

EXAMPLE OF LOW GRADE

Daniel Wright

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End of Semester Narrative

I did not have very many expectations coming into this class. I had Dr. Teate for ISAT 252 and he ran his class very differently than you run yours. I suppose I expected the class function somewhat similarly to his more traditional style of teaching with quizzes, assignments and tests. In Dr. Teate's class We also learned and wrote exclusively in Visual Basic. I think I also may have come into the class with the assumption that we would expand on Visual Basic or use it. I really enjoyed the freedom of not being bound to one language and having the freedom to learn new things.

I set several learning goals for myself at the beginning of the semester. I wanted to learn HTML and Python right off of the bat. I had an initial idea for a project to work on and I knew that those would be good tools to have . The second goal was have a better understanding of what databases are and how to use them. Before this semester I did not have a clue what a database was or even what they looked like. My last goal was to complete the fantasy weather app and have it functioning by the end of the semester. As the semester went on, I realized I had to spend a large amount of time on learning the basics of things and did not get very deep past that. My goals shifted to more having a better understanding of programming logic and languages.

Some ways that I felt successful this semester was in writing small programs in Python as I learned how to use it. Specifically programs that should one day be a part of my fantasy weather app. I wrote programs that did calculations and handled equations and stored values in lists. I am most proud of a program that compares data values and can assign scaling points to players depending on how well that they did in comparison to other players. I also wrote a program that can allow players to log in using a username and a password that are stored in a database

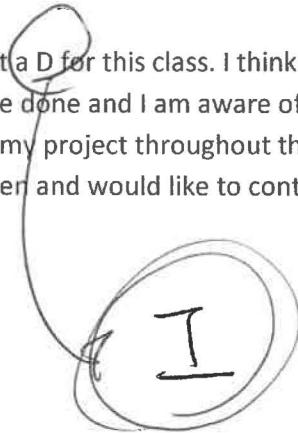
There are many ways that I think I failed this semester. I did not get any of the front end work done on my app and didn't learn very much HTML at all. I also did not get my app to be fully running yet. As I reflect on these shortcomings, I think that they come from two main sources. The first is that I do not think I put nearly enough time into this class. I would spend a large amount of time in short bursts, but did not remain consistent in working and improving. Secondly I did not seek out help from either my peers or you. I thought that it would be something I could complete on my own, but I did a lot of learning this semester on the benefits of reaching out for help. I certainly initially imagined that I could have done more on my own, but I realize how foolish that is now.

When I consider JMU's mission statement seeking to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives" in relation to me being in this class, I think it holds true. Educationally I feel like I learned a lot. Not only did I gain knowledge, but also a new excitement for

programming and learning new things. I don't really know if I am more enlightened or not. I do think that my failures in this class did teach me a lot about my work ethic and when I need to seek help for things. In retrospect, I do think I grew a large amount by not reaching my goals and realizing that I could have done more if I had help. The moments that I did have of excitement in learning new things and thinking in ways I have never thought before most certainly seem like they will be helpful in leading a meaningful and productive life.

This style of course I think would have worked well for me if I had a partner or a group. I think it was a poor choice to approach this class alone. It was very helpful filling out the weekly goals and objectives, but I found not being accountable to anyone but myself was difficult. I did love the freedom of working on things I am passionate about and finding the best tools to reach the goals I had set for myself.

I would like to request a D for this class. I think this is appropriate because I know that there was so much more I could have done and I am aware of my shortcomings, but I did learn many new things and plan on continuing my project throughout the coming year. I came out of the class with some tangible programs I have written and would like to continue to improve.



James Merrick
ISAT 340
Final Survey

- What were your expectations coming into this class?
- What learning goals did you set for yourself?
- How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?
- 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.
- 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?
- How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do the same or differently?

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 had come into ISAT 340 with high expectations because I had previously taken ISAT 252 with you in the spring of 2013. I had been looking forward to taking your class in particular because of the easy-going environment. I had not previously thought of a project to work on so I planned on Just hopping on a team that had some good ideas. I ended up working with Collin's group for the background-changing app. When initially setting out to complete the project my learning goals were really nail down the language that we had decided to type it in. My part was to work on the Mac version with Alec Chamberlin so the language was in Objective C. It was similar to Java so the learning curve was a bit easier although I thought it was more confusing then Java. Initially my goals were very high but as we began working on the project it started to become overwhelming. The idea was solid and so was our team but it was not very organized. Communication lacked what it needed to be to work on such a project and members of the team did not really communicate to others what they had already completed or what they were working on. Another issue with our team was that our proposed team leader from another class of yours had actually dropped out and we had no idea. In all honesty after that the fire under our feet had decreased to a mere candle flame. As the semester continued obligations for other classes had begun to take priority and the project was held off for a bit. I admit we had a rocky start but Alec and I worked on our part a lot over break to make sure we had some working code for our presentation. All-in-all for what we accomplished I'd say that it was overall a success; a mild success. We could

have accomplished a lot more in the time but the team synergy was not all there. I think the layout of the course is well designed and it relies a lot on giving students the benefit of freedom to do what they want. If you want to learn a lot you can and if not then you wont. I think it helps motivate people in a way to begin learning for themselves, which I appreciated. To improve the course maybe work on motivating teams to get more involved from the beginning. First initiation of a project can seem a little overwhelming to teams. Maybe if you helped each team get a solid foundation such as which language would be best to use, a checklist of things to accomplish, and some base code to start them off would be helpful and sending them off. I know for myself this was an issue because I had no idea how to write in objective C at first but over time began to learn it. Other than that I think your course layout is pretty solid. Motivating teams to work hard on the project is probably the biggest goal id say. In the end I would take the class again and try to allocate more time during the semester working on the project. Some really cool ideas were flowing in the beginning and if they were fully carried out it could have led to a really cool app. Despite this I was still happy with what we had accomplished. We had a rocky start but pulled through in the end. In regards to our agreement I would ask that you report an A to the registrar. This is my recommendation but in the end its up to you how you feel I performed and what I deserve.

ISAT 340 Final Narrative

Alex Conner

- What were your expectations coming into this class?
 - I've heard from friends of mine what Benton's classes were like. I knew it would be project based and a very independent self-driