

Shannon Peebles

End of Semester Assessment

By the end of this course, I expected a basic knowledge of code, enough to be able to understand web pages code and write basic programs. I hoped to have a better knowledge of how computers work and how code is a part of them.

As I realized that programming was not as simple as I expected, my goals at the beginning of the year seemed a little too high, I began to scale them down and my goal essentially became to learn as much as possible and feel confident in that information.

A major thing I learned about myself through this course is that I do not understand computers as much as I thought I did. I'm always the person in my family who can navigate computer/technology issues with relative ease; however, that was not the case in this class. I did learn how to work through problems and get help with things that I did not understand, which is a big step for me because I usually never ask for help. I also enjoyed the challenge of overcoming an obstacle in my code and becoming more proficient in programming. I was proud that I completed a project on my own though I was kind of sad that the group I planned on being with did not really try to include me in the project.

I accomplished the completion of my project, the beginner tutorial series of theNewBoston YouTube videos, and completed several sections of the Code Academy lessons. I kept notes from what I learned and used them to refer to during coding, and I learned how to validate forms, add input text, work functions, among many other things!

Most of my time was spent watching and taking notes on tutorials! I also spent time practicing code on NotePad++ and researching specific parts of coding that interested me, like attributes, iFrames, and fun things to add to applications!

My future goals are to take another computer science class over the summer to prepare for 340 and sector in IKM! Also hopefully read a few computer books for fun to learn more about computer processes.

This class style was extremely nice because it fit well with my hectic, busy schedule but I would have liked a little more guidance on the basics of programming. However, looking back I think this class was great preparation for the real world, in which work requires a lot of independent study and initiative! I believe that I put as much time as I could into this class and even though I struggled with the material I feel like I accomplished and learned a lot! I really, really would like an A in this class because even though you will dislike hearing this, grades are extremely important for ROTC. But at the same turn, I recognize that I may not have done quite as well as I hope I did, so I will respect any grade given.

Mariya Medovar
ISAT 252
4/01/2014

I remember how excited I was to register for ISAT 252. Being a junior computer science major, I have been through plenty of challenging programming courses. This class was supposed to be a relaxing class where I can do what I love. I assumed there would be regular labs to turn in and maybe a few programming assignments, but I knew it would be a lot simpler than the 400 level cs courses I was also registered for. When I first heard of the no grades policy in this class, I was relieved but also a little worried. I was relieved because I did not have to worry about getting an A in this class, but I wasn't sure if I would have enough motivation to work on a project all semester for a class where the professor doesn't even evaluate you based on your work.

Ever since I started school, I have always tried my hardest to succeed in every class I have ever taken. I don't accept failure and do not give up until I have completed an assignment to the best of my ability. Even though I was not being graded on anything I did or completed in this class, I still wanted to come out of this class with a working project. My partner (who is also a computer science major) and I decided to learn something new because we had the freedom to and didn't have to worry about failure. We spent all of class time learning how to create an android app. Since it was so early in the semester, we didn't feel the need to spend time outside of class to get this done. My main goal at this point was to keep learning something that I don't get a chance to learn in my cs classes.

After a few months of working on our android app, my partner and I started running into problems that we just could not figure out how to solve. With the two other programming projects I had in my computer science classes, I didn't have time to work on or even think about the android app. At this point all I really wanted was to have a somewhat working product by the end of the semester. After spending over an hour of looking for a different project, my partner and I decided to create a website and a java applet that plays Conway's Game of Life. At this point my main goal was to figure out the implementation of the game of life and then create the website to integrate this applet into. This project was a lot more interesting than the android app, so my partner and I started spending hours outside of class working on it.

I feel that I did succeed in some areas of this class, but I also think I could have been a lot more successful if I had the same mindset earlier in the semester as I do now. My success is shown through the applet my partner and I created depicting Conway's Game of Life. We ran into many problems during implementation, but our prior experience programming in Java helped us get through them without spending too much time on it. It did take a while to get the implementation completely correct, but eventually, after minor changes to our code, all our algorithms turned out to be correct. I am also proud of how I kept working on the project, knowing that I can just ask for an A at the end of the semester even if I didn't successfully complete anything or even learn what I wanted to. I learned that I don't give up easily, even when I'm the only one who would benefit from it.

I failed to complete the original project my partner and I thought of. This was a whole new kind of project that I have never worked on before, so there was always a chance I would

big these days, we decided to learn it ourselves. It required working with XML files, which I have only seen one time for a programming assignment I did last year. Even then we didn't need to know anything about the XML file; it was just being used in our project. I have also never really created a GUI that was more than just a label and some buttons. Turning those drawings we made into an actual app was harder than I expected. There was a lot more to do than drag the components onto the screen and add code to make them functional. We went through a few tutorials to get us started with app development as well as how to get the specific functionality we wanted, such as tabs, but once we were on our own, we ran into problems. It was hard to figure out what was going wrong in the short amount of time we had 3 days a week, but I also did not have too much free time to work on it. I am taking three 400 level computer science courses in addition to this course and had two other group projects to focus on. So when I had to pick which project to work on after my last class of the day, I chose one of those two because my group and I had to get it functioning by a certain day in order to give a presentation to the class on our semester project. If it wasn't for these classes/projects, I would like to think that I would have spent a lot of time figuring out the android app in my free time. Along with the limited time, I feel as though the stress from the other projects not working right away made me feel like I needed to do something different in this class so that I had at least one project that I was getting the hang of. Eventually, my group and I finished my projects in my other classes, so I am sure that if my partner and I stuck with our original plan, we would have eventually figured most of it, if not all of it, out. I learned that even though I don't normally give up on a project that isn't working, sometimes I just need to let it go for my own sanity. Maybe if I was taking different classes this semester that did not rely on so many group projects, then I would have stuck with learning how to create a phone app. I don't regret switching to a different project because I really did enjoy programming the Game of Life in my favorite language.

I wouldn't say I feel any more educated or enlightened from taking this class than I would in any other class I have taken at JMU. Removing the grade factor does provide a whole different experience in learning and doing school work. I love programming software and enjoy solving programming challenges that may come up, so I enjoyed doing the work for this class. There was no pressure to get anything finished so I worked at my own pace. Maybe some people would take this class and think since they are not getting graded, then why even waste their time on doing the work. This class is not for them. This class is for someone who wants to learn or who wants to expand their skills while also getting credit. I now know that android app development is not for me, although if I do have the chance, I would like to look into it again and maybe figure out why my partner and I were having so much trouble with it. This class made me proud of what I like to do. If it were any other subject, like writing for instance, I probably would not have put any effort into the class because I hate the subject. I would love to take a writing class where I can simply ask for an A and improve my GPA, but what would I get out of that? I got what I wanted out of this class: a chance to do what I love away from the pressures of due dates and grades.

This style of course work is so different than any other class I have ever taken. This type of class is probably everyone's dream class, so I am happy I got to experience it. Personally, I learn better in a regular style class where the professor lectures and evaluates the student's performance on assignments. I am a very visual person so seeing someone else do something helps me understand the material a lot better than if I taught myself. The grades also motivate me to do the work and get it done because I have a deadline. In this class, even without the grades, I was still able to do the work because that is the kind of person I am. I think this type of

class is more similar to the work place than most classes in college. We did not have specific guidelines to follow, but instead had to use our own knowledge of what we've learned. I know wherever I end up working, I will have to look up how to solve certain programming problems I run into, so this course was very good practice. Now I know I will be able to do it in the future.

I planned from the very beginning to ask for an A in this class. I was going to work for that grade and I hoped to have something to show for all the hard work. Although the original android app project did not workout, I didn't entirely give up. My partner and I jumped right into a different project and put in a lot more effort into completing this project compared to what we did for our first project. Unfortunately, we did not have enough time to incorporate the applet into a webpage, but we want to keep working on it over the summer and hopefully by the end of summer, we will have a completed project.

Will Sharp
5-01-14
end of semester narrative

What were your expectations coming into this class?

To be honest, I was not expecting a class that was so flexible in its structure as yours was. I expected to sharpen some skills I already had from my Computer Science classes, and maybe pick up some languages here and there. I expected PA's, homeworks, modules, quizzes, and of course, tests.

What learning goals did you set for yourself?

When I learned how the class was structured, I really wanted to take the opportunity to get into something more challenging than what I thought the average student in your class would be attempting. I wanted to learn something new that would challenge me, but at the same time not be too complex to be impossible. We decided on trying to make an Android application.

How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?

My goals changed because we were getting stuck in our Android development and weren't making progress for a good two weeks or so. We felt that it was better to admit defeat and start on something else than to continue struggling with Android when our enthusiasm and energy were drained from that project. We ended up scratching our app and implementing Conway's Game Of Life in a Java Applet. This really bugged me though, because I hate giving up; on anything. I think my determination is one of my strongest traits, so to admit defeat was really hard for me. I am proud of our little applet but I can't help but to think what if we had stuck with the android development.

In what ways did you feel you were successful? Please refer to specific, concrete artifacts that would serve as evidence of your successes.

Well, we were clearly successful in our applet because it performs Conway's Game of Life simulation accurately, and quickly. I also think I was successful in learning a lot about myself this semester as well. I learned that maybe sometimes, a project needs to be scratched and not to treat it as a personal thing, which I think will really help me in the future.

In what areas do you feel you failed to achieve your goals? Please reflect on what you think you've learned from your failures, and what, if any, plans you have to address those issues in the future.

I think I failed in a lot of ways this semester. My biggest failure was not accomplishing my initial goal at the beginning of this class, which was to create an Android app. We've also failed on our Java applet in the sense that we wanted to upload it to our very own website but it's not really working yet. It's on our website and it looks neat, but we can't really do anything with it unfortunately. I learned a lot from these failures though. I've learned that sometimes, when you've put everything into a project, and it still isn't turning out the way you want, perhaps it is time to pack it up and start something else. For me, that's really hard to do though. This is one of the first times I've willingly given up on

something to do with programming because I can't figure it out. I like to think I am good at programming and that if I analyze something well enough, I can solve and do anything. I've learned that you don't have all the time in the world though, so maybe I could've solved it and completed it, given enough time, but the fact of the matter is that I didn't. As far as to why our applet isn't working on our website, I'm not familiar with HTML or embedding them into websites so I am at a loss there unfortunately. I don't really have a plan to fix that failure other than to try not to bite off more than I can chew. I think I will always fail if I make my initial goal too high. However, that's hard for me to do, because I am proud of my ability to program, so if I think something is too hard, I tell myself that it's not and it just takes enough dedication to learning how to do it. Then I tell myself that I have that dedication and I can do it. But a lot of the time, I don't. I don't keep the enthusiasm, or the love for a project and I get sidetracked, or lose interest and I fail to do that project. If I don't lose interest though, I am super determined to learn or do whatever is needed of me. I need to try to keep this enthusiasm for things that I don't necessarily think are super interesting though.

JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Do you feel more educated? More enlightened? Less so? How have your activities this semester contributed or detracted from your knowing yourself better and having a better grasp on what you want to do in the near or distant future?

I feel a lot more enlightened from this class and semester. I have learned a lot more about what kind of person I am and what kind of person I want to become. I worked with my girlfriend, Mariya Medovar, the entire semester. At first, if we had differing opinions about a design issue or something, we sometimes let it affect our relationship outside of that group and the class. We've gotten infinitely better at separating class from our relationship and if we don't agree on something, and we can't come to a conclusion, we don't get nasty or let it affect us outside of the class. That's the person I want to be. I want to be able to not get emotional when someone doesn't like my idea or concept. I also want to be the person that doesn't give up unless he absolutely has too. I want to inspire people to work harder through working hard myself.

How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do it the same or differently?

I think this style of class is interesting because a lot of freedom to be creative and do what you want. I think that's great if the students are already familiar with subject, but I don't think it worked so well for people who have no idea how to program or are very new to that style of thinking. I think maybe adding some structure would help these students and maybe identifying them early in the semester to give them extra help if they require it would benefit this class. More importantly however, I really disliked the freedom between different sections of the class. It often felt like Mariya and I had to compete for seats with students from not only our class, but from previous sections. This was the primary reason we started developing in one of the Networking Lab on the first floor of ISAT. I also really disliked how some students acted in the classroom. Before Mariya and I started developing elsewhere, groups around us were consistently annoying, loud, and often discussing things completely off-topic. On a couple occasions, someone from another group brought in a rather annoying musical instrument and began to play it in the middle of class right next to us. The perpetrator was a Computer Science major as well so I could not believe he thought that was a good idea. That was the straw that broke the camel's back for me at least. I understand you're trying to stimulate people's creative juices and all that good stuff but there has to be a line I think. Sure, some people work better when they're free to move around and talk with whomever and talk about whatever they want. But playing your

instrument in class? Like seriously? It felt like there was no structure or discipline , so students took advantage of that to goof off and waste time instead of using it as a means to be creative and think freely. On paper, I think your style is really cool, but in practice, I think the way you have it now is not effective. I can recall several times I saw students sit down at a computer, turn it on to check their e-mail or Reddit and never once open an IDE or source code, and then talk the entire time and leave. I think there should be a strict policy that if you're not working on a project, then you should leave, because the people are there trying to get something done are distracted. That goes for the creative freedom stuff as well; I think it's great until it starts to disturb other people's creativity. Then it becomes unfair and annoying. Also, I hated that people would watch youtube movies or short clips with their sound turned on. That's incredibly disrespectful to the other students trying to work, and it's easy to avoid by simply wearing headphones. Though when students are interesting in working, and everyone is focused, the room becomes a fantastic workspace that filled me creative energy. However, I rarely found that feeling. I think with some more discipline and enforcement, your style of teaching would be an incredible tool for learning programming and developing something. However, as it is, I think students are too often looking to cut corners give the appearance of sincerity, which doesn't make sense to me, because if they don't want to be there they don't have to be. I will be taking another class with you next semester and I hope it is somewhat more structured, though I do enjoy the creative freedom and I took advantage of it when it was possible.

What grade would you like for me to report to the registrar for you, and why? As per our agreement, please remember that you can ask me to report any grade that you would like and I will honor that request.

I think I deserve an A. This is because of how much I learned about who I am, and what kind of person I want to become. I grew a lot over the course of this class, and I definitely think it was for the better. I through your weekly-self evaluations that I thought I was happy, but I was always angry on the inside for some reason and now I'm not. I learned to let go and sometimes admit defeat so I can fight another battle. And I learned to not take it personally when someone else doesn't like my idea as much as I do.

ISAT 252

Exit Narrative

Taner Durusu

When I came into this class, all I knew was that we were going to be making a project and that I would have to do a lot of the learning on my own. I was honestly worried that I would have to be doing a lot of self-motivating. I know that from my past projects, I am very bad about getting really excited about a project and then losing steam half way through. I knew that I would need to also be apart of a good group to help keep me on my toes and stay focused. I also was aware that I was going to be able to choose my grade in this class. To me, this meant that I had to make an honest effort. Whenever I have been asked what grade I think I deserve on assignments in the past, I always feel guilty asking for grades higher than I actually feel that I deserve. So, I knew that if I wanted to ask for an A, I would have to actually put in the effort.

What I really liked about this class was that it was goal based; I have always felt that I work much better when I have goals that I am trying to reach. My initial goals were to just familiarize myself with the programming languages. Since I had not done any programming previously, I went ahead and started with Code Academy. This was really fun when I was doing the HTML tutorials because they were straightforward and simple. I actually got very excited to reach new milestones every day. I was even starting to do the tutorials in my free time for fun. It felt good to learn new building tools and see those tools come to life on my screen. Once I finished HTML and CSS, my goal was to learn Java script. But this is where things got hard.

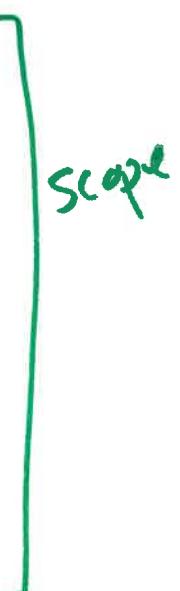
The tutorials for Java script were not nearly as easy or as fun as the HTML and CSS ones. This is due to the inherent way that Java script works and it is harder to design simple guides to complete the lessons. I just really wish that they had made them easier. This is where I started to give up on the goal of learning Java script. After learning some basic stuff, I gave up on Code academy. This definitely made me realize that my learning is centered on earning frequent rewards. As soon as I was unable to complete the levels and get to the milestones, it became a lot less fun for me. This quick reward based system of learning I have most likely stems from my hobby of video games. When I play a game, I am achieving goals and rewarded for it in a matter of minutes and not days or weeks like my schoolwork. Perhaps if I could find some way to create some sort of quick reward system with my studies, I would spend a lot more time doing just that: studying. I think I will definitely try this out over the summer for my maymester.

My next goal was to start to install and understand the tools to actually build the mobile app. Looking back at it, I did this in the wrong order. What I did was download all of the stuff required for apache to work on my computer before I had even started on the app. I did not realize that I had to actually make the app in a

competence

text-editing program first. I was under the impression that Xcode would be a lot more intuitive and have more building blocks for me to easily design an app. Learning how complex and elegant Xcode could be gave me a lot more respect for people that are able to design really good apps. This shit is hard.

This was when my group began to shift goals. At this point, we had all been doing code academy tutorials for a while and we wanted to figure out what type of app we wanted to create. I had some ideas in my head about maybe an app where you could browse poetry based on whatever mood you were in like Songza. But after talking to my group, we decided that we wanted to create an app that could replace the JMU Dog Food app that was no longer working. Because we didn't just want to do the exact same app as before, so we ended up outlining and app that was a lot more ambitious than we could probably handle. This shows me that I really do have strong ideas and can think of great things to achieve if I set my mind to it. The only problem was that we had so many elements. We wanted to create an app that had all of the times, all of menu items, all of the nutrition facts for the menu items, menus for the dining halls (which change daily), nutrition facts for the menus that change daily, a filter that would allow you to eliminate foods that had or didn't have a specified nutrient, sort the menu items based on highest or lowest value of a nutrient, a calculator to add up nutritional values to monitor the nutrients consumed at each meal, and map that would show you all of the places to eat on campus. This was insane. We actually thought that we might be able to achieve all of this. And the sad thing is that we may have been able to do all of that. But the problem was that there were not many incentives to achieve everything that we sought out to do. For a class that was at 9:05 in the morning three days a week where attendance is not taken and there are no grades, it began to be hard to be motivated to achieve everything when things got hard. This shows me that we probably should have tried to do something a little bit easier to achieve or at least make more realistic goals.



The harder part that we began to run into was the screen scraping. The code on the campus dish website was not super easy to sift through as far as existing screen scraping programs were concerned. We tried Screen Scraper and even Kimono, but they were either limited in scope or were not very intuitive to get them to work for the website that we were scraping from. This is where Morgan Benton began to do a lot of the heavy lifting.

With his magic, he effectively did the screen scraping for us. This gave me mixed feelings. In a class where it a lot of learning on your own and asking for assistance, I felt bad asking you to do some much of the work. Though some of my team members were quick to just ask you to solve problems for us, I felt guilty. I felt that if I didn't at least give it an honest shot before asking for help, then it really

wasn't my work at all. Though I felt really uncomfortable with this, after talking to my friend Julianne, she made me feel better about it. She is a Computer Science major and she was explaining to me how much of programming involves asking others for help or looking to other resources to answer questions and solve problems. After hearing this, I began to feel a bit better. I just wish that we had made a bigger effort on our own before asking for help. This taught me that I need to learn to just accept help when I need it and not let it effect my pride. There is no shame in asking for help.

Once we got the screen scraping working and had the menu items listed, it wasn't long until we had the nutritional information showing up. This was very exciting! Our app was starting to do some really cool stuff. Though it was still only a website, it was really cool to see something that we helped make actually function instead of just show text that we typed in. Now that we had all of this starting to work, we just needed to put all of the pieces together.

On the final week, our goal was to just get everything together and working in some form and it did! Though it did not work in all the ways that it should have, it worked well enough for a demo. This actually made me feel really good. Though it may not have looked very impressive to the rest of the class, it felt so damn good to have some sort of product that functioned. For the whole semester, we hadn't had anything really working at all; everything had been made by different people and hadn't yet been put together; it gave me a lot of satisfaction. I can now see why a lot of developers will choose to make apps and not charge anything for them. I cannot even imagine how much satisfaction developers get from seeing how many people download the app and give positive feedback on it. This honestly made me consider developing software in the future. I know that I don't have the same drive to program as you, Morgan, but it felt really good to create a functioning program. The only regret that I have is that we didn't get it imported into apache and work on an iOS simulator. It probably wasn't too hard of a step to make, but we just didn't have the time.

As for JMU's Mission Statement, I definitely feel that I have become more educated and enlightened. What this class did was reawaken that feeling of creating something and presenting it to people to enjoy. In late high school and early college, I used to make a lot of YouTube videos just for the fun of making a cool looking product. Though I did not feel that programming at our level had the same level of artistic aesthetic that I feel is captured when I meticulously edit a video together, I definitely had the same satisfaction at the end. That feeling where you see so many little mistakes that others most likely don't notice, but you are still proud of all of the time you invested in the project. This class has definitely made

me want to record videos again and get back to editing. It is something that I used to really love and I want to pick it up again. I think that if I can just find another style or subject that I want to record again, I could truly get back in to it.

In terms of how the course went, this course taught me a lot more than just programming. It made me realize how I work in teams and with long-term projects that don't have much supervision. Though, I feel that if I took this class again, I would spend a lot more time taking more resources from Google and jquery mobile. By the time that I had realized that these resources were out there, it felt a bit late in the projects life. I think that for future classes, you should definitely turn them the jquery mobile as a good starting point once they understand some basic programming languages.

For the grade that I would like for this class, I am asking for an A. The reason I am asking for this grade is two-fold. The first reason, is that the goal of this class was for me to learn some computer science and to get more out of this class beyond that; I truly feel like I have. I have learned how I work with projects that are not guided by grades or drafts that needed to be turned in. I hadn't done anything in that dorm for a while and it was a good experience. The second reason that I am asking for an A is more of a selfish reason. Freshman year I failed a four-credit math class; that grade has been weighing down my GPA heavily. This summer I am doing repeat forgiveness to get rid of the F and hopefully boost my GPA a lot. My goal is to graduate with a 3.0 because that is a good GPA to have, but my Dad also gave me some incentive to reach that grade point. He said that if I can graduate with a 3.0, then the whole family would take a trip to Japan. I have always been in love with Asian culture, and particularly Japanese. I have always dreamed of going there one day. Coming from a family that travels often, I am bummed that we have not been to Japan; especially when my Dad has been there several times. If I were to get an A in this class, it would definitely help me reach my goal of going to Japan with my family for vacation. I also feel like I would be letting them down if I was not able to get the grade point average and none of us got to go. I don't want to let them down.

ISAT252 Semester Narrative

5/2/2014

Takaki Akiyama

When I picked ISAT252, I expected that this class would learn material related with computer programming. However, I could not imagine what kind of programming will be on course material because it is ISAT course, not CS. All courses I took from CS major is learning basic programming and its concepts. So I thought this class would be similar with my other CS courses before semester begun.

After first class and description of Professor Benton, I was excited about the class because it is the programming course, which more focused on developing the project with any computer language. I had taken many CS course and completed lots of programming assignment. However, I never had developed an application or program from scratch. So I set up a goal with “learn new language that I never touch” and “develop programing project with team”. I decided to set up these two goals because I never learned and used popular web design language which are html and JavaScript. Since professor Benton introduced us great website Codecademy to practice various computer languages, I choose JavaScript to learn. The group project was my other goal for the semester. Not only learn JavaScript but also have to use it in actual project. I thought this would be the best practice to learn and experience new trial that I never had done. Therefore, Tommy, Liam, and I formed a team to decided work on Liam’s future project, Breakfast Burrito service home page.

My goal, actually evolved little over the course of the semester. Especially learning the new computer language. Since Codecademy is pretty good resource to practice beginning of new language, I finished JavaScript pretty quick. So I started to learn new language such as html/CSS and PHP. The feeling I had after learning these language was they are much simpler than Java or C++. But I did not realize that they will become more complicated when they combined and using it together. I realized this when I start working on our team project. I was planned to work on registration form for our homepage project using html and JavaScript. The html part is very simple and easy. I just implemented the column for each data to store into database. The JavaScript part is checking the restriction of each data. If user entered wrong value in each column, alert will give a notice that user entered wrong value. First time when I try, code looks logically works fine, but when I run it on web server it did not run correctly. I guess that is because I tried to put both html and JavaScript into one document and it made some

bugs. Before end of semester, I deleted all of my old work and start over with separate html, style sheet, and JavaScript. After a while, finally, the registration code works and Liam put that onto our project homepage.

I feel I am successful in learning new computer language, especially the JavaScript. Fortunately, my another ISAT class, which is ISAT480 mobile app development class uses mostly JavaScript (Titanium Appcelerator uses most of code from JavaScript) so I learned lots of code and functionality about JavaScript this semester. It is similar but its difference is like Pepper and Dr. Pepper. I also took CS430 Programming Language class, and that class says Java is an object oriented programming language. But JavaScript is an object oriented scripting language. Java creates applications that run in a virtual machine or browser, while JavaScript code is run on a browser only. Java code needs to be compiled while JavaScript code does not. JavaScript does not create any stand-alone applications. In its most common form, it resides inside html and provide levels of interactivity to web pages that are not achievable with simple html. So It has similar name and algorithm of function, but these two language are slightly different. That is why I had hard time on make it work in html. I am really proud of understanding the difference between these two languages so I will not feel fear when anyone asks me about difference between Java and JavaScript.

I feel I failed to achieve goals that I did not complete project enough. I spend too much time on registration page and could not reached to connecting with database which Liam prepared for us. It requires SQL statement and JavaScript package but our code submits the registration data, but did not stored into database. To improve this problem, I have to manage my time well and try not to stuck with one problem for extremely long. I realized that learning programming language is not the easy thing. It requires many practice and experience. It is easy to understand what the single or one segment of code working, but it is difficult to figure out entire code of one big project. So if I have chance next time, I want find more smart way of manage the time and practice the programming.

I feel more educated after this class. I think most important class rule in this class is that oneself have to control own self and give own learning material. So if one self is educated person, I am pretty sure that he or she will focus on learning rather than wasting expensive tuition. Usually I am very lazy person and always putting own homework before due dates. But this class, does not have any due days so I have think it and make it by own. This helped me on train how to managing the schedule: Design phase, meeting with team member, coding, testing, and debugging. I understand that

big project will not be completed in one dates only if he or she is super genius and able to code anything. However, if there is no experience, it is very hard to start because most people will not know what he or she should start. I had same problem on beginning of this semester. It was tough at first time, but I am pretty sure that I will remember this experience and able to do well on next project.

In overall, I love this style of course. I am worst test taker, so I really want just focus on learning, experiencing, and developing. That is how I memorize the material and most effective for me. Training and experience, I believe this is how social formed. Of course, for certification or entrance exam, we have to take because there are too many people and company has to select them in limited time. But for programming, I believe it is more important on programming skill than how much you got on Computer Science exam. If I take this class again, I would recommend do same way. But, I will more happy to hear some comments about project and your advice.

Thank you so much for this semester!

Takaki Akiyama

Final Grade

In overall, I would like to give A to myself for focusing on class and had effort on learning the material.

Joseph C Straub
ISAT 252 End of Semester Narrative

My uncle once told me that I should try and learn as much as possible. I didn't have to be a genius in any one subject, but being able to recognize various elements of what you're working on can bring you great success. During that conversation, he mentioned computer programming as one of those things that you do not need to be an expert in, however if you know basic code you can increase your worth tremendously. After that conversation I started codeacademy.com. I practiced HTML to start. I gave up after about 20% of the module, moved on with my life, and never looked back.

When I signed up for 252, I remembered this conversation I had with my uncle. I was eager and excited to jump into programming, knowing how valuable of a skill it could be. I expected a course similar to my Spanish class where we would review the language tediously with a lot of repetition. I expected to learn a lot of different pieces about programming but, similar to Spanish class, never be able to carry out an entire project.

After the first day, my expectations changed a lot. I realized that this class was going to be unlike any class I have ever taken before. I was nervous, because in the past I have not done well studying or learning well on my own. I was afraid that this class was going to be a waste of time and I wouldn't get much out of it. I knew that this learning dynamic was going to be difficult for me and that I needed to dive headfirst and nip these fears in the bud.

My first real experience with this course was the first Monday night hacking session. I walked in blind, sat down, and didn't know what to expect. Morgan started a conversation with me and we began to talk about how to start. I have never had a professor ask me "well, what do you want to learn? What problem do you want to fix?" The floodgates opened. Morgan and I spent a lot of time talking about my diagnosis with type 1 diabetes. I wanted to make my treatment better. That was going to be my project.

That night there was a lot of talk about a senior project, about creating a business, and many more BIG ideas. It was intimidating at first, however I loved the thought of the whole situation. When I got home, that was when my goals really started forming. I called Kayla Cook, my best friend, and geeked out to her over the idea. After that conversation, my goals were pretty clear.

- I wanted to learn how to code. I wanted to open up websites and figure out how they work.
- I wanted to create an app that would help me manage my diabetes. (or at least start it).

- I wanted to be able to know enough about coding that I could walk into a business situation and know what people were talking about. I needed to make sure that I got some important value out of this process.

The beginning of the semester had a huge learning curve. The hardest part of the entire situation was learning definitions. It was frustrating when I asked Morgan “how do I do this?” and he would respond with “you want to use github and fork a repository” yada yada. First, what the hell is github and how the **** to you fork it. What does that even mean?! Eventually I found the best way to figure stuff out was to just google what Morgan said, however I wish he could have went a little more in depth and really spelt stuff out for us in the beginning. If I were to make one recommendation to Morgan, it would be to have an introduction lecture at the beginning of the semester touching on the basic definitions that we will need to know over the semester. I think that would have helped a lot.

Towards the middle of the semester, our goals downsized a lot. We lost the guiding star attitude towards a senior project or even creating a business. My team spent a lot of time struggling to grasp the basics on codeacademy and did not have anything to show at the halfway point. Our goal shifted from the above goals and decreased to just the first goal. If I learned some code, I was going to be a happy camper.

One day in the middle of the semester, Katie Kelly walked in and showed us what she had been working on. She did it. She had a basic website that was on its way to being fully functional. That was the spark we needed. I looked under the hood of her code and I understood it. Things started clicking in my mind. For example, I realized how to link webpages to webpages and how to make one folder that is the “website” with all of the elements within it. It was all starting to make sense. My goals changed again.

After that day, I got off of codeacademy and turned all of my learning to Google. I understood enough to figure out what the code meant, now I just needed to paste it all together. I got a website framework off of github and started playing around with it. I made different pages with different elements on each. I learned how to set up the html/css part of a form. I learned how to modify the css to make everything look pretty, more than just changing the color. I was proud to walk around with this website up and show it off.

Coming into the end of the semester, my goals are as ambitious as ever. This idea is going to work and this idea is going to happen. Right now, my goals are:

- Learn php and jQuery to make my website work.
- Get IRB certified over the summer.
- At the beginning of next semester, start reaching out to students with diabetes on this campus.
- Work with these students to fine tune the app and make it appeal to everyone.

- Start a year-long research study with students on this campus that have T1D to gather a large amount of data.
 - If all of the above goes according to plan, start a company and get this app out to people.
 - Use the data received to do research to find a better way for doctors to help their patients manage trends.
-

Looking back on this semester, I definitely learned more than I thought I was going to. Even if I didn't learn a lot of "what" I learned indescribable amounts of "how" and to me the value in "how" far out weighs the "what." I think the structure of this course is to be credited for learning "how." I am glad I was able to overcome my initial fearful expectations. It is amazing how much a person is willing to learn if they are passionate about the topic. I don't think this learning style would have worked with any other type of subject matter. But, because I was learning something that I wanted to learn, the wheels kept turning and are turning faster now even though the semester is ending.

All in all, I think I met my initial goals. I am comfortable walking into a room and talking about what I know to people. If I was ever thrown into a situation where we needed to use code to solve a problem, I think I would be able to figure it out. In a nutshell, I feel I am more educated and enlightened.

Morgan, I would like to thank you for all that you have taught me this semester. Your education has spread far beyond the scope of this course and far beyond any professor I have had thus far. I look forward to class with you next semester and to continue collaborating with you as this app develops. Seriously, thank you for everything.

I believe my efforts and my knowledge learned throughout this course, as explained in person and in the above narrative, afford me the privilege of receiving an A in this class.

Dylan Morra

This semester changed my life. It went from being the best college experience of my life to sitting in a jail cell within an hour. But, just because things went south, others aspects got better. I learned a lot about myself over the course of these weeks and I feel as if I am a better person now as appose to what I was coming in. Sitting in that jail cell, I contemplated life for hours. What the hell are we doing here? What's the purpose of all this shit? Am I doing it right? I saw that there was no right or wrong, it's just how you look at it as a whole. Its how you see yourself playing the part from the outside looking in. I realized I had to make changes in my life that would change how I see the world and the people around me. This class helped a lot with these changes.

I started this semester with everything and anything I could ever want. I had all the money I could ever imagine, all the pot I could ever smoke, all the alcohol I could ever drink, and all the friends I could ever need. I don't think anybody was living the life my roommates and I were living for the past year. And the great part was, it wasn't a dream. Then things changed. It all got taken away. I walked down the same stairs I would walk up with kegs, bottles, friends, smiles, and a grand cash in my pocket with cuffs on my wrist and nobody but the cop walking me down. The thoughts came rushing in. What the hell am I doing? Look at yourself! What is mom going to say about this one?! Sitting in that cell and for the next two- three weeks after, I felt like complete shit. I was down about myself, worrying about what my life will be like and how the hell I was going to overcome this one. But, then I started to look at the positives and that made all the difference.

The first thing I realized is that I am tremendously lucky. Like, so lucky you have no idea kind of lucky. I didn't get caught selling drugs. I only got caught with a bong in my room. My roommates....not so much. I could finally say, "well at least I didn't get this because then it would be worse." I realized that things weren't so bad. It was just how I was looking at it. My perspective changed. The way you look at something can make all the difference. I went from negative vibes all around to good vibes that I could enjoy and not be worried about. It just took me a few weeks.

The changes I wanted to make in my life would have to be real and something that I would want. I wanted good grades. I realized I was here for the school part and got enough of the party part. My mom said if I don't get a 3.0 this semester I would not come back. I wanted to step it up and make things happen. And looking at that goal I set right now, I can say that I accomplished it. If finals go according to plan, I could end up with grades that I actually want and am not ashamed of telling people. I am proud of myself for accomplishing what I set out to do. I finally put my focus in something and it feels great to have a positive outcome for once. Maybe getting arrested wasn't so bad after all. It made me stop smoking pot and I feel way better right now than when I was high everyday. I have a clearer head and more energy to put my mind to something. Don't get me wrong though, I cannot wait to hit a bong again but that is between you and me. I just have to know when I am doing more pot than school and tell myself to focus otherwise. I think I have learned that quality over the course of the semester.

Setting goals every week helped me. My goals may have not been as ambitious as some but it put them in the back of my head. I started working out after I got arrested and it was one of my goals every week. Eating healthy has the same story. If I didn't eat healthy for a week or when I was biting into that cookout burger, I thought about what I wrote down in those weekly surveys and reflected on what I was doing. They made me think.

Coming into this class, I thought it would be hard and wouldn't know it I could be successful in it. Wrong. Your style of teaching was great and it was bad at the same time. Obviously I absolutely love the choose your own grade but, I wish there was a little more "lesson" and force because without it I will slack off, which I totally did. I think your style worked out for me though. Erika, James and I wrote a basic goal setting app. James wrote most of it and walked us through what he was doing and made us add some features that we had to look up. For example, the background color scheme. I liked the fact that I actually had to find out how to do this on my own and I think that is what you are getting at with your style of teaching. I think you are setting us up for the real world more than any other professor here. In the real world, as I would imagine, there is nobody guiding you but yourself and we have to learn how to do things on our own. This style made me realize my potential and what I can do on my own. I liked it.

In regard to my grade I would like you to report an A for two reasons. One is that I really need one to make my mom happy and that I can come back. My GPA is suffering and it wouldn't hurt to add a little 4.0 into the mix. You always got to make momma happy. The second reason is that I think I have earned it. I learned a lot about myself this semester and this class contributed a lot. Those surveys were annoying as hell but after I felt good and was eager to accomplish my goals. I learned that goals are very important and can make a difference in your life. Before this class I didn't set goals as often as I do now. I actually think about them a lot. My long-term goals have changed throughout this semester and reflecting on myself every week contributed to that. This class also helped in the changing of my major. I started out business for freshman year then switched to ISAT all of sophomore year but then I had an epiphany. I don't want to be a scientist, per say, I want to do business. I know that I am businessman at heart. Always was, always will be. I enjoyed this class and the material so I decided to switch to CIS. I think it is a good fit for me and I am excited for what the future has in store for me.

I thank you for teaching me that changing your perspective on something can make a huge difference. Looking at yourself in the mirror not to see how ugly you are, but to see how pretty you can get will change anybody's thoughts about life, themselves, and what they accomplish.



Kayla Cook
Dr. Benton
5/2/2014

ISAT 252 Exit Narrative

This course was completely overwhelming to me in the beginning. I knew that programming was a foreign topic to me and the laid back set up of the class showed me that I was going to have to be very self-motivated to do well in this course. I expected to be challenged and confused throughout the semester but I also knew I would have a great support system between my classmates and professor. I did expect a little more guidance and structure when this course began but I feel as if I adjusted to still learn from this course without formal instruction. I think this course ended up falling in line with my expectations from the beginning.

My learning goals for this semester were very vague from the start and evolved over the course of the semester. I came in with absolutely no programming background or knowledge so I viewed my goals by learning as much as I possibly could. At first, this worked out beautifully. I sat down and cranked out assignments on code academy left and right. My focus was split between HTML and JavaScript. Once I reached a general understanding for some of the basics of these languages, I began to struggle with the question of what to do with all of this knowledge. From that point on, my goal for the semester was to figure out how to apply the skills I had acquired. I wanted to develop a website to show the class on the topic Joe, Katie and I had come up with. From that point on, I wanted to create something tangible with the information I had gained.

In the beginning, I had come into this course with the idea of needing to be the “best” student. I was so focused on how I compared to others in the class that I was instantly discouraged by my lack of any knowledge in this field. After a few classes, it became obvious to me that being the best was not possible but it also was not the point of this class. From that point forward, the only student I focused on being better than was the person I had been the day before. My goal was to improve as an individual, not in relation to the rest of the class. I reached a tough point in the semester where I lost sight of this goal and was just simply overwhelmed by how much there was to know but by refocusing on this goal, I was able to get back on track and end up with a project I am proud of for the semester.

I feel as if I was successful in trying to gather knowledge to apply in this course. I spent about 20 hours just reading things online and trying to get my head around how to work github and run a local host on my computer. Although I still am learning more about Github, I feel as if I have learned enough to use it for this course. I have also begun to understand xampp and how it works on a very basic level. Also, I completed 50% of the extensive JavaScript tutorials and lessons in addition to 25% of the HTML lessons. I was stuck on the JavaScript tutorials for a long time at about 30%. I reached the point where I almost just wanted to give up but I managed to ask classmates for help (something I was previously not too fond of doing) and get through the section I was stuck on. Overall, I feel as if I was successful in persevering this semester when I began to lose confidence. I found a way to break up all of the information that was available to

me so that I could learn in an efficient way. I also feel as if I worked in my group well. Katie and I were working on the same lessons for a while on code academy and instead of both doing the same thing, we decided to split up and try to master different topics so that our end project could be a culmination of our knowledge. Our group was successful in piecing together our knowledge like a giant puzzle where everyone had an area where they were most knowledgeable.



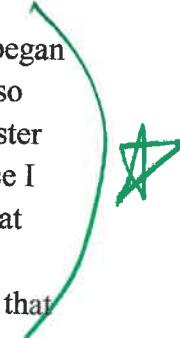
I feel as if I failed to maintain my motivation at certain points in the semester. Once I felt as if I had gathered enough information to start my project, I got figuring out where to start with my group. We probably lost 2 or 3 class periods getting overwhelmed and confused by what to do next. I continued with code academy in this time period but this was the first time that I felt like I should have asked for help and didn't. I am truly happy that I did as much research on my own with GitHub in this time period but I feel as if I could have been more efficient if I had asked my peers for help rather than stubbornly insisting on starting on my own. In general, I feel like I failed to ask for help enough this semester. This is something I truly struggle with but luckily my group members were always willing to ask questions and for help when we got stuck.

This course has truly helped me embody the mission statement for our university. I feel as if I more educated and enlightened in many ways. First off, this course has taught me so much about programming and developing a website, even though the information I have gained is just very basic. There is so much more to learn but part of being educated is realizing that. I know I have not mastered programming in any way, shape or form but I feel as if I begun to appreciate it and realize what I need to learn in order to make it a useful skill in my life.

In a more abstract sense, I feel more enlightened and educated about my own personal goals, skills and plans in life. I remember watching the opening video for this course and hearing programming described as one “outfit” that we would be trying on for the semester. I have tried on this outfit and found that although I find it utterly intriguing and magical in a sense, it isn't what I see myself wearing in the future. I am enlightened in that I am able to appreciate the work that goes into programing and I can see the huge benefit it has as a life skill. I am educated in that I have learned this isn't a skill I hope to really pursue any further. I feel as if I can appreciate programing and all that goes into it but I know now that it isn't something for me.

I have learned more about myself in this last semester than I ever have before. I feel as if I can hardly recognize the person I was in the fall. At the beginning of the semester, I knew that I was starting a bit of a transformation but throughout this class, I have begun to evaluate my life in a different way. I am going to get my first B in college (well hopefully a B+...) in my English class. Last semester, this would have been absolutely devastating and discouraging. Now, I just see this as a way of showing me that I am not meant to major in English (I mean, I am an ISAT major!). I don't have to get a 4.0 this semester to have learned something. I have learned that I am a pretty excellent writer through that course but I have also learned that I don't handle abstract literature well. I tend to find a different meaning in many readings than I am “supposed to.” If conforming to the “expected” interpretation is what it takes to earn an A, I will take my B with pride. The grading policy and style of this course reinforced to me that I am so much more than a B in a general education English class.

This course has also caused me to reevaluate many of the things I am involved in. I began working in a biomanufacturing research lab this semester as a paid research assistant. I was so excited to have been offered hourly pay and a great opportunity that I let myself go all semester before I realized how absolutely miserable I was in lab. I truly struggled with what to do once I had this realization. This week, I finally was able to see this research as just another outfit that didn't fit with my personality and future. If I hadn't gone through this class this semester, I would have tried to convince myself to stick it out through the rest of my time in college but that isn't what college is about.



My self-learning wasn't all negative. I have also started to find an outfit that I think may fit me for the future. ISAT 212 was my absolute worst enemy at the beginning of the semester. I received a 14/100 on my first quiz in this class. I had never even gotten a C on a test before. This was a slap in the face to apply myself and when I did, I found that not only was I interested in this material, I was pretty good at it. This class has been the most rewarding challenge for me and nothing made me happier than hearing my professor tell me that I am the kind of person that doesn't complain but rather, works twice as hard with a smile on my face to get a result. This experience comes full circle in that I allowed myself to try on this class as my new "outfit" rather than forcing myself to wear the outfit I had just acquired in my research lab. I was truly able to go into my energy class hoping to see if it was something I may pursue for the future.

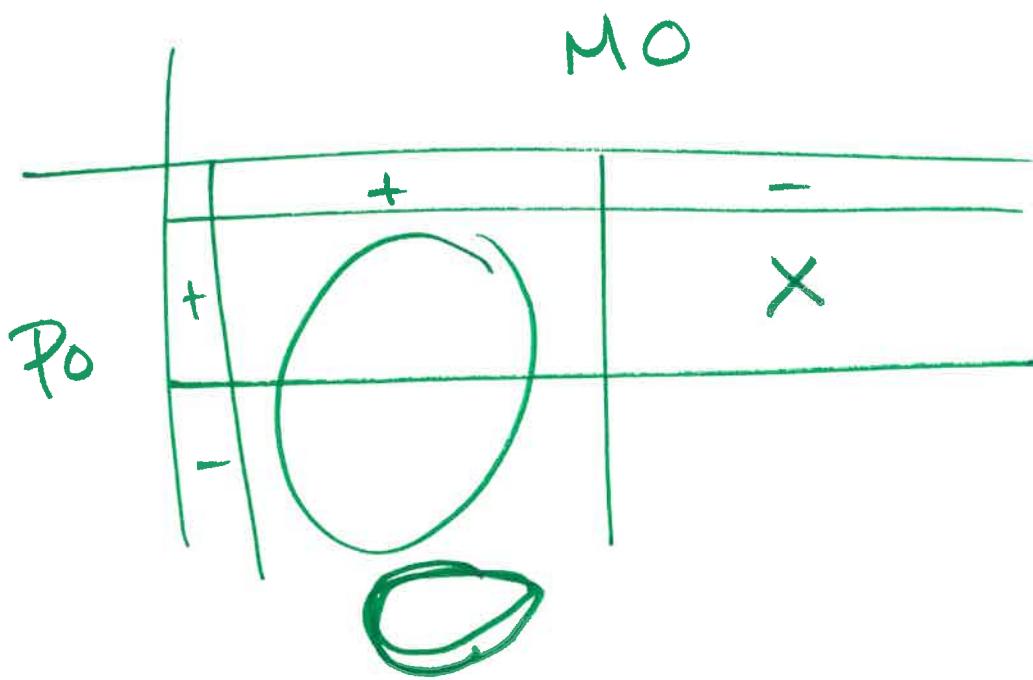
Although the future is still a great mystery to me, I have begun to learn what I do not want to pursue. I have learned that although programming is interesting, it isn't for me. I have also learned the same about biotech and biotech research. In a way, my future is more clouded than ever but I have a better grasp on who I am as I approach these clouds.

This course style completely overwhelmed me at the beginning of the semester. I was so scared of not being able to focus on this course because my other courses were pressing so many deadlines and assignments on me. Luckily, I was able to settle into a rhythm and gain interest in this topic before it completely fell off of my radar. I struggled at times to determine where to go next in my learning but Morgan or my classmates always helped put me back on track. In the future, I would try to teach the basics a little bit more formally to give students a good starting place and then let them continue their learning on their own through application. I spent too much time trying to master HTML and JavaScript rather than trying to applying my knowledge. I learned more through creating the actual website rather than the hours and hours spent on code academy. If I had realized that earlier, my whole group could have benefited by starting on our project sooner.

I think that I deserve an A for this course. Throughout the semester, I have struggled and overcome hardship, either individually or in a group setting. My end goal for this semester was to produce a website and the beginning of an application that could potentially change lives and I feel as if I have achieved that goal. I feel as if I have learned a great deal about both html and JavaScript throughout the semester. As a result, my group was able to compile an application in order for diabetics to track their carb, stress and energy levels daily. Although our group worked collectively on this project, all of our ideas originally went separate ways. As a result, I began to

do my own separate research in order to learn all that I can about diabetes. Our website and future applicant developed as a result of a group effort, even though our final presented design was mainly created by Joe. I attended class regularly, completed the weekly evaluations and truly put a lot of effort into this course. I persevered through challenges and worked to reach the end goal of creating the framework for an application that can be developed in the future. Although a lot of the code I wrote did not directly end up in our final product, I used the knowledge I acquired on my own to help create this application. I may not have mastered all that there is to know about coding or become the best programmer in the class but I have personally progressed so much throughout the semester. I feel as if I have come full circle in self teaching and applying my knowledge, which is why I deserve an A in this course.

Achievement Goal Theory



Before coming into ISAT 252, I did not have many expectations. I did not have any preconceived notions about this class, other than many different people telling me that I was very lucky to have gotten the best teacher for this class. After reading the first email, which explained the course objectives and the project that we would be spending the semester working on, I was extremely excited. I did not realize it would be such a unique class until I read about a new kind of teaching style that would be implemented for this semester. The idea of self-teaching was very interesting to me as I have never heard of this idea before. Computer programming seemed like the appropriate subject to implement an idea like this. I was also nervous at the thought of not having any tests or quizzes. I have never been in a class where my grade was based on a semester long project none-the-less the grade that I have chosen based on what believe I deserve. Overall I was just eager to finally learn more computer science skills, other than what I had learned in high school AP computer science.

I expected the class structure to be the same as previous high school and college classes, which included lectures and reviews. This alternative teaching style really intrigued me and got me excited for the upcoming spring semester.

Coming into class, I set many goals for myself. The first goal was to learn everything that I could about computer programming, particularly code that would help me to develop webpages. I really wanted to learn java script because I had previously learned Java and thought the two code languages would be similar. I also set a goal of what I wanted to do for the project. I had an idea for the app that I thought would be really cool and helpful to JMU students. My idea was to create an app that would help students get home at night, by providing cab numbers and sober driver numbers. My goal was also to meet more friends in the classroom, as I had previously only known a small group in the class before.

Throughout the semester, after beginning my journey into learning how to create an app, I realized that my previously stated goals had changed drastically. I had wanted to learn everything about coding, including learn 4 different kinds of languages. After doing a few code academy tutorials, I realized that one semester of online code classes was not nearly enough time, nor thorough enough for me to become proficient. I ended up learning the things that were important for the construction of the app.

Another goal that changed throughout the semester was the actual idea for my app. At first it seemed like a pretty simple idea that would be very useful. I did not take into account the idea that someone previously could have made this app or a variation of it. After I was informed that a similar app was not only completely developed, but also even available in the app store, I had to reconsider my plans. Once I got together with my teammates, brainstorming new ideas was very easy and ideas flowed all over the place. We finally settled on an

idea to make an app that would allow people to record their daily calorie and fat intake. It was a sort of health meter, but only for JMU students who ate on campus. We were taking on a big task so we decided to start small, and at least display the daily specials and their respective nutrition facts. This is how the previous goal evolved into our finished project. We decided to name our application, "Duke Dog Dish".

Finally, my last goal, in which I wanted to make more friends and build a closer bond with my classmates, held true for the entire semester. This goal did not change or evolve as the semester progressed. Start to finish I tried my best to branch out to new people and keep a friendly attitude despite the early time of day.

I felt successful in many aspects of the class. The first way that I felt that I succeeded was when I made the homepage for our app. No one in my group had started working on the project yet, and I really wanted to finally use the skills and tools I learned on code academy to make something tangible. When I finally saw what I had made, I was so proud, although the code was a little sloppy and was not formatted nearly as well as it should have been, I was so happy to see something there on the screen rather than just learning code. I even created my own logo for our app. I added links and put little clock logos that could be clicked on for the various dining hall hours. To me, the homepage was the official start to the success that would be our app.

Another moment of success for me was when Taner and I worked so hard to get the screen-scraping element of our app to work. It took us weeks to figure out how we were going to get all the much needed nutritional information from the campus dish website into our hands. Lucky, Benton was able to help us by putting the screen scraping on the class website. Although it was still a major challenge to obtain the information, we finally worked everything out and were able to get the daily specials and the respective nutrition facts.

The navigation bar also made me feel a major sense of pride and success. The idea of the navigation bar was in the original plan for the app; it would have a back button and map button. We put that element on the backburner though when we decided to work on the main points of our app. In the last two weeks we were able to put in the footer and add the buttons we wanted. We got a lot of help from Paul who helped us work out all the little bugs and problems we were having. When the bar finally worked, it was such a good feeling to put in the last piece of the puzzle.

Finally, the last goal in which I am proudest is my personally goal to get closer with my classmates. I definitely became closer with Taner who ended up being a very great person to work with. I also became friends with Kyle, who I met on the first day of icebreakers. I met a lot of new people through this semester and I am very proud that I put myself out there and was able to do it.

There is only one thing that I feel that I have failed in this class this semester. Although it is only one, to me it is extremely important. I feel as if I did not learn the basic principles of computer programming. I only really learned the

application of it. I have never taken a self-taught class before so I do not know if I should feel this way. I just feel as if I know the skills I must use to make a website or app, but do not really know the principles behind them. This might not really be a detriment but I am scared it will hinder my ability to code more complex things in the future.

This semester has definitely enlightened me and helped me really hone in one what I would like to do in the future. I really do enjoy computer programming and I would like it to be part of my career. I think that in most fields now it is important to have a basic understanding of computer programming. I think that most professionals so use computer programming in many different industries. Although I do not see myself computer programming as my main occupation when I am in the real world, I could definitely see it having some part. I think that in the distant future I want to work, in someway, with sustainable manufacturing. This would require the computer skills I learned this semester in a big way. This class showed me that I should not be scared to program or learn a new code. It inspired me to chose manufacturing as one of my sectors because I know that this is not the last time that I will use these type of skills...although maybe not every single day. This semester undoubtably abides and exemplifies JMU's mission statement to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives".

This style of course was very interesting and different from all courses I have taken previously. I think that only taking one course, which was a huge adjustment for me, was not enough for me to judge whether I liked it or not. Although I did teach myself a lot, I feel as if a more structured class would have taught me more of the fundamentals of computer programming. Code academy was an awesome resource to have but did not explain the reasons behind each concept. A lecture every week or even two weeks might have tied up some loose ends I had in my head and fill in the blanks when I did not understand. Also, coming in to a class where I had basically no prior knowledge was difficult because I did not know what I did not know so I had no grasp of how I was keeping up with my learning or if what I had learned was the correct information to help me in the future. I would recommend tri-weekly check-ins, rather than the surveys, maybe just little individual meetings in class where we show you where we are in our learning and app development and you advise us in the direction that we should be heading and if we are on the right track.

I believe that I deserve an A in this class. I came into this class with no prior knowledge of webpage or app development and I worked really hard to learn what I could in this subject. I did hours and hours of code academy to get my understanding and skills up. I researched alternative tools and programs that would further improve our app, as well as provide us with more advanced features and tricks. I also worked tirelessly on the code for the app. I played a huge role in the creation and development of the project and I am so proud that it ended up being a major success. The app that my group and I worked on shows how much work we put in and how seriously we took the assignment.

Thomas Vasilopoulos

I cannot deny that I thought very differently before this semester, and that hearsay from other ISAT students had an impact on my decision to take this class. That being said, I make a conscious to approach every situation without assigning prior expectations to my experience. I believe that is how one can maximize any experience, and learn as much as possible. However, learning comes in many forms, and in the case of a college class, does not always adhere to the guidelines of the syllabus. Each class will teach you many lessons, some involve the curriculum, others will not. In my case I learned more from this class outside of the curriculum. I hoped to gain an understanding of programming and hopefully be able to apply what I learned to my life. I can definitely apply what I learned from this class to my life. I learned many lessons from my interactions with Liam and Taka. I attribute almost everything I learned in ISAT 252 to my interactions with them. I do not necessarily feel that Dr. Benton was anymore than an indirect influence on my learning experience. Of course, that was the point of the class, to learn through group work and experimentation. This was a clever approach from the professor. I also feel that the class was designed so that everybody would have a very individualized experience, or at least that each group would have an experience that was unique to them as a unit. In terms of how I was successful in this class, I have little tangible evidence to prove my case. However, I do think I was successful in this class. This course coincided with the foundation of a lot of spiritual growth, and I began to apply what I was learning about the universe to my encounters with people in the class, primarily Liam and Taka. Liam and Taka are both brilliant, and have wonderful personalities. I know they will go far, and be successful in life, in whatever way that may be. With many people, they choose (because of various reasons) not to see the positive aspects of themselves and instead focus on the ugliness inside or outside, and create problems for themselves. This is the case with Liam. He is one of the smartest individuals I have ever met, but he views himself with discontentedness and dissatisfaction. I like to think that I made a very positive impact on Liam this semester by shining a light on all that he is. I saw many fears in him that were preventing him from loving himself and optimizing his potential. This is not to say that I live without fear, for I am not perfect by any means. I simply have a very thorough understanding of my self, and a unique ability to impact those around me through love and compassion. I used these skills to make an impact on Liam, and illuminate all of the good within him, so that he could release any expectations for himself that were blinding him. People often think that when you don't set expectations for yourself that you are lazy, this is not the case. By not setting an expectation and not attempting to compare yourself to everyone around you, we can develop ourselves further than those who choose to focus on what they do not have. Although we are all part of the same universal energy that flows through the veins of the planet and each of us, every person is wonderfully unique and brings a fresh perspective to the table. When we force ourselves to change our ways to be more like somebody else, we are forcing our true selves down into the depths of consciousness. This is a terrible suppressant, and leads to unhappiness and lack of fulfillment. What is important is get out of your own perspective and view life through

somebody else's eyes, and then integrate what you have learned into your own worldview. We must still maintain our own individuality though, for if we lose touch of who we are, we lose touch of the world as a whole. When people choose to express themselves truly, everyone feels more comfortable being who they truly are as well, and the world is filled with love. Anyways, back to the topic. I feel that this class has most assuredly helped me to become an "educated and enlightened citizen who leads a meaningful and productive life" in that every moment I was in ISAT 252, I was engaged in my environment. When we are engaged, we are learning. Prior to 252, I had no programming experience. In this case, everything I learned was brand new and exciting. I feel that my understanding of coding, the Internet, and modern technologies as a whole has been vastly increased. If nothing else, I now have an appropriate understanding of everything I do not know...which is quite a lot! I am thankful that this class has also helped to show me that I do not desire to work with computers in my future. I see the beautiful potential in creating something from scratch, and connecting the world through the endless connectivity of the Internet, but I hope to benefit everyone and myself in a different way. As to the grading policy and general class structure, I have done a fair amount of thinking about these topics over the course of the semester. I am very much in agreement that it is a terrible shame that our society has conditioned us away from self-motivated learning in school. We have so much to learn and we are given such a beautiful opportunity to do so in college, yet students go through the entirety of their experience hoping to get good grades and be marketable to employees. We have somehow standardized a system of quantification of learning, which in my opinion, is silly. I have no alternative solution, other than everyone should study what he or she loves, and not worry about getting a good grade (a number) to signify that they did well. This is a superficial pursuit, because anytime money is a motive, superficiality is inherent. Students pay lots of money, or don't and go into massive debt, in the hopes that they will be able to make a lot of money in the future. The incentive for learning is not the learning itself, but what rewards will come from learning. This is why college is so stressful and unenjoyably for many people, because they are not doing what they want to do, they are doing what they feel society dictates they should do. Our conditioning is so deeply ingrained in all of us, it is a wonder why students go through the week like robots, and only look forward to drinking and doing drugs on the weekends. When a student spends his/her time worrying about getting good grades and getting internships and getting a well-paying job after college, they are not making the most of their time. They become distracted and are blinded by fear. They become so concerned with a pursuit that is not their own, yet they wholeheartedly subscribe to this pursuit. This class is a nice break from the norm in that Dr. Benton takes a step back and removes the societal incentive for taking a course. He incentivizes intrinsic learning, and allows students to work without worrying about their grade at the end of the semester. This in theory is a wonderful tactic, but students (myself included) manage to misinterpret this design as an easy A. Either that, or students feel so pressured to complete a project that they end up stressing themselves out despite the option to pick your own grade. They feel that they can't get an A unless they present something tangible that justifies their grade. This defeats the purpose entirely, as

students put themselves even further into the trap of societal conditioning and taint a very pure idea. This tainted perspective is shared through word of mouth, and eventually, people only take the course because they know Benton is "chill" and you can pick your grade at the end of the semester without having to do any work. I think that this structure works better in theory, than in practice, but that is not the fault of the instructor or any one person in specific. I believe that this structure would work better in an upper level class, where students already have plenty of prior knowledge, and ideas of potential projects they can pursue. In an introductory level class, this idea oftentimes goes over the heads of students. And students who do not know anything about the topic, and have a desire to learn may feel discouraged by the lack of a guide, or somebody that helps them along while they establish the framework for their understanding. What I have deduced is that the grade is completely arbitrary, it does not matter what letter you put on the transcript because it does not do a good job in signifying what each person got out of his or her experience. I could ask for an F or I could ask for an A, or anything in between. The point is that I learned a lesson from the class in self-teaching and intrinsic motivation. Unfortunately we live in a society where grades and superficial indicators of experience reign over all, and to survive and flourish, we must cooperate to a certain extent. It is for this reason, and the reason that I would like to honor my father's wishes (and show respect for him paying for entire 4 years of college) that I will ask for a good grade, which I also think I deserve. What grade specifically, I do not know yet, I will figure that out while we discuss. Thank you, Dr. Benton! ☺

Thomas Herbold

Dr. Morgan Benton

ISAT 252

5/2/2014

End of Semester Narrative

Before class even started, I had an idea of what programming was and have always been amazed how professionals could create these complex programs. And thought it was incredible that all software was written by people, professional or not, could develop such intricate video games and software. But I only knew basics like, the different languages, because of what my mother and other student had told me. Never did I think I could make my own programs that actually worked. To be honest I really thought this class would mostly consist of you teaching us one specific language with lectures and examples.

After the first couple classes when you explain that this class was going to be mostly self-taught I got kind of nervous. I wasn't sure how well I would do on my own trying pick and to teach myself one language. I've always been interested in this area and was hopeful that I could quickly pick up and develop my own program. I mean, I knew I was capable of being successful but without a "structured" class that I am used to, I wasn't positive how well I could do.

I guess my goal for this class was to learn as much as possible in this short time and be able to apply what I had learned to create a working program. And as the class progressed I felt more and more confident in my skills, especially after practicing on code academe for so long. And I think having a partner at the same skill level as me was also beneficial because we could learn from each other and help the other one out if we were stuck. I really felt successful when going through code academe because it started making sense to me. Especially when we actually started working on our project it felt great when our program seemed to be doing what we wanted. Like when linking pages together and getting buttons to work, as simple as that seems now, was a huge confidence booster.

It was when we started trying more complex programming techniques where I began to fall behind. I had a good grasp of the idea of what I wanted to do but putting my ideas into a working app became quite difficult. So I went back to code academe to try learning more advanced coding thinking I would be capable of implementing these techniques. And that's when I hit a wall, sort to speak, I understood what I needed to do but when I tried actually writing the code I would keep getting errors and could not understand why. That's when I decided to take a different approach, I began looking at other peoples work on github and examples online thinking that might be the spark needed to continue improving my skills. And this definitely helped because, being more of a visual learner, seeing my mistakes compared to working code showed me where I was messing up and could improve my code thereafter.

I definitely feel more enlightened and educated by taking this class. Before, I thought programmers were these magical special people who just easily grasped the concept without much effort, but after this class I now know that anyone can be a successful programmer if they practice enough. And the things that can be accomplished by them was something that many people have the ability to do, maybe not as easily as other but everyone has the capacity to learn this "alien" language. Another aspect that made this class more difficult was the fact that we were free to use any programing language we would like. For example, in a class that requires the use of math and equations there is only one way to solve the problem, but with programing, you can pick the language you prefer and you can be successful in most cases. But this can also be a double edged sword, languages can be similar but if you aren't familiar with the different cadences then it can be quite difficult to switch from one language to the next. And that was one of the biggest obstacles I faced in the beginning. Because I started trying to learn python, then I tried JavaScript, and finally, I ended up focusing on HTML. All of this switching probably wasn't the best way to learn how to program but it was helpful so I could find which language I liked the best and I tried to stick with that.

I was a little thrown at the beginning of class because you straight up told us that you weren't going to "teach" the class. And I'm used to this because in most classes, we have a structured timeline of what needs to be learned by a set date. It felt liberating; I now could learn how to code at my own pace, which I liked. At times this made it more difficult because I wasn't sure if I was behind other students or if I was going to be able to finish the project on time. I think it's a good skill for students to learn that in the real world they won't have a person looking over their shoulder everyday checking that they are on the right track. I learned a lot about the pace I need to go at and how to keep track of deadlines. I would have liked a little more direction in the beginning of the course, like if you had periodic check-ins during the first month to see if students were using the best language for their project. But this would be my only critic.

As grades are concerned, I am a little weary about what I should request. I haven't had the easiest semester, not being a great excuse, but I do think I've accomplished the goals set for myself at the start of the semester. I don't like being handed trophies for participation, I like to earn them and satisfaction that gives me to know that I have accomplished what is was I set out to do. This being said I think I deserve at least a B+ but I would feel cheated if I could possibly get an A or A- and didn't try asking for that, especially because I know other students who have done far less than I have and will probably be asking for the same grade. So in short, I would very much appreciate receiving an A or A- for this course, but as it is with most classes, I respect whatever grade you feel I deserve.

I hope I have effectively reciprocated my feelings for this class and would like to thank you for setting us up with a wide range of helpful websites and access to tutors. May the force be with you.

Microcurriculum as a
vehicle to explore possibilities
for majors

ISAT 252 end of semester narrative

By Wesley Bumgarner

Coming into this class I had very high expectations. I was told it might even be life changing. I wasn't super interested in computer programming as a profession later in life, but curious to learn about the art, nonetheless. I wanted to use the style that the class was taught to my advantage and hopefully learn more, in a laid back fashion, and to not let the worries of graded assignments get in the way of my progression in programming skills and knowledge. I had heard great things about you as a professor and as a person that is easy to talk to and come to with problems. Even though I did not really come into that many issues I would still agree with this sentiment. All this said, I was also extremely nervous. I was nervous because I have little technical knowledge with computers. Yes, I probably had just as much knowledge as others in the class, but it is still hard coming into a class that is all about using computers in the quest to solve real-world issues, with basically no idea of how programming worked. To me it was merely a bunch of characters or "code" on the back end that mysteriously turned into pretty things on the front end or user side of things. I was expecting it to be tough to learn and I was right.

My learning goals were quite simple and not very focused on anything in particular. I wanted to gain some valuable and usable knowledge on programming that I could maybe use in the future, whether it is for myself or for my job. I was interested in broadening my terminology and getting hands on experience programming various things, might it be a website, a mobile application, database, or form. I wanted to learn the steps in which programmers go about things and how they combine all the different components of such things into a real life, working system. After the first class period I also realized this class wasn't solely about programming. It was also about helping others and learning important things about your self. The self-evaluations would soon show their importance in the class.

Over the semester my goals definitely changed. I think kind of lost sight of the big picture of learning as much as I could about anything programming related, and seemed to focus more on finishing the final project. Focusing on finishing the project so that I had something to show for the time spent on the course. Which might sound counterproductive, however in the process of working on the project I have definitely learned a lot of useful skills. My goals also included filling out the self-evaluations honestly and striving to complete my goals listed each week. Most goals were academically related, but towards the end my goals were more of broad life goals of being happy, helping others and all things alike.

I went to code academy and went through html/css, JavaScript, PHP tutorials. During those code academy steps I learned a lot cool things, but I learned that if I wasn't actually putting that knowledge into action, that I basically forgot everything about that

particular programming language. Once I had worked on code academy for a while, and played round on the text editor a little bit, the first optional exam was posted. I then worked on this for a couple of weeks. I ran into some issues, got frustrated, and in turn, never completed the exam. I have basically scrapped that code and therefore don't have concrete evidence of that work.

After that, my partner (Mark Adkins) and I started working on our Pep band Scheduling app, the idea we had come up with eat the beginning. We came to be partners because we already knew each other and it was kind of natural to work together on something. Our first idea was a car maintenance mobile app, to remind car owners that their car was in need of servicing and to take it to the shop. We worked on that idea for probably a week or two and then Mark came up with the idea of creating a Pep Band scheduling app. I immediately said yes and we scrapped the other idea. Both Mark and I were in Marching Band together and at the beginning of Pep Band season, we were both in Pep Band. The idea was great because currently and in years past, each individual person in band had to fill out scheduling sheets for what games they could play at well in advance, using paper. Some 200 band members would then fill out the sheet and turn one into the band director and keep one for their own records. Then the director would put this data into excel or something like it, from what I understand, and make roster for each game. This made data collection much longer than it needed to be and also wasted a lot of paper in the process. It was the perfect way to solve an issue and make a useful device for many to use. We then sketched pictures of what the different pages/forms would look like. The biggest hurdle, so to speak, was making a website that would act as a database for the information. This part was basically all done by Mark and it located at kayakinteractive.com. I wasn't sure how to help, and he was also making the website for other projects he is working on, so I left that up to him, and basically just helped him test to make sure function were working on it. After he made the website, we started on the code for the pages/forms. I was finally successful in using my html/css knowledge. Mark also taught me a lot of things, as he already had a good bit of experience programming. He has been a big help in learning code and what certain things do. Then I went on to learn a little bit of php to get the functionality part of the database working. PHP is definitely a tougher language to learn, for me. It's not that easy to figure out what certain things do and when to use them and how exactly to use them.

In terms of failed goals, I think I failed in the sense that I didn't go out and program a bunch of different things. I think it would have helped me learn more about learning if I went out and did a bunch of different small projects on my own. Working on a project with another person doesn't exactly give you the freedom to try a bunch of different code to see what works or not.

This mission statement definitely came true for me in the aspect of enlightenment. While the more educated part was a factor, doing to weekly and biweekly self-evaluations was honestly pretty cool and now I feel more enlightened. The

biggest part that spoke to me were the questions that basically asked you how you used your gifts to help others ad how others used their gifts to help me. Even if I didn't think about it at the time of the survey, I know I had helped someone else and someone had helped me. This relationship between everyday people is an awesome way to think about your role in life and honestly made me a happier person. The joy of helping people is one of the best joys in life. Even knowing that you made a small difference in that person's knowledge is awesome. Whether is be helping someone understand a concept for your general psychology class, or lending a stapler to your classmate in Physics. You are not only making friends, but you are helping better human kind. A more accepting, kinder, and critically thinking world in which others help others is exactly what we need! In the world today, it seems sometimes that everyone can be out to get you, but something so small as these actions could possibly turn someone's whole perspective or view on you and society around. Just reflecting every week on the good things in peoples has made me, I think, have a better attitude towards all different people. I just want people everyone to work together so that we can make this world a better place for all.

In the beginning I was all for this type of course work. Do your own thing, learn on your own, learn about what you want to know, professor if there for support if you need it. When I am out in the real world, this is how it will be. You are on your own for the most part. It's up to you to finish the job, no one to tell you exactly what to do. But as I look back on things, I think that more guidance would have better served me. I am the type of person that loves figuring things out on my own, and I am very independent. If I don't succeed, I'll probably just put off that particular thing, but if I do succeed, I'll get excited and work more on it. In a course that has particular assignments that I have no choice on whether I complete it or not, I will ask for help, but the opposite happened here sometimes. While I would call my learning a success overall and I accomplished enough of my goals, I do think I could have learned a little more if it was a regular style course. I do agree that grades can be a huge distraction and usually don't match up with how much that person actually learned from a course. For example, final exams are basically who can memorize the most information for a short period of time, take the exam, forget that information, and take the next final on their list. And who determines what information is the most important? That is very subjective depending on the person and type of life they will live, career, etc. Overall I don't think I would take another class like this if given the opportunity. It just wasn't for me.

For my final grade I would like you to report an "A" to the registrar. I think I deserve this grade for the effort I put forward in learning about programming and also the personal/psychological progress I have made. Overall I had a good experience with the class and would recommend others to try it out.

Mark Adkins
 Reflection Paper
 ISAT 252 ~ Spring 2014
 5/2/2014

Coming into this class, I honestly didn't know what to expect. I had never taken a programming class before. I didn't know what the expectations of me would be, and what the class would entail. I had some web programming experience so I didn't know how my experience in the field would influence my learning in the class. I've had my previous knowledge about subject help me in a class and hurt me in a class in the past.

haha!
 funny.

Coming into any class, I really just have one goal and expectation of myself when I walk into a classroom and that is to learn something that I would not have learned otherwise. If I continue to learn things, then something good comes out of every situation. Coming into this class specifically, I wanted to expand my knowledge of programming and create something useful. I am really bad about getting off on programming projects on a whim. I have an idea, simple or complicated and I'll start working on it. I had all these ideas for applications, but I didn't have any way to develop and deploy them without re-inventing the wheel every time. I had just been copying and pasting code and databases for the longest time and I never had a place where I can just make a few clicks and just have a new directory to create an application in, and it is already mapped and installed on the server and new database tables are created for the application.

Over the semester, generally my goal of working towards this system stayed the same. Sub-goals (time management, overall trying to not spread myself too thin, etc.) resulted from this one goal. Ultimately, working this project helped me realize how to manage my life better. The project does nothing to help manage my time, but working on it has forced me to prioritize more than ever. These sub-goals did help in improving me as a person. Granted, I am far from perfecting any of these goals, but they have helped.

Like I said, I am far away from mastering any of these goals or projects, but I at least know now what I need to do and how I can work toward it. I found my biggest weakness is time management and with many things, simply being aware is half the battle. I am continuously working to accomplish these goals and to better my skills and myself. I got a desk calendar and a planner to begin mapping out my schedule. I began syncing those physical calendars with a calendar on my computer that syncs live with my phone. This has helped me organize my time and my projects. It allows me to prioritize easier and it keeps me aware of what I need to be doing, and keeps me in a constant state of planning. It has been much easier to organize projects, meetings, classes, et cetera, and that is not something I would have every thought I would learn from one project. I guess I have failed in that it isn't something I have mastered, so I have not fully adopted these practices yet, but it is a process that I feel I am well on the way to accomplishing.

For goals within the class, I really wanted to expand my knowledge of PHP and learn some Perl and more Javascript while I was at it. I think that these are the goals I failed to accomplish the most because I did not even touch Perl this semester. I did however drastically expand my knowledge and what I am capable of doing with PHP and Javascript. I still am not as familiar with Javascript as I would like because I know how much programming on the client side can be beneficial. I can install and implement

Javascript and JQuery applications, but I have yet to build on by myself, which is a goal that I still have for the future. With PHP, I have been able to build several applications from scratch. I know PHP syntax the best of any language and I have been able to blend it in well with HTML and CSS. So in expanding my knowledge and possibilities with PHP, I feel that I have succeeded. I also had a goal of expanding my knowledge of security. Through my knowledge of security that I have gained this past semester, I have made applications so much more secure. I went back and look at scripts that I wrote a few years ago and realized how poorly designed it really was. I guess this shows how far my skills have progressed over the years. A friend of mine once told me if you want to feel smart, look at code you wrote when you were learning.

I feel that I have become more educated as a result of this course. I feel more enlightened about myself, with regards to my weaknesses. I have learned a lot about both programming and about myself as a whole this past semester and for that I am grateful. A lot about what I learned is more about what I want to do in the future. As a result I have dropped one of my majors. I have dropped ISAT as a major and instead I am doing a Computer Science Minor. I don't have enough time in the next four years to do a full major in Computer Science, and Media Arts and Design is what I really enjoy in terms of Interactive Media. I also work in JMU Information Technology with the HelpDesk, this experience has led me to work more with the systems that make JMU and similar organizations function. I have met several people working in Information Technology and Database Administration. These people have been mentors to myself and helped me in much of my work in this class. Getting to know these people have been an invaluable asset to my knowledge of computer programming and real-life applications of programming. As a SMAD major and a CS Minor, I hope to bridge the gap between user interface design and productive programming.

One person in particular, Mike Ripley, has mentored me through endless hacking sessions to figure out a problem simply because we were curious. Mike is a Database Administrator in JMU Information Systems; he is also a JMU graduate. This mentorship and friendship with Mike has helped me realize what I like to do and how I can get better at it. Curiosity is my biggest asset when it comes to programming. The question in my mind always remains "So how does that actually work?" When I do not know how something works, I want to find out and then try to do it myself. We had a 4-hour conversation one time with him teaching me how a web server works, not necessarily just Apache, but how the link between native and web software is made. It got all the way down to how the server level at how the hardware runs and Linux operates the server to get the server software to function properly. I will be working over the summer in Harrisonburg so during spring break I went home and got an old computer that I was not using. I put in a few new hard drives and began running it as a Linux web server. It is not at production level yet, but it is going to be a summer project to work on.

Honestly, I get bored extremely easily so if I am not working on anything or do not have any projects, I need to find something to do. These projects scale from very small 1-2 hour projects, to this server project, which will probably be several months. It will likely be an expansion on what I was working on this semester. I have gradually been diving more and more into databases and database management and it has been a very interesting process. Now I have very few PHP scripts that do not utilize a database at some point. From there, I realized that database integration grow exponentially and it

is very difficult to have just one because they are extremely useful to applications and data storage. They make applications functional. The world of databases is a world that will be very difficult to find the full potential simply because the possibilities are very close to endless.

This course format was definitely different from my past experiences with classes. I was not expecting to just learn things at my own pace, which I did like, but I also would have liked the class to be more structured. It felt like we almost had too much freedom, and with no real assignments in the class, the goals for the class seemed blurry. If I took the class, I would like there to be lectures. Not necessarily all the time, but at least periodically as checkpoints to make sure everyone in the class is on the same page. I think a mixture of lab days and lecture days would be very beneficial for students as they learn programming rather than just releasing everyone and only speaking up if they have questions.

For my grade in the class, I would like to have an A. I feel like I have a solid understanding of programming and what programming is used for. Of course everything in programming is relative and will only be relevant for a short period of time in the syntax, but the concepts remain the same through the changes. I feel like I have a good grasp on this concept and I have shown that I can put this concept and my knowledge to a good and productive use.

Jaymie Krambeck
ISAT 252
May 2, 2014

Exit Interview

Having taken 348 and speaking to you about this class I came in knowing exactly what was expected of me and knowing what I wanted to accomplish in this class. I knew that I was going to continue my work with the project I started last semester, the ISAT game. I knew this would probably be the only (and last) class where I could continue working on this project which I was still really interested in and looking forward to working on. Coming in I knew I wouldn't be able to actually finish the game but setting that as the goal really pushed us to complete as much as possible. Walking in I didn't really have a specific goal other than to form a team with people who would enjoy working on this challenging project as well. My general goals at first were basically to get as much done with the game as possible and to continue learning as much as possible. I planed to have more specific goals once I learned more about what my teammates were interested in doing for the game and what they wanted to learn more about since I already had some experience with game programming and modeling. After talking about what was currently in the game and tasks in other classes and for other projects we developed more concrete goals one was to finish and touch up the 3-D models of ISAT and have them match the building as closely as possible in order to actually have the models printed out using a 3-D printer as part of another project I got involved with and then we decided to integrate SIR into the game for our ISAT 341 project.

I feel this was a very successful semester because the models we have now for ISAT are more professional and finished. Unfortunately we didn't get to work on the HHS building but the work on the ISAT building is awesome and is ready for printing any day now. Reyna also developed much better zombie models however we couldn't animate them in time for them to be put into the game. It was also amazing that we got the SIR model integrated into the game successfully. Research for SIR alone took up a lot of time and then trying to get the model to work with the game took a great deal of effort. However in the end we did get everything working and added a great new component to the game that I didn't think about previously. This was actually one of the trickiest parts of the project because first we had to learn all about SIR and then find a way to represent that information to the player as the game was running. We did manage to find a way to control the number of "enemy" GameObjects that were present in the game so it would match the

infected number generated by the SIR model and we could display the SIR model statistics to the students that updated every 5 seconds (for demo purposes).

Although we did accomplish a lot I still wish we got more done with the other sectors of ISAT. We did focus more on IKM this semester which was very interesting but we didn't get a chance to throw in information or aspects of the other ISAT sectors into the game yet. I hope I can continue work on this after graduation but I honestly might not have enough time. It is possible that this game will never be finished but I learned so much from this experience. Not everything we tried worked but we learned just as much from failed attempts to accomplish a goal as we did from successful attempts.

Of course I feel more educated and enlightened from my work this semester! In my phone interview with Google they were actually interested in this project, just because of how unique it is (some of their employees came from AAA game companies). They wanted to know why I decided to work on this project, if I previous experience with Unity, ect. They seemed very pleased with my answers since I had a clear passion for learning and facing new challenges. I do have a passion for games (playing and development) but I honestly just love challenges in general and problem solving. I want to continue to learn as much as possible and to be challenged. After graduation I can focus more on finding solutions to problems instead of just worrying about passing or failing. Finding solutions involves taking risks and trying new methods but in school the goal for most students is to not fail so we rarely do anything that may damage our grades which really hinders a student's ability to learn since we graduate college not knowing how to deal with failing and always perceiving it as a bad, unacceptable occurrence which we will be punished for when in fact our failures teach us how to be successful in the future.

Having taken ISAT 348 previously I still feel this style of course work is incredible. I also let my computer science professors know during our senior exit interview that I believed we need more courses that let students work on any project that interests them without the fear of failure. In CS we do have a lot of programming assignments and we do learn from them but we can't really use them beyond class and once the assignment is done that's it. Even with the programming assignments the student's goal isn't to learn it's to protect our grades from these devastating assignments! Fear of failure really holds students back and doesn't encourage students to enjoy learning. We fall into a routine of just memorizing information for a brief period of time in order to pass a class instead of truly learning the material presented. We lose

interest and stress out about grades that will mean nothing after graduation, heck some students lose motivation before graduation and start to do the bare minimum if even that. This style of course quickly rekindles the student's interest in learning and encourages students to try things that might fail and to learn from that failure instead of fearing it.

Although speaking of fear of failure...please give me an A =)

Home Safe app

Cameron Stalker
ISAT 252

Personal Narrative

What were your expectations coming into this class?

Coming into this class I didn't really know what to expect. Honestly I thought I would hate sitting in front of a computer typing away at code, and I never thought I would decide to sector in IKM by the end of the year. I came into this class hoping to just take the class and get it over with. I expected to do very poorly in the class and not really gain an appreciation for the computer language. I also expected not to be able to code because it just seemed too hard and too much work. Another expectation I had was that the language was going to be too confusing for me to understand.

What learning goals did you set for yourself?

At the beginning of the semester I set goals of trying to learn the language of HTML, CSS, JavaScript. I also set the goal to try to be open-minded about the material and allow myself to be immersed in the class. My final goal was to be able to code something even the smallest thing all by myself.

How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?

Over the course of the semester my goals evolved completely. Instead of just learning the language I decided to go even farther. I made a goal to try to design an IOS application for a phone. I also decided to not just do it by myself but instead build a team to work on the application.

In what ways did you feel you were successful? Please refer to specific, concrete artifacts that would serve as evidence of your successes.

In this class I feel more than successful in a number of ways. The first way I feel successful is by learning the language. I completed all of the tutorials and steps to learning HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. This was a huge accomplishment for me because in the beginning I didn't think I was going to be able to understand any of the language because I had so much trouble completely little tasks on code academy. Another way I feel that I was successful in this class is using the language learned to build an application for a cellphone. This was a huge success for me because I learned things from building this app that code academy never taught me. For example one thing code academy never taught me was how to make different pages of an application. Another thing that made me feel successful in this class is to feel connected to the material. I now actually enjoy sitting around playing with different code and developing things that I could have never done before. In all this class

made me feel super successful because I never had the outlook on coding like I do now and how much it has changed my feelings about code.

In what areas do you feel you failed to achieve your goals? Please reflect on what you think you've learned from your failures, and what, if any, plans you have to address those issues in the future.

One place that I feel that I failed my goals was in not completely the application to full usability. I build the app completely using HTML and CSS but never got to build the app in a working order using the JavaScript language that I learned using code academy. From this failure I learned that I need stick with things no matter how tough and preserver through things. I also learned that asking for help on things is okay and this is the time for it to be a learning experience and getting help is a good thing. In the future I have many plans to address the issues by never giving up and asking for help when it is needed. I learned from this failure that asking for help is not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength.

JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Do you feel more educated? More enlightened? Less so? How have your activities this semester contributed or detracted from your knowing yourself better and having a better grasp on what you want to do in the near or distant future?

After taking this class I do feel more educated. I walked into this class not knowing a single thing about code or even what it is. I've always played on websites and used apps but never understood how they work and what they do. I know understand how the apps work how they are developed and what they are made of. I never thought that I would understand code but I have learned so much and feel more educated then I ever had. Other classes you learn about things more in-depth you understand things on the surface but not this details. I feel so much more educated because I learned something totally new to me in which I had never been exposed to in my life before. As a person though I learned so much about myself. What I learned about myself is that I need to be more open-minded and not to have preconceived ideas about myself. I now know that I enjoy coding and I enjoy sitting in front of a computer screen and developing something completely from scratch that is all mine. I also learned that in a group setting I am a great leader. I divided up the work, I made sure everyone was on task and when we couldn't do something I took the initiative to try to get help. Over the time in this class I learned more about myself as a person than I did the information in class. This class helped me learn that I would enjoy going into a field where I deal with coding. I also learned that this information I learned in this class is so important for the future. I know now how coding is going to be connected to everything because everything is technology driven. So having an understanding for code and how it works will help me advance in what ever field I choose to be a part of just because of its connection to everything else in the world. This class makes me love my major that much more because in the major you get to see how all the different fields of study connect and your never

limited to the field you studied in college. This class and ISAT gives me great insight into the future. I love the ability of this major to not be held down into anyone field but be given the tools to do anything in the entire world that I feel drawn to do with my life. I cant wait to see what the future holds because these realizations and these classes make me so excited for the future and what path my life will take.

How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do it the same or differently?

This style of course work did great things for me. I never felt pressured about assignments, I never felt overly stressed about the class, and the class helped me to learn about myself. I could have just slacked off and not done anything the whole semester but I wanted to learn something about the material and myself. I learned so much on my own time, which was just so nice for a change. One night I didn't have any plans or work to do so I thought hey maybe I should just mess around and play with code. I ended up coding from 6 pm to 2 in the morning. It wasn't cause I needed something done it was just because I was enjoying what I was doing and didn't feel pressured about anything I was trying to complete. It gave me such a freedom with learning that I loved so much more than any class I had ever taken. I would recommend maybe having one learning tutorial every two weeks maybe. That way the kids can learn awesome things that they may not come across if they were just to build a website or an application.

hack
binge

What grade would you like for me to report to the registrar for you, and why? As per our agreement, please remember that you can ask me to report any grade that you would like and I will honor that request.

I would like to receive an A in the class. I feel I deserve an A because I spent a lot of time on this class and also I learned so much. I learned so much not only with the class but also with myself. I feel that college it shouldn't just be about the grades you receive. Yes I want an A but also I want to learn something about myself. College is more about learning about who you are rather than the information you learn. Yes you learn a lot of information and that is important but the experiences you and the bonds you make are way more important than any class. I feel I learned more about myself than I ever knew and this helped me to learn the material. This has been one of the most influential classes in college for me personally. I feel the effort you put in and the things you learn about your self should determine your grade rather then your test taking ability or how long you crammed the night before.

Joseph Hoang
ISAT 252
Benton
05/06/14

252 Final Analysis

Coming into this 252 class I had expected gain basic knowledge in programming with several different languages. My goals were to be able to program in Javascript and html, gain the ability to complete a basic project by incorporating the two languages together and identify which sectors fit my interests the most. I feel I had successfully gained knowledge of the basics of programming in these two languages. By working on my end of the year project it forced me to gain a basic knowledge of these two languages as well as CSS. The project forced me to learn a good chunk of Java script in which I am 78% done with on codecademy. It also required me to have to learn how to put three different programs together (Javascript, Html, and CSS). I had also used codecademy to learn the basics in doing this, as well as other tutorial websites to be proficient in doing this. This semester has given me a more clear idea of what I would like to do In the near future as well. I was able to decide which sectors I will be doing for the rest of my ISAT career, which are engineering and manufacturing, IKM, and environmental science.

I feel as though I have failed to gain a complete understanding of the languages I worked with. Even though I understand very basic concepts of programming such as, if statements, while loops, for loops, and simple commands in html and CSS, I cannot use these basic building blocks of code to come up with a program that completes complex tasks. I feel as though I failed to understand how to connect the three programs properly to create something more than just subpar. Even though I did not accomplish these goals, I am pretty proud about how much I learned on my own. To effectively accomplish my goals in the future, however I feel as though I need to cut out some of my procrastination induced habits, such as drifting between two different websites. For example sometimes when doing something that I am not fully engaged or find it difficult to be fully engaged in random thoughts will come to mind such as "what is Martin Scorsese's best movie?" which would lead me on a five-minute tangent on what I was doing previously. A solution that I have found works well to fix this problem however is to meditate at least 10 minutes per day, which I have neglected to do recently out of laziness. I believe the root of the problem lies in my organization of time. If I had my tasks organized in a schedule or a calendar, I would not get overwhelmed by work and I would have time to accomplish more without being stressed. Organization would also force me to not procrastinate as often because I would have a better idea of what I should be doing and when.

I feel that I have learned more about myself after taking this class because it was one of the last general isat classes I have had to take, therefore I have a taste of the entire spectrum of sectors offered in ISAT. This in turn has allowed me to have a better grasp on what I would like to do in the future. In the beginning of this class I felt like IKM was going to be my concentration, but as I got further into the concepts of computer science, I was less drawn to the idea of doing it for my concentration. This realization allowed me to really analyze what I want to do in the future. From taking this class I realized the sector that really resonated with me was engineering

and manufacturing. This being said however I found this sector, IKM to be a "universal sector" in that it fits well with every other sector. I want to expand my knowledge of computer science because I believe it will be a useful tool for me in the future. After this semester however, I still feel as though I do not have slightest clue as to what I want to do once I graduate. I have only scratched the surface in my research of jobs applicable to my major. I have neglected to really take time out of my life to think about what I would like to do in terms of a career 5 years from now or what my goals are in that period of time. I have however come to the conclusion that I would like to live in a highly populated city. All of my life I have lived in the suburbs of Richmond and Harrisonburg, I would like to experience an environment with more cultural diversity like New York, Los Angeles, or San Francisco. I would like to travel around the US and other countries to gain a first person understanding of other ways of life and culture unique to their geographic location.

I found this approach of teaching very thought provoking, because I have not experienced a style of teaching like it. I feel this class made me grow in prioritizing my time. In the beginning it was hard to prioritize for this class because the grade incentive was not there in this class and I had several other challenging classes to deal with. As time progressed and I got more adjusted to this semester I realized that the grade incentive should not be a drawing factor on why I should do well in a class. As this paradigm switch occurred, I began working on material in this class more seriously, and I began to feel more accomplished with myself. This style of teaching was more applicable to how life works outside of JMU. No one is going to use grades as an incentive to get you to learn more outside of school; it is all up to ones motivation. This unique style of teaching is not universally applicable to everyone in all situations however. Since other classes are graded, and many people including myself want good grades, many people are going to focus harder on the classes that are graded. This issue could cause people to not want to give this class a chance. Other than this one weakness however this style of teaching is effective. The ideal situation for this style of teaching would be if all other classes used this style of teaching so that the student would work for subjects that they are passionate about, rather than just working for the incentive.

In conclusion this class gave me a better understanding of who I am by forcing me to be highly introspective and observant, as well as forcing me to be completely independent on learning material. I would like to receive an A in this class because I felt I have put the work and created a mindset befitting of this grade. I have evidence to prove that I deserve an A such as having a 78% in Javascript, an 88% on web projects, and an 16% in html and CSS on codecademy. Also I forged every line of code myself on my group's decision-making project. To me however this class is less about coding and more about growing as a person. I have considered and practiced the concepts revolving around living a sustainable, happy life, which this class encourages, therefore I feel like I deserve an A.

Bassel Karadsheh
ISAT 252
May 6, 2014

My expectations coming to this class were that I would get familiar with basic coding and learn about the different programming languages.

I set couple of learning goals this semester which were differentiate between different programming languages, learn how to write a code with PHP programming language, help to fix my dad's website and learn how to build a website by learning HTML and CSS.

I feel I was not successful this semester with most of my classes. For ISAT 252, I failed to do a project or develop an app. However, I was successful in ISAT 491, which Thomas Herbold and I planned out our senior project for next year. Our senior project is going to be designing a solar backpack that have solar cell attached to the backpack, which will allow smartphones and tablet to be charge by using USB port. This was the proudest thing I have ever done in this whole year.

I failed in many areas this semester, I failed to achieved good grades in most of my classes as well as I failed to build a website or work on a project for 252. But in the summer I promised my father to work on his website and my other failures till now I do not know how to address them. I have faced many problems this year, from family, friends, relationships and school work. I started this semester ready to get back my G.P.A above 3.0 like how I had it for the past two years. I was motivated, not distracted and ready to give 100% in every course I was taking this spring. But, I faced many problems my family were going through a rough patch that was a big factor in my failures. Then, I had to end a two-year relationship with my significant other and that had also a major effect on my failures. Hearing voicemails and getting text messages saying how I was the reason for her being miserable and ruining her experience in James Madison University was too much to handle. Lastly, My friends and best friend were not even there for me and they did not care on what I was going through. All my friends depend on me and consider me as big brother. My best friend would always express his feeling and his problems to me since I listen and help him out with them but when it comes to me trying to reach out to him he will never listen then he will interrupt me to tell me about his problems. Plus, he punched in the face and made me bleed because of his girlfriend. Finally, as I mentioned before I started this semester motivated and ready to get A's in all my classes, which did not go as well as I wanted it to be. I studied hard for my classes spent to much hours and I ended up getting 40's and 50's in all my classes. The highest grade I got this semester was 73 in ISAT 321 first test.

I feel more educated and enlightened this semester from all the courses I was taking this semester .I learned that everything I am learning in ISAT applies on most thing that happen around us. For example, ISAT 331Automation in Manufacturing was my favorite class this semester. This class contributed in knowing what I want to do in the near future, which is working in factories especially automobile factories. The professor always talks about stuff that I'm interested about and shows every once a while YouTube clips of different factories and how products are built from scratch using complicated advanced technology. One of my favorites YouTube's clips was the VW-factory in Germany. Also, in ISAT 212, I gained a lot of knowledge and in every material we explored I would just see how it apply in real life application. These two courses gave me better grasp about what I want to do in the near future.

I really think the style of this course is interesting. This course it taught me to be more responsible and fair. The first day of class you said there is no tests or assignment when I heard it, I could not believe that it's true for while. Then, I felt like I had responsibility to learn about programming and put effort in this class because I'm not going to earn 3 credit course without even learning a the basics of programming. The thing I would change is that you just give a brief lecture o general information and history of programming.

If I can get an A in this course I will take it but if you feel I do not deserve it then I will consult you in our meeting and you can tell me what I deserve.



Semester Narrative

Cameron Minor

ISAT 252 Programming and Problem Solving

Spring 2014

Submitted to: Morgan Benton

For the last two and a half years since I have attended college I have sat with Code Academy waiting for me as one of my “favorites” up in my toolbar. Always was it on my to-do list, yet never close enough to the top for me to take the time to properly engage with it. Having made it into the second semester of my junior year without a single bit of experience in coding, I felt now could be the time where I finally cross into such a threshold. The excitement I felt joining this class stemmed from it being something entirely new and unknown to me. The thought of writing programs and creating functions for a computer to follow largely baffled me, for how on earth could the gibberish that, to me, was code create something moving and organic like a video game, or even as seemingly simple as a website? I felt that I was missing a set of knowledge that kept me from understanding the nature of some of the most fundamental aspects of modern life.

Purposeful consideration of what we are interacting with on a day to day basis seems largely a forsaken notion for the majority of the population. We visit thousands of webpages a year without even the slightest regard for understanding of how they are working, created, or managed. We regularly use hundreds of machines programmed to complete tasks that we take for granted with total ignorance as to how that functionality is achieved. I thought, as I chose to take this class, that this could be an opportunity to put *some* of that ignorance to rest. I was forced to recognize that there would be a limit to what I can achieve in only a semesters worth of study into a field whose attainable knowledge stretches far beyond any individuals capability of possessing. And so I mark that I chose to break at least *some* of that ignorance. It would be the presentation of the class dynamic and the decisions I made in direction of my pursuits that would eventually steer me as to what I would actually be learning.

Certainly the way this class is organized is something entirely new to me, although not unwelcomed. I was able to come to the conclusion very early in my schooling that I could not stand the establishment that is the way we are made to learn. While I do not pretend to have a perfect solution for it, school, in my mind, has a tendency to dilute intrinsic motivation for learning while simultaneously sapping creativity in thinking for the more easily managed alternative of objectivizing a world of subjectivity and transposing it into multiple choice exams. The relative stagnation of engagement in modern individuals for self-actualization in academia, that I believe I am seeing, is the result of years being force-fed factoids in a way that dries the enthusiasm of any learner. It is the limitations in our ability to institutionalize positive divergent thought into educational programs that ultimately leads to far too many likeminded individuals. The issue of being taught *what* to think rather than *how* to think is at the forefront of the matter to blame.

This class marked the first opportunity in my school career where I had a guided, yet open, prospect as to what I was going to learn, why, and how; thusly defeating any expectation of a standard classroom lecture setting that we as students have endured since the day we set foot into a school building. Coming into this class I had heard whispers of unorthodoxy in how it was run but the specifics eluded me until I actually joined. I found it intimidating, yet interesting to figure out what I was going to spend my time doing in a class that had no specific requirements. Surely I could have spent the last 4 months becoming fluent in Swahili and met the basic criteria for this class (Which might still be worthy of an A in its own right). I knew about as much Swahili as I did code language at the beginning of this semester anyway. However, given that this was an introduction into programming class it was as good of a time as any to finally get some coding experience under my belt! And so began my journey to actually figure out what I wanted to learn. The best place to start, as recommended in class and where I had intended to for a few years was Code Academy, namely for HTML/CSS. Originally, the plan was to master as much as I could of that material and then move on to JavaScript, most likely because it was the name of the next language I had heard the most about. This was, admittedly, an altogether shoddy reason to choose something to learn but I felt it was fairly logical given its popularity.

I found a good interest in the HTML/CSS workshop provided by Code Academy and spent a lot of my time expanding on the prompts suggested by utilizing the basic tools they provided to approach website design and some animation. With much time, effort and my fair share of help I was able to create, as you have seen some of already, an animated model of the solar system made with an accurate relative orbit timescale between planets. As per my plan I then moved on to JavaScript and tried my hand at the tutorial set provided by Code Academy. I found it interesting at first but my enthusiasm towards it dwindled fairly quickly. I felt that I wanted something that would be a little more relevant to my personal interests involving physical systems given my goal after leaving school is to become a licensed engineer. With that in mind I drifted towards applying my budding understanding of programming to something that might be more tangible than a website or phone application.

This semester I happened to be involved in a large team project as a lab for my telecom sector. We were developing a home energy monitoring system called HEART that could be installed into an individual's home to help with managing their energy usage. I chose and was eventually assigned to work on the "backend" team that was to be predominantly involved with creating a physical sensor to collect the energy data. That data would be delivered to a database where it could be compiled and viewed within a webpage and phone application. (It is my understanding that you were one of the helpful spirits that allowed the frontend team to complete their intended tasks). What surprised me in that project, at roughly the same time as I was slowing my progress in JavaScript, was just how much programming I was going to need to

know to make this sensor work. I simply had no idea that it was going to take multiple, interacting scripts to allow a relatively simple sensor build to communicate with a database with the intent of sharing data. As my partner and I started to look into writing code to achieve these functionalities, I realized how utterly useless I would be in trying to come up with anything when I had no clue where to start; apparently we were supposed to have some knowledge coming into this class... A lot of help that was to know after the fact. With this as my fate, I came up with the idea to form a partnership between these two related classes that I could use to ultimately reach a higher plateau of achievement in both. My interest in studying JavaScript was re-delegated towards learning the Arduino software's manifestation of C or C++ and Python so that it could be applied to my sensor.

I consider it a monumental success that I was able to employ what I was using my time to learn in this class for a long term project throughout the process of learning the material. This was what I believe to be fantastic method of learning that is too often neglected in schools. There have been far too many classes throughout college and high school that are so intent on pushing information that it's as if the notion of its practicality and application has been forgotten. It was, therefore, rewarding to engage with the languages of C and Python in my time throughout this class in a way that only asked that I appreciate what it means to utilize them before I could use that knowledge to reach a more defined goal. I was able to spend my class periods chugging along through JavaScript while at home researching and learning the languages that I could use to program my sensor. As I mentioned before I am pursuing a career in engineering. The nudge towards learning material under my own prerogative in tandem with direct application towards a team project felt like the authentic working experience I have been waiting for. Through many trials and months of development my telecom partner and I were able to create our own scripts for the microprocessor unit (the Arduino) and the computational unit tasked with compiling and redistributing the data wirelessly (my laptop). These included code that allowed for input and conversion of power (V) readings to the more practical kilowatt hour, the primary retrieval and dispensation of that information into a database, as well as intermediary scripts used to test functionality of factors such as wired and wireless communication before further development through means such as pinging. Nestled along with my Code Academy progress, solar system animation, and dabbling in JavaScript creations I did in the last few sessions of class, I have ended this semester quite proud of what I have learned and what I have to show for my time.

That being said my experience did not go without finding potential for improvements. I found myself far more productive in learning my chosen material outside of class rather than in the room. I can largely attribute this to the partnership I formed with Celia from the earlier section. Once we became friends we found ourselves somewhat distracted from what was generally the Code Academy for JavaScript that we were working on. I don't consider what we

did in class a failure per se. I made a new friend through the class work who I'll keep in contact with while learning material along the way, only, I could have used the time more efficiently. I suppose, however, in the scheme of the semester the work I did outside of class far surmounts any misemployed time that may have occurred in the comparatively small amount spent within the classroom.

Such experiences allow me to introspectively assess my preferred learning style given a newly broadened perspective corollary to this class. As I imagine is the result for the majority of students my feelings in regards to the level in which this style worked for me remains mixed. It is difficult to break the habits of learning which most of us have acquired over the course of our education. Certain limiting factors such as abating recognition of the intrinsic value of knowledge serves to hinder the natural inclination towards intellectual actualization. While I attempt to maintain cognizant of these aspects of learning, the temptation of looming complacency haunts the recesses of my inner motivational reserves; disheartening, considering I know myself to be a staunch proponent for the importance of always working to improve one's condition so as to be better fit to improve the condition of others; as Maslow would agree. I am fortunate that the opportunity to immediately apply what I was learning in this class presented itself. It not only reinforced the inherent importance of studying the material as a potential engineer, but provided me means in which to practice it in an exciting context. I certainly did all the necessary work, but I will give some of the credit to the conducive circumstance I found myself in. Which is, in a way, a positive reflection on the ISAT program in that learning opportunities can converge between classes to enhance the overall educational experience.

And so, come the end of the semester, I am brought to form my final regards as to what I will take away from this class as "evidence" of what, if anything I may have achieved per the convention. Grades seem destined to remain a necessary evil required to afford comprehensible, ordered merit to gaining knowledge. Given my experience this semester, and now my requirement to form a submission for what grade I should receive, I find myself with no qualms asking for full marks in this class. I am confident that I have demonstrated the necessary amount of dedication to pursuing an active role in my learning despite the potential for this class to be easy to "get by" in if I were to so choose. Regardless of the class or major you are in I believe you get out what you put in to your education and that not only have I put in an exceptional amount of work towards my pursuits for this class, but that I have more than enough to show for it in my projects.

Initially I went into this class thinking “okay, so I’m gonna do some programming, I don’t know what else to think.” I was neutral to the idea because I knew that programming is an incredibly valuable skill to have in today’s day and age of increased technology and the power of the internet to shape how we do things. So, from the beginning, I knew I was going to be learning a useful skill that would help me succeed. I hadn’t touched programming since my basic computer math course in high school, and frankly, I forgot the majority of the things I learned because it wasn’t valuable to me then. I was also a senior who took the class with friends and we goofed off a lot, but nevertheless, I didn’t take the class very seriously, nor did I care about it very much. So, despite an overall neutral feeling towards taking another required ISAT class to check off the list, I didn’t know what to think about the class. I purposefully took you as my professor after hearing all the buzz about how you had a different approach to teaching and how your class was very laidback, because at the point I was signing up for classes for this semester, I wanted to branch out and experience different teaching styles if I could. After all, college is a journey of learning that is enriched by trying new things and looking at the world from different perspectives, which is something I started to understand a little before this semester, but not to the extent that I understand it now. But more about that new understanding later. I also expected that a Friday morning class before 11am was gonna be rough, because the rugby guys have a habit of drinking Thursday night because we don’t drink on Fridays, the night before games.

My learning goals originally were not very organized. I was blown away by the quality of work that I saw others accomplish in this class, so I got ahead of myself in my mind thinking about what I could accomplish. Then, I hit a wall during the brainstorming process because I was passionate to create SOMETHING, but I didn’t know what that something was quite yet. At first I couldn’t think of an issue I was passionate about that I could feasibly incorporate with programming, but the stars aligned to help move me in the right direction to create a goal-tracking app. Once I had direction and a team, I was all set in my head. The brainstorming process was slow, with no physical product to show early on, but I didn’t become disillusioned because I knew that it was a matter of time. I reset my expectations and changed my goals to a focus on learning the necessary programming languages in order to have a grasp at being successful at creating the app I wanted to make. I chose HTML, CSS, and Javascript and made my active goal pretty simple in the sense that I simply wanted to slowly and steadily learn these languages, how they’re used, and what I can create with them. This allowed me to work at my own pace, so I could put codeacademy on the back-burner when I had an overwhelming period of time where other work piled up. But when things slowed down, there were many Sunday afternoons where I would be on codeacademy for 7+ hours just powering through the modules in order to gain a better understanding of the programming language. It was almost like a game, and I made it relevant to me, so it was interesting. I actually really enjoyed my codeacademy binges enough to the point



where I would show friends I was studying with what I was working on and try to explain it to them. This pattern of slow progress on the team project continued and I continued to learn the languages, but I didn't have anything to apply them to. At first, my partner became busy with another programming project she was working on, so I put our project on hold so I didn't really know where to start on the hard-coding aspect of it. I used this time to continue learning about code and do personal research on programming and I looked at work out there on Github that impressed me and drove me to want to create something. But my lack of success at creating something caused me to become disillusioned, so I half-heartedly gave up on the group project for a few weeks. Once my partner's schedule freed up a little, we started regularly meeting again, and it was clear that we didn't have time to finish the project, so she called it off, saying that I could just do what I wanted with the idea on my own because she had something for herself. I tried to piece together what I had to at least create a starting point so that I could maybe develop it throughout the summer, but starting that stage that late in the semester was really tricky. Near the end of the semester, I was talking with Joe, who showed me his website for his project and he helped me discover the template that he used from Github. I studied the code and tried to implement my own ideas to make this open source template work for my project as something unique, but it was above my head, so I utilized the code in the template to understand more about the languages and the whole project as an example of what a good project looks like. I didn't know the extent of my programming knowledge I would obtain from this class, but I definitely am proud of what I was able to accomplish on my own, and I feel that I consistently held realistic goals that kept me on track without stressing me out.

I feel that my successes and failures shaped each other as my goals changed throughout the course. Mainly my failures were a product of my own inability to prioritize a timely course of action for all of my goals in the class. I also feel that I failed to connect with my project as strongly as others did, because I liked the idea, but I wasn't as passionate about it as I would have liked to be, looking back now. I feel that this led me to put off the physical development when it became difficult to put all the pieces together. I also feel that I failed to connect well with my partner even though I was always open to putting the time and effort in when I could. I felt that she didn't respond well to my vague suggestions of carving out time outside of class at certain times, and mis-matching test schedules made it difficult for us both to always have a lot of focus on the project. I had the desire to create something within my mind, but the pieces never connected, so my motivation to take charge dissipated quickly, causing me to re-evaluate my goals. I couldn't just do nothing because I had already created a growing interest in the subject matter and where it could take me. However, what these failures taught me is that I need to take a more conscious approach to making the dots connect on my own end. Having a partner is great, but when neither of you are really accountable for each other, it's easy to let small things slide, which led to our project falling apart as a team endeavor, essentially. This failure caused me to realize that I need to simply take charge if the project isn't moving forward, as well as the fact that I need to be consciously accountable to myself when depending on others doesn't have the desired outcome.

I know that I can accomplish great things, but sometimes that extra push is needed, even if it comes from within my own self, which is something I learned over the course of the semester. From the standpoint of success, I feel that I accomplished a lot that is personally significant to me. The format of the class taught me to consciously set goals and reflect on myself and how I react with the world around me which I believe has helped me become a more observant, caring, and enriched person. I also feel that I succeeded in truly learning new programming languages that I would like to apply to my own personal projects when I have free time this summer. I actually grew an interest in coding for fun and I've already started saving links and resources to references that will help me continue to grow in my quest to be a better programmer. **This class actually helped me realize that I really enjoy programming and I want to pursue it further.** I've already started considering what programming projects I want to work on this summer when I have free time, so I feel that this class helped me succeed in learning more about myself. I also have a great programming project idea that I hope to elaborate on and possibly have a finished product sometime this calendar year, but I can't predict the future. As for forward momentum from my failures: I simply plan to be more consciously accountable to myself to make sure I get things done in a more timely manner. I sometimes have so many things going on that the pure busy-ness causes me to not prioritize certain things. I believe that conscious reflection (like we did in this class) can help me to reflect and understand what I need to change to be successful. I plan to use this approach early on next semester, because I know I'm going to be very busy, but I want to obtain as much as I can from the educational journey.

Honestly, I feel that this class helped me to discover a lot of things about myself and look at things differently, thereby making me more educated and enlightened. I really dove into the Burning Man material early on, because it really interested me and was very applicable to my educational journey at the time. This semester I started to really expand how I looked at things, and the amount of new perspective I received from exploring the principles of the Burning Man helped me shape my overall approach at how I look at the world, which I really enjoyed. If I gained one piece of knowledge from studying the Burning Mind Project, it was the idea that we are all valuable and everyone is important, relevant, and capable of utilizing their strengths and weaknesses in collaboration with others to create a better world. I started to look at people in a new light and that was something beautiful because I started to truly grasp a sense of unbiased humanity. I looked at people less selfishly and whether or not they served my purposes of being fun to be around and looked more at getting to know the story behind my perceived notion of who that person was. This strengthened my sense of empathy and my ability to have meaningful relationships with people in my life, and generally increased my happiness because I was able to look at the world in a new light. I now find myself much less selfish and much more focused on others and much more likely to strike up conversations with people I may not think of talking to on first glance. This approach actually led me to make some great friendships this semester.]

Personally, I really did enjoy the format of the class. It made the material relevant without introducing unnecessary stress or busywork. Everything done was purposeful, so I really enjoyed that. I will say that this class style did have the ability to enable my lazy side, but I'm past that being a barrier now, because this class taught me to consciously work towards changing that. At the end of the day, it isn't the influence of grades that influences work ethic; it's the conscious decision to put forth the effort to do well to accomplish something that influences work ethic. This class put that reality into perspective for me, because I realized I could be just as lazy in traditional classes and grades didn't seem to be a concern. At the end of the day, it's about how the work made me feel and how I prioritized that experience into my busy schedule. I would do it again in a heartbeat knowing now how I can succeed even further using this class format because it gives the freedom to work at one's own pace and explore the world through a unique lens that isn't dictated by a syllabus and a textbook. Based on the amount of time I spent not only on work relevant to programming, but also based on my own intellectual journey through the experiences of this class and how I invested that time in my life, I feel that it's fair to ask for an A, which I would also like to receive. I feel that I succeeded in this class by not only learning a good deal about programming, but also learning a lot about myself and the world around me, which is just as important from an educational standpoint as reading a textbook.

Also, positivity info helped change perspective.
Joined "Turning In"

Mickey (Mary) Harding

Morgan Benton

ISAT 252 Exit Essay

May 4, 2014

Before spring semester started, I did not know what to expect for ISAT 252. After I filled out my bio prior to the beginning of the semester, I realized it caused me to do some deep reflecting about not only who I am, but who I want to be in the future. Being able to write that down definitely boosted my motivation for the school year. After the first class, I was very excited and in tune with the course objectives. I liked how it stated that self motivation was important, but I mostly was intrigued by how the course tried to show the students that in order to be successful, knowledge is not the only aspect needed. I liked how it was explained that in a learning experience, learning and regurgitating information is not sufficient. Real learning occurs through learning the type of person you are and the type of person you want to be through not only course work but through your relationships with other people. The way that it was said; that everyone has a gift to share with the world really sparked my interest.

Coming into the ISAT major, I was very worried about not being intelligent enough to keep up with my peers. Through experience, I have learned that sometimes it takes me longer to grasp concepts in class, whereas some student inherently understand everything taught. When this class taught something different from the norm, stating that who you are as a person contributes to your success and not only knowledge, it gave me relief and happiness. Because of my fear that I am not as smart as everyone around me, I read articles all the time about how success in the real world is attributed to more than just grades. I feel that I am a pleasant person to be around, and I always try to be kind and thoughtful to every person I come in contact with. I was once told that I have "a way" about me that makes everyone feel comfortable. I'm not sure if that is actually true or not, but I'd like to hope it is. The beginning of this class gave me the reassurance and hope that I do have potential even if I am not able to process information as fast as my peers, or get good grades in certain classes.

gift!

In the beginning of the semester, I decided that I would work to collaborate with my group as much as possible to develop better friendships as a bonus to the project we were working on. Over the course of the semester, I feel like I had forgotten the beginning message that was given on the first day of class. Yes, the weekly self evaluations were somewhat helpful, but my goals to learn over 3 different coding languages proved to be too high of a goal. On top of that, I realized that my self motivation was not enough to devote a large amount of time to learning more languages.

A certain goal that changed throughout the semester was my group's idea for an app. Our group was very excited, and as time went on, we kept changing

our structure that we chose, making it even better in the long run. With the name "Duke Dog Dish," our goal for our app was to make one that would display all of the dining places on campus, the menu along with the calories for each meal, the operating hours for the dining halls, and even a map to show students where each is located. Yes, it was a hefty goal but we were excited.

To start off, I knew nothing about coding so I knew I had to begin at code academy. My first completed goal was that I completed HTML/CSS on code academy, and I was very excited. Finishing the entire lesson made me very very proud and I realized I could start working with our group's project. After Jamie created the logo, the titles, the extra symbols, all on the home page, I set about creating a code that allowed the clock symbols next to each dining hall name to have a popup of the hours of operation when they were clicked. With help from Paul, I worked on that goal for a long time, because I still was not at all in a comfortable place in my knowledge of HTML and CSS. It was still very new to me, which caused me to take a lot of extra time fooling around with codes to see what worked and what didn't. When I thought a certain code would work and it didn't, it would take me large sums of time to figure out the glitch. So by assigning myself this task, it turned out to be a huge learning experience, although I bet for the avid HTML user, this task could have seemed simple. But every mistake I made helped me get one step closer to familiarizing myself with the coding language.

While I was working on that project, I decided to still make progress on code academy. The next language I chose was JavaScript, because I had heard that HTML and Javascript sort of go hand in hand. However, I stopped when the lesson was 20% completed because I had been talking to my peers that knew computer systems and languages much better than I did, and they were raving about Python. My friend told me that it was easy to learn and could also make apps and such. After hearing this, I wanted to try to learn that language instead. So now, I am 30% finished with the Python lesson on Code academy, and I plan to finish it by the end of my summer, and I am looking forward to being proud of myself for that achievement.

Persished beyond semester

Referring back to the app that my group was working on, our group worked separately on our tasks but collaborated when each of us needed help. A couple of weeks out of the semester Jamie and I dedicated to inputting clock symbols into the code that I was working on (because it didn't transfer correctly through email). Through trial and error we finally fixed the glitch in the code, but I was sort of disappointed that so much time was spent on such a minute task. But, in the end, we put it all together and we were immensely proud of our result.

As for the areas where I failed to achieve my goals, I feel that self motivation was not enough for me. Yes, I finished HTML/CSS on code academy and completed my task for the project, but I feel that I don't completely understand the fundamental principles of computer programming like I should. That being said, I am worried that I would not be prepared for a more complicated project in the future.

In accordance to JMU's Mission Statement to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives," I believe that the concept taught in this class is a phenomenal aspect to get across to students. However, I feel that if there was perhaps more structure intended in the coursework, such as deadlines or lessons or activities due, my procrastination may not have suffered as much as it did. In essence, I absolutely love the idea of this course work. I believe it can teach students that they can do whatever they set their minds to do, regardless of their inherent intelligence or whatnot. But I feel like the idea must be reinforced by lessons or activities in class that remind students to work towards learning new things and being a better person as an outcome of it.

For this class, I would recommend that instead of weekly evaluations that have certain questions, we should have journal entries to do each week. Then each student would be able to personalize their goals much more than a survey each week. As for the course overall, I completely recognize the main goal of the style of coursework. However, being that this is a beginners class, I feel like we should perhaps be taught certain fundamentals first before we are set loose to do our own projects and ideas. If this class was a higher level computer programming class, then I am certain that allowing us to create and implement our own projects would be a huge success because most of the students would have a clear idea of the concepts and fundamentals that programming entails. This would allow students to be able to create something that interests them specifically, and I believe that is an important part of learning.

Journal

I believe that I deserve an A in this class. Along with long consecutive hours spent on code academy (it takes a while for me to get "in the zone"), I also created a reference sheet for each lesson I learned so that in the future I would be able to refer back to it. I researched different websites with my group that could be used for our app and talked to numerous of my peers in other classes to get their feedback and opinions on certain programs and their applications. Paul was also an enormous amount of help to me and my group, and I am thankful for that. This class taught me to create my own motivation to learn in ways that would not only benefit me, but keep my interest peaked as well, which is what I believe to be one of the biggest components in successful learning.

Joshua Feshari
ISAT 252
Professor Morgan Benton
05/06/14

End of the Semester Narrative

I've heard the terms hacking and coding before but I had no idea what they actually meant or entailed until taking ISAT 252 this semester. I came into this class knowing the basics of computers essentially typing, Microsoft office, and how to effectively navigate the web. Slowly but surely I have realized the vast capabilities of my computer and was able to expand my knowledge of computers this semester.

Coming into this class I didn't know what to expect especially when hearing that you could pick your own grade. This concept intrigued me along with already having had Professor Morgan Benton for a discussion group my freshman year and led to me signing up and taking ISAT 252 this semester. After coming to the first few classes it became evident what was expected of us as a class and as individuals this semester. The expectation I have coming into any class is that if you work hard and pay attention success is just around the corner. With ISAT 252 you are able to make your own hours, work on a project that interests you, or just simply learn coding on your own, the course works itself around you and not the other way around. Coming into this class I did not have the expectation of having so much freedom and that there was no real curriculum other than learn as much as you possibly can, given the resources provided. I knew that there would be "no grades" but I didn't know we wouldn't have assignments or requirements as part of the course. Another expectation I had was that Professor Benton would be there to assist with any questions my group had throughout the semester and that was absolutely the case. Anytime my group or I ran into trouble with our project Professor Benton was always there to lend a helping hand. Lastly I expected to become more familiar and better at operating my computer/ laptop.

my availability

This semester I wanted to see if coding and computers was going to be an interest and possible career path for me. I came into the class knowing very little about programming and wanted to learn about it, actually try it, and lastly see if it was a good fit for me. Having that in mind I set learning goals that would give me an understanding of the basics of coding and would help me add some code to a project I'd be working on this semester. Being it my first time at programming and having no background knowledge I think those were good learning goals to set and strive to achieve. Throughout the semester I used CodeAcademy to start practicing learning code, and I asked my group member Taylor DeTroye a lot of questions about coding and he was able to help me out a great deal along the way. Over the course of the semester my group and I began working on an app and my learning goals evolved basically around that project. Whether it was writing code, brainstorming ideas, meeting with faculty on campus, or figuring out repositories there was always something new and exciting to learn and a new challenge to face around every

corner while working on this app. My goals never changed throughout the semester, I kept the mindset that I came into the class with but came across and learned some things I didn't expect to learn when starting the class. Overall I believe my learning goals reflect those of a person just beginning to learn programming for their first time and I do feel as if I gave myself a good foundation this semester for what programming is and what the Information Knowledge Management and Telecom Sectors would be like if I were to take them in the future for my sector and/or concentration. The goals I set I knew I could achieve while also gaining a good amount knowledge.

ISAT 252 was a success for me because it showed me what programming was like and I was even able to do some coding and see what computer science is all about. My greatest success and I feel my biggest accomplishment from this class was the actually code I wrote for my group's app. The app project we have been working on all semester is a dining hall app that would give you the opening and closing times and the menu's and specials for each dining services place across the James Madison University Campus. Unfortunately we were not able to workout all the kinks and make it a fully functional app yet but it is almost there. The way the layout of the app is designed is the home screen would list all the dining services places in a vertical list that could be scrolled through up and down. Then next to each dining service place's name would be a little circle icon. The circle icon would then light up green if the dining service's place was open, yellow when they were 30 minutes to close, and red if the place is closed. I used the java coding language to write the code for this portion of the app. I believe it adds a great aesthetic to the app and also is an easy way to quickly check if the place you want to go grab a bite to eat at is open without having to search it on a browsing app.

The area in which I feel I failed this semester is that I could have made more use of the amount of freedom given to me in the class. I feel like I maybe could have worked on another project, done a couple smaller things to have more evidence of my knowledge gained in this class. This all I feel falls under time management and I believe the latter half of this semester I improved a lot in that category and I feel like it will carry on with me into the future, over the summer with my internship and next fall and spring in school. Also I feel as if I failed in using Professor Benton more as a resource. My group had a senior computer science major and whenever I had questions I would ask him for help because he was right there working with me as opposed to seeking guidance from Professor Benton. He has immense knowledge and loads of experience with programming and I feel as if I missed out on gaining some of that from not talking to him more and not going to enough hacking sessions to learn more. I hope to have a class with Professor Benton again in the future and be able to ask more questions and gain more knowledge.

After taking this course I definitely feel more educated and have learned some basics of a valuable skill in programming and coding. This class not only taught me a lot but it was also an enlightening experience because it opened my eyes to the world of programming and gave me a better understanding for

computers and aspects of technology. Working on the app project that I have been with my two other group members for the past semester has helped me a lot in figuring out what I'd want to do with my future. Although programming is very interesting and can be lots of fun when everything is working out for you, I realized it wasn't something I'd want a career path in. Now its not that I hated coding, its just I'm more passionate about other things and feel as if they would suite me better moving forward. This programming class has taught me that programming is a very valuable skill and I hope that I can keep my knowledge of the basics and even expand it over the next few years and be able to take that skill set to a future career. Our society is moving forward with computers so any knowledge about them and how they work is incredibly useful and I'm glad I was able to be introduced to it and will build off of this foundation given to me. I hope that I can keep learning about coding off of CodeAcademy and keep it as a hobby and try and develop my own apps as I learn more because there are always new ideas coming up it just takes one person to make it reality.

The class structure for this course was very laid back and allowed us as students to pick groups and work on what we were interested in. This worked great for my group and I because we were able to work around the very flexible schedule of the class. The only criticism I have is that sometimes a due date would be helpful just so we knew we were making the right progress and moving in the right direction. I know everyone works at their own pace and some groups had all beginners while others had some experienced computer science students, so maybe a monthly check in would have worked. This is just a suggestion because sometimes it felt as if there was no rush to get anything done and it was hard to determine if you were grasping a lot and moving at a good pace or just getting a little here and there. That also could be fixed on the students part, for example I could have laid out a time schedule for the semester and planned to learn things by certain times. Overall though the structure I found was very conducive to learning and group work, and it worked for my group and I in developing our app this semester. I enjoyed the freedom of the class and made the most of the open hours held during the week. It was nice to know you could come in pretty much whenever you wanted to and there was someone there to help you out.

This semester I took a class similar to this one in the style of an open curriculum class with Professor Radziwill and I received an A. I believe I put the same effort into this class and therefore would like the same grade of an A. I came into this class not knowing anything about programming and was able to write code for an app, which I think is incredible because I never thought I'd be able to do something like that and have the skills now to further work on things. This class gave me a solid introduction into programming and taught me the tools and resources to further continue my learning of coding and a better understanding of how computers and programs work. Everyone in the class learned at a different pace and I feel like coming in as a beginner I learned a substantial amount from when I started in the class.

End of Semester Narrative

I remember the day I got your email over winter break. That night, I did everything you asked us to do like create a profile on your website and download Github. That was the first glimpse I got for my classes this semester and it made me excited to get started. Last semester was really inspiring for me because I took GISAT 112 and it changed my life. It made me realize that I wanted to do environmental/energy work with my life. With things going well in school and the new mindset I had, I was ready to take on the challenges of a new semester. I had heard that your class had no homework, tests, or attendance policy and that at the end of the semester we asked for our grade. Of course I wanted to take that over Teate's section to take some weight off my shoulders, but I still had intentions of doing the best I could.

On the first day of class, I was surprised to see how laid back things were. We talked about life, your outlook on school and grades, and the basics of this class. It was really interesting to see another point of view on how a class should be taught from an authority figure, especially one that wasn't obsessing over a grade. I didn't feel pressured to stress out over programming, which I think is an awesome approach to help people do their best work. Being able to always think about practicing code as positive allows it to be a fun activity and something you want to do. I decided I would focus on Java Script and HTML for the semester since I was told they were good introductory languages and I didn't want to get over my head. I figured I would start out on code academy, form a group, and think of a project to work on.

Dylan Morra and I decided to be partners one day in class and we started thinking about ideas for a project. It had been a few weeks and neither of us had gotten that far on code academy, but we were getting antsy and wanted to start implementing what we had learned. Your belief in goals and weekly emails that made us think about our goals helped us come up with a website idea. We originally wanted to make a goal app called "Achieve-a-Mente!" which would allow you to post goals you had based on their urgency and when completed, be rewarded with a virtual margarita for less urgent goals and a tequila shot for more urgent goals. We wanted the narrator to be a Mexican guy in a sombrero that would cheer you on until you were successful. We figured that was a fun little twist on a positive concept.

One day around the time we came up with this idea, I ran into my TA from ISAT 211 last semester. He was helping me with some ISAT 212 homework and asking how my semester was going. I told him about your class and the idea we had for our app. He said he was into coding as an IKM concentration and would be willing to help us put our plan into action. So, Dylan and I met with him throughout the rest of the semester in and outside of class to work on "Achieve-a-Mente!" We chose to settle for a website instead of an app because it was easier. James, who helped us, ended up writing most of the code, but he showed us step by step how to do it. He taught us the loopholes, to use the Internet to our advantage, which was where most of the code came from. He showed us jQuery and Dylan and I were actually able to personalize the appearance of the website ourselves. We made the color scheme yellow, red, and green to go along with the Mexican vibes we were going for. Unfortunately, no Mexican guy in a sombrero, margaritas, or tequila shots made it on to the page, but we were able to create an option for goal urgency.

We didn't get as far as we wanted to, but I'd say it was mostly because Dylan and I had a lot going on this semester. This has definitely been my hardest semester considering I'm taking

ISAT 212, ISAT 252, and my gen-ed English requirement. Those three classes were very demanding, like you insinuated about the first two during the first week of class. I feel like I haven't had any days off this whole semester with the amount of work I've had on top of being in the IHS and Kijiji organization and trying to maintain a social life. I think I've written more lab reports this semester than I have in my entire life, which took up an immense amount of my time. To Dr. Henriksen, apparently 14 hours of blood sweat and tears qualifies for a C...

But on a lighter note, I feel that I was successful because I was finally exposed to coding and got a website running based on our ideas! I had done some coding with R last semester in GISAT 251, but I had never been acquainted with website building tools. When I started this class, I didn't even understand that writing code requires a text editor. It has definitely been an eye opening experience to see the underlying truth about the Internet. I also gained an appreciation for goal setting by hearing your opinions on doing so and having to reflect on my own goals each week. The organization I'm in, Kijiji, even influenced that appreciation. I take part in a small group within Kijiji called JMU Green that focuses on implementing positive environmental practices and my project specifically is to bring a bike share to JMU, like the ones in big cities. So far we have been unsuccessful, but a big message my group leader would teach us was the importance of setting short-term goals. By doing so, you actually get things done without feeling overwhelmed. I have been practicing doing so throughout the semester and I feel that it was really helpful for me. I got a lot of things done without having to cram it all and that decreased my stress level enormously. I have felt more stability in my life this semester than I have throughout college and I think that has a lot to do with it.

The main way I'd say I failed was by not doing as much with our project as I wanted to. Like I described earlier, we had this crazy idea for a goal app. The crazy part never made it into the website, which is pretty disappointing. I think once we had a solid website going after working out kinks, we kind of put it on the back burner. All the work I had this semester seemed to take over my life and I didn't make as much time for this class as I should have. If I could start over, I would make a plan. I would draw out the steps needed to create what I wanted and focus on one step at a time. Not having deadlines taught me that I need to pace myself. My other classes had weekly assignments, which was a very different format than this class. I had to get used to working at my own pace instead of being forced to do things. I think that was good and bad for me in the sense that I wasn't feeling stressed and pressured, but sometimes I need to feel that to get my work done. I think that if every class were like this it would work because I would take everything equally seriously. Instead, I had to take my other classes more seriously because each assignment was going towards my grade and I had to spend my time on that before I worked on this project.

Nonetheless, I do feel more educated and enlightened after this semester with you. Getting a glimpse of coding showed me its importance in today's world, which I think is important to understand. I loved the endless creative opportunities, but I'm not sure I could see myself getting really into it, at least at this time in my life. I'm not the type to sit in front of a screen for hours if I can help it, I'd much rather be doing activities that involve human interaction. I can barely sit long enough to watch a movie; I just get insanely bored. I almost decided to be an IKM concentration, but this realization made me decide to choose Manufacturing instead, which I'm not sure will be much better. However, I am happy I was able to grow an appreciation for coding because it really is an awesome skill to have. I'm grateful to at least have an understanding of the basics of programming because I think that will come in handy for future endeavors.

Besides that, I feel like I really benefited from having a class like this. It has been really cool having a professor that thinks beyond our corrupt society. I love your outlook on the education system and I would say I agree with your beliefs. I feel like I'm cheated out of a true learning experience in college because the main focus tends to be on letter grades instead of actually learning the material. For example, ISAT 212 interests me so much and has definitely helped me realize I'm doing what I'm supposed to, but I hated the class. I hated how unfair the tests felt compared to what we did to prepare for them and it was especially hard watching my grades sink. I feel so discouraged I'm not even sure I'll study for the final because 20 hours of my time only managed to get me a 57 on the last exam. It shouldn't be like that, and although I'm not going to let one professor ruin my dreams, it's still depressing to see myself do poorly in a subject I think I want to focus my life on. I feel that having a different professor would allow me to have done better, and getting better grades would have given me more inspiration to try harder in the class.

I have so much respect for your disbelief in grades and I think it's a great start to a change in society. I've considered being a professor in the future, and I will definitely keep in mind this option if I ever pursue that. I wish more classes had the leniency this one did because I truly feel it would have a positive influence on people's learning. It may be hard to transition at this point because our minds have been molded to this way of life, but I think it would be better in the long run. It's actually sickening that things have become this way in the scheme of things. We're all only around for a short amount of time, shouldn't learning be something we want to do and appreciate instead of a forced chore? Society has made it a competitive and dreadful experience, which saddens me when you think about all the good that could come out of everyone wanting to learn. I guess it could be argued that people choose to come to college, but most of them are only interested in the money that college will bring them as opposed to actually wanting an education.

This class lets you learn if you want, which once again I respect so much! There are a few things I would recommend for the future, though. I know for me, I had no previous experience with coding coming into your class. I wish you had shown us some basics before having us dive right in because I think it would have expedited our learning. I eventually figured out to start with code academy and download sublime, but at first I had no idea where to begin. I know I probably could have asked you for some pointers, but since I had the whole semester I felt like I could take my time. I feel like it may have helped me do more if we had to meet with you a few times this semester to show you our progress. That would still keep the relaxed nature of the course but make people take their projects more seriously. Other than that, I was very happy to not have an attendance policy because some days I just didn't have it in me to attend all 4-5 classes that I usually had on Monday's and Wednesday's. I wish I was responsible and made sure I got enough sleep every night, but that was rarely the case. That extra hour really made a difference, and I would try and make up the class by attending double periods another day.

Anyhow, I would really appreciate it if you would report an A to the registrar for me this semester. I feel like I got a lot out of your class in terms of the basics of coding and an improved outlook on life. I used my resources and got a website running, which I'm proud to have to show for my semester. I never thought I'd make a website using code, maybe through a website generator but not from scratch. I did have a lot of assistance, and I'm really thankful to have peers that are willing to help me prosper in ISAT. Thank you Dr. Benton for helping me have a successful semester and being such an awesome professor. I'm lucky to have had you twice so far and hopefully I'll be able to take one of your classes again! I hope you have a great summer

Deontivation
b/c
of
grades

and hey, keep telling the story about your unexpected visit to one of your student's homes and their bong in the corner. It was quite hilarious. ☺

Felt guilty
for not doing more.
Wants more strict
class.

EXIT INTERVIEW

I had higher expectations of myself and of this class when coming into this semester. I thought I would learn more than I did. Over winter break I had contacted a previous student of yours in order to get a jump-start on the material we would be learning. I started the HTML code academy lessons before coming back to school and I had though I would have an excellent understanding of this material by the end of the semester. When I realized how self-taught this course was I had higher hopes for myself. I have always taken an interest in technology and computers and believed this course would be something I would give a lot of time to. Early on I set goals to complete both the HTML&CSS and JavaScript code academy lessons. From week to week my goals were to get to a certain percentage through or to complete the entire lesson. My goals after the first few weeks did not evolve. There was a week where I convinced myself I was too busy to complete the weeks survey and did not end up doing it. I did not see any repercussions of me failing to complete the surveys aside from a slight amount of guilt. I also did not see much of an upside to completing the surveys. I would sit down and work on those for 15 minutes just to get them done. They had no lasting effects. I generally forgot about the goals I set by the time I finished and hit submit on the survey. After I made the decision to ignore one survey, I started to spiral out of control. I don't believe I completed a single survey, neither the weekly or tri-weekly ones, after the first one I ignored. I did feel bad. I felt as if I was giving up on self-improvement and admitting defeat on things that mattered to me. However, this sense of guilt would only rise in me if I was present in class or ignoring reminder emails to complete surveys.

Not all of this semester was a waste though. I did have mild successes. I completed both the HTML & CSS and the JavaScript code academy lessons without too much difficulty. One of the things I realized from completing those is that they do not give you a full understanding of the material but they do give you enough to be able to search for codes one would need and incorporate them into my own code. For example, the mid-term coding assignment I had no knowledge of how to add text boxes to my code but by googling what I was looking for I was able to find how I was able to add them. Our main project, HomeSafe, had a nice template completed for it using mainly HTML. Cameron completed most of this formatting for the app but it was nothing I felt unable to do. Although it did not work as we wanted to, I still feel successful getting the template of how we want it to operate down. I also wrote a very quick series of HTML pages linked together that eventually got to asking my romantic interest at the time if she would be my girlfriend. These pages were not the most difficult things to complete but to someone who knows nothing about coding I appeared

as if I did a lot. It was a very satisfying feeling once I concluded that project and was able to present it to her.

As far as failures specific to this class go, our app was not functional. I believed it was aesthetically pleasing but had no real function so I would count it as a failure. The biggest failure on my part was not allotting ample time to grasp all the material I feel I should have learned this semester. I did not complete the code academy lessons by the time I had thought I was going to. I did not complete the majority of the surveys that only took about 15 minutes out of my day. I did not always attend class for 3 hours a week (especially the last two weeks). I did not work hard at achieving the goals I had set for myself. Overall I failed to value this class as an actual class. I knew I could do minimal work and still ask for an A in the class and receive it. Had this been something I was more interested in and had intentions of concentrating in I hope that I would have given more value to this class and put more time into it. I think I have a mind that could be good at programming if I had given this the time. Failing does not feel good. In the future I need to learn to focus on goals. One of the biggest reasons I would not achieve or even put forth the effort for some goals is because I would forget I had set those goals. Possibly by writing goals out on a sheet of paper and placing the paper somewhere I will see frequently it will push me to think about my goals more often and hopefully I will then strive to achieve them. I also need to find something else I am passionate about. This class did not captivate my mind so I wasn't as invested in it as I could have and should have been. Hopefully with something that does peak my interest I will be more willing and excited to put forth the effort I need to complete the goals within the realm of that topic.

After taking this class I do feel a little more enlightened. Now in the future I can say "I dabbled with computer programming." Programming doesn't seem like it is straight magic like it used to. I can follow the thought process of how to code. Tell a computer line by line what to do, and if you reference something, you better have told the computer what that reference means. I wouldn't say this class has shown me what I want to do in my life but it has shown me what I do not want to do and I do not want to be a programmer. I think programming is really cool and the things programmers create are astounding, but programming is too tedious for me. A code could be ruined by not having a capital letter somewhere or having a semicolon where it needs to be. I feel more educated than you're average person when it comes to these materials, but after learning a little bit about programming my eyes have been opened to how much I still do not know at all. I feel both more and less enlightened at the same time.

This style course clearly did not work for me. I did not have the self-motivation to learn as much as I could have and complete longer difficult projects. The laid-back attendance policy was something I took advantage of. I really wish I could say that I excelled in this time of environment but I did not. I

guess I am someone who needs stricter guidelines and repercussions of poor performance to put forth the time needed in a course like this. I think this course would have worked better for a higher-level class where the students have some foundation knowledge of how to code. I felt as if I was a kid being thrown into the middle of a pool for the first time and being told to swim to the edge. I could cheat and walk and still save my life or I could look at the kids around me and try to learn by myself how to swim. Had I had maybe a swimming lesson or two where I received brief directions on how to swim maybe I would have tried to use those techniques to reach the edge. Sadly, when it came to this class I chose to walk to the edge where I will receive the grade. Some more guidelines and maybe a lesson or two for the first half of the semester would be very beneficial. These lessons could possibly show previous projects that students in the past (with no prior knowledge of programming) were able to accomplish and the steps they took to complete their projects. At least then we would have a starting point and we would know what would be in the realm of possibilities for this class.

What grade do I want you to report to the registrar? I would like an A for this course. I agree with you that society these days unreasonably value grades more than they should. I do not believe a higher grade necessarily makes a person better, or shows that that person is smarter than their peers, but people still view grades this way. My parents are some of those people. I believe an A on my transcript will look better and make my parents believe I am more successful than a grade of anything lower. An A would look better on my transcript and help boost my semester GPA. I could really use a boost this semester too especially with two other incredibly difficult classes to bring down my GPA. I wish that this class was not paired in the same semester with 212 and 253 because I am sure that had I not had those two classes to consume the majority of my academic time, I would have been more focused and successful in your class.

Cecilia Hansen
May 6, 2014
ISAT 252
Morgan Benton

End of Semester Narrative

- **What were your expectations coming into this class?**

After watching the introductory video for the class, I honestly did not know what to expect. I was excited for the relaxed environment and open nature of the class. I have already learned a little about programming before, so I knew that I could probably handle the class fairly easily. On the other hand, knowing the class focuses on programming did not make me too thrilled... Computer science (particularly coding) is not my strong suit or desired activity. This is the kind of class that, upon signing up for, I just wanted to get out of the way.

- **What learning goals did you set for yourself?**

In the very beginning of the semester, I felt a lot of goals were set for my partner, Nick, and me. We planned to use css, html, and javascript as our coding languages along with several other programs to come up with a final product – most of which I knew nothing about.

Other than “project” skills, I wanted to also learn about myself and develop some other qualities. I wanted to be a good team member, listener, and organizer. I made a timeline for Nick and I to follow with hopes that we could complete our original project idea. I was also thinking that since I was interested in our final project goal, I might find that I appreciate coding a lot more and even start to like it.

- **How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?**

A little farther than halfway through the semester the goals stayed pretty much the same. Nick and I were having trouble meeting to work. I was kind of torn because I didn't want to do a lot of work without him while I was in class and he was absent (or vice-versa), but I also didn't want to get extremely behind.

I ended up moving on and (for other reasons) completed a project with Paul. This project seemed to fit well into this course and I also had an interest in the topic. After that project was done in March, I thought about getting back to Nick so I didn't leave him hanging. We talked and decided to simply go our separate ways.

My goals for the second half of the semester had obviously changed when I decided to move on. To keep it simple, my goal in that project was to analyze and organize the data to be presented in the final product. We created a timeline for that project as well and were required to present our final product to the judges/employees. I tried to keep open communication with Paul, compromise on ideas, and remain patient and motivated.

After that project was done, I checked in with Nick to give him some options and see what he wanted to do; we ended up going our separate ways. As of here on out, I was satisfied with my accomplishments and wanted to use my time to focus on my other classes.

- **In what ways did you feel you were successful? Please refer to specific, concrete artifacts that would serve as evidence of your successes.**

While working with Nick, we actually did accomplish a good amount in terms of planning. We brainstormed a few ideas and designs before settling on specific looks for the pages of the app. As stated before, I created a timeline for us to follow. We both finished many lessons on code academy as well. On GitHub, I created a repository and began to create the home page for the app. I had trouble transferring the template into my own code/files – this is the point where I switched projects.

The second project was very successful. I got familiar using a virtual machine, working with new file types (.csv) and programs (Tableau), was able to observe the work that Paul did (coding the pages of the app, stronger presenting and teamwork skills, and much more. My concrete evidence of this would be the virtual machine and new software on my computer and of course the final project.

- **In what areas do you feel you failed to achieve your goals? Please reflect on what you think you've learned from your failures, and what, if any, plans you have to address those issues in the future.**

I am disappointed in myself that I let go of the original idea with Nick so quickly. Each of our attendance was slacking so progress was held up quite a bit. I could have discussed our attendance and made sure we both were taking the project seriously. I also failed on learning those new coding languages since I didn't get much practice with either project. I did try for the original project and found it almost just as frustrating as when I had taken previous programming classes.

I was able take a lesson out of each of these experiences. 1 – I do not enjoy coding. 2 – I should have confronted both Nick and myself about attendance/motivation instead of allowing myself to give up so easily. 3 – Having a project that you really care about *does* make a difference. I appreciate the opportunity to have explored that. 4 – I was able to (most of the time) express patience throughout my work this semester.

These are things I simply have to keep in mind throughout my future endeavors. ☺

Lastly, I wish I used my free time at the end to explore hacking. ☺ I didn't even think of the idea until the last week of class. That would have been really interesting and I hope I get another chance to do that.

- **JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Do you feel more educated? More enlightened? Less so? How have your activities this semester contributed or detracted from your knowing**

yourself better and having a better grasp on what you want to do in the near or distant future?

I have completely confirmed that I do not enjoy coding. I did however learn that I am able to still understand some of the language or at least pick up on concepts fairly quickly if they are being explained to me. I found working with a virtual machine and Tableau pretty unique and fun. I am good at analyzing and organizing data. All of these traits make me a good “middle man” between hard coding and business. I would like to pursue a position like this for an internship and/or career. To the first two questions above, I would have to say yes. Even my failures provided me with lessons.

• How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do it the same or differently?

I really like the overall style for running this course. I appreciate how students could explore literally whatever they wanted and could be present at very flexible hours. I would recommend two things:

1. Since the task at hand is so open ended and most people literally have no knowledge or experience with computer science, I would give a few lectures or facilitate class discussion at the beginning of the semester to help the students learn from you and each other. I know you did recommend coming up with an idea and/or starting code academy, but it still seemed a bit like I was being thrown into open water.
2. I would also definitely implement check points throughout the semester or a recommended timeline for students to follow to ensure everyone stays on track.

• What grade would you like for me to report to the registrar for you, and why? As per our agreement, please remember that you can ask me to report any grade that you would like and I will honor that request.

A

Taylor DeTroye

252 Personal Reflection

I had no real expectations coming into this class. I'd heard it was a fairly easy introduction to programming class, knew several of my CS peers were taking it, and decided to take it as I needed to boost my GPA – I was on academic suspension for a year, and I couldn't risk dropping below a 2.0 again, otherwise I would have been suspended for two years. I looked up both ISAT 252 professors, and saw that Benton was the more lenient of the two, so I decided to take his class. On the first day, I was initially nervous – the video that had been sent to us seemed strange, and I couldn't really understand the thought process behind it. I also didn't really like what seemed like a psychological profile that I had to fill out initially, and was worried it would affect my grade, so I attempted to give more neutral answers than fully revealing my beliefs. I'd heard of classes like this, but had never taken one. However, upon learning that the class had no attendance policy, no grades, and no tests, I was elated. Here was a class that I would be able to do only work I wanted to do and no more. I also enjoyed talking with Dr. Benton about his political views, and was pleasantly surprised to find that many of them aligned with my own. I always dislike whenever I'm put into a class with a professor who holds radically different views from my own, so this was a breath of fresh air.

I set a couple learning goals for myself this semester – I wanted to teach myself some new languages, write a basic app to have some code samples for job applications, and begin work on a bigger game I would continue work on over the summer. These goals evolved in startling ways. I was able to teach myself Python, Javascript (which admittedly was not too difficult considering it is essentially Java with some additional features) and relearn HTML, a language I learned in high school and promptly forgot. This goal also evolved into helping others; I taught Josh and Kevin the basics of Java and HTML, and they worked with me on creating the app. I did a fair amount of the work on the app, but they were always with me, learning from what I was writing and adding in edits of their own. Through that, I saw they learned quite a bit, both from doing CodeAcademy and what I was able to teach them. My final goal, however, was not quite met – I have the structure for the game I'll be working on, but not much beyond that, as other classes got in the way of creating it. I'm creating a basic turn-based strategy game, and I have the visual implementation done, but still need to work on enemy behaviors and implement the turn system. That will hopefully be done within the first few weeks of summer so I can focus my attention elsewhere, as I'm working with one of my CS professors to develop a visual interface that translates C code into assembly code with Snap and Canvas (not the Blackboard-esque website, but another development tool named the same), and that project is going to take me a while, so much so that I'm setting up an independent study next semester to work on it.

I felt I was successful in multiple ways. Kevin, Josh and I managed to write a functional app that could (with a few tweaks) easily be deployed to help serve the JMU community. I helped several of my peers learn the basics of coding and create their own projects, and I know that if I ever need some reliable people to call on for coding I can

ring them up. Admittedly, they are not the strongest coders, but they are reliable and efficient at doing so, and if I can give them direction, they can usually figure out what to do next on their own. I also learned multiple new ways to create graphical interfaces, and am thinking about implementing a JQueryMobile-based menu for a mobile game I'll be working on over the summer.

I did fail in a few ways, however. I was not as reliable as I should have been about showing up to class, and that was an intersection of my anxiety about other classes and my difficulty with waking up in the morning. We also ran into a few roadblocks when creating the app, the biggest one being that we had no way to test it on actual iOS systems – we could only use the emulator as none of us could afford the \$100 Apple developer fee to put the app on our phones. Finally, I failed to do many of the weekly reflections, and this was because other classwork interfered with my mind and I continually forgot; another one of my classes always has work due on Fridays, and I would frequently remember that class, do the work, and then assume I was done, completely forgetting to do my weekly reflection. I did keep personal week-to-week goals, however, even if I was not doing the reflections, and was able to structure my time efficiently to accomplish almost all of them. Some included getting the app up and running, creating an efficient and sleek-looking interface, and writing the Javascript to generate visuals within the app. Regrettably, the current version on GitHub is broken – a couple weeks back I was updating the interface, and accidentally managed to overwrite the file directory with an older version from my flash drive – wiping out the Javascript that generated the times for each dining facility. I attempted to rewrite it, but I could only work so fast before finals arrived and I was not able to finish it in time for a demo.

I absolutely feel more enlightened after this semester, and this style of course worked perfectly for me. I enjoy learning on my own time and being able to learn however I want to, and the free nature of this class suited me perfectly. Having no deadlines, I was able to work on things as needed, and if I needed to take a day off to finish work for another class, I was able to do that. This sped up my learning immensely – I taught myself Python within the first few weeks of class, simply because I had the time available to do so. Working very closely with Javascript and HTML also helped, as I received a refresher on those languages and was able to develop ways of coding that made my code very efficient and easy to read. My activities this semester have cemented my desire to go into game development after college – having the free time to work on personal projects such as my games allowed me to get a small glimpse of what the development cycle is like, and I really enjoy it. I am still unsure of which company I will be applying to, but I will be using code I developed in this class as samples for the applications.

I do not necessarily feel more educated, but that has to do in a large part with me knowing a fair amount about coding before coming into this class. I certainly feel like I have helped others become educated, as stated before when I helped Kevin and Josh.

If I were to take this course again, I would recommend that you walk students through CodeAcademy in the first few weeks before turning them loose – I know Kevin and Josh had questions for me occasionally that I felt should have been answered in

CodeAcademy, as I believed it to be a basic introduction to coding. Also, occasionally other members of the class would ask me for help, as they knew I am a CS major, and it was often extremely easy questions that they should have known if they had a brief introduction to coding. I would also suggest that you give students ideas on how to create apps if they go that route – I had to ask Paul about how to develop through the Cordova simulator, and even then it took me a week before I could get it up and running because of various requirements I had to meet.

I would like you to report an A to the registrar, as I feel like I met and exceeded the criteria set in this class – I became more self-aware, I helped my community, and I produced code that, while unfinished, has the potential to be an excellent addition to JMU. Granted, I did not do all of the reflections, but I carried the basic process behind them – analyze my mood, figure out how I can improve it, and set short- and long-term goals in order to efficiently finish tasks – into my daily life, and it is now a part of my routine every week to write on my calendar the things I have to accomplish for school as well as the times I'm working at my job in the upcoming week.

When I first registered for this class in the fall, I had a few expectations in regards to the class's difficulty and my individual skills. I expected this class to be quite difficult because I was entering an area of technology that I had never experienced before. Programming was a mystery to me as I had never coded anything in my life. Growing up in a family that rarely used computers did not prepare me for the vast areas of technology that I would face in college. In fact, I was actually nervous entering this course because I thought I would not be able to comprehend the material. Viewing vast codes produced by senior friends and awing its complicity did not help my nerves either before entering the first day of class. Another expectation that I had upon entering this class was that our class would only be working with one coding language. I'm not sure why this was an expectation of mine, but being able to learn various language of my choice promoted freedom and individuality within the class. On the funnier side of expectations, I expected myself to model Mark Zuckerberg coding the next website banking in billions of dollars. Obviously, this expectation was a bit irrational, but that was what I pictured in my mind when I thought of programming. Overall, I had a few expectations but my view on what the course was going to be like was unknown, but I was more than excited to enter it.

There were multiple learning goals that I set for myself at the beginning of this course. The first goal was to successfully complete my first language (Javascript) in *codeacademy*. I had heard from many of my friends in ISAT that were older than me that JavaScript was one of the easier languages in understanding. That being said, I felt that it was an appropriate starting language for my programming career. The second learning goal that I set for myself was to learn my second language (HTML) in *codeacademy*. I chose HTML basically because I wanted another language really wanted to use it for my future project. My last learning goal was to code some kind of project whether it be a website, app, or just about anything that I wished to make.

In regards to my goals evolving throughout the semester, they did not really evolve much. In the beginning of the semester, I only wished to learn one language through *codeacademy* and then move onto my project. This was not the case as I really enjoyed learning Javascript, so I decided that I would be smart to understand another language which is where HTML came in. As this semester came closer and closer to a close, I noticed that I was not finished with learning HTML and my goal of making a project was not achieved yet. This called for a decision by me as to which one I wished to conquer. I decided that to finish up learning HTML and extending my goal of working on a project to the summer. I decided to do this because my view on the class and main goals were to understand the basics behind programming and learning several languages before any projects. Finishing up HTML has left me with a hunger for working on some kind of project in an effort to still complete my last goal that I set for myself this semester. I'm still a little upset with myself at the evolution of this goal throughout the semester, but I plan on sticking to what my original goal was and completing a project over this summer.

Sean McArdle
End of Semester Narrative
ISAT 252 – Section 1

In regards to my success during the semester, I believe that most of it came from learning the foundations of programming. These foundations arrived when I completed JavaScript and HTML through *codacademy*. Coming into this semester without a clue what coding was and not knowing where to start, I felt really happy with my success in understanding a few languages in programming. Completing these languages truly changed my whole look on coding and the difficulty behind it. I know that there are bigger and more difficult components of these languages, but understanding the foundations of them was what I wished to learn when the semester began. Setting these goals and completing them really enhanced my understanding of the technology behind computing programs which I never would have pictured at the beginning of the semester. Overall, meeting these goals and being successful in this class really gave me a respect towards programming and all of the fascinating components that arrive with it.

Looking back at this semester, there were a few areas of failure that continue to bother me. The first one came when I did not have enough time left in the semester to start/complete my project. I was very focused on completing my total understanding of JavaScript and HTML that I began to lose focus on my third goal. Not being able to achieve this goal is upsetting because I will not get the chance of working with people in my class. I've decided that instead of accepting this failure, I will continue to work on a project this summer because I do not wish to leave this class without achieving my last goal. Another reason for this failure was my time management throughout the semester. I focused a lot of my attention towards my other two ISAT classes, 212 and 253, which were a nightmare for me this semester. I put forth a lot of my time towards these classes, which is a reason to why I did not have time to complete a project before the semester ended. In order to avoid these failures in the future, I need to work on my time management and understand that my goals depend on it. Not planning out your days, weeks, and even semesters without some kind of management can lead to unsuccessful outcomes. I plan on improving this management in the future in order to not have a failure like this again. I can't wait to work on this project over the summer, but I'll be sure to manage my time in order to make my project the best it could possibly be.

After completing this course, I feel much more enlightened and educated! Like I said before, I came into this class knowing nothing and I thought the material was going to be almost impossible to understand. Looking back at this semester now, I learned so much about programming and the foundations of JavaScript and HTML. When taking other classes, I learn theories, math problems, vocabulary and the history of the world. This class promotes a different type of learning that is a more hands on experience that I can continue my learning in and make any kind of project that I wish. I can't do that with other classes. I can sit down on my laptop and code any kind of project, app, or website that I desire with this class. Other classes only promote memorization and the hands on lab work can't be done by the student outside of the lab class time. Being able to learn something that can be continued on my own and has the freedom of

Sean McArdle
End of Semester Narrative
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producing anything is truly enlightening. This class has taught me not to be afraid of new areas of life whether it is starting a new career or just entering a programming class like myself. Looking back at my nervous self at the beginning of the semester is kind of surprising because I should have looked forward to learning something brand new in my life. In my future education and life in general, I wish to never say no to new opportunities of education. Being afraid of something can only hold you back in life and I wish to endure as much as I can all the days of my life.

I had no idea what the course work would be like before the semester, but I worked great for me. I treated this class as though it was an online class in an effort to prepare me for my first actual online class this summer at my community college. I worked on this class whenever I could throughout the weeks and it was very convenient to just sit down at my computer and work with coding. Having a more relaxed course like this was very nice and allowed me to appreciate the material more than other classes. I feel rushed in my other classes and don't seem to fully grasp and understanding of the material presented. If I were to take the class again, I would definitely recommend the same course work because it worked great for me and did not give me that stress like almost my other entire classes do. I had a lot of respect for this class because it usually gave me a break from all the stress and difficulties that were arriving from other courses. Being able to sit down at my desk, plug in my headphones, and practice coding was usually my relieve from school work even though I was still learning something brand new in my life. Overall, I loved this course and its structure because it gave me a stress-free environment and the freedom to learn a brand new concept in my life.

Looking back at this semester and deciding on my final grade is difficult, but I believe that I deserve an A in this course for a few reasons. Entering this course, I knew that my concentrations in ISAT were not going to involve programming, but I still wished to achieve the basis knowledge of it. This is where my goals arrived when I stated that I wished to learn several coding languages and complete a project. I completed JavaScript and HTML, but failed to achieve the project. The main reason for not completing this project was time management due to my class in 212 and 253. These are the classes that I plan on continuing my studies in within ISAT, which is why I put more time towards them. However, I did complete the basis understanding of programming which is what I wanted to achieve from the class ever since the beginning. Not completing this project still bothers me though, and I wish to start and complete one over the course of this summer. Overall, I gave myself this grade because I came into this course nervous with very little knowledge about the subject, but I left with an enlightened education of the foundations of programming and a hunger to continue my education in coding. This course provided me the opportunity and freedom to learn something brand new in my life and I conquered the unknown and made myself a more enlightened individual.

Katie Kelly
End of Semester Narrative
ISAT 252
5/3/14

I was very excited to take this class in the beginning of the year. Computer programming is such a widely used and applicable tool that I find it super exciting to learn something that is extremely applicable in the real work. Sometimes I find it hard to get into physics, or other subjects like that because I always ask myself, "when will I actually use this?". I knew nothing about computers before the class, so I had no idea if the subject matter would be something I find hard or something I could pick up easily and enjoy. I heard that you were an extremely laid back teacher so it was nice not worrying about if this class would really adversely effect my GPA. Overall, I was just excited (and a little oblivious) to learn more about programming.

Once the course began, I was still excited but a little lost. I had no idea where to begin. Every decision I made seemed like the biggest decision ever. Even picking a language to learn felt like somehow I was sealing my fate with the programming Gods and I had to be SURE I picked the right one. I had read about all the basic programming skills and the little blurbs about the different languages on the course website but still was anxious. I am just naturally an extremely anxious person so that really doesn't come as much surprise. It wasn't until about a week and a half into the course that someone mentioned that I should use Code Academy. After finding Code Academy, I picked to learn Javascript and after that it was very easy to set learning goals for myself. I would aim to finish about one module and one "application" module (where you make the little games and stuff with the skills you just learned) per week, which usually ended up lasting more like a week and a half. This worked out really well for me because I really liked how Code Academy was set up and I found it to be super fun! By half way through the semester, I was about 50% through all the prescribed learning activities for Javascript and had learned all but 2 basic programming skill mentioned on the course website.

A bit more on Code Academy: like I said, I was very into Code Academy, especially when you got to make the little games at the end. I was super proud of all the little games I made and showed them to practically everyone I saw when I had my laptop on me. I didn't really realize how much more difficult Javascript was than HTML (what my groupmates/other friends were learning at the time) which makes me even more proud of my accomplishments. I specifically remember showing my boyfriend the Rock Paper Scissors game I made. He likes to pick on me, so when I asked him to play, instead of inputting Rock, Paper or Scissors, he put in a different word, but my game still responded that he won/lost because of the way I had it set up. This is when I got really into and went to ask Morgan for help on how to prevent this from happening, which is when I learned that you could incorporate HTML into your program to enhance it. I came back to show it to my boyfriend again, and although he didn't really understand how cool I thought it was, I was still so proud of myself that I out witted him.

Halfway through the semester, my goals became more focused on the app that we were trying to create, Diabetastic. This second part of the course was very frustrating for me because now I had all these skills, I just couldn't figure out how to apply them to the real world. We were so lost on everything that had to do with our app. We spent a lot of time researching into different things we could incorporate into the app, such as data bases (MAMP, MySQL) which we ended up not pursuing. It was frustrating at the time because I felt like we were wasting so much time going down all these wrong avenues. In hindsight, it was a little beneficial because now I know a little more about databases and other things of that nature that I would have never known if we didn't go down that path. But, unfortunately, I felt like we spend so much time to things irrelevant to the project that we make as much progress on the project as we would have liked to make. However, I do feel that we were successful considering how little everyone in my group knew about computers. Our final product for our app, more like two final projects, (one the app template that we presented with all the information and sheets and the other the HTML webpage I made with the graph and input boxes on it) I feel was very impressive for people of our programing level and looks really cool! And, like I stated earlier, I learned about a lot of other things pertaining to computers and programing, such as D3 graphs, HTLM, a bit of CSS, PhoneGap, reactive templates, GitHub (which I am still a little shaky on) a little bit on databases, and how much of programing actually comes from just googling something and changing preexisting code into what you need. I also learned that I need to find out more about my Mac, like where I default save things too, how I organize my Finder, and things like that. This became a real issue when trying to share and upload files to the rest of the group. My Finder really needs some spring-cleaning and a makeover.

One thing I could have done better in is actually understanding the basics of programing and computers a little better. If you asked me to write a function, array, if/else statement, anything like that, I could do it, but I would have a hard time explaining WHY certain things are happening, or what exactly is going on. Overall, I feel like this is a problem with a lot of things ISAT: we focus on such the hands on practical aspect of learning that we don't always understand what we are doing. (I find that I do this a lot in my biotech research lab. If I am asked to perform an experiment it will do it successfully, but then have a hard time explaining what I actually did.) I think this "failure" has a lot to do with the fact that I was clueless about computers/programing in the beginning of the class that I didn't actually know I didn't understand what was going on so I never saw it as an issue until later in the semester. One thing that would have really helped me out is that if this course, for the first half of the semester, was a little more structured. If the whole class spend a week or two in the beginning of the semester going over how computers are set up and how they "think" then that would have helped me out a lot in the development part of the course. Going off that, if we had spend the first part of the semester briefly going over different programming skills, how they can be used, and where we could go/who we could talk to learn more about them would have been extremely helpful. A lot of the time I would have a task that I wanted to do, but not have any idea how to even get started on it or where to look for more *quality* information on it. For example, if we spend a class period talking about loops, the

different kinds, how and when they are used, maybe an example of one in use, and where we could go to learn about more about how to create one that would be helpful. We wouldn't necessarily go over the syntax of how to create one, since that varies from language to language and is something we can find out more on our own. If the course was set up where we had classes like this for maybe the first half of the semester, and then the second half we split into teams to develop our software, I feel like people would feel less lost and more excited to finish creating their product at the end of the semesters.

James Madison University's Mission Statement aims to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives". After this course, I definitely feel more educated and enlightened than I was previously. Like I stated, I knew nothing about this topic going into the class, so producing a semi-working app was definitely a big accomplishment and something I learned a lot from doing. I also learned about how effectively work in a group. I had a great group in the sense that we all were very motivated and wanted to make something out of this experience, but I learned the importance of helping others out and maybe taking a step back to make sure everyone is on the same page. I also can say that I am now very good friends with Joe and Kayla. Joe has been a great friend and actually helped me out outside of class when I needed a boy to be in our dance for Greek Sing, the Greek Life dance competition. He was so helpful in that and my sorority ended up winning 1st place in the competition! Kayla and I work in the same research lab and will now be working on the same research project together next year! It's nuts how people inside you academic life weave into other parts of your life if you let them. As for being more enlightened, I would say that I also accomplished this. I ended up really liking programming and now want to pursue it as a career! Anytime you find something in life that you like, you become more enlightened not only on the subject matter, but on yourself.

Based on my accomplishments in this course, inside and outside the classroom, I would give myself an A. I honestly learned a lot; not only about computers and programming, but also about how approach and solve problems and how to work to get the best team dynamic. I am very excited to take 340 and learn more about the things I didn't quite accomplish this semester. I am already have ideas for new software that I want to make for my sorority*** as well as the boutique that I work at at home that will make life so much easier for so many people! Overall, I am very happy with the progress I have made in this course and am excited to keep learning more about programming and computers.

****Side note on this thought: my sorority has been having a hard time with Google docs. We use Google docs to sign up for different events etc. but for some reason, girls keep accidentally deleting peoples name, signing up for the wrong thing, moving names around etc. The form you had us use to sign up for our exit interviews was so easy to use/hard to mess that I think this could solve our Google doc issue! I want to propose to executive board to maybe have Mickey and I write program over the summer that we can use next year to avoid all the confusion we have had this year.

So don't be surprised if I come back from summer with questions on how you made that program! I saw it is in PHP which is a langue I know nothing about and will have to look into.

Maggie MacLeish

ISAT 252 Section 001

Dr. Benton

Throughout the 2013-2014 school year I have worked to become a better student, and by better student I do not mean by getting better grades. I have worked to enjoy learning and the opportunities available to me through James Madison University. ISAT 252 has helped me to achieve these goals, by having me rely on my internal motivation to learn and accomplish something.

I had heard about the class structure from your previous students, but was uncertain as of what to expect. Also having taken your section of ISAT131, I did expect to learn through questions and answers, rather than lecture, while learning about the course topic and ourselves. I assumed I would learn the basics of programming. However, I did not really even know what programming was starting in January 2014.

Not knowing what to expect from a class, or really anything about programming, made it difficult to have a lot of goals set going into the semesters. I also did not understand the difficulty and algorithms that go into creating a function that I use so easily. I have to admit, I thought the process of creating a webpage would be a lot easier than it is. As the semester rolled on I got an idea of what type of work is expected for "newbies" and found a project/goal that was interesting and feasible. Throughout the semester Scott Helburn and I worked to create a page that would hold ISAT alumni information for the purpose of networking for current ISAT students. This project was, in the most part, successful; we used a database to store information and connected an alumni information form to the webpage.

I learned a lot from this course, but most of them were life skills. The main skill I learned from this course was just getting out of bed, not because I would be judged if I did not, but because I had a duty to myself to learn the course material. I did also learn some programming including most of HTML and CSS and the very basics of PHP and using a database. While working on the project some of the other things I improved on included how to convince others of something you think is a good idea (alum webpage) and how to communicate

with group members.

There were also parts of the class that I think I could have put more time energy into. I do not want to say I failed because failed means that it is over, and learning is never over. I did feel that I did not learn quite as much coding language as I would have liked myself too. I did not learn any java script and barely any PHP. I was also somewhat disappointed because I worked pretty hard to make our project more astatic, however, most of the work was not used in the final project due to the use of the PHP most of the HTML and CSS was just simplified for time's sake.

I spoke to you approximately one year ago about how I felt "burnt out" over school and the idea of taking a semester/year off. I obviously did not take a time off, but I have defiantly changed my outlook on school. A year ago during finals week, I was a wreck, a walking time bomb. I am proud to say I am not that person. I made my first C+ as a final ever and was not even sad. I made the decision going into my fall semester of 2013 that I wanted to enjoy life, even if that meant that I would not make all A's. I changed my attitude and outlook on school. I still believe in trying my best, however, my best does not require me to sacrifice my sanity or my happiness.

Fall 2013 was the first semester that I really got into my ISAT major courses. I took environment, biotechnology, and manufacturing sectors and loved them. The courses were interesting and filled with practical information. The course work fro this semester helped me with keeping a low stress load and a positive attitude towards school. This semester has only improved this thought process further. I would like to believe that it was my decision to be less stressed about school that created my appreciation for classes. However, I know that without this amazing course load I would have never stuck to my vow.

To get back to your question, I feel more educated and more enlightened everyday. I am grateful for so many of the ISAT classes and professors. I am excited to learn for the first time, in a long time. I am very competitive, but your class has inspired me to do work for me. I am proud to have learning objectives set by myself, not a syllabus. This thought process has only strengthened my enjoyment of the ISAT program.

However, I did mention that I could have learned more by putting in more

time and energy. This semester was not easy, and sometimes this class was put on the backburner. A lot of this was due to the stress of finding a summer job that would make me more hirable during my senior year. After a lot of applications were sent out, I do have my dream summer internship (Nestle Operations Management Trainee Internship). This internship will help me to achieve my long term goals of working as a manager in a biological manufacturing setting.

Overall, I liked the style of coursework, but it was difficult when having other classes that I was graded in. I wanted to do this work for me, but doing work for a grade normally had a higher priority. I did struggle with the no teaching aspect of your class. I do better with some direction, not necessarily a lot, but a starting point would have been nice. The other aspect of the class I had difficulty adjusting to was finding a project and then finding other people that wanted to do it with me. I was not expecting to have to pitch my idea to several people and have several people turn it down. When I did find a group, staying in contact with them was very difficult because we all went to class a different time. We actually ended up losing a member of our group due to lack of communication. I did feel obligated to be the initiate of the communication because it was my idea for the project. This job was very difficult for me I think because of the lack of deliverables and deadlines.

With all of this said I would like you to report an A grade to the registrar. [I find it very interesting that you ask what grade would we like, not grade we think we deserve.] Whether I like it or not, I am still extremely competitive and view my GPA as this all-consuming number. I also did come up with a pretty awesome idea, and helped deliver on that idea. I do not know which of these reasons is why I would like you to report an A. I would like to think the latter of the two options; however, I really want a 4.0 this semester. My current goal is to into next semester with an even better outlook on learning, which will be difficult because I have to take several unwanted biology courses.

Thank you for a great semester, and a great learning experience.

What were your expectations coming into this class?

I didn't have any expectations coming into this class, other than I thought it would be similar to ISAT 340 I took with you the previous semester. I guess in a sense I expected it to be a little less demanding in terms of programming but I had an idea since taking your class last semester. I always enjoy coming to the 340 class where I am free to learn the things I want to learn about programming and where my grade does not depend on my ability to take an exam because I am just not a great test taker when there is a time limit imposed. I actually do a lot better on finals when there is more time during the exam for some reason where I am not pressured as much to finish within a ridiculous 50 minute time period. This class was a little more relaxed with fewer meetings than 340 and didn't require a presentation which was nice for the students who wanted to discover for themselves if they liked programming or not. There aren't many teachers that think from a student's perspective like you do which makes this class one of my favorite because the things I learn from a "happy" environment are 100 times more useful than from an academic perspective.

What learning goals did you set for yourself?

Honestly, I didn't fill out one survey this semester. Last semester I did it and I came to realize that goals were very important so I could see and what I wanted to do for the week. But after it was submitted, sometimes I wouldn't even remember which goals I set except for the most important ones, like study, code, workout, and do things to be more involved. So this semester I did things a little differently. I used the weekend around the beginning of the next month to browse the internet, look at quotes from people, watch TED talks (I do this quite often for some reason), YouTube videos of inspirational people, and make my own set of goals for what I wanted to do to better myself on a monthly calendar after writing down all the deadlines. This allowed me to see and remind myself to keep at the goal because I saw a TED talk about how habits don't change overnight or even over the course of a week, they take about a month to break and you have to keep at it or you will end up going back to the same old habits. I created some goals specifically for this class such as learning how to make Android applications, increase my knowledge in database, and get an internship this summer.

How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?

As the semester progressed, I realized the my goals became more diverse in terms of things I wanted to achieve. I noticed I began doing a very strange thing every morning. I open up the Daily Horoscope App and read it so I know what I need to do for the day but I never took it to heart or anything like that. It tells me things that could happen like a situation will arise where things where I will get angry so I need to stay calm or some past mistake has caused a lot of work to drop on me and I will be overwhelmed so I can curse the world or keep a clear mind and things will get better. I guess it just makes you feel better about knowing that you're going to have to deal with a stressful situation. I wouldn't go out seeking to have a problem or anything. If a situation arises I would just remind myself to think rationally, if not, I'd just move on. From previous monthly goals, I think GREATEST thing I learned from goal setting was that I

goals don't have to be done one at a time. Rather you can find a common goal that completes all the other goals you set out to complete and put yourself in a position where there is absolutely no way you would fail to complete the goal that encapsulates the other goals. You end up in a win-win situation.

In what ways did you feel you were successful? Please refer to specific, concrete artifacts that would serve as evidence of your successes.

For this semester, I made quite a few goals such as make more friends, go to office hours more often, do hw on time, stop procrastinating, do better academically, etc. Kind of overwhelming if you take it one step at a time but if you find a particular goal that compacts these other goals, it doesn't seem so bad. There was one goal that worked particularly well for a person like myself who prefer to stay in my room and work on my awesome desktop with 3 screens. The goal was to stay on campus until 5 (read somewhere that I should at least stay on campus until at least 5 because if professors work from 9am to 5pm, then so should you; so this became my minimum for when I can leave). Sounds easy, but was a lot harder than I thought so it took me maybe a little over 5 weeks to make this into a habit. At first I failed miserably at it so I would force myself into a position where I would have to stay on campus. I would ask people to study with me, work out with me, eat with me, sit down at tables where I saw a friend doing homework, and just about anything to stay on campus. From there I realized that I would be a lot more productive throughout my day, I would ACTUALLY go to office hours, I would run into friends more frequently, and from friends you make other friends. I was even able to find a capstone group that needed me to make an Android Application for the senior project, and even through El-Tawaab is my advisor and can be a little more demanding, I don't even mind because I really want to learn how to create an awesome mobile application. We even had to begin developing our assigned part and I'm feeling pretty good about it. Academically I think I did a lot better but I was also more productive in other work such as applying for jobs and I managed to score an internship this summer! I'm almost 100% positive that if I kept with my habit of staying in my room to learn everything or procrastinate, I would not have even tried to apply and probably would have convinced myself taking summer classes is better.

I also feel that as a person I have become better able to look at things in a broader sense. My group for this 252 class knew that I had a better understanding of programming than they did, and by a lot. At first I told them a lot of things that I could do and they were kind of like "alright sweet, we have a guy who knows how to code." So they would just keep telling me of things they wanted their project to have and when I can do it by rather than creating it on their own. I truly was hammered with work so best I could do was give them some useful resources I used when starting out and then one member decided to take up the project on his own and complete it. I probably could have done it in a weekend since they weren't trying to do anything fancy with it; I don't even think they know their limits as to how much coding they could actually have done if they started earlier of thinking I would do it all.

In what areas do you feel you failed to achieve your goals? Please reflect on what you think you've learned from your failures, and what, if any, plans you have to address those issues in the future.

At the end of last semester, I was motivated to code, and I still am but this semester I had to take 17 credits worth of ISAT classes only and I overestimated my ability as to how much coding I would actually complete. When I wanted to code, I would have other work that needed to take priority. Overall, I did better with myself in terms of work ethics but for coding I didn't do that great. I really do wish your plan and Dr. Radziwill's plan to take us to San Francisco or California for our senior year will get approved soon for future students. That way if they're serious about learning how to program, they can actually see their knowledge of coding go to good use and be more motivated. I chose 3 sectors for ISAT because I had to, not because I wanted to take environment or biotech classes. The only one I was really interested in was IKM and I still am! Which is why I was really happy when I found a capstone project that will let focus on my interest.

JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Do you feel more educated? More enlightened? Less so? How have your activities this semester contributed or detracted from your knowing yourself better and having a better grasp on what you want to do in the near or distant future?

I absolutely feel that I have been more educated and enlightened! I used to think that everything was out of my control, even since I was a kid. Thought that maybe I was just unlucky because I really have been through a lot pretty awful things in the past. I don't want to go into too much detail but as a kid I had to deal with being fat and picked on (later the guy that bullied me became my best friend) and when I was in Vietnam for the first time around the age of 11 I saw three guys who just got out from getting a haircut in a place that had some major construction going on. All three were on the back of a scooter and tried to cut off one of those gigantic industrial Caterpillar(CAT) trucks that wasn't going very fast but fell over right in front of it and you can guess what happened to the guy sitting in the back. I saw the CAT truck run right over his skull no more than 10 feet away from me (I was the closest one that witnessed it). From there hundreds of other things happened, such as dropping out of Engineering as you already know, and I kind of just accepted that either things go really well for me or they absolutely suck but the part that sucks is always exponentially greater than the things that didn't. But I never stopped trying and that's probably what I am most grateful for. This was one of the tougher semester though I've had to do a lot of work, I actually feel good about that things I was able to accomplish, which is strange because I am always hating myself for not doing better. Of course I could have always done better looking back at this semester but as a whole, I feel like a better person.

How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do it the same or differently?

I enjoy it a lot more than any other class because it allows me to learn the things I want to learn rather than being forced to learn, which works out great since this is what I like to do. To be honest, I just wish it wasn't at 9am. I am not a morning person and most productive in the afternoons. For lectures and things, I don't mind having to go to class because I just have to write notes, listen, and such but for this class, since it is self-motivating, I wish it was in the time I am most productive. This is the one goal I failed at. I heard that people make themselves become a morning person but it hasn't happened for me yet. The moment I get out of class, I pass out on the bean bags of Festival. Since I have a job this summer, maybe I being forced to wake up without having to do homework will let my body get used to it.

What grade would you like for me to report to the registrar for you, and why? As per our agreement, please remember that you can ask me to report any grade that you would like and I will honor that request.

I would like to receive an A because I really did work hard this semester and managed to complete a majority of my goals. I made more friends, became more productive, did better in my classes (I'm pretty sure) while taking 17 credits worth of ISAT classes, got an internship, and overall I feel like a better person. At the end of last semester, I said that I was happier; I wasn't lying and I think my actions have reflected in the results with things only getting better from here. Thank you for everything!

Samuel Graham Howard III

ISAT 252 Exit Interview

What were your expectations coming into this class?

My expectations coming into this class were pretty unclear at the time. I expected to do a semester project of sorts but I wasn't really sure how it would be structured. I expected to have more lectures but the lack of them proved not to be a problem at all. It was interesting to see how at the beginning of the semester I didn't know what to expect and by the end I had learned so much more than I thought.

What learning goals did you set for yourself?

I feel like I expected a lot from myself. I set some high goals, one of which was to use languages that I wasn't good at. Another goal I set myself was to use a language that I had never used before. The last learning goal was to play with all of these new technologies so that I could better myself as a programmer.

How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?

My goals changed significantly throughout the semester. I went from mostly focusing on learning the new technologies for myself, to basically teaching my partner them. In the end this helped me greatly because not only was I able to learn but I was also able to help him learn more about programming.

In what ways did you feel you were successful? Please refer to specific, concrete artifacts that would serve as evidence of your successes.

One way in which I feel I was successful is learning how to better create a database. Installing all the technologies myself and actually being to fiddle around with things gave me great new insights onto ways that I could help my app become better overall. Another way that I feel I was successful was in actually creating my application. I used so many new technologies that I had never used before. One of these for instance was PHP. I had seen it before but never had the chance to actually use the language. So using it as a background to integrate with the database was very interesting. Another way that I feel I was successful was learning how to use XAMPP and the Intel XDK. By using XAMPP again I was able to further my skills and better test my

application. And using the Intel XDK gave me an option to actually view the code that I had created.

In what areas do you feel you failed to achieve your goals? Please reflect on what you think you've learned from your failures, and what, if any, plans you have to address those issues in the future.

I think that one way in which I have failed to achieve my goals was the fact that I wasn't able to fully complete the application during the semester. While it is a long and intensive project, I feel that one way I could have sped up the process and made it better would have been to plan out the classes I wanted to create more. In the future I plan to spend a lot more time planning so that when I do go to actually implement the code it will be easy to do.

JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Do you feel more educated? More enlightened? Less so? How have your activities this semester contributed or detracted from your knowing yourself better and having a better grasp on what you want to do in the near or distant future?

I feel after this semester I feel as a person both more educated and more enlightened. Being a senior has really changed the way I look at my studies. I have found over the course of this semester and this class that I have focused on things that I like doing more. This class though less structured I feel gave me more information about who I am and what I like to do. It gave me new insights and allowed me to create a project that would let me try new things to hone my skills.

How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do it the same or differently?

I think this style of course worked perfectly for me. I would definitely recommend that you conduct it the same way in the future. Some students may see this as an awkward beginning to learning to code but I feel as if in the end they will get more out of this class than they would standing in front of them and lecturing. This style of course makes them want to learn more as they go rather than having to suffer through it.

What grade would you like for me to report to the registrar for you, and why? As per our agreement, please remember that you can ask me to report any grade that you would like and I will honor that request.

I would like you to report an A as my grade to the registrar. I believe I deserve an A in the class because I feel I was able to accomplish a lot of my learning goals. Not only that, but the way I approached the project was different than I normally would approach a programming assignment. I chose to make it harder on myself rather than take the easy way out and make a simple web page. I feel that I deserve an A because I was able to learn new technologies that will benefit my career.

Kevin Coleman

Exit Interview Write-Up

ISAT 252 Programming

Dr. Benton

05/06/14

My goals for the semester for both my academic and extracurricular activities were to grow as a student and as an individual, such that I was a better person for having had the experience. The main thrust of my semester goals dealt with delving into territories that had been, up to this point, unexplored in my life. This semester I took both Energy Fundamentals and Instrumentation and Measurement with Drs. Altaii and Henriksen respectively, both of which are tough in their own right, and combined together along with Programming, was bound to be a lot to handle, but I was up for the challenge. The more finite and quantifiable goals that I set for myself over the course of the semester were more specific to actual assignments and deadlines within the course framework and some of those included, working on and finishing an app that accurately displayed dining service information and up to date hours for each location on campus, which we, as group did, thanks of course go to Josh and Taylor for our collaborative work on finishing the app. Another more discrete goal was to present a lab notebook for my Biotech lab and another for my Instrumentation lab course components, which contained documentation for all of the labs completed over the semester, both of which I completed with precision and in a timely manner. These two goals tie into the general goal I have been striving towards in both my academic and personal life, which is to be a dependable and organized person who always meets deadlines and is proactive in completing the time sensitive things that are expected of me. If I manage to keep an active calendar with dates of deadlines that I check frequently, I can successfully accomplish everything that is on my plate, instead of just trying to remember all of the things I need to do, which is how I operated during my first two years here.

I have been at JMU now for 4 years and I am only a little over halfway through my ISAT degree, and will have to really squeeze the next two years of school into a year and a half so I can graduate “on time” and start my life away from college. The first two years of school started with a major that was undeclared and I was not quite sure where to go from there, since I had done well in math and science and political science I knew that both of those topics were of interest to me, but the goal here was to figure out what kind of job I would want to go to every morning and one where I enjoy what I do. The decision to declare my major as Statistics may have been rushed and turned out to be misguided because I fell behind on the material and could never recover. I ended up withdrawing after I got two D’s in Major classes and decided that a break was what I needed to get back on track. Over the course of the next two years I worked various jobs, like landscaping and then at Best Buy and Fresh Market, I worked nearly full time at both places for a good portion of my time off from school. My most rewarding and fruitful adventure that occurred during my time off was my employment at Mary Immaculate Hospital in the OR as an Operating Room assistant, where I really got to explore my love of helping and healing people, this job had plenty of negative aspects to it, like all jobs are bound to have, but I turned it into a fun and fulfilling job that really showcased my talents, and eventually became a

place where I could flourish as an individual and as a member of a thriving community. During my time working at the hospital I also took a few courses at the local community college, in order to keep my mind sharp and not backslide while I was out of school. Once I had shown that I was serious about my education I decided to return to school as an ISAT Major, because it highlighted my strength and passion for math and science, with a Political Science Minor because I had taken a course I really liked at community college that struck a chord with me. This time off really helped me gain perspective in terms of the purpose of school and education in general. The question of why am I going here, comes to mind and then you get into the question of how is this experience supposed to ameliorate my sphere of knowledge to make this a beneficial venture, because if I come out of college the same person I went in, with no new experiences or wisdom, it would turn out to be a bust, when I could have gone to Europe or Australia and worked as a backpack guide and gotten a much more educational experience. Who's to say college is right for everyone?

At my oldest brother's medical school graduation I was talking to a friend of his who gave me advice that was very future thinking and predicted exactly what is currently happening in the world today. He said that the best thing you could do would be to somehow make your own spin on an app or program that did something nobody else is doing, he suggested that fitting into an existing job description is good and all but that making your own job would be more rewarding in the long run. I have heard from various other sources say that making an app is simple, and thinking of an idea for an app requires only creativity and the actual execution of the code can be taught afterwards, or simplified and it can even be outsourced to a third party. The idea to do a dining app arose out of the need for such a program that could tell accurate hours of operation for all of the food locations on campus. This need presented a very good opportunity to create a mobile based service that did just that, using the languages we explored on codecademy and on other programming information sources. I worked on some of the adding times and dates for the various locations for our app, which was Javascript but it turns out that the section I worked on was deleted and not used for the finished product, but that I helped with the HTML code along with Taylor and Josh too. This application met the need presented and did so in an efficient and easy to use way but did not necessarily tackle a very profound or game-changing issue like say another idea I have been thinking about, and will most likely work on over the summer and next year with the help of some of my professors and classmates if they are interested. My idea is a mobile or web based program that allows for a sort of social networking site acting as a digital support group where people recently diagnosed with terminal or even minor diseases can interact and discuss treatment plans and useful tips and precautions when it comes to the disease or disorder.

I was diagnosed with Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy, which is an autoimmune degenerative nerve disorder that affects the myelin sheath of the peripheral nervous system which degrades the signal carrying capacity of nerves to send signals to peripheral muscles, mainly arms and legs. This meant I was in a wheelchair and leg braces for years and still have lasting physical effects that frequently affect my daily life. If I had a simple app that I could go on and discuss the benefits of treatment options or potential symptoms I would have been much more prepared to deal with my disease and I would have known exactly what to expect because I had heard it from people who are

experiencing it and could offer life changing advice or guidance. As it turned out, I had already been introduced to medicine and healthcare at a young age because my dad is an orthopaedic surgeon and my mom is his scrub nurse, so I was in good hands when it came to health problems, and through very expensive monthly IV immunoglobulin treatments I made a near full recovery and have minimal but lasting effects as a result of the disorder. Since I had prior knowledge of health care, I took it upon myself to learn as much as I could about my disease and through research and countless hours of collecting information from various credible sources, I had a working understanding of what was going on in my body and from there I could enact a concrete game plan for how I was going to beat my disease and make the best of the situation. The disease came with numerous health concerns and symptoms like nausea, vomiting, migraines, and of course the muscle atrophy and weakness. The fact that this issue is so close to home means that it is important to me to try to devote my time and effort to helping connect thousands of people who are suffering similar afflictions but would otherwise have no way of contacting each other. This idea which uses a forum with various subsections and message boards would include people seeking help on diagnoses or disease management, like living with diabetes or coming to terms with terminal cancer, and would provide a much needed service for people who are out of options and have nowhere else to turn for advice. One of the fundamental comforts in life is to be able to empathize with people, and share healthy discourse about issues relevant to you and them, such that the mutual exchange of information is beneficial to all parties involved and can serve anywhere from a starting point, after receiving a tough diagnosis, to just wanting to vent about a personal situation, to even doctor led public forums that reveal the latest scientific and technological advancements in Medicine. This app idea I believe is one that could really help a lot of people, and could even be tied in with my senior project, not to mention how good it would look on a digital portfolio when applying for jobs in the future.

Overall I would say this class was extremely rewarding, interesting, and fun, and I would recommend it highly to anyone interested in expanding their scope of programming knowledge, while also becoming a member of an active learning community. The free form project format was very good for being able to set my own goals and learning objectives. This class structure made being organized and time oriented very easy because it was all on me to get things done on time, not because a teacher hounded me about it. Developing a good work ethic is a skill I plan to carry over into my professional career because it teaches autonomy and dictates that you generate productivity from within and that the only way to reach your goals is to start yourself. Thank you for the opportunity to take this class, and I look forward to our future discourse.



Liam Sargent

5/5/2014

ISAT 252 Dr. Benton

ISAT 252 End of Course Evaluation

I came into your programming and problem solving class expecting a traditional, syllabus-based learning environment with set deadlines, goals, and tests. Upon coming to the class, I realized that this is not the style of classroom you like to run. I realized from the very first day that you would run the class in a non-traditional format, because of the interesting get-to-know-you activity we did on the first day. This semester marked a time of deep personal change and growth in myself through my relationships as others as well as my studies. Beginning a semester long class with an intimate activity like sharing deep seated feelings and honesty with almost a random stranger really kick started my learning. I have always struggled with trust and letting others into my life, and before coming into this semester, I decided I would make it a point to grow my relationships with others as often as I could. After a short time in the class, I made good friends with Tommy Vasilopoulos and Taka Akiyama. We immediately decided upon a project for us to work on (the Scramblegg website) and were able to devote tasks to each other based on our skill levels and experience. I really enjoyed working in a self-motivated environment with Taka and Tommy. They are both thoughtful, intelligent people who have taught me many things in and out of the classroom this year. Tommy in particular has been somewhat of a mentor in confidence and trust, and making friends with him and working with him in this class has nurtured a friendship I hope to keep for the rest of my life. My goals started out as little things, like finishing my homework assignments on time, and keeping my room clean. I was able to pick each one out individually and satisfy them. As the year went on, I was able to create more abstract goals, like "listen twice as much as you speak today", to assist myself with growing relationships and being thoughtful, areas in which I have struggled for most of my life.

In terms of JMU's mission statement, I absolutely feel more educated this semester. Even though the coursework was self-derived, I was able to pick a topic that the entire group was interested in, and set goals and decide the material I needed to learn for myself. My life has absolutely become more meaningful as a result of this class. I have come to appreciate those around me and the gifts they bring with them far more than I have in the past. I have also become much more self-realized because of the nature of the self-motivated work. I am proud of the work we have accomplished as a team this semester, and I look forward to working with my teammates again in life and in schoolwork, if I can.

I would like to receive an A in this course for the semester, because I believe I have worked up to and beyond the expectations of the class. I have grown more as a result of this class than any other class this semester, which I absolutely did not expect before coming to the class. I felt a desire to learn unlike any structured class I have taken in the past, and this has opened my eyes to my true capabilities as a person.

I was expecting something similar to what I experienced in a previous programming class, and was not disappointed. I chose to format my learning experience in a similar manner to what I had experienced previously. I came into the class interested about programming and wanting to dig a bit deeper. I decided to explore Javascript and HTML/CSS to build skills that I could hopefully use to build websites and games. I have not directly applied my skills to making a finished product yet, but seeing how much I learned on my own in the class, I feel comfortable pursuing those goals outside of a classroom setting. Although I did not complete my initial objectives of making an animated game with a website, I did manage to finish an online course about Javascript and nearly completed a course on HTML/CSS. I used some of these skills to do minor projects such as making an animated solar system, or a simple web page within the courses. In the future I would like to dedicate some more of my free time to working on programming. Often times I would choose to do something else when I did not have other coursework to do.

I feel that I learned some valuable information about programming languages, but I also learned about myself thanks to the weekly self assessments. It was interesting to think about how I had been feeling and what I would idealistically like to do in a week. Sometimes I completed my goals, and often I did not, but it was still an interesting thing to think about. The quizzes meshed well with my goals for personal improvement over this semester.

I liked how the class is set up, but I wish that I could have taken it any other semester. I have had some of the most difficult classes of my career, all at once. So, honestly, I have had to put those first when I would have rather been hacking. But at the same time I can also say that I voluntarily put more work outside of this class than some of my other, more demanding, courses.

I liked the hacking sessions and classroom environment. It was interesting to see the colorful interactions between people all working on something that they wanted to do. I would have liked it if the course website (which was really cool) was more integrated into the course. Maybe have a part of the weekly assessment direct the user to view a classmate's profile or post something. I would have liked to see more stuff posted by you as well. The articles that were on there were quite interesting.

Please give me an "A" in this course. I feel that I put a fair amount of effort into it, learned some things, I did what was asked of me to get the grade, and I could really use the GPA boost.

Kyle Chipman

5/6/14

ISAT 252 End of Semester Narrative

My expectations coming in to ISAT 252 were to grasp an introduction and build a foundation in programming. I was brand new to programming and no prior experience coming in to this class. I was interested and ready to learn because I knew there are many applications that I could use programming for and thinking this would enable me to enjoy a new skill while exploring new opportunities. I figured we would start off learning a few basic programming languages then use that knowledge to complete coding activities, projects, and then be tested on the material. I'd have to say before I came back from break I wanted to get the most out of this class that I could and thought it would be to my benefit in the future. I was also considering taking on a computer science minor and thought this would be a great intro to see if I should take steps down that path.

I set various weekly goals throughout the semester through our self evaluations on our course web site that I thought would enable me a good start, and eventually progress further into this new subject area. I started off by working with python in Codecademy, and then moved on to HTML, CSS, then java script. Once I had teamed up and decided on a project to pursue for the semester the goals I set became more oriented in that direction.

My goals evolved over the semester to complete required tasks and solve problems related to my project. We decided on creating a workout based mobile application, which would require very limited user interaction while the user is involved in their workout. The idea was to create an app allowing the user to fully customize their own workout, set and receive audio notifications for the end of each set and rest period of their workout, which also would be linked to their desired playlists. I liked the idea proposed by my team member and we decided to pursue it. This is where my goals for the semester changed from learning code on Codecademy to trying different approaches to build a cross platform mobile app. After discussing our idea with Dr. Benton, I explored the two of the three approaches to build a multiplatform app that we discussed. Among the three Phonegap/Cordova, Titanium, and Kivi, I decided to work with Titanium first, then Phonegap. I ended up continuing with Titanium for a few weeks, trying different things, and attempted to create test apps by following the documentation on their website. Then I moved onto working with Phonegap and researched the background information about the open source framework and what it all entailed to get started working with Phonegap. From here my goals were to troubleshoot the problems that I had getting Phonegap up and running, incorporating it with android SDK's and the android emulator on my windows machine. Learning the Cordova CLI was my next goal. Then I set out to expand my coding knowledge in HTML to order to develop a basis for my application. Realizing that this led to me using JQuery/JQuery mobile, and I then set more goals for myself to learn how to get this interface up and running.

I felt successful in the progress, self-determination, and commitment that I kept up throughout the semester. I can't lie, I felt really frustrated while initially trying to get Phonegap up and running on my pc. I ran into countless problems along the way and decided not to give up. I had already tried using Titanium and didn't enjoy the interface so I was going to get Phonegap working. The problems in the short term may have made me not enjoy what I was working on, but I can say I learned a good amount of useful information about my computer while setting up this development environment. I explored many tutorials; stacked overflow became a one of my most visited websites on Chrome, and other various online resources were at my disposal allowing the time I spent worthwhile and ultimately into a success that I was proud of. I bookmarked all the useful web pages I visited that had solved the problems. I then began building my application through Phone/Cordova using the Cordova command line interface through command prompt. The basic foundation tools of our app was now created and I downloaded Sublime Text 2 as my text editor for my HTML, CSS, and Java Script files under the www directory folder. I then began to explore JQuery and JQuery mobile to incorporate in my app to give me a sound foundation to the start of my apps layout. This took me a while to learn, once I had the layout of the multiple virtual JQuery page format in HTML, the jQuery layout would not display on the emulator. Another one of my successes was linking jQuery properly (turned out to be a simple fix, where the jQuery links must be before the jQuery mobile links) then I dived in to the different features that jQuery had to offer, which were all based off of HTML code. From here on I started developing our workout app. I completed the layout of the virtual pages, adding links, buttons, input forms, collapsible lists, popups, and other attributes. W3schools was a great reference, which I benefited from to get started and provided me a great introduction into jQuery.

I did fail to achieve some of the goals I set this semester. The main one that stands out to me was the lack of java script knowledge that I had learned. I had spent many hours getting my development environment set up on my pc, learning HTML, and CSS. I regret not devoting enough time, at the least completing the java script modules in Codecademy. I say this because all the potential functionality of my app needed to be created in java script. I had managed to complete some of the modules in Codecademy but not enough. I still tried to get my app to function with borrowing sample code and incorporating into my app but with out enough background knowledge I ran out of time to get it functioning properly. In the future I will lay out and prioritize the essential criteria that I should focus on and allocate the time needed to complete each task. My lack of knowledge in programing languages in general led to a time delay from when I started creating my app, but I also hadn't realized that I could have been developing my app while still getting Phonegap working. After the fact, while experimenting in order to get jQuery working I made a generic folder containing the files index.htm, index.js, and index.css that I created and used the web links for jQuery instead of the local files. I then opened the index.html file in chrome. If I had known this while still working out the kinks of Phonegap I think I could have completed much more content on my project, with a better end result. Another thing that I failed to achieve was to learn how to use Git Hub; I had created an account in the very beginning of the semester and never took the necessary time to fully understand its operation and features.

Reflecting on JMU's mission statement I definitely feel more educated after acknowledging what I have learned this semester. I pushed myself to learn the knowledge it takes to create a cross platform apps with Phonegap. I now have experience in a few coding languages, including HTML, CSS, and a little Java script where I had no prior knowledge in this subject area. From the beginning of the semester till now I feel enlightened in the sense that I have learned some basics in programming, writing code, and utilizing it in a real life application. I think my activities in this class have positively impacted in contributing to knowing myself better, especially through the weekly and tri weekly self evaluations where taking the time to reflect, can really show how well you know your self, and what you could change in the future.

The style of this course work was different than any other course I have taken at JMU. I think it did work for me, especially because I was interested in learning programming and taking something away from the course. It was an interesting experience, and I enjoyed being able to work at my own pace, and completing a project of my choice. Not learning material in the class from pure instruction or lectures was a challenge for me sometimes, but it enabled me to expand my use of other resources to compensate and obtain knowledge myself. If I were to take this course again I would recommend you to keep it relatively the same. Personally I tend to like a little more structure in a classroom setting. I may have learned more if we had had deadlines or periodic checks on the progress of our project. One suggestion I have is that maybe a form could be created on the course website where students could write topics of interest that they might want to learn, have a type of comment/pool where other students could show their interest in the same topic area, then one class time the material could be reviewed either in small groups or as a class. I think I missed the whole class interaction, that I am used to from my other classes. I do think this class makes students who want to benefit learn the material, and especially when one is working on a project that they care about. I have talked to other ISAT students taking 252 and heard they wish they were learning programming skills, by implementing in an actual application, such as an app.

Looking back on the semester I have learned a lot about programming and think the time I put in was well worth it. I struggled working with my group member, which I think made me put more time and actually learn more from working a lot on my project. I put many hours into my project, I am glad now at the end of the semester, I have something to show the work I put in. Even though it may not be in the completed form that I wished, I still think it reflects my effort and the knowledge I have obtained this semester. Overall I enjoyed coming to class in an open and free to work type environment. I plan to keep expanding my programming skills, from the solid foundation that I developed this semester. I would like you to report an A to the registrar.

Jacob Ricketts

ISAT 252

Professor Morgan Benton

My End of the Semester Narrative

My expectations coming into this class were to learn some basic programming skills that I could apply later on in life at possibly a job. I had heard about this class beforehand and knew that it was quite introspective and more laid back. I was happy that I was coming into this type of classroom environment and having a professor that was as cool as you seemed. Another expectation or learning goal that I had for this class was to gain a different perspective. Either in life as a whole or about programming. I wasn't quite sure but I always try to gain different perspectives in life and in whatever I do.

At first I just set basic goals, like finding team members and learning some basic programming skills. This started by Melvin Gonzales and me forming a team and coming up with different ideas for projects. Once we came up with our idea to do a project that was a mixture of Facebook and ancestry.com we set some basic goals that we needed to achieve. This is when I decided that I needed to learn some basic coding and got into code academy. Also, I started to read the syllabus and tried to pick up on things that would help me out with programming skills. So I basically just got on code academy for a few hours the following week or two and started to learn html language. At first it didn't seem too bad, it was kind of interesting to me, but I could only work on coding for short periods of time. I'm the type of person that has never really liked computers and being on them for long periods of time. I was still doing coding for the project and was still showing up to class. Then physics started to get challenging and I started reading a lot for Russian literature. This is when I started staying up late at night til around 3am doing homework or trying to get other things done. My goals went from trying to learn all of html on code academy to just trying to get on it every once in a while. Then I just started to get bored with coding and it was very tedious to me. At this point I really stopped accomplishing my goals for this class and it all just started to snowball on me. I was staying up late and hence not going to class in the mornings especially because my only other class on Monday/Wednesday/Friday was physics at 2:30pm. It was especially difficult because I did not like actually coding, it was just too boring and required me to be on the computer for long periods of time. I didn't really change my goals much though as I was trying to have better time management and get back on track. However, part of it was just being lazy and taking the easy way out knowing that I did not actually have to do the work because of the way the class is set-up.

I then started to make goals that were not related to the class, like working out more and playing sports with my friends. Also, I was working really hard in my other

classes which paid off at the end of this semester. I found out that I love physics even though I came into that class with low expectations. I also, found perspective from my Russian literature class by reading Dostoevsky Chernyshevsky, and Bulgakov's works. These people had world ideas that societies picked up on during the 19th and 20th centuries and that helped me to see an entire new realm of thinking which I love. I love to think about things and ideas. I'm going to end up getting A's in all of my other classes which is surprising to think about having entered the semester with low expectation for these other courses. I also set some goals for things like fixing my car which I ended up doing. I tinkered and toyed with it until I found the problem and ended up replacing the battery and fuses by myself and it solved the problem. These are the types of goals that I am most proud of, fixing real world problems, even if they are smaller like fixing my car without having to take it somewhere.

I do believe that I failed to achieve most of my goals for this class though. My dad always said anything worth doing is worth doing right. I feel like even if I didn't enjoy coding and the material in the class I should have still done it. I took the class and only had a semester to try my hardest and I did not do that. That is probably the most disappointing thing for me. Especially because you were such a chill professor that I should have at least showed up to class every day and just hung out or talked to people. I'm not too disappointed that I didn't actually learn the material because it is not interesting to me and nothing that I want to peruse in the future. I'm also disappointed with how my time management was this semester. It was worse than I've ever had it before. That's something that goes with me just being kind of lazy and that's all on me. I have learned from these failures though and plan to keep what my dad says in the back of my mind whenever I'm doing anything. Also, I might try to give coding another shot over the summer because I have a ton of free time after work. I work on the road so I just sit in my hotel room and watch TV usually. Hopefully this can kind of fill in the learning gaps that I failed to accomplish during this course.

JMU's mission statement is to produce, "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." This does ring true to me for my semester as a whole. Maybe not so much for this class but definitely for my others. Like I was saying earlier Russian literature and physics have enlightened me significantly. Seeing the perspectives and worldly ideas from a different time about god, sciences, and societies definitely broadened my perspectives. Also, physics was amazing and I learned so much from taking this course. It definitely set me up for what I want to do in the near future. I feel much better about going into the energy sector after taking this class and loving it so much. I feel like I do know myself better as well. I understand that I do not like programming and dealing with computers. I need to be doing something that is more tangible or where I'm doing the work. I'd rather have a blue collar job than sitting at a desk or computer. It's just not my forte or what I'm good at. I'm completely okay with

this though because it does help me narrow down what I want to do in the future which is with energy and the environment. I want to be working outdoors and at job sites. This semester also reaffirmed to me that I enjoy life much more without electronic technologies surrounding me. I noticed that whenever I was on my computer or cell phone that I was usually stressed out and had to many things going on at once. I am less stressed when I'm doing actual physical work. Like working on my car, doing landscaping, or physical lab work. In the near future I'm going to cut back on my use of phone and computer because I enjoy myself more without them.

This style of course really did not work for me personally. It was a combination of things, such as the time of day being early, you not actually giving lectures on the material, and me just not being interested in the material. I just had little motivation to do try in this style especially with not having the grade incentive. However, this is just me personally and nothing against you or the way you teach the course. Obviously you want to help us learn and have fun doing it but it wasn't working for me. I would recommend making the class time later in the day around noon. It would also be helpful if you provided more of a structure for making us show up. Maybe not mandatory attendance, but more of an incentive.

I would like you to report an A on the registrar for me. Personally it would be nice to have this for my GPA. Also, I feel that this class gave me an understanding of my weaknesses and showed me that I can fail at doing well in a subject. This has never really happened to me, but it doesn't feel completely terrible. I realize that I don't want to be in this particular field in my future and that over the course of this semester I have become more "enlightened" and know what I want. Although I may have failed most of my goals I have accomplished new insight into what I need to do in the future.

Dustyn Michael Reeser
5/7/14
ISAT 252
Benton

What were your expectations coming into this class?

My expectations coming into this class were to gain experience using basic programming skills and get a better understanding of HTML, PHP, JavaScript, as well as other programming languages. I had pretty high expectations regarding my success in this class. I was pretty confident that I would be able to learn the material I wanted to gain knowledge of and become a better programmer. Before coming into the class I had heard various things about the structure of the class and I liked the idea that students were able to come up with their own project idea and work on it for the semester. My expectations for this class included coming up with a useful project idea I was interested in and completing the project.

What learning goals did you set for yourself?

The first learning goal I set for myself was to gain experience using basic programming skills and get a better understanding of HTML, PHP, JavaScript, as well as other programming languages. Before coming into this class I had very little experience with programming. The only programming experience I had was with HTML in which I created a web page about myself that consisted of 3 pages describing information about me. The web page included a background, images, and links to 3 other pages. It was very basic and my goal for this class was to build on my previous knowledge of HTML and learn other programming languages. My second learning goal I set for myself was to come up with an idea for a project and actually carry out and finish the project. Another learning goal I set for myself was to spend time outside of class each week to work on the project as well as research and learn about different programming languages.

How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?

The learning goals I set for myself over the course of semester did not really evolve much. The same goals I set for myself at the beginning of the year carried out through the semester. My goals did somewhat evolve into smaller goals near the end of the semester when I came to the realization that it was going to take longer than expected to finish the project. My goals changed from completing the entire project where I had a completely workable app to making smaller goals of finishing different aspects of the app. At the beginning of the year I did not really anticipate the amount of work I would be doing in my other classes and the amount of time that would be taken up from my other classes. It made it much harder to spend more time on my project for this class.

In what ways did you feel you were successful? Please refer to specific, concrete artifacts that would serve as evidence of your successes.

One way in which I feel I was successful was the amount of knowledge I obtained throughout the semester. I was able to gain a better understanding of different programming languages and how they work together to create a final project. The project my partner and I have been working on was a skateboard spot app for mobile phones in which users could create their own account and share different skateboard spots with each other. Users would be able to take or upload a picture of a spot at a particular location and share it with friends so they could go skate at that spot if they were in the area. One of the first ways I felt success was in planning out how the project would be completed and coming to the realization that the skate spot app would be possible to create. We drew out the concept of how we wanted the app to look and all the details that needed to be included in the app. We wanted to make sure that spots on the app could only be shared between friends and not be shared with everything. The reason behind this was to not blow up the spot in which a bunch of kids would start skating at the spot and get kicked out causing the spot to be ruined for others. I had never created or worked on a mobile app before and before this class I thought it would be impossible. Another moment of success was the completion of the first page of the app. We were able to create a useable login and account page for users to create an account and login to that account to use the app. One of my personal moments of success was the creation of images for the app. With a little help from my roommate I was able to use Photoshop to create images to put on the app to make it look more aesthetically pleasing. I had no previous knowledge of Photoshop before this class and never expected to gain experience with this in a programming class. Although the app is not completely finished, I believe we had a lot of success in the pages of the app that were created.

In what areas do you feel you failed to achieve your goals? Please reflect on what you think you've learned from your failures, and what, if any, plans you have to address those issues in the future.

One area where I feel I failed to achieve my goals was in time management. My goal was to effectively plan out how much time would be spent on the project and when we would be able to work on the project. One of the biggest problems we had was scheduling conflicts between my partner and I. We both are seniors and didn't realize how busy we were going to be with other classwork and senior projects. I wish I had the opportunity to take this class sooner in my academic career to spend more time on this class and the project we were working on. Taking this class as a senior I felt I had to prioritize my workload and it leaned more towards other classes than this one. The completion of my senior project for graduation was my main focus this year. I also feel I failed short of my goal in learning as much as I could about different programming languages. When working on the project I thought I would be able to learn and understand all the things going on with the project. I was hoping to become proficient in programming however I know this takes much more than one semesters worth of time. One of the problems I had with this project was with understanding the coding

that my partner would be working on. Before coming into this class my partner for this project already had proficient knowledge of programming and apps and was able to begin coding right away. It was hard for me to work with the coding he worked on because I would often not know what exactly he was programming or how he found the code. However this was only a minor failure towards my goal because I actually learned more from my partner than I would have if I did not work with him. It was hard in the beginning but my partner was able to show me exactly how he did the programming, where it came from, and what needed to be done to make it work. So overall I believe that it was actually more than a success than a failure.

JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Do you feel more educated? More enlightened? Less so? How have your activities this semester contributed or detracted from your knowing yourself better and having a better grasp on what you want to do in the near or distant future?

I do feel that I am more educated after taking this class. I definitely was educated in various programming skills that I never would have thought to use. I also gained education on time management and team working skills. I feel more enlightened in the sense that I realized how big of an impact programming can have on solving real world problems. I never really thought about the impacts programming has on society and how it can be used to make a difference in people's lives. I also realized it could have a negative impact on people's lives by distracting them from the real world. I feel some people get too caught up in their programming they forget the more important things in life. I also feel more enlightened in the fact that I have new outlook on programming and the role programming plays in my future. After taking this class I realized that programming really isn't for me and I do not really have the patience or willingness to sit in front of a computer screen looking at coding for hours on end. I respect programming and I am glad I was able to get some experience in it but I would honestly rather pay someone to complete an app if necessary than actually use my time to do the programming. I realized that I want a career in which I could work with different people and on different projects and work on different goals. I realized I am more of a hands-on person that likes working in different situations.

How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do it the same or differently?

I thought the style of this course worked fairly well for me. I liked that I was able to come up with my own project and work with a partner to create an app that I would never be able to do on my own. In other courses I have never given the freedom to learn what I wanted to learn. This class let me gain knowledge in areas of programming that I was interested in instead of forcing me to try and learn everything. Although I believe this style of course worked well for me, I also think I need a little bit more structure when it comes to learning. It was hard for me to come up with my own goals week after week. If I were to take this class again the only thing I would recommend would be to do a little bit of lecture in the first 2 weeks of the course or do some sort of group activity to get everyone introduced to different programming languages.

What grade would you like for me to report to the registrar for you, and why? As per our agreement, please remember that you can ask me to report any grade that you would like and I will honor that request.

I would like to receive an A in this class. I feel that I was able to gain the experience in programming I wanted to learn and use that knowledge to solve a problem in creating the skate app for a mobile phone. My expectations for what I wanted to gain in this class were far exceeded. I learned a lot more than I thought I would by working on the mobile app project. I was able to gain experience in teamwork as well as programming. I was also able to gain experience in time management and prioritizing the important goals I had in life and for this class.

ISAT 252 End-of-semester narrative

What were your expectations coming into this class?

My expectations were set in an interesting way. They were set when Dr. Benton walked into my GISAT 160 class as a guest speaker and talked about how grades work exactly in the educational system and the negative impact that grading can have on a student rather than simply learning for pure enjoyment and curiosity. That left a profound effect on me because I had no other teacher or professor that used that kind of teaching style. It was so different from every other professor's teaching style but it made so much sense in theory. Knowing this, I was excited being able to learn how to program at my own pace without the negative impacts of grades to motivate me.

What learning goals did you set for yourself?

I wanted to be able to acquire the skill set so that I could create a website. When we were going over what we wanted to create, I needed help on what programming languages to learn. From there, I did research and set my goals to understanding HTML and CSS as best as I could as well as explore other languages so that I could create more applications.

How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?

As the semester went on, I used CodeAcademy to practice programming for HTML and CSS so that I could create my own website. After a while, I started to explore the possibilities of other languages such as JavaScript to build games in a browser and Python to create web apps. My scope had been broadened and while I got busier over the semester, I kept coming back to CodeAcademy so that I could practice my programming skills for fun.

In what ways did you feel you were successful? Please refer to specific, concrete artifacts that would serve as evidence of your successes.

In what areas do you feel you failed to achieve your goals? Please reflect on what you think you've learned from your failures, and what, if any, plans you have to address those issues in the future.

I felt successful when it came to the logic that the various programming languages, such as HTML and CSS, required in order to start up programs as well as following the code for compiling and runtime errors. Because of this, I was able to make my own website on CodeAcademy and modify it to my liking.

My failures consisted of not finishing a final smart phone app for android. One idea for a cool project that I had for the beginning of the semester was to create a car maintenance app that you could maintain your vehicle with. I did not get around to this project because I got too caught up with the basics of programming and having to relearn it again. Along with this, I had no support from a group that would help create this app so everything I did, I did alone. I have learned from my failures that in order to really come up with an end product, you need to commit to the idea and the language. Plans must be made and self-motivation is key in order to finishing the project. This kind of discipline is important and carries over many other things in life. It is also an issue with time management. I plan to keep practicing my work and better time management strategies. I became too side-tracked with other languages that I failed to complete my smart phone app idea and I really regret not committing to it like I should have.

JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Do you feel more educated? More enlightened? Less so? How have your activities this semester contributed or detracted from your knowing yourself better and having a better grasp on what you want to do in the near or distant future?

I do feel more educated in the logic and principle of programming languages as well as enlightened about how prevalent and practical these programming skill sets

are in the world of science and technology. These are skills that are taken for granted by technology users all over the world and it makes a difference when you are more aware of the inner workings of web sites. Unfortunately, I do not plan to be a computer programmer or software developer and I know that now for a definite after this course. However, I did enjoy the work that I did as well as the teaching style implemented in the course. This class helped me regain an interest in coding that I had previously lost before and I am happy for that.

How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do it the same or differently?

I actually liked the style that was implemented in this course. It allowed me to go learn what I wanted about computer programming at my own pace without having to worry about the negative consequences of grades to motivate me. I was doing what I wanted to do because of my interests in what I wanted to learn and achieve. If I could change anything about the class, it would be cool to get a crash course on the various programming languages used and their applications throughout technology.

What grade would you like for me to report to the registrar for you, and why? As per our agreement, please remember that you can ask me to report any grade that you would like and I will honor that request.

Looking back on everything that I have learned and achieved as well as what I have failed to do, I would like to request an A in the class. I have realized that this field of work within the ISAT program is not for me but while I did work on this, I had a relaxed and enjoyable time learning what I wanted to learn. Compared to my other ISAT classes, this was a less formal and enjoyable learning experience that I am glad that I was a part of.

Emery Siegrist

ISAT 252

End of Semester Narrative

May 7, 2014

What a Semester Does

When I first came to the class I was expecting it to be like other classes where we would have assignments given to us and would then turn in work that was different thanks to the nuance of its creator but all similar due to the limits of the scope of the assignment. What I found was something wholly different from this. This class had a free for all approach which I felt suited the type of work we were tasked with. The breadth of programming languages and their uses lends itself to the creation of numerous projects from phone apps to web pages which differ greatly in focus and purpose. The freedom of information we enjoy through the internet also allows easy access to the steps to turn our ideas into reality. It was knowing that I could make nearly anything with no prior knowledge that led me to decide on developing a vehicle maintenance tracking application for smartphones. As I would learn the level of complexity of my app along with my otherwise busy schedule was something I was not totally prepared for.

In the beginning I wasn't really sure what I was going to do with my time in the class. I didn't have a clear goal set for myself yet and I didn't really know what I wanted to make. After about a week of bouncing around ideas with others in the class I finally decided on the maintenance tracker app idea. My idea for a car maintenance app would allow multiple cars to be entered along with service descriptions and dates of service, finally a chronological display of each cars service history would be on hand to view. After years of working on cars I had seen how easy it was for people to forget what they had done to their cars and when they had done it. I figured I could alleviate this with a handy and portable way to keep track of a cars history. With the ability to manage the history right on your phone it would be easy for people to keep track of what had been done to their cars.

With this in mind I met with Professor Benton about how to go about creating my app. Being entirely new to programming I had no idea where to begin. He recommended I start with the services offered by CodeAcademy to learn the basics of HTML, JavaScript and CSS. I was also instructed to start working with Phonegap which I would use to create my app. Now armed with knowledge as to how to proceed I started working with the HTML portion of CodeAcademy. I found the site easy to use and very helpful for a total beginner like myself. The major issue I had with it was that the things I learned were very perishable in my mind. With all the new things I learned in such great volume I had a hard time

retaining it all and had to very frequently refer back to previous lessons or online resources to refresh myself on most topics. This was not difficult but it was time consuming for me during class and outside of class.

Despite the slow pace I was setting for myself I completed the basic HTML portion of CodeAcademy and moved on to the Java. I encountered similar issues when learning Java that I did with HTML, frequently having to refer back to previously learned information to make progress with the current lesson. During this time I also began to dabble in Github at the advice of my professor. I read about how to use Git on their site and also watched several videos about it on YouTube. I even created a Repo on Git to get a head start on having a place to put my app once I began to build. It was at this point that I began to branch out of the CodeAcademy website and starting poking around other places for coding information. I found vast resources on YT in all sorts of aspects that I thought would be helpful in building my app. Everything from coding review to how to actually use programs like Phonegap was on YT. Then I ran across a bunch of people on YT using Eclipse to build their apps. This seemed like an easier platform to build from, despite the fact that making an app on Eclipse required that it be re-written for each platform it was to be used on. Feeling empowered by this array of information I started working with Eclipse to build an app.

I soon realized that my limited skill coupled with constantly referencing my learning material was slowing me down greatly. As I worked more on the app and did some of the tutorials again I began to get more confident in my skills. I think that the more constant use and reinforcement of them was what I needed to make it 'sink in' so to speak. Now that I was building I needed a place to put my app while I was working. I used Eclipse's built in ability to create a repository on my computer. I figured since all of my work was done on my laptop I didn't exactly need the flexibility of Git to store my app at this time. After putting in a fair amount of work I ran into some pretty serious issues with Eclipse. The program began to experience some pretty serious instability and many of the widgets which are used to add functionality also stopped working, effectively halting progress on the app. I spent a few weeks trying to work out the issues I was experiencing including asking Paul and Dr. Benton about how to fix it. I finally had to accept defeat and migrate back to Phonegap. By this point the semester was nearly at its end and I had little app to show for it.

As I reflect back on the time spent on the app the only failure I see is being unable to allot myself the time necessary to complete it. The stressful nature of my semester, which included: fourteen credit hours, the Rockingham County Fire Academy and a new job working 20+ hours a week ate up all of the time I had this semester. I had spread myself too thin which precluded me from doing many free-time things I enjoy in exchange for accomplishing numerous goals. After this semester I have learned just how much I can get done and what time commitments it takes to accomplish those things.

Likewise, the failure of several goals including this app, becoming more active in my clubs and exercising more frequently showed me that there is not enough time to get everything done at once and that I should schedule my time somewhat more leniently in the future. Perhaps most telling of the stress of this semester was my development of mild high blood pressure which is certainly cause for concern indicating that I need to take steps to manage my time more effectively.

To turn back to my app, I have learned how not build an app. Making it up as I go was not an effective strategy, but it was the one I adopted fairly early on. Being that I was totally new to what I was trying to do I probably should have heeded more the advice of those who knew what they were doing such as Dr. Benton and Paul. I discovered and utilized multiple methods of learning different programming skills and creating an app. Completion of the CodeAcademy tutorials would be the greatest piece of evidence I have to show for my learning. Also, the list of bookmarked sites that I have used for references when I was coding serves to show the extent to which I researched the topics I was learning to better understand them. The ruins of Eclipse could also serve as a point of reference for the work put into the app.

With all of the new things I've learned not only about app building but overall time management and scheduling I can certainly say that it will make me more effective in the future in my career at JMU and elsewhere. My new knowledge of programming and the steps in designing and implementing an app will in no way make me a computer or app wizard but it will allow me to be a better contributor to those who need help when deciding what to do with their ideas whether they are for apps or something else. I was also pleasantly surprised at how easy learning the material was given that I had never done anything like it before. The challenges came in retaining it and applying it to a more abstract system. I had never really gotten into programming before this class and now I find it interesting albeit quite challenging. This new style of learning which I found in this class fit well with the way that I learn already. The vast amount of knowledge that I know has been gleaned from articles and publications both online and in print, not from classrooms. I find the vast knowledge of the internet fascinating and I think it's great that this course made students exploit that resource and teach themselves what they needed to know using what had been there all along. As stated before the freedom to make anything and the ability to learn it from the internet allowed students to be as creative as they desired in the creation of their programs.

Despite my personal shortcomings and time constraints I feel that I learned a great deal from this course in not only the programming but the problem solving aspect. In keeping with the fact that my app does not work as intended (yet) I feel that I should receive a 'B' in the course given the time commitment and effort I put into the app. I can truly say that this class has been unique in my college experience in terms of the course style and things I learned.

Sergio Mateo

ISAT: 252

5/7/2014

Thinking back to when I started the course at the beginning of the semester, I didn't know what to expect in this class but I wanted to go in open minded. I honestly thought that I would struggle a bit in the course because I've never had any prior experience in coding and I wasn't sure whether I could actually pick it up. The only clue or insight I had in programming was the little I had seen my roommate do for his CS classes. And let's just say it looked way too complicated for my liking. With that said, I tried to set myself reasonable goals to accomplish this semester. My initial goal was to try to learn at a steady pace through code academy. I knew I wouldn't be able to master an entire language in 1 semester, but I thought I could get pretty comfortable in coding. Because it gave percentage of completion for each language, I measured my progress that way. I was aiming to complete at least 10% a week. Starting off I wanted to get an idea of each language so the first few weeks I jumped around a few languages in code academy. Eventually I settled on HTML and CSS to focus on.

As the semester went on though, my approach changed as well as my goals. I started off strong. I was doing better than my original goals and was moving at a really good pace. But about midway through the semester I hit a wall. Once I started the Selectors part of CSS I started to go downhill. There was about a week span that I just couldn't figure out what I was doing wrong, neither could my roommate (there ended up being a glitch in the website that was messing me up). After that 1st speed bump is when I began to struggle, big-time. My pace slowed down a lot and I just wasn't moving through code academy like I was initially; and I began to struggle memorizing all the different lines (thank god for the side bar hints). Around the same time, other classes, specifically physics, started to build up so I dedicated less time toward coding. I did get a ton of help from my roommate though. When I did get stuck, he would help me dig myself out of it. I think it also helped just watching him code and seeing how he did it. This is how my approach changed. Before I was sticking to code academy but watching

and getting help from someone that already knew it was a luxury. It was a bonus to have 2 methods of learning and practicing coding.

Over all I think this course was a success for me. I knew going in that I would struggle but I wanted to keep an open mind throughout the class. I wanted to give programming an honest shot and I feel like I did that. I got through a language on code academy so I guess I made it farther than I thought I would. Even with that said I can honestly say that programing is not for me. In a way I did enjoy it. Like when I went through lessons without making mistakes, I felt good. I felt accomplished. But when I got stuck, I was really stuck. I got frustrated and got close to the point of giving up. Normally things come easy to me but programing and coding was just not one of them. I really just don't see programming in my future as a profession. But maybe when I'm older I can come back to it. I could be a useful tool along with other skills in the workforce.

Through this class I feel like I know myself a lot better. I know my mental limitations a bit better and the class helped me strengthen my work ethic. When I would get stuck in CSS, it just made me want to solve it that much more. And that work ethic helped me in other courses like physics and russian literature. I feel a little smarter too. Like when I see people code now I grasp the general concept of their lines and kind of have a framework of how computer applications work now. This class also helped me solidify my ISAT concentrations. I was up in the air on sectoring in telecom of IKM but with this class I know that I don't want too and that it is not for me. I enjoyed the class and the experience.

The layout of the class helped a lot. I feel like programming is not something that I would be able to do through lectures and test. Lectures would prevent me from learning at my own pace and that was probably the biggest attribute for me in this class. If I was constantly meeting deadlines on assignments, not only would I struggle but I would most likely be turning in crappy codes that don't work. I also liked how you were still available to help if we needed it as well. Luckily I didn't really have to always go too you for help considering I live with a CS major that I can go to for help.

As for the grade in this course I'm not really sure what to say considering I've never been asked to give myself a grade. But in all I think I fall between a B and B+. I didn't excel at programming but I do feel like I gave it an honest shot this semester. And to be honest after about the midway point when I realized that I didn't like programming and I wouldn't be pursuing it, I thought about blowing it off. Thanks to my roommate I didn't though. He kept me in check and I'm glad. Because even though I dislike coding, I'm not sure there was a better feeling for me this semester than when I could get a code or lesson right.

Melvin Gonzalez
Morgan Benton
252 Section 1
Spring 2014

My Reflection Narrative

I truly believe that there is something that all of us have to struggle with. For me, it's trying to get around the obstacles that plague my mind. I think way too much, which leads to me not being able to work very efficiently, especially not by myself. This greatly affects my habits not only when I'm doing work, but also in a social context when I'm trying to talk to others. I can't usually work more than a couple minutes without taking an unnecessarily long break. When trying to communicate, I sometimes completely forget the topic of conversation or completely disregard what someone else is saying to point something out or offer my own opinion. I knew full well that this is how I am when I enrolled in your class and I knew the terms by which you do often use to grade students. It seemed so perfect, learning at my own level and pace, especially with all the other classes that I knew I would be taking within the same semester. I also had high expectations of myself upon entering that I would end up being completely enthralled in the field of programming and just try to learn as much as possible. I wanted to be able to truly open myself to this completely new world of computing that I have never before experienced. However, my issue came about with trying to work up a motivation to do everything that was not only expected from you, but also what I expected from myself. I overestimated my ability to wake up on time to get to a class in the morning that came before my 11am English course. For some reason it seemed almost impossible to get the will to get up and go even with the numerous alarms that I had set to help me up. It also didn't help that my closest friends in the class and "Teammates", people that live in the same building as I do, were also on the same page as me and didn't feel the need to go.

My goals of the semester were simple: to grasp a good basic understanding of the material presented in the course, maintain a good social dynamic in which I didn't feel secluded from the rest of my student body, have a good work relationship with you the professor, and to have a good semester in general including all of my classes. As of right now, I'm looking over what I have accomplished in the semester, and I am neither angry nor overly excited with how it went. I definitely ended up gravitating towards the social aspect of my goals more so than anything else. I had no plans of getting more involved on campus than I had currently been at the time, but I was convinced otherwise to apply for a couple positions that I didn't expect to actually get. I ended up achieving the position of a Leadership Counselor for Make Your Mark on Madison, which was one of the most exciting experiences of my James Madison experience so far. I've met so many good people and long-lasting friends through the program and have learned of so many more opportunities in a social context. I also gained the position of secretary in the club IEEE here on campus for the upcoming semester. As for most of my classes, I ended up doing pretty well without trying overly so. It's kind of something that I am both kind of proud of and also disappointed with at the same time as I always try to get the best grade possible by doing the most minimal amount of work. I know that this is one of the leading reasons that lead to me being as lazy as I am and also feeds into why I don't have much motivation to do much with my life as I feel like I can just wing it with most things. This makes me wonder how much I could actually do with my life if I actually applied myself. Yet, I'm pretty confident that I am a smart kid and that I can get along in classes without worrying about them too much. This thought process led to me just laying in bed doing nothing for most of the week, only getting out when I

knew I needed to do something important, get food, or hang out with my friends. School sort of started to fall behind on my personal significance level much like it usually does in throughout semester.

Overall I feel as though I succeeded and failed in different areas of work in this semester. I did end up enjoying the things that I did end up achieving over the course of the semester which to me is a complete success. However I realize that my main priority here is to be for school and that's not something that I should be taking for granted. The more I think about how well I could be doing compared to how hard I actually try makes me feel so guilty inside. I keep looking over it and feel bad about not being able to really punch out the grades that I know that I need to find internships in the future and impress my parents. I know that some of my fellow students try as hard as possible, studying everything they can and stress themselves out like crazy, while I sit in my bed without much care to how I'm really doing. I really truly wonder what my life would be like if I cared that much about school. What would my life be like and how would it translate into my grades in classes. How would it have affected how much I learned in this class? But my biggest question to myself is how much could I accomplish? A very deep question that is rightfully so open ended. I really do ask myself that all the time. Instead of just reaching for the bare minimum as I usually do, I wonder what I could really do with my life. I can only imagine what I could have done with my original plan of working with my group to create Redwood (my family social media website). There is only opportunity for more successes from here on out as a college student but what can I make of it? I already feel confident in myself when gaining the positions that I have achieved already, but I know I can do more; I just have to force myself into it. I gave myself too much time this semester to just fool around and accomplish next to nothing in that time. I learned over the course of the semester that having an actual plan and schedule is something that counters that issue and will help me be more productive in the long run.

I currently feel that I have grown so much in the past couple of months with the experiences that I've had over the course of this semester. Make Your Mark on Madison is a program that helps students really be introspective and really go to the next level when trying to learn about themselves. This is something that has really helped me out personally when figuring out my true purpose and objectives here at this school. I do want to be a great student, but that takes a lot of effort to accomplish but I know that I sure am on my way to becoming one, I just have to keep myself in line. However, going along with the mission statement for JMU, I truly feel as though I am becoming a real and distinguished citizen with every passing day here. Though I may be pretty lazy and lack motivation, I do feel that when I am out doing things that I can be a sort of role model to those around me. I am someone who is courteous to those around me and one who can prove to be educated. I know that I can hold my own in many different conversations and bring up much of what I have learned over my time here at this school to offer different and fresh conversational topics to those around me. However, there is still a lot of room for me to grow as I have stated earlier. I realize that there is still a lot about myself that isn't what I would like to see in most other people. I would love to just be a more active and productive person overall because those are some of the traits that a person needs to help a society function. That is something that I feel will come to me as I continue to mature and grow past the current stage in life that I'm at. I know I can improve upon myself so much more than what I currently am at. As for the enlightened part of the mission statement, I feel as though being here has really opened my eyes to so many things that I otherwise would never have been able to see. On top of what I've learned in my classes, my professors have taught me a new code of morals and helped

me realize what I truly do believe in. There are two quotes that have been introduced to me that I feel are completely relevant in this capacity. The first one is "If we don't change the direction in which we are headed, we will end up where we are going". This is one that really speaks to me and my lifestyle, I've begun to realize that yes, if I continue to be lazy for the rest of my life I will probably not be able to go anywhere or accomplish anything in life. I need to really work on and improve my lifestyle and daily habits in order to improve as a person, and that could help in my ability to play an important role as a citizen in the future. The other quote that I want to mention says, "the unexplored life is not worth living". This is something that I feel that if I look at I will feel motivated to really push my boundaries a little bit and put myself out of my comfort zone. I want to do different things in life and be able to see the world for what it truly is. I know that there is so much out there that I have yet to experience, I just have to go look for it, only then will I be able to experience my life to the fullest.

This class in particular has shown me what my priorities are. I told myself that I felt bad for not going to class, but when I think about it, if I truly did feel that bad about it, I would have worked up the effort to come. In no way am I trying to say that I don't care at all about how I did in the course, but I do now realize that I have mistaken myself and have lied to myself in how much I cared about accomplishing in here. This material still seems so interesting and seems like something that I would love to do in life, I just need to start trying harder than I currently am to really get a good understanding of whether or not I do think I should continue on in the subject. As for this style of class, I still think that it is a great idea as it encourages students to be intrinsically motivated in the course subject that they are taking. I know that I can learn so much still in that style of class I just need to push myself a little bit harder in the things that I know and can deal with. If I were to take this same exact course again knowing what I do now, I would definitely just try tell myself to work up a better sleep schedule and get myself going to classes more often. I know that had I come to class I would have learned so much more than I did had I just gone. You are comforting as a teacher and are just really approachable altogether however I know that on my end as a student I didn't give back. Everything I didn't learn was completely my fault as I continued to just not come to class and not do the related work. I realize that anything that I do want to know is going to take effort to learn, I just need to get there and go in the right direction to begin with. I just have to build off of projects that I know might work and look fun. There are just endless possibilities in the field and that is what truly excites me.

As for my grade, there is a huge discrepancy between the grade that I would think that I have earned and that grade that I want. I don't want to be a liar and try to show off random code that I never learned how to do and try to pass it off as something that I did so that you think that I deserve some sort of grade based on that. If I'm going to show you something that I feel deserves a grade it will have been my own work. Unfortunately I have nothing to really show off to you as there wasn't really that much that I accomplished to begin with. This is where the grade I think I deserve comes in. I don't think I earned anything higher than a C in the course as the average student who just came by a couple of times and didn't really accomplish anything. My plan earlier in the semester was to really work off of Redwood and really have something to work off of in the future but right now I don't think that I know enough to really get that started and put that into effect. Please don't take this the wrong way, but I know that this is something that I'm going to be thinking about in the future. As a student, the grade I desire is an A just simply because it can only help me out in the short-term. However, I would feel guilty just leaving it at that, asking for the grade and calling it a day. No, this for me is more of an IOU than anything. I am taking your course again next semester and by then I will want to be able to show you

something that I have personally been able to work up. I know that this summer for me will be one filled with free time, and I want to have something to show you by the end of it. I feel as though I can at least accomplish something in the coming months, and I want to be able to share it with you and hear your critiques. As for next semester, I already realize that it is too late to be doing anything for this semester, but I have recognized my mistakes and plan on working off of them so that I don't run into the same problem again. I've also enrolled myself into a CS 139 course for next semester to work up a minor in the field to keep me in check. I'm sorry, I feel as though in some way I'm sort of taking advantage of the system, but I know that a year from now if I had asked for anything less than that grade I will be kicking myself.

Shawn Wilson
ISAT 252
5/7/14

Personal Reflection

Coming into this class, I was expecting a typical classroom atmosphere with the instructor up front teaching all class and the students sitting patiently waiting for the class to end. I honestly chose this course mostly because of the ratings the professor was given on RateMyProfessor .com, but I cannot say that I wasn't interested in computer programming from the start. I had taken a programming class in high school because I have always been good with computers, but I quickly decided it wasn't for me when I realized how boring and complicated html and the many other codes were. Since then, I thought I had lost all interest in computer programming, changed majors and am pursuing other interests. However, my little brother is currently taking the same high school computer programming class with another teacher and he's loving it. Last semester he kept me updated on what they're doing as a class and it seems a lot more interesting than when I took the class. My little brother got me interested in the computer programming again and that was the reason I wanted to find a class where I could learn more about the topic.

I strived to do well in this class. I enrolled in the class with basically no knowledge of html or the other codes associated with the class, but I really wanted to try and become comfortable and familiar with them. I wasn't expecting to learn everything in one semester, but I wanted to be able to grasp the general concepts as the course progressed. As the semester went on, my goals slowly changed and adapted to the typical activities we would complete in class everyday. My main goal was to create an awesome app that would make everyone's life at JMU much easier. I wanted to complete every lesson on codecademy .com and work with my groupmates to create a unique app that could possibly be the first step in creating a large collection of apps and websites using the codes discussed in class. I also wanted to learn more about the ISAT major as a whole. I have taken some time to research the major and similar minors to see what the requirements are and have discussed the possibility of declaring a minor in a similar subject. Unfortunately this idea seems to be slightly unrealistic unless I want to graduate a year and a half later than what I had originally planned.

In many ways, I thought I was very successful in achieving my goals in this class. I completed the html lessons on codecademy .com, and even moved on to some of the more difficult codes found on the website. I made multiple practice webpages without using hints from the website and I feel very comfortable with the basic html text and guidelines. I put a decent amount of time into learning what computer programming is all about; including careers associated with an ISAT major and graduate studies that build off of computer programming. Although I have no intention of declaring the ISAT major or a similar minor, I still plan on

pursuing more information on computer programming, especially through [codecademy .com](https://www.codecademy.com). As a whole, I found that I appreciate the subject of computer programming again. I find it very interesting and I'm happy to say that it is something I actually enjoy "studying".

Although there are areas where I feel I have achieved a decent amount and accomplished some different goals, there are also areas where I know I can make significant progress. I do not like to make excuses, but this semester has been a tough one for me. With this class being my only elective among six major courses, there have been multiple occasions where I have had to put ISAT 252 on the backburner. Whether it be a test (or two or three) that I have to study for all week, a thirteen-page research paper that I have to write, or a case study that I have to conduct, I will admit that some of these assignments have taken precedent over the completion of my app in this class. Besides that issue, procrastination is a problem that I have been dealing with all of my life. I truly believe procrastination is a habit that is common to everyone, so it has been one that I try not to feel too guilty about. However, this semester has been particularly strenuous due to my unusually excessive amount of procrastination. This problem, along with my larger-than-normal courseload for the semester, and my internship (not to mention the ridiculous amount of snowdays) have made it more difficult than I had hoped it would be to achieve all that I have wanted to in this class.

Despite the negative effect these problems have had on my classwork this semester, I plan to use them as a life lesson. This semester started off as my strongest semester yet in my college career. I knew that I had a lot on my plate, so I prepared myself for every week by creating a schedule that I would follow for every different day of the week. This system worked out very well and I managed to get A's on all of my tests, even though they were all on the same week! This was starting to become a regular ordeal, until the snow days came. I'm not sure exactly how this happened, but after having six days of class cancelled due to snow, my motivation just about disappeared. Since then, I have abandoned my "new" system and replaced it with one that allows me to settle with a B average in all of my courses. I greatly look forward to a new semester at JMU, where I can turn a new leaf and utilize this system that worked so well for me in the beginning of the semester. Organization, motivation, and the determination to do better than just average are three things I plan on practicing every day next semester, and I look forward to seeing how well I can handle them all.

I feel that, as an organization, JMU does a superb job of following its mission statement of producing "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Nearly every class that I have taken has taught me a lesson or value that I will take with me wherever I go, as long as I live. This class in particular taught me way more than I had ever anticipated, not even regarding programming but just about living life. The emphasis the professor placed on "deep reflection" and positivity every week really changed the way I acted day-by-day and how I handled

various situations in life. The weekly self-evaluations, for instance, honestly seemed like they would be a pain to do every week and in the beginning, I didn't take them very seriously. However, as the semester went on, I began to look forward to these assignments because it gave me the chance to stop whatever it was I was doing and focus on me. I was able to lie in bed and truly think about my week; what I regretted, what I appreciated most, and what I can change for next week. It even gave me a more positive outlook on the simple things and lead me to appreciate various feelings and emotions I would feel throughout the week. The overall great atmosphere of the class most definitely enlightened me and has helped pave the way for me becoming an "educated and enlightened citizen who [will hopefully] lead a meaningful and productive life."

Upon completion of this course, I truly feel I deserve an A. I feel I have learned the course objectives to the best of my ability and am leaving this class a more intelligent and enlightened individual as a whole. I'm happy to say that I went out on a limb to learn about something that I am very unfamiliar with, and I enjoyed doing it. I made new friends and learned that a class can be enjoyable even when it is over. I'm excited that I can use codecademy, and the many other resources provided to me by my classmates and my professor, whenever I like and continue to learn more about programming and other computer skills. Even if the professor feels that I do not deserve a grade as high as an A, I personally feel that I am a much smarter student than I was when I started this class. I'm proud that I have passed a class and enjoyed it at the same time.

Greg Von Wald

Coming into this course, I did not know what to expect. It was my first computer science related course and I had absolutely no idea what I was doing. Honestly I was expecting to have perhaps weekly programming assignments or some kind of structured assignments that would be geared towards beginners to teach us the foundations of coding. I expected to come out of the course with an idea of whether or not IKM was something I wished to pursue.

Based on these expectations, I set several learning goals for myself that were perhaps a bit too ambitious. I wanted to learn several languages and be able to apply them in a classroom as well as a workplace setting. These languages included JavaScript, CSS, HTML, and Python. I wanted to be able to have a marketable skill for my resume and for potential internships and jobs.

My goals evolved as I learned more and more about myself and about the way that the classroom functioned. Instead of aiming to learn specific programming skills, my paradigm shifted towards more self-exploration and self-fulfillment.


I grew up believing that grades mattered. I grew up believing that they were the primary determinants of your future. So all through high school I made sure that I always had straight A's. People would ask why I needed an A in every class and I'd lie and say that my parents would be really mad if I didn't. It wasn't my parents that would be mad. I would be mad. I put so much value in grades that I was able to exit high school with a 4.0. Then I arrived at college and received my first A-. This was a shock as the school system that I came from didn't give A-'s. My world was turned upside down as I didn't have a 4.0 anymore. It wasn't genuinely until this semester that I realized how little bearing your GPA has on defining you as a person. I thought a GPA was supposed to be the standardized measure for how much you've learned or how smart you are. But it's not standard at all! It's not standard across colleges, it's not standard across professors, and it's not standard across majors within the same university. And it's absurd to believe that this construct has so much power over how we operate.

And so as my sister graduates from James Madison as valedictorian, with a 4.0, I have finally come to grips with the fact that the GPA doesn't matter, it doesn't define you, nor will it actually define your future. You are the one in control of that, and you take control by igniting the fire to learn.

James Madison said that "Knowledge will forever govern ignorance: And a people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives." It is important that we focus on what we are learning and not how we are assessed. Because once we learn that which we need to know, we can take a good look at how we are assessed and change it. We can be our own governors and make democracy work. The current system fosters an oligarchy, not a democracy. It allows those at the top to remain at the top and the rest of us are inhibited and limited by the systems and benchmarks which they put in place.

That said, I do feel like I was successful in learning the basics of JavaScript and HTML. I completed the CodeAcademy courses and gained a valuable foundation for future coding

courses. I now understand the general syntax of code and while I may not be able to code and interpret advanced code, I can at least read and understand the basics.

Additionally, I was successful in helping to create the app HomeSafe with Cameron Stalker and Preston Rhodes. We were hoping to acquire a little more functionality by this point, however, the fact that we made it this far is remarkable. I would have really hoped to explore the Bluetooth functionality of having a wristband that the kid could wear to ensure that he is within a certain distance from his mom.

However, primarily, I was successful in shifting my paradigm away from grades and more towards learning. I have taken a look at myself in the mirror and thought about what type of person I want to be, excluding my GPA.

In accordance with JMU's Mission Statement, I absolutely feel more educated and enlightened. My horizons have been broadened in a way that I never thought they could. The world needs more people who think in the holistic way that this class encourages. Too many people remain entrenched in the paradigms prescribed by the world. One of the greatest enemies of knowledge is tradition. We get so caught up in the way that things have always been done and assume that they can't be wrong. However, the world is changing and as such, so our systems of education and assessing that education need to adapt.

I watched a really interesting video about how our school systems were engineered for the industrial revolution. The grand architect of the education system in America designed it for the Industrial Revolution. The system was set up in a way that would create an elite few with college educations, and a mass of unenlightened plebeians to work in the factories. However, times are changing and this is no longer what it takes to be successful in this world. You don't need masses of labor to become a productive and competitive nation. We now encourage everyone to receive a college education, but we haven't reexamined the barriers and constructs which inhibit them from doing so.

This style of course did not particularly work for me. In this context of an introduction computer programming course, it almost felt like we were pushed in the deep end and expected to swim. That said, I think that this course style is a fantastic idea. It's incredible because it allows those who want to learn, to learn. And those who would rather not learn anything, are not forced to complete assignments. However, the problem with doing this for an introductory course is that we don't really know where to start. The prospect of coming up with a project that can be carried out utilizing computer programming is fairly difficult when you aren't even capable of comprehending what computer programming could be useful for and what is too ambitious. However, what was great about the style of course was that it allowed novice programmers to interact with and get help from those who have been doing it for years and have that passion for it. It was awesome to see what these programmers were capable of with the hacker mindset and a few hours to code.

If I were to make recommendations for adjusting the course style, I like the ability to freely come and go in the lab instead of being pigeonholed into one hour-long block of time. However, with my schedule this semester, I had a class right before and a class right after this one and was not able to fully optimize my time in the lab. That being said, I think that there should be a little bit more guidance in the classroom. Perhaps give a lecture once a week on a concept related to computer programming. I understand that you were always available if we had any questions and you were a great help when we did. But as beginners, sometimes you don't even know the right questions to ask. However, I did really enjoy the community aspect of the course. A lot of us were running into similar problems and so those who had already figured it out were able to help the rest of us work through it.

I would like you to report an A as my grade to the registrar. Primarily, I would like this because if I have learned anything from this course, it is that grades are an arbitrary construct to quantify intelligence and are not an adequate expression of effort and understanding. Additionally, I have put an amount of work into this class that I think merits an A. I attended class and would work on the project at hand. While much of my time was spent on other challenging classes such as 253 and 212, I still dedicated as much time and effort that I was physically capable of. Finally, I believe that I learned a lot. And is that not what a grade is supposed to portray?

As it is finals week, I am running a massive sleep deficit. I have drank the prescribed amount of coffee, I have pulled the standard all-nighter, and I have spent more time in the library than I have at home. I just finished the most difficult semester of my college career, and I'm coming to grips with the fact that all of that energy and effort is going to be reduced to 7 letter grades which are weighted accordingly to accurately encapsulate my entire semester. However, unlike past semesters, I won't let my grades define me. I know how much I've learned and grown this semester and it can't be captured by a letter or a number. I've discovered stress-management techniques like meditation and running. I've discovered time-management techniques that allow me to fully optimize my time and maximize utility. I've discovered where my passions lie and how to make every class relevant to that so that in the end, the grade doesn't matter.

Celia Ross

I wasn't very sure what my goals were coming into the semester. Once I learned a little more about the class I decided to make a goal to create an iPhone app. The app was going to be designed to cater to the needs of one of my roommates. She could never remember what groceries she bought so I planned on making an app that had lists of her foods and shopping lists.

My main goal wasn't met this semester. Over the semester my goals changed into smaller goals. I wasn't sure where to start with any of the app work so I tried codeacademy first. My goals became more involved with the online site. Instead of having one big goal I broke it into "gain 5% on codeacademy." Sometimes I was able to achieve the weekly goals but sometimes I would get stuck on a code and it would take longer than expected to finish it or get to where I needed to be.

I felt I was successful in my goal of completing sections of codeacademy. I was able to do HTML and Javascript this semester. Sometimes I would get stuck on a section for two weeks until I was able to get the right code. Even though it would frustrate me, I was able to work past the speed bumps.

I found myself somewhat successful in basic understanding of coding. Although I don't think I could write out a ton of code by heart, I can explain the concepts behind several codes and find some errors. This is helpful, but not quite as far as I was hoping I would get. I think working with codeacademy has given me a better understanding of coding but there is still much room to continue learning concepts.

I didn't get a full understanding because I lacked the motivation. In the first few weeks I tried really hard and spent a lot of time trying to get through the sections quickly. After a couple weeks of that I got frustrated because I didn't feel like I was achieving anything. Working fast through them made me forget most of the things I'd learned right after I was finished. I wasn't really learning those things, I was just memorizing it for the short term. This burned me out fast and made me slow down a lot.

From going so fast through the first sections, I had a hard time doing the later sections too. I learned that I should really take the time to understand why I'm typing things in instead of just following the recipe. By understanding it better from the start, I give myself an easier transition into the heavier coding in the long run. Next time I will put more effort into what I'm doing at that time instead of just trying to work as fast as I can.

For myself particularly, I don't feel enlightened in the specific field but I feel enlightened as a person. Although I'm not sure how exactly to do coding, I have a better understand of how to achieve and make goals for myself. I feel more educated as a person than I do as a student.

Before this class, I had no idea that I lacked the motivation to set my own goals. This class helped me realize that I need to find a way to set concrete goals in the future. With those goals I need to find the motivation within myself to carry out the necessary actions. I've always thought I had plenty of drive to achieve my goals but I realized that it's much easier to achieve my goals if I have a structured plan set up.

This class has made me understand that other classes, with their day to day plans, make it easy for students to simply follow a plan to achieve goals. In the real



world, not everything is set up with this type of structure. The babying these classes provide do not set students up for realistic expectations of a career after college. An employer won't check up on every employee to make sure they're on the right track, they want results and it's up to the employee to make it happen. In order to prepare myself for this, I need to motivate myself.

A way to keep myself motivated would include making a schedule of short-term goals, like the weekly emails, to keep myself on task. I typically need a lot of structure to be successful in a class, in a class set up in this fashion, I need to make my own structure and follow through with it.

Once I have a structure I need to follow, I will have to minimize distractions in the future. This semester, Cameron asked to be partners. We worked on codeacademy together but soon after we became friends we struggled in focusing on things other than our work. I don't regret becoming partners with him because he's taught me a lot too. I've started thinking about things from whole new perspectives thanks to Cameron. Even though he practically criticized my entire life, he showed me new ways of thinking. I hope I've taught him something as well; Cameron analyzes every little thing, sometimes too much. I hope I've taught him to relax somewhat and enjoy things for what they are instead of trying to find the bad in things.

I transferred into ISAT this semester and meeting Cameron has made my transition a little easier. Because the program is so close-knit, I felt intimidated by all the friendships and wasn't sure if I'd be able to fit in. In 252, I met him and he became my first friend in the major. He gave me tips on professors and classes which helped me better understand ISAT. After becoming friends with him, I felt more comfortable branching out to people in my other classes too. If he wouldn't have approached me to be partners, I'm not sure I would have transitioned in as quickly.

If I were to retake the class, I would do it a little differently. First off, I would ask many more questions. I was so nervous coming into a new major that I found myself too intimidated to ask questions. For the first few classes I had no idea what I was even trying to learn. I think to help students in later classes, maybe lectures during the first two weeks would help. Giving a better overview of what they should be learning will help guide them. I think I would have had a better chance of success if I knew what exactly I was working towards better.

This class has taught me a lot about life and programming. I think I deserve an A because I put in the effort to get a basic understanding of programming. Even after taking codeacademy, I may not be able to run codes automatically, but I've never finished a class mastering a skill. Classes are taught to give an understanding of a topic and I think I have achieved a good understanding of coding. By coming to class regularly and participating in the online tools, I've learned the basic principles of codes and programming.

Kyle Dewey
ISAT 252
Professor Morgan Benton
End of Semester Narrative

Initially, when I enrolled for this class I expected it to be exactly like my other ISAT classes, except it would consist of a different topic. However, after the first day of class, I knew my expectations would change completely. Before attending class, I assumed it would be a boring class that would consist of long, difficult lectures. However, it was the complete opposite; it was a fun, enjoyable class that consisted of you learning at your own pace. Honestly, I had never taken a computer programming class before, so I was a little nervous on how I would perform compared to other students in the class who might have had previous experience. I was filled with joy when professor Benton explained his unique teaching methods. Although it was different than others professor, I thought his style of teaching was brilliant and fun. He transformed what could've been a boring lecture into a fun, productive, and informative class. I expected to learn a fair amount of computer programming by utilizing Code Academy, other online resources, professor Benton, and other students in the class. However, since it was my first coding class I did not expect to master a programming language or create a perfect webpage/app. I just wanted to put countless hours into the class and grasping the basic concepts so that I can use my skills to eventually create something I am passionate about.

In the beginning of the course I set a few main learning goals for myself: I wanted to grasp the basic concepts of computer programming and attempt to create a webpage. Over the course of the semester, I filled out numerous weekly-evaluations. These weekly evaluations were unlike anything I had done before. I have to admit I was very skeptical at first, but after taking them seriously week after week I realized that I had learned things about myself that I never took the time to look at before. These weekly self evaluations allowed me to set weekly goals for myself, which mainly consisted of learning computer programming concepts, working on Code Academy, and conducting research on my General Fishing Knowledge webpage. However, I did set several personal goals, which was refreshing once I completed them. Some of my personal goals included applying for internships, preparing for interviews, and attempting to break my bad habit of procrastination. I was very satisfied with myself when I would set the bar high and reach those high expectations. Therefore, I can say that my goal evolved from something simple relating to this to something more difficult for this class as well as beneficial, personal goals.

I felt successful the minute I began completing my weekly goals. Although I did not master coding or create some significant webpage/app, I believe I succeeded in learning a substantial amount about computer programming and in building knowledge to be able to pursue the creation of a webpage that interests me. Ultimately, I felt the most successful in gathering the massive amount of knowledge required for my General Fishing Knowledge webpage. This was an idea I came up

with about half way through the semester. I just began fishing and I have an interest in learning more about it; however, I don't have a "teacher" that can teach me about it, and I couldn't find any webpages online that would teach me the basics behind the sport. Thus I decided that I was going to learn by doing. Essentially I would research anything and everything about fishing by utilizing books, webpages, and videos that gave me reliable information. I began compiling this information in a document so that when I want to create the webpage I know exactly what information I will incorporate into it and I will have easy access to it as well. I did not realize that Fishing had so much information; therefore, it took me countless man hours and nearly all semester to gather the information. Another thing that I worked on for several hours a week every week of the semester was finding an internship for the summer. This was one of my main personal goals that I wanted more than anything. Fortunately, my hard work paid off because about a month ago I got an internship offer from an energy management company in my hometown. I was thrilled when I found out that I completed one of my main goals for the semester, and I would have to say that was the moment at which I felt most successful.

I believe that I failed my goal to create some significant webpage/app. I helped my partner Michael with our Energy webpage, but he was a much more experienced coder than I was. Although I gathered research for my personal webpage, I did not have the skills to code it and make it look excellent. I believe that what I learned is basic, but the basics will allow me to continue my pursuit of coding this Fishing webpage. I learned that coding does not click for me as it does for others, but I believe that if I put the time and effort into it the next coming semesters I will be able to comprehend and apply it to anything. Procrastination and time management were two issues of mine this whole semester; therefore, in order to fix those problems I will work on organizing my assignments and goals and setting reminders on my phone to complete them in a timely fashion. IKM is one of my sectors so I will have lots of time to work on improving my programming skills.

I feel way more educated than I did when I initially came into the class. I had no idea what programming was and now I feel as if I could have a conversation with someone about it. I feel way more enlightened than I did coming into this class. Knowing more about something I had no previous knowledge on as well as knowing more about myself has enlightened me lots. Although I have not figured out what I want to do in the future, I believe that learning more about myself was an excellent first step. Learning about my weekly goals and semester goals will allow me to learn about my interests and possible life goals. I believe that this internship I obtained through a semester goal will allow me to understand what I want to do in the near future as well as set a long-term goal for myself.

Like I said earlier, I admired professor Benton for embracing this style of teaching. I had never dealt with it before, but I feel as if I learned just as much, if not more, than a class where I would have to sit through a boring lecture class. I am taking ISAT 340

with professor Benton and I look forward to have another great semester learning under his teaching style. I wouldn't recommend that anything be changed.

I would like to you to report an A to the registrar. I believe that I deserve an A after the amount of hours I put into this course. Although putting in hours is important, I believe the amount of information I conceptualized was phenomenal and well worthy of an A. I came into the course not sure of what computer programming was, and I left knowing a great deal about it. Also, I continually completed the weekly and quarterly evaluations in a timely manner, attended class and stayed after class on some days. I believe my hard work and dedication makes me deserving of this grade.

Thanks for a fun and knowledgeable semester! Have a great summer!

Kenny Abod

ISAT 252

5/7/2014

Exit Interview Reflection Paper

When registering for this class, I was merely looking for a basic class that seemed interesting enough to fill an open spot in my schedule that fulfilled credit hours for me to graduate. Also, since not too many of my friends have the same major as me, I wanted to take some classes with some of my buddies. Little did I know that I would have more than just a few friends in the class, but none of these reasons were the main one for signing up for this class. I took a computer science class in high school, which I enjoyed very much. I am thoroughly entertained by messing around on computers and exploring different programs and functions from which I can learn new things. Lastly, both of my brothers are heavily involved with computers. The middle brother is a computer science major at Virginia Tech. In addition, my youngest brother just started his own company, Notable Music LLC, where they just finished getting funding for their website where they will teach people how to play guitar based on a note-recognition algorithm written by him and his friend. They exceeded their goal of \$20,000 by raising \$32,250 through an app called Kickstarter. So, when the opportunity presented itself to take a programming course, I jumped on it, ready to tackle whatever came my way. As the first day of classes this semester approached, I was completely oblivious to what I was getting myself into. By the end of the first week of classes and much to my surprise, I found myself thinking eagerly about what I was going to be able to accomplish in ISAT 252, perhaps much more than most classes I've taken at JMU.

Intrigued by the style and structure of this class, I was highly anticipating the freedom and open style of learning, which seemed kind of strange and unfamiliar at first. Since I had a basic idea of what I was going to be learning in this class, I had a few expectations I wanted myself to meet by the end. I wanted to be able to openly discuss coding and styling, not only with my brother, but also with other CIS, ISAT or computer science majors who I knew. To do that, I knew that I had to quickly, and thoroughly, learn the fundamentals and then apply them to a website, app or any type of project to figure out exactly what I was doing. Codecademy was a very useful source for doing just that; in fact, I found myself casually enjoying working through the modules when I had some spare time during the early weeks in school.

Another goal of mine was becoming a leader in our group for our project. I quickly learned that I was the only one with previous coding experience, which wasn't really saying too much; nonetheless, I wanted to know what I was talking about when addressing our team members. For as long as I can remember, I have enjoyed stepping up and taking on leadership roles, so when the opportunity presented itself, I immediately presented ideas and channeled others' so that we could get the ball rolling with our app.

A big problem of mine, especially for classes similar to this where attendance isn't required, is actually making it to every class. Though it might seem cliché, I find myself uncomfortable attending a class after missing the previous one; therefore, making it easier each time thereafter. This is exactly the reason why I made it a goal of mine to attend every class for as long as possible before letting other things take precedent.

As the semester progressed, I saw some developments and trends beginning to form. I felt as though I had definitely taken on the leadership role in our group. When I mean leader, I don't mean dictator or supreme controller; rather, I was merely the one to encourage my team to come to class, make progress on Codecademy and continue to generate ideas for our app. This was very fulfilling because I felt that if we didn't have some sort of organization from the beginning, we would have been cramming to finish something by the end of the semester just to show it off like we did something. This was not the case, and none of us wanted it to be that way. We were all very creative and open to new thoughts and ideas. The only difficult problem, just as I suspected from the beginning, was making it to class; yet, I realized that it was not one person's fault. A team consisting of five members, four of whom sold their souls to the dark depths of the cold world known as Zane Showker Hall, certainly does not hold for an optimistic scenario where every person makes it to every class during the semester. Now, I can't speak for everyone in my group; however, I can admit that as the semester progressed, I did not keep the same track record of attending class. That was one major setback to two of my goals. It did not bode well for my learning of the material. On the other hand, whenever I made it to class, I worked diligently and thoroughly because I knew that in order to actually start making the app, we had to have an idea of what we were doing and where we wanted to go with it.

When it came to the actual building of our app, I sat down and encouraged our team to generate ideas so that I could write the code for it. After we were given the template for the structure of the app, the code was not very challenging; however, the team seemed to struggle with it when I was not there. Resultantly, I made it a point to make it to class as much as possible from the time that we actually started the app until it was finished. Unfortunately, I was very upset that I was not there to present our app due to illness, but I was very proud of the work that we accomplished throughout the entire semester. I know I can speak for everyone in our group when I say that I am shocked and very proud of our feats this semester because our hard work paid off.

There are plenty of things that I have taken away from this class. First and foremost, I have a better understanding of my time management. Within the class, I underestimated how long Codecademy would take to complete, and I never ended up actually completing it. However, I am glad that I have a Codecademy account in case I ever need to refer to it or return and learn more code. Our team worked individually through Codecademy up until spring break, after which we began working on our app for the remainder of the semester. If I had to retake the course, I would probably begin working on the app earlier and continue with Codecademy simultaneously. Still regarding time management, I realized that since attendance for this class

was optional, I could afford to miss a class if I had a big test or project to tackle later that day. As I stated earlier, I don't necessarily like to do this unless absolutely necessary, but it became easier once the first time already occurred. I learned that my time between when my last class of each day lets out and when my head hits the pillow for the night is extremely valuable. Putting things off and cramming at the last minute is a bad habit, something I am doing a better job of avoiding, but I still find this a common problem of mine.

ISAT 252 has been quite the experience. It is one thing to take an interesting class that won't just be another run-of-the-mill, GPA-killing GenEd or elective, but it is another thing to take a class that allows you to express your creativity as a result of the environment in which it takes place. From day one, it was clear to me that this would be a prime example of the latter. I can always tell when a teacher passionately cares about teaching students, helping them learn material and providing ways of making it interesting to them. That is exactly what I have experienced in this class, contrary to a similar class I had this semester. My spreadsheet finance class was 100% excel based, had very dry material and I left the class every day trying to grasp what I just did for an hour and fifteen minutes. That was never the case with this class. Every time I entered ISAT 252, I knew exactly what I was going to be doing for the class, and I was able to follow along easily with very minimal problems or difficulty understanding what I was doing. This class has been very fun and interesting throughout the entire semester. I can definitely say that this class has broadened my interests to the point where I hope that later on down the road I anticipate working with computers and writing some sort of code or programs.

This course was different to say the least; however, it was extremely enjoyable and I would take it again in a heartbeat. The only thing I would change would be to keep up more with the self-evaluations. I feel that had I kept up with them, I would have felt more accomplished about myself throughout the semester. Even though I slacked off on those, I always thought about what I could do to improve my week, brighten someone else's day or just tackle a simple task. I have no major changes to make to the class itself though. There was a good balance of individual and group work, both of which I like. I would recommend this class to anyone who enjoys expressing their creativity and doing something different that they wouldn't do unless they stepped out of their comfort zone.

The grade that I would like reported to the registrar based off of my work and accomplishments this semester would be an A. I have learned a lot from this class, and I have put in the work that I believe reflects a well-deserved grade.

End of Year Essay

By Chris Miller

Coming into this year I expected something totally different from what I received. I looked at the course title and expected a class where we were going to be expected to do precanned programs in a specific language and would be graded on how pretty our code looked. I expected the teacher to be a disconnected socially-awkward brilliant mind who, while smart, could seem disinterested in his students. I couldn't have been more wrong in these assumptions. I hate classes like the one I mentioned. Since those teachers have been using those same projects for however long they have been teaching the class, their students don't learn to code; they learn to recreate those specific programs. Needless to say, I was not excited to take this course at all.

When I found out that this course was going to be unlike the one I mentioned above, I was still weary because I wasn't sure how much I was going to enjoy taking a coding class. I had taken remedial coding classes before in both C# and Java and dislike both of them. The projects we had done were boring and pointless, and I didn't learn enough in the time of the course to use my abilities of writing code for something that had meaning to me. Thus, I thought I didn't like coding. As it turns out, coding had just been poorly presented to me. My main goal for the year was to find something that I enjoyed working on. I didn't want to have to work myself up to learn.

I eventually settled on learning python. It is a language I know that my dad enjoys, and something he had mentioned would be useful to know. Grudgingly I took it upon myself to

listen to him and learn python. I started with codeacademy but learned after a few days of doing it that I felt it was going too slowly. I bought two python books that my Dad recommended to me and began using the online style guide on python's website. Before I would write a function or statement into my actual script I would create a smaller script with a small example of whatever function/statement I wanted just so I knew how they worked. I was successful in creating the code I wanted, and also understanding why everything works the way it does. While I was learning about Python I became quite interested in its relation with Linux so I decided to see if I could play around with it just for fun. I spent some time changing my laptop so it could dual boot to Ubuntu. This took much longer than I wanted it to, but it was really fun to set up nonetheless.

I feel like I failed in going above and beyond. I set a goal for myself at the beginning of the year to write the code that I did eventually write. I feel like I could have done more than that. Not to say that I wasn't challenged by the code that I wrote, but that I could have challenged myself further. It is one area I wish I had done better in.

All in all I feel like I have learned a lot from this semester. I challenged myself in my coding and also in my outside learning that I related to this class. I loved that I had the freedom to discover things on my own and realize when my learning was failing me. I was able to correct problems that I encountered on my road and I was forced to become more willing to explore my resources instead of being spoonfed the material like I would in a regular class. Because of this, I learned the material a lot better and didn't memorize it just so I could parrot it out later like I do in many of my other courses.

This style of course worked really well for me. I enjoyed it thoroughly all the way through, and it allowed me flexibility according to my other courses. On some weeks when I would have two or three exams in my other classes I wouldn't spend much time working on this class' work. Other weeks, however, I would spend hours just learning the code and learning about the Linux line of operating systems and their integration with Python. This style of course also allowed me to make mistakes and forced me to learn from them. There was a point in time where I was having a syntax error with an if statement that I had written and I had spent almost three hours looking at python style guides trying to find where this syntax error was. I googled up and down until I finally found a website called stack overflow. Stack overflow is essentially a Yahoo answers for coders. I asked my question on there and within the day I had an answer for my problem. The gentleman that answered my question even was nice enough to hop on Skype with me to answer a few more questions about my code that I was having trouble with. It was probably the most gratifying experience that I had in relation with this class.

Lastly I would like an A in this class. I definitely made the time commitment to this class that I feel I earned an A. I encountered challenges and I messed up on many occasions, but I got through them and learned a lot. Not having the safety net of a rubric to fall back on forced me to forge my own path, and in doing so I learned much more than I ever would from a traditional code class.

Michael Johnson

252 Exit Paper

When I signed up for this class, I expected to learn a lot. I heard coming in about how there were no grades in this class. I thought that this system will help me learn better. One of the reasons why I think I would learn more through this system is because there would be very low stress. In my other classes, when I get a bad assignment back, I really do think that it affects me. It lowers my self confidence in that class and I stress out a lot. When I stress out a lot about a class, I start to overthink things, which is not good. I also came in with very little programming experience. I took a basic computer science class my senior year of high school just as an elective. It was mostly just JavaScript. However, I really enjoyed it in high school and that is why I took this class seriously. I really enjoy programming and I wanted to learn as much as I could.

I set two main goals when I first started this class. My first goal was to learn another language other than JavaScript. My second goal was to increase my knowledge with JavaScript because I kind of forgot most of what I learned in high school, but I still remembered a little.

As the semester went along, my goals evolved a little. For instance, after I finished learning as much as I could on code academy, all my focus went to my project. I remember what you told us the first day of class, which was that you wanted us to leave showing that we made something. I really took that seriously because I thought that if I did not leave with something, I would feel like a failure.

I think that I was successful in many ways in this class. The first way I believe that I was successful is that I learned a new language, which was one of my goals. According to code academy, I mastered HTML. I finished all the tutorials on Code Academy. The next reason I believe I was successful was that I refreshed myself with JavaScript. I think I got about thirty five percent done on code academy for JavaScript. I would have done more, but it was half way through the semester and I had not started on my project yet. The last thing (and most important thing in my opinion) was that I created a website. I combined my skills that I learned in HTML and JavaScript to make my website. My website consists of a table that shows six different items that contribute to your energy use in your house. You type in the kilowatt-hours per week for each item, it adds them up, and then tells you if you are using too much or too little.

There are two things that I think I failed in this class. The first failure was that I did not master JavaScript. I learned enough to make my program work, but I feel like I could have learned a lot more. Like I said before, I think I only completed thirty five percent of the tutorials for JavaScript. The next thing that I think I failed at was the complexity of my program. From looking at other people's projects, it seems like theirs was maybe a little more complex. However, I knew that those people had had previous coding experience and a lot more than me. I just feel like I could have maybe added more to my project to make it better and to show off more of what I have learned. I think in the future, I will try being more creative and spending more time on my project to make it more up to par with my expectations on what a very successful project look like.

I feel that I am a more educated person after taking this class. I believe that the main reason is because I had to learn everything on my own. My group fell apart about a quarter of the way through the semester. One of my group members left college and the other one I never saw during class. However, this did not upset me. I actually saw it as a bigger challenge. It taught me how to do independent learning. It challenged me more I believe. Also, just because of the way the class is structured, I believe I am much more educated. Everything depends on what you put into it. There are no lectures, so you have to learn on your own. I give a great thanks to the internet because that is where I learned a lot. Code Academy provided me with a good starting spot. When I was on my own working on my project, if I ever had a question, I would look it up online and most of the time I would figure out what was missing or what I was doing wrong. I also want to thank Paul for all of his help. Most of the time when I was in class, you were always helping someone else. Paul helped me a lot with questions I had with my project and I learned a lot because of him. He was good at explaining what he was doing and how he was fixing something. I would always ask questions if I did not know or understand something as well. With the combination of all of these things, I believe I learned a lot in this class and became much more educated.

I do believe that this class got me to know myself better. I think that one of the main things that helped me do this were the weekly evaluations. I always took them very seriously and never missed a week without filling them out. The questions on there really made me think of my life and what is going on in the present. I also think this class was proof that I can do anything if I put my mind to it. At the beginning of the semester, I was having a hard time picturing myself creating a website or app. In some sense, I am glad my group did not work out because it allowed me to challenge myself and work harder. If I would have been in the group I would probably have not worked as hard since I had other people helping me. I like group work, but I think that for this class, it was better that I worked by myself. This class also made me like coding so much more. I am actually strongly considering this as my concentration. I always thought that I did not have enough skill in programming to be able make IKM my concentration. However, after taking this class, I think I can do it if I devote a lot of time.

I very much liked the style of this class. Like I said before, I think it allowed me to learn more and I think other students would agree with me that they learned a lot as well. I also liked how you explained why you do it this way. You said that in programming, there are always new languages coming out that you will have to learn on your own, so it is important for us to learn on our own. Because of this, I think it is the perfect way to teach this class and I would not change anything. I am taking ISAT 340 with you and I hope it is the same type of class.

I would like you to report an A for my grade in this class. As I explained in the previous paragraphs, I believe I learned a lot in this class. I am completely confident with my HTML skills now. I did not know anything about HTML before this class and because of the fact that I finished every Code Academy tutorial for HTML and the fact that I created a website, I believe an A is a fair grade.

Daniel O'Brien

ISAT 252

May 7, 2014

Course Reflection

I chose to take ISAT 252 because I was considering a minor in Computer Information Systems in the College of Business. Before arriving the first day I was expecting the class to be structured like any other class with quizzes, tests, homework and the standard course assignments. As far as my expectations were concerned I wanted to see if I liked the material covered in this class to determine if I wanted to pursue a minor In CIS. I found out that the course was unstructured and that I could take my learning in the direction I wanted. I felt a little overwhelmed with the daunting task of creating my own program with no computer knowledge. I wanted to learn as much I possibly can because I found the topic very interesting and I could take it in any direction I wanted to.

The Learning goals I set for myself were to reach a final destination; which is a completed application. I formed a team with a few of my friends and after much deliberation we decided what we wanted to build. We all agreed that we were tired of going to get food on campus and finding out that the particular place was closed or not opening until a specified time. The app we decided to create was a list of all of JMU's dining facilities with the hours and menu each day, that was easily accessible. At first I didn't know how to apply my learning goals to reach the final objective of a completed app. I decided that I would start to learn HTML in code academy and wanted to learn as much as I possibly could about Java Script, HTML, and CSS.

Initially at the beginning of the semester we wanted to build a website with all the dining hall information in it. I started with code academy to familiarize myself with the computer language. I was slow to pick up the html language and struggled with a few parts in code academy. Sometimes it would take me 30 minutes to complete one lesson and I began to think the application was not every going to become a reality. Unfortunately, I lowered my expectations for myself believing that I would never be able to create a webpage. I began to work on Java Script for a while to take a break from html. I then learned that I would not need Java for this project, so I went back to html. After I continued to work on code academy I began to understand it better and realized that paying attention to minor details is the key to success. With continued practice my team members and I began to feel more confident in our skills and set our goals higher. We now believed we could make the website in code academy and the next objective was to complete it in their interface. We continued to work on our html skills in code academy while building our website inside their interface. Our skills began to grow more and more and we eventually had our webpage completed in code academy. At this point, there is a few weeks left in the semester and we set our objectives higher to get our application on our phones. Once we saw our progress starting to build, we were very motivated to complete

our project and we began to work harder and harder. As our motivation increased and we became passionate about completing the project our learning became the most effective.

The concrete artifact of my success in this class is our application. To build the application I acquired many skills and I now have a basic understanding of the relationships to make a website. Most of my learning occurred when I was trying to solve problems inside our app with notepad. I am now familiar with JQuery and how to make it do cool and interesting transitions. I also feel I was successful due to the ability to learn outside of the code academy in an unstructured environment with the help of Morgan.

My failures in the course are I did not get to learn as much as I originally wanted to. I wanted to have an in depth understanding of CSS, Java Script and Html. I also did not complete nearly as much code academy as I wanted to. I never really ended up learning anything about CSS and was disappointed because I could have done so in code academy. I learned a small amount about Java Script but not as much as I had anticipated. Assessing myself and why I was not able to achieve my desired success was because of my course load this semester. I began my first series of major classes and was very determined to do well. To be able to succeed I had to invest immense amounts of time into the classes. I understand that I could have sacrificed additional hours out of my free time to learn more about coding. I was not dedicated enough to do this because I valued that time to relax and recharge. Looking back over the semester, I realized that I could have stayed after class for an additional amount of time each day but it is a lot easier said than done. To address my failures I do not have any specific plans. Looking in hindsight it is easy to say you will do something but coding to me right now is interesting but not my top priority. I simply do not have the time to fully achieve my learning objectives. With that being said I still believe that I was successful in the course because I was still able to learn a good amount through completing our application. I find coding fascinating and with a large amount of free time this summer I can definitely see myself working on our application more throughout the summer.

I feel much more educated after completing this course because in the beginning of the course I did not even know what html, Java Script or any code languages were. I definitely feel more educated and more enlightened. I feel as if there is now an entire new world that has just been opened up to me to begin to explore. I may not currently have the time now to further my learning, but I realize that I can learn a lot of this on my own and with a little research. After taking the class I decided not to pursue a CIS minor. I am very interested in the subject but I do not think I would be able to handle the course load of extra business courses. I learned a significant amount about myself throughout this semester. I learned a lot by "putting the mirror to my face" on a weekly basis allowing me to learn a great deal about myself. The one consistent thing I realized in the weekly self-evaluations were that I always had high amounts of stress. After realizing this, I began to try and not let things stress me out as much. It is not an easy thing to do this because I believe it is inherent in my nature but I now realize that if I try my best usually good results come. I now realize stressing about things does not help solve the problem. The further I get into college the more I learn that all I can give is my best effort. Another thing I realized from the weekly self-evaluations is having an optimistic attitude is key

for successful performance and a well-rounded life. After consistently seeing the...How optimistic? How confident? How thankful questions? I realize how fortunate I am.

I started to try to make myself restructure things cognitively to view them in a more optimistic manner. Trying to think of things differently does not automatically come, but after working at it for a while I believe it has increased my happiness and my confidence. Looking at things optimistically also fosters confidence. With these two combined, I started to see great results in my life. One day when I was sitting in my room taking the weekly self-evaluation the question of how grateful or how thankful began my thought process. I now realize how fortunate I am. I have an excellent opportunity for education at a great institution. We hear people complaining on a daily basis about how "hard" their life is with all their homework etc. I started to really appreciate the opportunity I have and realized how easy I have it. The simple weekly questions have put things into perspective for me. If you focus on what you have vs. what you don't have you will always be happy and I have begun to realize this in the last 4 months. There are many people out there that would do anything to be in the position I am, therefore I have become very thankful for the gifts and opportunities I have been given. From answering the weekly questions, I truly believe it has greatly impacted my life in a positive way.

I have never taken a course structured like this one. I really enjoyed being able to work on my project at my own pace with my own objectives. I believe it is very effective for people who truly have an interest in the subject matter. When being told what you have to learn on a daily basis, I believe it restricts learning. When students have an interest in a material, combined with the ability to take it in whatever direction they desire it will create the most passion. I believe this will ultimately facilitate learning at a higher degree. If it were up to me I would not change anything about this class. It worked great for me because I was able to learn in a relaxed setting, which was my favorite part [I think more teachers should try to be like Morgan because he befriends his students and can relate to them. I have had teachers that have been very detached from their students and also had teachers who make their students fear them.] Combined with the class structure and the friendliness of the professor I believe it is a great course. This has been my most enjoyable course yet at JMU.

I would like to request an A for my grade.

Increase
in
Positivity

Kevin Alders

5/7/14

Professor Benton

End of semester narrative

Coming into this class I expected it to be much different. My expectations were that we were going to be lectured each day and have certain projects and tests that we were required to complete. Instead this class put the responsibility of learning in the students hands. At first I was a little apprehensive about how this was going to work because nothing was necessarily required of me, so it was up to me to decide what I wanted to get out of the class.

When setting my learning goals for the semester the weekly evaluations were a major help in guiding my focus and keeping me on track. The weekly evaluations made an impact on my goals for ISAT 252, but also for other classes as well. I was able to set up five goals for the week and focus to try and accomplish them. Then when the following Wednesday came around, I would be able to evaluate what helped or hindered me from achieving my goals. When there was a goal that I failed to accomplish that was a great reminder for me to pull it together and get working on that goal. So next week when my next evaluation came around, I could check it off that I accomplished that task. When filling out the evaluation it gave me a few minutes to slow down and reflect on myself. Also I was able to monitor how I was living my life. The questions asked about my emotions and feelings for the week. Often times I would look back on the good times that I enjoyed, but also think about the stresses and the worries that were going in my life. From taking those weekly evaluations I can look at myself and say that I live a pretty balanced life. I tend to not get too high or too low. I feel that I take school very seriously and doing well is important to me, but living a balanced life is also something I keep in mind. As bad as I may do on a test or in a class, I have to remember that there will be plenty of more opportunities for me to do well and tomorrow is a new day for me to prove that.

When looking at my goals over the course of the semester I would say they continued to show improvement on my project and progress on this semester as a whole. In terms of reflection on my project, I would say my group took a good approach to the project. We all started off doing code academy to get a feel for coding because none of us have ever done any coding before. This was a great website that helped lay the foundation for us and get a start on our project. So back to how my goals have evolved over the semester, I would say that they became more focused as the semester progressed. Initially they were pretty broad and did not cover anything that I would not be doing out of the ordinary. So with time I began make them more focused and detailed on goals that I would not otherwise accomplish. This was helpful because it got me to complete assignments ahead of time and be sure that certain parts of my project were being completed.

Well my first success I would say was completing a programming project and presenting it in class. There was a point in the semester that I was worried we would not be able to complete the project because we were all new to programming and not sure on an idea. Once again by setting goals and taking the project in manageable steps, were able to chip away at it ultimately coming out with a quality project. Another goal that I accomplished this semester was doing well in my intermediate accounting class. Going into the semester I failed my first quiz very badly and was nervous that I was not going to

make it through the accounting. I definitely had a break down. But I was able to recover by making my accounting work part of my weekly goals and main focus for myself. Pending the grade I got on the final, I got a B in the class, but I feel pretty confident that I did well enough to maintain that grade. Another major endeavor that I set upon this semester was obtaining externships. I spent a tremendous amount of time working on my resume and applying for externships. I did not receive all the offers I would have liked, but I would still say it was a success because I am attending three externships this summer. If anything from all the interviews I went on, I got some great experience in interviews and networking, but also got my name out there. So next year when I begin to apply for internships, they already have an idea of who I am and I have and I have a feel for which firms I prefer.

Onto the goals I failed to achieve. Throughout each semester I had my ups and downs, but I feel someone's true character is shown when they are down. Back to the externships topic just because we recently were discussing it, but my next step is to improve my interviewing skills. I feel most of my interviews went well, but maybe they were seeing something that I didn't. With that said I need utilize the resources the school offers and do some practice interviews. This way when I go to apply for internships in the fall, I will be better prepared. Another area that I feel I struggled with at times was taking care of myself physically. I don't know whether I was just that busy this year or did I just not make time to take care of myself and get some exercise in. Throughout my life playing sports has been a hobby of mine that I have enjoyed, but this semester I think I failed to make time for that. This fall my course load will not be as heavy, so I plan to make an effort to spend time getting some exercise in. Because living a healthy life would only increase the chances to live longer. And of course who doesn't want to spend more time on this great planet. In regards to academics, I would say that I did pretty well this semester. I feel my GPA this semester will be right around what my cumulative is. There were some assignments that I wish I had planned to do ahead of time that I continued to put off. For example I have an ethics paper that is supposed to be 3,500 words and I have not really gotten a great start on it.... Granite I have been focusing on my other classes because of finals, but I probably should have begun the project 2 weeks ago when she assigned it. But once again I have to make the best of the situation and get after it instead of sitting and complaining that I have paper to do while it seems everyone else is done with finals. In the future I plan to improve my time management skills so I can avoid leaving things for the last minute. Procrastination has been a problem of mine for a long time. I have made strides to improve procrastination, but it could always be better.

As I am nearing the end of this semester I would definitely say that I am more educated and enlightened. When looking back on the classes that I took, some may seem absolutely pointless but I still got something out of them. For example I am taking Math 103 which I thought was going to be joke, but actually requires me to do some work. I figured it was going to be very basic math, but some the problems are more difficult than I expected. From taking the class I have learned more about math, whether or not I will ever use it again, I at least have that knowledge and can apply it if necessary. In regards to being more enlightened, I feel that I have become a more well-rounded individual and have a better understanding of life. Last semester I studied abroad in Belgium for 3 months which was a very enlightening experience and I figured how much more does James Madison University have to offer? Although once again I was proved wrong. The definition of enlighten is give someone greater knowledge and understanding about a subject or situation. This semester I learned that college is not about the grades and classes, it is about growing up and expanding your knowledge in the process. This semester I

have done a lot of growing. For starters, this is the first semester that I have lived off campus so things were much different. From paying billings each month to cooking dinner most nights. Once again, paying bills and cooking will be everyday life activities for me after college, so overall I would say I am more enlightened following the conclusion of this semester. Also during this semester I joined the accounting fraternity. The biggest impact that had on me was the advice I received from the older brothers who have been through the accounting program. Advice on ways to study best for certain classes and help with networking. Actually one of the older brothers introduced me to the recruiter for one of the externships and I ended up getting an offer from them. If it wasn't for her bringing me to the networking event with the firm, I don't know if I would gotten an offer from them. Joining Beta Alpha Psi, the accounting fraternity, has been time consuming, but the benefit and experiences from it definitely outweigh the time it takes.

Throughout my academic career I have never experienced a teacher take the approach you did towards teaching. I really liked the standoff approach because it put the responsibility on the students. It allowed us to use our imaginations and create a project of our own. Rather than most classes that are require the memorization of a large amount of information and we are expected regurgitate on a test. None the less when we take a test we are often under time constraints which often cause me to panic and cloud my vision. Another point that I liked about this class was the level of stress. Throughout this semester I was often feeling overwhelmed with too much work and pressure from certain classes. I didn't feel that intense pressure when I was attending this class, but I also knew I there was work to be done. Making the work on my project much more enjoyable because I was not under a great deal of pressure. This is an approach to teaching that I wish many more teachers took because it empowers the students. Through the weekly evaluations we are able to keep ourselves on track and focused on what we need accomplish. While also we are offered the freedom to think. Plus when questions arrive either the TA or yourself were there along the way to help. For instance we got stuck at a few points in the project where we were not sure how to get the project on phone gap and you offered your assistance.

I would like you to report an A to the registrar office for my grade in your class. When looking back on the semester I reflect on the things I can take away from this course. The first aspect that I improved upon was my group working skills. I was in a group of 5 students so at times it was difficult to get things done because we were a large group. I felt I took the lead for the group and did a lot of the managing. One of my strengths is my organization skills. My goal throughout the completion of our project was to keep my group focused on our task at hand. When analyzing how we completed the project, I realized that we did it in a number of steps. Like I said previously, we began by doing wok in code academy and then we applied our knowledge to programing in a notepad. We continued fine tuning our project by adding color and have the screen flip when a button was clicked. A lot of this was trial and error, but sometimes that is the best way to learn. For example we wanted to get the links for all the menus on the notepad. Although we were not completely sure how to do this, so we would refer back to code academy and collaborate our thoughts until we figured it out. Overall I must say that my team worked well together and we all put a good effort forward. In my opinion, I feel this class was a great learning experience. I made sure that I did all my weekly evaluations and tri-semester surveys. A couple of them ended up being done a little later than I would have liked because I got caught up with other work, but I always made sure that I completed them. Also I made an effort to cover all the topics on the syllabus. I posted a dream about me, which was to try as many different foods as possible. Which

Same
thing
Ken
said

I will continue to do throughout my future. Also I made sure I reviewed the posted material on the website to contribute to my learning this semester. I feel I deserve an A in ISAT 252 because I completed a project, did weekly evaluations and the biggest reason is that this was unique class that added to college experience. I would definitely recommend this class to other students and I would say continue with your teaching approach. It seems you have continued to improve and refine the course, making it attractive class for future students to take.

Upon knowing that I was required to take a computer programming class this semester, I will be honest in saying that I was more than a little intimidated. Although being an ISAT major, I had never explored the world of coding, it seemed too foreign and hard to learn. Although I did think that teaching your computer how to do something was cool, I thought it was something only geniuses had a knack for (as portrayed in the media). I was no Bill Gates or Steve Jobs, so I knew that this would be a challenging, but hopefully rewarding experience for me. I knew that this would be my hardest, most time consuming semester yet (and I was right), and I was so happy to get you as my professor, especially because multiple sources had told me that you were the most chill teacher around. When I first got your email and the site including the syllabus I actually got pretty excited to see what programming was all about.

The goals I set myself in the beginning was to learn the basics of HTML, CSS, and JavaScript just to basically test the waters of my ability to code. Then, after we formed teams, my group decided to make an app that we ourselves, not to mention, any other student at James Madison University could use. Our idea was, in my opinion, ingenious. How many times did I as a freshman, go into the dining halls blindly, hoping for the best. It was time for this Russian Roulette of picking a place to eat, ended. We decided to make an app that would let students see the menu, nutrition facts, hours, and locations of different dining halls and eateries on campus before they actually took the trek and learned the hard way. We probably didn't realize that early that this was going to be extremely time intensive, but we did soon. We decided to split up the different parts of the app. Jamie and Taner would work on the menu and nutrition facts, Mickey would work on the hours page, and I would be responsible for the map in which all the locations of the eateries would be displayed. I first learned the basics of JavaScript and HTML on CodeAcademy, which was fun, but could also be frustrating if you were not able to finish a step. This made it all the more rewarding and valuable when you could actually figure out what was wrong and then fix the error. That green check mark never looked so beautiful. Sometimes my goals were halted by the fact that my other course workloads were too heavy and at one point I felt as if I was drowning in assignments. Eventually, I did manage to get back on track and with some assistance from Paul, the TA, our app went from a dream to reality.

Over the course of the semester my goals evolved from giant goals to more small, realistic ones. At the beginning of the semester I would write that in one week I could finish a language on code academy, but as my other coursework that was graded harshly and due at a set date became flooding in, these goals had to become spread further and further apart. I did become good at setting attainable goals for myself by the time mid-semester came around and

was able to progress without stressing myself out too much. The app was a goal that kept being pushed back further and further until I finally had some time to breathe, but once I was able to get my head above water (barely), I made sure that I made headway on it sooner rather than later.

There were some definite benchmarks that made me feel proud and successful over the course of this semester in computer programming. By the end of my time in CodeAcademy, although I did not complete the languages, I feel as if I had gotten the important skeletal skills of them, and I was actually able to understand most of the coding shown to me because of this. My favorite piece that was completed on CodeAcademy was the rock, paper scissors game because it was challenging, as well as cool to see how one can create an operable computer game based on simple demands based on actions of the player. Even my boyfriend, one of the smartest people I've ever met, was impressed with my progress. I also felt accomplished that I attended almost every class and stayed a double period most days, since I have had a history of trouble waking up early (which is why none of my Monday, Wednesday, Friday classes next semester start earlier than 11:15.) I actually enjoyed coming to class because it was a very relaxed atmosphere where I didn't feel pressured, and actually wanted to stay. If I didn't have other classes, I probably would have stayed a triple period. My most proud moment as a result of this class was seeing our hard work come to fruition with our app. It was beyond cool to see an idea that started only in our heads come to life. I had always been amazed at certain apps, wondering how the creators brought their ideas to life, and made it available to the public, and at that moment, I could not have been more proud of my group. It had been a rough semester for all of us, and even through all the hardships and disappointments of our other classes, we still managed to keep our eyes on the prize.

Although, in many ways I felt successful this semester, I did feel unsuccessful in some regards as well. I wish I was able to dedicate more time to learning the code itself, rather than giving up on the parts that frustrated me. This was mostly due to the fact that I didn't have that much time this semester in general. I was so stressed out this semester that I lacked sleep, my immune system weakened, and I was getting sick all the time. In fact, I had been to the Health Center no less than 4 times this semester for various ailments. It felt like all for nothing too, since I would study for no less than 25 hours for tests in certain classes and still fail them anyway, which left me feeling hopeless at certain points. I did thoroughly enjoy this class partly in because it was a reliever of my stress on most days, and an environment where I could learn at my own pace.

In regard to JMU's mission statement "to produce educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives", I feel as if this class was the only one in which that mission statement was true this semester. I loved the structure of the class and it made me want to learn not because I had to, but because I actually, genuinely wanted to. I feel as if I now know a ton more

things about coding than I did when I first started (none), and actually would still like to progress the app in future semesters. I don't think that coding is necessarily my strong suit, but I did find it very interesting, and extremely applicable especially in today's day and age. We are constantly progressing and moving forward in technology and it amazes me every day which new inventions come out that make our lives so much easier. Who knew that the telephone would one day be one's own personal, mobile computer? We would feel lost without some of the technology in our lives (me falling victim to a cell phone addiction), and I think it would be awesome to help people's daily lives through something you like to do for fun anyway.

I did like the way this class was run, and it was definitely a new experience for me, although I think this style of learning would work better for me if all of my classes were like this, not just 252. It made the other assignments that were graded earlier and more harshly seem like more of a priority, which took me off track at points from making progress in this class. I think it as good for me, knowing that it did relieve a lot of my stress during this whirlwind of a semester, but I do wish I had more time to dedicate to this class as a whole and not have it be pushed on the backburner because of petty grades. I encourage you to keep teaching this class in this style but also enlighten the other ISAT professors as well on this innovative style of teaching and learning. I believe ISAT would benefit as a whole by having more classes taught like this one, especially with the high amount of stress that we face daily. If I were to take this class again I would have started earlier on my app and hopefully I would have more time to focus on this subject.

I would really like you to report an A to the registrar for me because overall, I think I have learned a lot from this class. I have learned more than I ever thought I could with coding, and have amazed myself with the app my group and me had created. Although I wish I could have dedicated more time to this class, I believe I had given the maximum amount of time and effort I possibly could have considering the amount of work on my plate. I want to thank you for showing me a different type of innovative class structure, as well as the world of programming. I hope you have a great summer!

Ivan Ango

ISAT 252

Professor: Morgan Benton

05/04/20124

When I first walked into the class, I thought we were going to hit the ground running with some new programming terms and various ways that we could use them. I expected the class to be like any other classes where the professor stands in the front and lectures for the whole time. I also expected to learn about programming and what it really means. I was very surprised and my interest in the class peaked when we were asked to learn something about programming that we like. The style of teaching made sense to me and I became interested on how websites work.

During the beginning of the course, I set several goals that include reading about some programming terms, getting familiar with some Development environment and learning how to code in HTML. As the semester went on, I decided to read about other programming languages to see if one of them could grab my interest. I also decided to start a project on my own and the project was to build my own website using HTML and CSS. So, I watched a lot of tutorial videos on YouTube and I started slowly coding and building the website.

My goal which was to learn how to build websites really became the center of my attention throughout the rest of the class period. As I was learning how to code, it was amazing to see what really goes on in the background when you open up a webpage. I felt like I was successful when I looked back on the Notepad++, I saw all the work and how it translated back into the website that I created. I felt very proud of myself at that moment. I also felt successful when I was getting help from Paul in order to improve my project. Finally, when I presented my project

to the class and everyone got to see how someone who did not know how to program, ended up building a website.

I feel like I focused too much on just my project and I pushed back everything else. I gave up on some of the goals that I had such as learning how to program using another programming language. I have also failed at getting a group project running since it was hard to meet with the group. I learned that sometimes I have to try and multitask in order to put myself in a position where I can learn a lot more great material that could be very useful to me in the future. To address this issue, I have to manage my time better and I have to take more initiative into getting a group together and actually achieving a common goal.

I definitely feel more educated and the fact that I have learned and apply the programming skills into a real life process, showed me that the class was really worth taking and it was really helpful. After this semester, I found out that I still have a lot of work to do when it comes to time management and getting out of my comfort zone in order to interact more with other students. The knowledge that I have acquired here will go a long way and it is something I can definitely put on my resume.

The style of teaching was very impressive and encouraging however, it would be nice if you had multiple sets of projects ready to be worked on. If I was to take it again, I would recommend assigning teams, have the team pick a readily made project that they feel interested in and have the teams present the progress of the project halfway through the semester then the whole project at the end.

I would like to have an A because I came into the class not knowing what programming was and now I feel like I have the basic grasp on what it is. I have learned a lot not only from working on

my own project, but from hearing and watching other students who, like me did not know anything about programming and started great projects with great intentions behind them. I also wish I wasn't taking ISAT 212 and ISAT 253 at the same time this semester so that I could accomplish more in this class.

Michael Higgins
Dr. Morgan Benton
ISAT 252
7 May 2014

End of Semester Narrative

To be one hundred percent honest, I had very mixed expectations as I walked into my first Monday morning class of the semester. I had recently returned from studying abroad in Antwerp, Belgium and was excited to return to JMU and pick up where I had left off. While I was studying in Belgium I began to have very mixed feelings concerning my major as well as my future career path and what I honestly could see myself doing for the next thirty plus years. Somehow during that first semester of college I had managed to switch majors all the way from Media Arts and Design to a double major in Accounting and Finance. It had been a spur of the moment decision my first semester as I became stressed out at the idea of not getting my dream job of being an actor or director in LA. It seemed much more reasonable to get a degree that would certainly net me a job. However, as I studied in Belgium and traveled from country to country, I realized that there was so much more to life than a stable job and decent pay. I began to worry that I had given up my true values to please people other than myself and that it had become too late to switch my major again. I decided that switching majors again would be a little drastic; however, I was more than willing to start taking a couple extra classes in some areas of interest. I knew I had always been fascinated by computers and had loved the simple web design classes I took in high school. I also knew that I was very interested in the music industry and thought that it might provide me with the artistic outlet I desired while maintaining the business acumen I had gained through my accounting major. I

ended up choosing ISAT 252 over the music industry because it had occurred to me that it wasn't much of an "industry" any more and many of my friends had recommended Professor Benton as one of their favorite teachers. After the first day of class I was filled with inspiration and planned to learn as much as I could about the mobile application development process by the end of the semester

Prior to this class I honestly had absolutely no conception of what was involved in the process of programming. I had taken a very simple web design class in high school and had completely forgotten anything I had ever thought I knew about HTML documents. At first I had no idea that building an application on a mobile device would actually entail coding. I figured that there were already tons of templates available on the web and that it would be relatively easy to create the app and get it onto my phone. It turns out that there are such options but they lack many of the options available to someone who truly programs the application myself. At first it was very difficult for me to come to terms with the fact that I would have to start learning programming from scratch without any true direction or assignments for motivation. I had never experienced this sort of classroom setting before, where you were free to learn what you wanted at your own pace wherever you wanted. My first goal was to make sure that I kept attending classes although I knew that they were technically not mandatory. Without homework, quizzes, and tests to keep me on my toes, I knew that I would have to create a strict schedule for myself and begin to follow it weekly. Every week I began to create new goals that would build upon those that I had completed the week before. It was an amazing experience to watch as I set goals for myself and then was able to check off what I had completed or not completed each week and how or why it had not been done.

After the first couple of weeks of class I had become determined to complete as many of the “Codecademy” tutorials as possible and to get at least one fully functional application to show my friends and family on my phone this summer.

As my other major classes began to gain speed, I began to slack off on my progress in 252. I had initially been so motivated by the idea that I could learn exactly what I wanted to learn. However, as I became inundated with work and job interviews in the middle of the semester, I began to lose steam on my programming progress. It was not until I received my first internship offer that I immediately got back on track and realized the true value that could be derived from this class. Each week I began to build off of my goals to try and achieve and internship this summer. I had continually put it off for the past six months and I had not even begun to create the first draft of my resume. As I would complete my weekly evaluations, it would really bother me if I had not been able to complete a goal, especially if it was out of pure laziness. I couldn't believe the fact that I was actually making significant progress each week completely on my own with only the motivation of my next weekly evaluation staring me in the face. It had become a battle against myself and I became more determined to win each week. Around the end of the first two months of the semester I had received two internship offers and two externship offers from four of my top choice firms. I started to feel terrible for slacking off on my project and my inspiration was revitalized as I began to see how quickly the tables had turned on the internship front as I completed my weekly goals. Thus, our team began to take a more serious focus on the class and we started to actually produce presentable material! I started by trying to complete as many of the codecademy tutorials as possible starting with HTML/CSS and moving onto Java as fast as possible.

Our friend Kenny Abod created the initial HTML skeleton and we began to build from there. I managed to figure out the GitHub interface and uploaded our repository so we could begin to work on it at home at our own pace. With Morgan's help we were able to get the phonegap program working in concert with Xcode on my computer. It was fascinating to learn that I had always had access to a developer's environment on my computer or that I always had that ability to code in a text editor. Morgan also showed me how easy it was to take code from demos on sites like jquerymobile so that we could stylize our application with a simple copy and paste. Unfortunately, I was never really able to figure out how to get the application onto my mobile device because of the licensing requirement by Apple. However, being able to simulate the application on my computer to show my friends has been rewarding enough.

I had originally intended to use this class as a way to complete the pre-requisite for a CIS minor in the business school. I am so glad that I chose to take this class over CIS 221 because my friends have learned significantly less about programming in a number of areas. While my friends were completing dumbed down homework assignments, I was accessing multiple resources around the Internet to teach myself at an accelerated pace. I think that this is a perfect example of how classes could be taught to actually inspire students to learn on their own rather than through a forceful grading system. I felt comfortable starting new projects, which allowed me to explore what I really wanted to get out of the class. When I take easy general education courses, it is a terrible burden to attend class. I do not feel as if I am expanding my knowledge on the subject in any way other than trying to cram as much information into my brain as possible before I take the final exam. With ISAT 252, I was not only getting to learn

about an interesting subject at my own pace, but I was also getting to jump from subject to subject as I discovered what interested me the most. I learned that I am definitely interested in learning programming languages and using them to create applications, websites, and functions to improve mine and other's daily lives. I have found that I no longer want to complete a CIS minor, but that I am very interested in continuing my pursuit of the numerous languages available to learn. As I mentioned, I had returned from studying abroad with a new outlook on life and I was very concerned with my distant future and what my career path might entail. It was extremely refreshing to be able to spend at least a few minutes each week reflecting on my thoughts and emotions while also setting strategic goals for myself. I learned that I will always have the opportunity to pursue new ventures, regardless of my major. I felt as if a huge weight had been removed from my shoulder because ISAT 252 demonstrated how simple it was to pick up something you're interested in and actually learn it all by yourself. We have truly entered an age where textbooks and professors should be there to supplement your learning, not dictate the ways you need to learn the material. I can only hope that more teachers will continue to adopt this pedagogical style of education because it has honestly made me completely rethink the way I take my classes. If I were to take this class again, the only recommendation I would make is that we are given a set of optional assignments each week. I must admit, sometimes if I had a tough week in my other classes I would end up slacking off and performing almost zero hours of programming. By the end of the semester I have realized that this is more of a problem of self-motivation that I will probably deal with for the rest of my life. However, as a college student, I can say that the temptations are probably a little bit more apparent at this time in my life. This is why

I would say that for me personally, it might have helped to have had a few more dictated assignments so that I would ensure that I was keeping up with the course material each week. Another thing I would recommend is that each week we have at least one class period dedicated to an optional tutorial taught by Professor Benton. I noticed that sometimes my friends were sometimes reluctant to ask for help on our project. I think that if the tutorials were offered weekly rather than requested of, some of the students who may not have felt comfortable asking for the class would still have the option of attending. As for my grade, I would like to request an A for my final semester grade. If getting an A in a class is built upon the completion of the goals you have set for yourself that semester, then I believe I have met this objective. I have never put more effort into assignments that I technically did not “have” to do and I think that this self-discipline will be an amazing asset for the rest of my life. I realize that I may not have learned as much about programming as other students, or that I may not have worked on my project as many hours as I should have. However, I can one hundred percent honestly say that I have learned more in the class about myself this semester than in any other class or semester of college. I cannot express my gratitude enough to you for the way that you have structured this class. Without my weekly evaluations, I seriously doubt that I would have ever managed to obtain the internship I have lined up this summer. If the goal of JMU is to produce “educated and enlightened citizens,” then ISAT 252 has met that standard, and I hope to continue this style of learning as I see where this life leads me.

Scott Halpern

8 May 2015

ISAT 252

Coming into ISAT 252 on the first day I was expecting a lecture type class in which I would learn one or two languages over the course of the semester. I was expecting to have tedious coding practice for homework and tests that I would struggle on. I expected to come away having just the basics of building a webpage down and maybe a little something else. After that first class my expectations changed greatly, I expected to get what I put into the class. I expected to learn a lot and have guidance and help where I needed, but for the majority of it I expected to need to put forth more initiative than just showing up to class and coasting.

I set many goals for myself during the course of the semester, most of them relating to learning more of a specific programming language. At first I set my goals too high and expected myself to be able to learn more in a week than I really could. As the semester went on my goals became more specific, I wanted to learn how to use one function of a specific language that I could apply to my group's project. My goals became easier to attain because I knew exactly what I wanted to do and where to look to get that information I wanted. The only negative to this was I didn't get as broad of a base of information, but rather what I needed isolated in the vacuum of the project.

There were definitely goals that I failed to achieve over the course of the semester. I feel as if I failed to learn as much as I possibly could. I felt that given the way that this class was structured that I failed my goals when I gave up on learning a lot of the languages I could've learned in order to learn exactly what I needed to for the project. In the future I plan to make more time for the things I want to learn along with my other classes. I will learn to manage my time better in order to accomplish more of my goals.

I feel that the ISAT alumni database I constructed with my group is the biggest example of success I achieved in this class. I was able to adjust my learning goals from HTML, which I spent most of the early part of the semester on, to learning PHP and how to apply it to the project. I was successfully able to code a database entry form and then call that data into a table for easy viewing.

This style of class was a huge change from the normal COB classes I take the rest of the time. In the end I think it was one of the best classes I've ever taken because I wanted to come to class to learn programming and try and perfect what I was learning. That being said there was definitely a time right before spring break where I just stopped coming to class for two weeks. Part of it was me knowing at the end of the semester I would get whatever grade I wanted no matter what I did; part of it was my lazy nature taking over. I thought I could do my whole project at home with random tutorials I found online. I quickly realized I kept putting it off and eventually decided I needed to go back to class in order to actually get going. Once I went back to class I really got motivated again and worked on it for at least an hour a day outside of class in addition to the time I spent in the lab. I really enjoyed going to class at the end of the semester because it was a quiet place to get my work done with all the resources I

needed to get my project done. This style of class made me realize the importance of motivating myself and going to class as well as using the resources available to me when I'm struggling. If I were to take this class again, I would definitely like to have you teach with the same style because in addition to learning about programing I learnt a lot about myself.

In regards to JMU's mission statement I definitely feel more educated and enlightened after taking this class. I learnt how to make myself want to learn something that isn't going to be easy. I feel that learning that was probably the most important thing I've learnt so far in college. As far as my future plans go this class threw a monkey wrench in knowing what I want to do. I initially took this class as a prerequisite class for the CIS minor. I initially planned to major in accounting and minor in CIS but after taking this class I feel like CIS might be the right choice for me to major in because I really enjoyed the computer side of things.

I would like for you to report an A to the registrar. I feel that it is a fair grade as I came into this class knowing nothing about programing in the slightest, but at the end of the semester I was able to help create a project that in January I would've thought to be impossible.

Andrew Funkhouser
252 Exit Interviews – Prof. Benton
5/8/14

This semester, it was my pleasure to take ISAT 252, Programming and Problem Solving. I did not know what to expect at first, but I was excited to begin to learn how to program. My expectations for the end of the course when I was signing up was to have a basic idea of what programming was, what it was used for, and how to use a language to create a program for a certain purpose. I thought it would be an enjoyable class, and one that I would be able to use in real life/real world applications. If I enjoyed it enough, I thought I would sector in Information Knowledge Management come the Fall of 2014. To do that though, I would have to learn enough about programming to make sure that I could sector in it.

At the beginning of the year, after missing the first day due to a terrible stomach bug, I was thrown into the world that was our 252 class. I made some goals and tried to think up a program that I would like to see made by myself in the class. I believe the idea at that point was to piggyback off Greg Baker's idea of an application for your phone that turned your Wi-Fi connection on and off as you walked in and out of range of the network. I also had some application ideas of my own, but I do not believe they were very good, as I do not recall them at this time. I then took the time to sketch out what Greg's app would look like from a Start screen and even thought up the idea to use Google Maps to show where the wireless networks were available to switch on and off. I made goals about how we were going to create this app, starting with learning how to program in HTML on CodeAcademy.com. The first Code Academy lesson I partook in was the earth revolving around the sun. It seemed simple enough, and had great directions. My goal was to finish it by the end of the week, and I did it.

Next up was the whole HTML and CSS tutorial on Code Academy. I thought this would be a breeze, seeing as how the Revolution tutorial seemed to be very simple. I was wrong. I ended up taking almost the entire semester to finish this tutorial, as it was longer than I thought. Overall, my goals were not time manageable, as halfway through the HTML tutorial I made it my goal to finish the tutorial in the next week. This persisted for several weeks, until I made it my goal to move on to the CSS. When I finally did, my goal was to finish and start a project using what I had learned in the tutorial. However, by the time I had finished the tutorial, it was a bit too late as Exam week was already here. As much as I wanted to maybe begin to build a website, I simply could not find the time of day to do it. Other goals of mine throughout the semester varied, such as trying to make people laugh or smile, doing well on lab reports in other classes, and trying not to struggle with my job.

I felt that I was successful in some instances in my goals for this class however. I was able to gain an understanding for both HTML and CSS languages, as well as being able to find resources to help me better understand the subject. I was able to see the

language in Code Academy, understand what it did, and why it had to be that way. I was also able to understand what I had to do as far as typing part of the language and where it had to go in the context of everything that was going on with the rest of the program. It was really a good framework for understanding different programming languages. I feel like with this framework, and a little bit of help from other websites or maybe a programming book or mentor, I would be able to construct websites as well as other things out of the HTML and CSS language. Through the online course, I believe I accomplished my three goals coming into the class that I had when I signed up for it: learn what basic programming is, I learned what HTML is used for, and how it can be created to be used to serve a purpose that I have.

Although I was able to gain a basic understanding of programming from HTML and Code Academy, I feel that I failed my goals because I was unable to create a program. I feel like the main problem with this was that I simply did not have time for this class. Between other classes, a job, and a girlfriend, it was very difficult to find time for this class, and sometimes there were days where I even did not have the motivation to go and work on it because of how exhausted I had become from my activities. Through all of this, I learned a lot about time management, as I turned this semester into one big juggling act of classes, working, family, and friends. I learned that I needed to make time for things of great importance, and prioritize them so that I would be able to do well. Because of the difficulty level of my other classes and the fact that I did not want to get fired or dumped, I put this class on the back burner and decided that I would still be able to accomplish my goals even though I had a lot of other things on my plate at the time. I was wrong, and as a result I was unable to do as much for this class as I had originally wanted. In order to make sure that I have time for all of my classes in the future, I decided to start keeping a planner towards the end of the semester so that I can manage my time more wisely, and even make a little time to just go with the flow and be myself.

As for JMU's production of me as an "educated and enlightened citizen who leads meaningful and productive lives", I believe that I am all of these things. I believe that I become more educated and enlightened everyday, as I am always learning both academics and life lessons along the way. I've thought this since high school, and its my goal as not only a JMU student but an Integrated Science and Technology to lead a meaningful and productive life. The life lessons come in many shapes and sizes, but never cease to leave an impact on me and make me a better person. This semester alone has made me learn many life lessons about not only myself, but the people around me. I have learned that even though some people are your friends and you like them, you cannot always trust them with everything you have and that sometimes you need to take matters into your own hands. As previously stated, I have learned a lot about time management and the impact that it has on your life, and to plan ahead and not procrastinate. This semester also made me realize more and more about the person I want to aspire to be, one that is looked up to by younger students and people and respected by older people. I believe I have done well in the latter this year, as I made

quite an impression on an interview for an internship I had today where the employer said I presented myself well, as compared to my job interview last summer where my employers said I seemed nervous around them and to ease up a little bit. Through my goal to be a man who wants to be a leader and respected, I have become even more educated and enlightened on how people perceive other people, another useful life lesson and skill to have.

The style of this course, I believe, was one of the reasons that I was unable to actually complete a project. Had there been an attendance policy, I may have been able to sit down, complete the HTML & CSS course earlier, and do a whole project. However, due to my time constraints I was unable to make it to almost half the classes. Sometimes when I didn't go, I would work on the tutorial anyway, but actually attending the class would have made me get a lot more done, and I believe an attendance policy would have made me work harder in this class to accomplish all of my goals. I did enjoy some of the optional parts of this class, but I feel like I took too much of an advantage of the project. This also would have been helpful because I felt sometimes when I was doing the Code Academy tutorial at home, I could have used some guidance. Otherwise, the class structure was awesome, and I agree with you that learning isn't all about grades from exams and homework, but what you actually take away from the class. For example, one of my classes this semester I did not do well at all on tests, but I understand all of the main concepts and could explain them if need be due to my learning during the hands on lab experiments performed in the class.

As for my grade, I would like for you to report to the registrar that I have received an A in this class, because I believe that I set out in this class from before the time that the semester began: to learn what programming was, what things they were used for, and how to create a program that will serve my purpose. With my free time this summer, when I am not working, my goal is to go through and do the JavaScript tutorial on Code Academy as well, and try to program a website for my fraternity to make sure that I fully understand what I learned in the HTML and CSS tutorials before I set out to sector in Information Knowledge Management. I would like to thank you, this class and this reflection taught me more than I thought it would, and I look forward to seeing you again in the Fall.

ISAT 252 Closing Narrative

Gregory Baker

5/8/2014

Computers have always been something I have had a great interest in since a young age. After declaring ISAT as my major here at JMU and looking over the foundation curriculum I saw one of the classes to take in the first two years was programming. When I saw this I was both excited and nervous, having never had any experience with programming before I thought the class would require a large learning curve because it was something I had no prior knowledge of. After my first three semesters I was ready to enroll for the fall semester and chose your section of 252 at the recommendation of many of my peers. My expectations the first day were mixed. I was very excited to learn a totally new topic but at the same time nervous. I wanted to learn the basic fundamentals of coding and to get a feel for a few different languages. Beyond that I didn't know what else I wanted from the course.

I remember the first day of class was really eye opening to me as far as how school works. I vividly remember you telling us how teachers can own their students with grades because professors cannot be forced to change them even by the university. I had a great deal of respect for you that first day because of your outlook on grading and learning and it made me wish every class ran the same way. After hearing the introduction to the class and the idea of making an app I considered a problem I had with my phone which was battery life. I wanted to make an app that would use GPS to turn Wi-Fi on and off when you left or entered a familiar place so as to save battery life. My partners for the class seemed enthusiastic about the idea over the first few days. We decided to start with Codecademy as suggested and I decided working on HTML and CSS was the best place to start as they were both pretty basic codes. With the idea of an app suggest I was pretty intimidated. I went from knowing nothing about coding to having to think about creating a whole app and had no idea how to start. Because of this I just continued to work at Codecademy for a long time into the semester. Sadly this was as far as the app progressed.

The weight of 253 and 212 began weighing on my partners and I and we focused more heavily on the two lab reports we got per week. To be perfectly honest these classes were part of why I did not get as far as I would have liked in 252. Being enrolled in 212 and 253 easily made this the most difficult semester of college so far. My lab groups I relied on in these classes ended up procrastinating lab reports and they would not get done until very late. This left me feeling like I had little time to work on an app. In reality I could have improved myself despite these setbacks but at the time all I wanted to do was worry about those classes and get their assignments completed. My biggest failure was easily giving up on our app idea. I wish I had seen the project through and would like to try again at making it. I also will admit another failure of not coming to class everyday as I lost motivation sometimes when I was staying up late with my lab group writing a report or studying for a big test. I am not happy with myself for skipping classes for this reason and wish I had done it differently but at the time it seemed necessary due to my heavy work load. I feel as if all of my classes this semester had been conducted in the

same vein as yours I would have been more able to balance my time between all of them well. ISAT 212 and 253 were both heavily grade oriented and I struggled to maintain the level I wanted in those classes. My 212 professor had ideals basically polar opposite from yours and made it difficult for students to pass or even learn in his class. This was a real life example to me of what you said on day one and made me realize school based around grade did actually limit students because I was limited from learning in 212 as well as the assignments kept me from learning in other parts of life because my only goal was striving to keep my grade where I wanted it. Aside from that my professor also completely dissuaded me from even wanting to consider an energy concentration. When I realized I had this feeling I wondered to myself isn't the whole point of the foundation classes to figure out which sectors are interesting. Because of that teaching style I could not enjoy energy. In contrast by letting me learn what I wanted to about programming I fueled my own interest by researching and learning the things I wanted to. Your method of teach absolutely makes sense, especially with a foundation class like this because the whole point is for a student to find interest in a topic. If this is tainted by a bad class then has the foundation class really served its purpose?

Dissuade
from
energy

Eventually after realizing my group was no longer going to be making an app I strived to learn as much as I could through Codecademy. Our groups' goal of an app was not realized but personally I made good strides learning basics of coding languages. I modified my goals to at least give myself more knowledge on coding if I could not make an app. I continued to work on my HTML and CSS and started to work on Java Script as well. I found these lessons from online very interesting as I loved seeing the work I was typing in that formally made no sense to me eventually make something that looked usable in the example window. I plan to still work on coding this summer and see if I can use more sources online to help me improve my knowledge base of it. When choosing my concentration I made IKM a sector of mine because I really am interested in learning more about this subject. I hope next semester I can schedule my time more wisely and have a better schedule to complement your class as I have enrolled with you again. Aside from the coding knowledge I gained this semester I also learned I need to improve myself by being better at setting goals. I did modify my goal this semester but I think I should have set smaller ones to eventually achieve my goal of an app instead of letting it discourage me.

Referring to the JMU mission statement I think I have been enlightened in this class. I have never thought of education before the way that your class made me think of it. In addition I was enlightened about myself in that I need to be a better goal setter. I need to learn to motivate myself to work on projects that are not last minute projects. I want to be able to improve my ability to work on something long term and come out with a good finished project. This class really helped me see that side of myself and while I wish I already had that skill it is something I'm glad to have realized. The knowledge I gained of coding gave me a greater appreciation for the ways in which I use it everyday and don't even consider. I want to strive to get better in this area next semester and learn more about coding and even create a program of my own. I think the knowledge I gained in this class has given me a good basis for learning to program and I am excited to expand upon that next semester. Along with the greater appreciation of coding I also

Like
me!

gained a greater interest. It intrigues me that there are languages that can be learned to make a computer do anything the programmer tells it to and behind every program that automates our lives there is a person. I could easily see myself working in a field later in life where I would code or work with programs day to day.

I think your teaching style complements this class very well. Coding is something that I know many people have simply taught themselves. For myself personally I was fairly overwhelmed when the first day you asked us to build an app. If I could suggest an improvement to the class I would have preferred the first few weeks be instruction in the sense that maybe we work on creating a small program as a class in order to get a feel for different programs needed and where certain coding languages would benefit a program. Another thing that may help would be to have a day to talk about multiple languages and their uses, sort of a crash course of things we should know before we start. I only mention this because the first day I felt thrown into a topic I had no understanding of. This is not to say I dislike your opinion on grades and learning. I think letting students learn what they think is necessary and what they want to learn is a great strategy. It allows us to explore a topic without being forced into doing something we don't want to. If all professors taught in a similar fashion I think college would be a more beneficial to students. I would definitely allow us to divide up time better and would probably reduce stress. I also think more students would leave college with an appreciation of what they learned because they got to decide for themselves what they would learn. I would like to thank you for giving me a different perspective on teaching as well as learning because I think both students and teachers can learn from this. When I tell many of my friends that I'm enrolled in a class where you choose your own grade most of them think it's crazy but as I explain to them your reasoning and why you allow it they begin to understand and many have had reactions saying they wished they could learn in a similar way. Aside from some sort of introductory portion to the course I would not ask anything to be changed about it. I think you run your class well and it gives your students a chance to truly gain an appreciation for the subject.

Ideas spread

Lastly I would like to ask you to report an A as my grade as I feel I have gained an appreciation for this subject. While I did fail to create an app I do believe I learned enough about coding to provide a foundation as well as enough of an appreciation and interest to want to do more with it. This class provided me with enough interest in the topic to choose IKM as one of my sector courses where some of my other foundation classes failed so I consider that a success. I'm currently enrolled to have another class with you next semester to continue my IKM sector and very much look forward to having you as a professor again. Thank you for giving me a chance to learn more about coding for myself as well as learning more about myself and looking into what I can improve. This class has made me want to be more goal oriented and I believe that is as good of a takeaway as the programming knowledge itself. I hope you have a good summer Morgan and look forward to seeing you next year in class and around ISAT.

Sydney Sumner

252 Reflection

April 2, 2014

Priscilla Welch, a British marathon star from the 80s, had an unlikely rise to fame. In fact, Welch didn't even start running until her mid 30s! When Welch was nearly 40 years old, in the summer of 1984, she ran in the first women's Olympic marathon in Los Angeles. Welch finished 6th in a time of 2 hours and 28 minutes (that's about 4:36 minutes per mile). Welch went on to win the New York marathon in 1987 at the age of 42! Priscilla Welch came to running almost by happenstance. While I didn't end up in this programming class by coincidence, it isn't something I envisioned doing with my life or putting time into learning. However, like Welch, I began this semester eager to make the most of the opportunity I was given to learn programming and turn it into something important and worthwhile. Priscilla Welch once said, "If you want to become the best runner you can be, start now. Don't spend the rest of your life wondering if you can do it." I came into this class knowing that if I wanted to learn and get something out of it, I would have to be the one pushing myself—I would have to be the one driving my own education.

When I began this class, I had two sets of expectations. One set of expectations for what I was hoping to bring away from the class and one set of expectations for what I thought the classroom would be like. My educational goals were simple: I wanted to walk away at least having an understanding of all of the terms contained in the "Stuff to Learn" section of the website. The first time I looked at the website, I was totally intimidated by the amount of content and the content itself. I had a vague and abstract definition of what I thought a programming language was and a concept of what operations, arrays, and loops were. Besides just coming out of the class with a general understanding of basic programming, I wanted to come out of the class having gained some basic proficiency in JavaScript, HTML, and CSS. I also had the initial goal of building my own app; however, at the start of the semester, I didn't really have any ideas about what I would build or how I would build it.

After the first couple of weeks of class, I realized that I was not going to be successful if my learning goals were as general as "gain basic proficiency in JavaScript." That goal wasn't concrete and didn't really have any way to be measured. As a result, I decided to approach this class as I would approach learning how to trad climb. Trad climbing is a style of rock climbing in which it is the lead climber's job to place temporary anchors in the rock surface as protection from falling. For a trad climber, this can only be accomplished if they have a variety of protective gear (pro) at their disposal. All of this pro is kept on a rack, usually a padded gear sling attached with a carabineer.

There are two types of pro, active and passive pro. Active pro refers to gear that has moving parts whereas passive pro refers to gear without moving parts. Trad climbers must know how to eloquently use all of their rack to create strong, safe, and reliable anchors. In order to do this, climbers must not only spend time accumulating enough gear so that they are covered for all situations, but they must also understand the fineness of placing gear and know when it is best to use passive pro or when it is best to use active pro. This semester I have spent time building my "programming rack"—the tools I needed to successfully complete my individual project.

I began building my programming rack using the JavaScript tutorials on Code Academy. Through the modules in Code Academy, I was introduced to some basic programming skills and concepts. The first basic skills I learned were things like the difference between numbers and

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strings and how to find length, create variables, write if statements, do basic math procedures, and use booleans. As I progressed through the semester, I learned how to do things such as create if-then statements, for-loops, while-loops, and arrays. I also learned what an object was and why it was important to programming. However, my favorite part about the JavaScript tutorials was getting to construct my own projects. Through the JavaScript Code Academy tutorials, I got to build my own rock paper scissors game, create and search a contact sheet, and even make a cash register. Despite the many, many hours I spent working on the JavaScript Code Academy tutorials if I had to take a standard written test on the material, I probably would fail. I don't have the basic elements of JavaScript memorized and I'm okay with that. I am able to recognize some basic elements of the programming language and I understand the basic formatting of the language, but I couldn't sit down and start coding without some resource about using JavaScript at my disposal.

After I went through the JavaScript tutorials on Code Academy, I went through the HTML/CSS tutorials. I loved going through the HTML/CSS tutorials on Code Academy. I enjoyed learning how to change fonts, how to organize a webpage using paragraphs, tables, divs, and spans. One of my favorite parts of the CSS tutorials was learning how to make buttons. I think I was more successful in learning HTML and CSS as compared to JavaScript. I'm not sure if this is because HTML and CSS are easier to learn since they are markup languages instead of programming languages or because I found satisfaction in the aesthetically appealing outputs of HTML and CSS and thus put more effort into learning HTML and CSS.

After I completed the Code Academy tutorials for JavaScript and HTML/CSS, I felt as though I had built up my programming rack enough so that I had a general awareness about how the various programming tools work together and an idea of how to combine the tools to form an end product. At this point, I set out taking a stab at "Exam One" over spring break. Trying to construct my own contact form was tricky, and much harder than I originally thought it would be. I feel I was successful in completing this project. I was able to build a contact form that contained fields for the user's address, city, zip code, phone number, and email. While my form didn't follow the exact format as presented in the "Exam One" challenge, it did make certain fields required, and only allowed users to input phone numbers and zip codes in specific formats. At this point in time, I was unable to make a drop down input for the state; however, I did eventually figure out how to make a drop down menu, which I was able to utilize for my individual project.

After making the form I took a giant step forward and began working on my project. For my project, I wanted to create an iPhone app that scientists could use to help make field sampling of benthic macro invertebrates easier. Last summer, I had a research internship at Virginia Tech for Interdisciplinary Water Sciences and Engineering. For my project, I assessed stream water quality based on benthic macroinvertebrate density and stream substrate. I loved my project and I learned a lot about what it was like to work in an actual research setting. One thing I hated though was carrying my yellow waterproof notebook and pencil everywhere I went. Every time I got to a sample site, I would pull out my notebook and begin writing basic information about the stream; however, there was always some information I couldn't fill out until I was in the stream. Since I didn't trust my memory to last until I got back to the truck to write down a specific detail about the stream of the sampling procedure, I repeatedly found myself messily scribbling notes.

Additionally, I always took my iPhone to each sample sit so that I could take pictures of the stream to include in my final presentation. When I got to this class and I had to start thinking about what I wanted to do for my project, I thought to myself "Man, it would have been great if I could have had my sampling notes, the sample location, and a picture of the sample site all in one place." So that is what I set out to do.

To begin the process of making my own app, I started by researching standard EPA benthic macroinvertebrate sampling procedures. I found an EPA prototype benthic macroinvertebrate sampling form and then used my own field sampling experience to decide the information that was most important and what could easily be filled out on a phone. After all, you can't replace an entire 10 page form with an app.

After I decided what content I wanted to include in my app, I began using HTML and CSS to create the user inputs and buttons for my app. I used BareBones Edit to do this. However, once I had the basic HTML and CSS I wanted, I had no idea where to put it so that I could build a functioning app. To solve this dilemma, I first went to X code. After about a week of no progress despite watching many, many YouTube videos, I was still overwhelmed by X code. As a result, I began looking for a similar way to make my app. This time in my search to build my app, I put a particular emphasis on finding an app that had tutorials that could help me figure out how to get my app to have photo taking capabilities and GPS location capabilities. While searching the Internet based on these criteria, I came across appery.io™. Even though I had to pay \$25, I chose to use appery.io™ because it utilized PhoneGap, and made it easy and straight forward for me to combine the HTML and CSS I had written in BareBones Edit with the platform's drag and drop formatting. Additionally, I was able to utilize the platform's quick build services as well as write custom JavaScript to make my app function. I also liked how easy it was to test the app, either in my web browser or on my iPhone.

The hardest part of building my app, Stream Bug, was trying to store and recall the user inputs. After viewing a couple of videos, reading appery.io™ tutorial documents, and many failed attempts, I eventually figured out how to put the user input into local storage, recall the input from local storage to display on the app for a preview, and then ultimately put the information into the database storage where the user could view the output on the "My Reports" page of the app. Unfortunately, I have not been able to get this to work for the picture taking capability of the app. When the app is tested on a phone, a photo can easily be taken and a series of numbers is inputted into the database; however, I haven't quite figured out how to recall this information so that the app user can see the picture they took along with their sampling information. This is something I think I will continue to work on even after this class is over. In building Stream Bug, I encountered many failures, in fact most of what I did throughout the semester consisted of failures. Some seemingly small code feature would result in some not so small error that would prevent my app from working how I intended. For example, when I was trying to get the latitude and longitude for my app to be sent to local storage, I kept getting two values for latitude and no value for longitude; however, after much troubleshooting, I ultimately got the latitude and longitude to be recorded properly.

Overall, I am very satisfied with my experience in the class. While I think it is cool that I learned some basic stuff about programming, I am stoked that I got to spend my time working on a

Sydney Sumner

252 Reflection

April 2, 2014

project I was passionate about. More important than the programming skills I learned in this class, I learned the importance of research and critical thinking. I didn't learn about researching in the traditional sense of going to the library and finding books about comparative politics or about how to use a database to find primary articles about interspecific competition between plant sources. I learned how to find several resources to help me attempt to achieve my programming goals and evaluate these resources. Additionally, I learned how to apply the information I found and not just regurgitate it. There is no "how to create an app for benthic macroinvertebrate sampling". I had to find information on the basic idea of what I was trying to accomplish and then model that information to fit my specific goals and objectives.

This course has definitely been enriching. While I do not have a new found aspiration to become a programmer when I grow up, I have found this course extremely valuable. As with all of the ISAT classes I have taken, I think after completing this course I have developed my skills as a critical problem-solver and I have learned a new skill set that may come in handing as I attempt to solve the problems I am faced with in my daily life as well as the problems I will face in my professional life.

I enjoyed the style of this course and I think it benefited my learning. If this class was taught in the traditional style, I think I wouldn't have had any interest in the material, which in turn would have made the class a chore instead of something I enjoyed working on. Being in charge of my own learning was refreshing and because I was interested in what I was doing, I was motivated to perform well. The one aspect of the course that I didn't find beneficial to my learning was the weekly self-evaluations. I didn't like answering the same questions over, and over, and over. I would have liked a more personal and fluid weekly evaluation tool that also integrated the whole classroom community. This could be something like having two to five minute presentations one day a week where everyone could informally let the class know what their goals are, how their project is going, and whatever else they would like to share. I also felt as though there was a lack of community in the class. I felt as though we were just a bunch of individuals working in the same room without any real connection to each other. Despite these features of the class that I did not like, I still appreciated the format of this class and found it helpful in achieving my learning goals.

After reflecting on my progress throughout the semester, I would like you to report an "A" as my grade to the registrar. I believe this grade is an accurate reflection of what I have learned in this class and the progress I have made throughout the semester. I have gained basic knowledge of how to use JavaScript, HTML, and CSS. More importantly, I have demonstrated my ability to synthesize this basic knowledge along with knowledge of how to use databases and database services to create an actual app! Climbing racks are rarely ever complete. There is always room for one more nut or one more cam on your gear sling and just when you think you have a complete rack, a piece of gear is broken, lost, or stolen. And just when you think you have seen all of the possible scenarios in which you could build an anchor, you go to a new crag and realize your tools and knowledge are totally insufficient to meet the current challenge you are faced with. The same is true for programming; you can always learn more and are always faced with new challenges. While my programming rack is still very small, I have worked hard so that I could attempt to over come the challenges I faced while trying to build my app, Stream Bug.

good feedback
on class format

ISAT 242 Exit Narrative

I started this semester on a much better note than it ended. I had a very well-paying job lined up so I was on top of the world. I didn't have any programming classes last semester so I wanted to take at least something to keep me doing something related to my major. I had hoped to take the opportunity to help some of the other students with a group project and teach them how things like databases work. My plan was to try something new but integrate what I learned with one of the things I already knew.

After I realized that I'm way too awkward to talk to strangers, I changed my direction for the class. I wanted to expose myself to JavaScript so I figured that this class could be a fun opportunity to try new technologies like Phonegap. Then I realized that I hate JavaScript so I started looking into a native Android application. Around this time I was informed that I was not able to be hired by my first company, so I switched my objectives again. Rather than just play around with new things, I chose to start using tools that actually would help me in my job search. From my internship over the last summer, I had heard of the Spring MVC framework and Hibernate so I decided to use those since I had previously done a Java based web application in a different class. I decided to create an application that would allow roommates to assign chores so that everybody knows what their job is.

I wanted to simulate a real world project as well as I could so I used a local Tomcat instance as my web server, MySQL as my database, and Maven to package the application. I didn't care about what the application actually did, only that it worked using the technologies I had chosen. Using these technologies, I was able to talk about them during interviews and impress the interviews. Most CS students aren't familiar with frameworks like Spring so just knowing about them was a huge plus on my part.

Despite being very depressed over this semester and having to spend a large chunk of my time driving around the state interviewing, I still managed to work on this project consistently. I didn't slap it together at the last minute because I wanted to talk

about my progress and what I was learning during my interviews. I had to filter through tutorials of outdated versions of the Spring framework to find one that would work for what I wanted. I found an even more Objective Oriented version than the version I was exposed to, I got it to work, and (for the most part) I understand why. I feel very successful in this class considering I had work in my other classes, a part time on campus job, and full time job interviews to attend.

I feel more educated and this course turned out to be a huge help for me in particular, but I think that students would have technically learned more from an actual programming course similar to the CS 139 class. That being said, I don't think that a CS 139-esq course would be more beneficial overall to the students who normally take this course. Your nurturing style of "just play around and go with whatever you think is cool." clearly resonated with the other students. People who aren't already interested in programming can easily lose all interest in code and your attitude helped them with not getting overwhelmed. Coming into this class, I was a very familiar with programming (I'm actually certified in Java 7 by Oracle) so that attitude wasn't needed to make sure that I wasn't afraid of code.

As for my enlightenment, I can't say that there's any change. I've never been one to go for the romantic ideas of enlightenment. I'm too realistic of a person to be caught up in the societal influence of the ISAT program. I can't say that I've ever had a class that contributes or detracts from knowing myself.

I could have taken this course with a different professor and probably would have had a few programming assignments that I could have busted out easily enough. Instead I chose your section based on what I had heard from a friend of mine who had you as a programming professor a few years ago. I was told that your sections were much more flexible due to the fact that groups were allowed to come up with their own idea for an application. I liked that idea and figured that I'd learn more in your section than a standard "Here's PA 1, it's called Hello World" class.

The style of this course worked very well for me because I wanted to do something a little more advanced than what a normal student taking this class would do, but I think that a little bit of more structure wouldn't hurt. Maybe have halfway presentations for every group, just to see that people are actually progressing by the

end of the semester and how. I saw that one of the presentations was a basic webpage in HTML and that's it. There's nothing at all wrong with that since he had never been exposed to programming, but I also saw that others did more with the same handicap. I'm not even saying that he didn't do as well as the other students. I'm just saying that he probably could have had that done by the halfway point in the semester. Maybe I'm wrong, and it took him the entire semester and that's also perfectly fine but at least you could see that he was working on it somehow.

I've never been one to toot my own horn, but I honestly feel that I deserve an A. Not many students would pass up an easy A from one of the other 242 sections where they could crush programming assignments in an afternoon. I chose to take a class that would allow me to do work beneficial to my future and chose to use technologies new to me. I could have easily set up a web application just using the JDBC connection in a day or two and stopped working. I believe that my work ethic in combination with the fact that I actually created a working product that worked well in my real world simulation.

Mia Gyu Kim

- What were your expectations coming into this class?

I didn't even have the time to have any expectations for this class because after abruptly deciding to minor in computer information systems I registered for the class, missing the first week of lecture. I think in that short amount of time, I probably expected this class to be like any other class in college, except that I will be dealing with computers and programming.

- What learning goals did you set for yourself?

Since I didn't have any background in computer programming, I set realistic goals that I knew I could accomplish within the semester. I tried not to set an unrealistic goal of mastering a computer language but rather getting my feet off the ground in terms of computer programming. I wanted to expose myself to the field of computer programming and see if my decision of minoring in Computer Information Systems was the right decision. Academically, I set myself to get an A from the class.

- How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?

My goals evolved in that it became more specific and challenging over the course of the semester. I also noticed that it became more personal and rather than being related to class, it extended to my personal life goals.

- In what ways did you feel you were successful? Please refer to specific, concrete artifacts that would serve as evidence of your successes.

I felt successful in terms of changes to my personal traits that I thought would never change. I believe I evolved as an individual in my relationship with others, myself, and with James Madison University. Reflecting back to the mistakes and successes over the course of the semester, I felt a sense of personal enlightenment that allowed me to mature up to the things I felt disappointed in and feel grateful for the good things that happened in my life.

- In what areas do you feel you failed to achieve your goals? Please reflect on what you think you've learned from your failures, and what, if any, plans you have to address those issues in the future.

I think I've tasted failure in all areas in achieving my goals and I'm glad I did. I think there were only a few times in which I accomplished my goals within that week. I guess in some ways, it reflects how unorganized I can be but as time passed by, I became more efficient in achieving my goals, became more organized in terms of prioritizing the things that need to get done, and became more responsible in accomplishing my tasks.

- JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Do you feel more educated? More

enlightened? Less so? How have your activities this semester contributed or detracted from your knowing yourself better and having a better grasp on what you want to do in the near or distant future?

I don't think my acceleration of acquiring knowledge has increased but I think my ability to acquire meaningful knowledge that I care for has increased greatly. Unlike before, where I was just going to school for the sake of getting a degree, I found a purpose as to why I should study certain material and think in a meaningful context when I study for such classes. The personal activities that I have done over this semester has greatly contributed to knowing myself better. It's almost as if I had gone back to my childhood where I felt that genuine joy in my life. In terms of what I want to do in the near or distant future, in the past, where I was scared of the fact that I did not know where I was going or where I wanted to go, now, I'm more happy that I have no idea where life will take me. Instead of being in fear, I'm happy that I'm lost. I've learned to realize that not having a clear path can be a gift for it opens up so many possibilities that's not constrained by societal or personal pressures.

- How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do it the same or differently?

This style of course where it's pretty laid back and relaxed has its pros and cons. While it taught me many things such as the value of loving to learn, I was also vulnerable to irresponsibility and laziness. While it's great to do only the thing you love, I think in life, there are things that you must do even if you don't want to and I think such style of class took away from that. While doing things for the sake of doing it is great, I think we as individuals need to elevate ourselves to a position where we have the right to do it. I don't think I have earned that yet and I will continue to strive to achieve that. If I were to take it again, I think a mixed style will work best that teaches both elements of life. I think things such as attendance should be enforced because when we go out to the real world, we have our responsibilities and duties and enforcing attendance will help us learn the value of doing things that we might not necessarily love.

- What grade would you like for me to report to the registrar for you, and why? As per our agreement, please remember that you can ask me to report any grade that you would like and I will honor that request.

I would like you to report a grade of A to the registrar for me because I believe I have achieved JMU's mission statement of becoming towards an "educated and enlightened citizen[s] who lead meaningful and productive lives." While I have had my downfalls, I believe I have achieved many great things in class during the semester including learning the basic concepts of computer programming. Personally, I have become a better individual that truly cares about not just academics for the sake of learning, but also an individual that cares about himself and others and his place in this world.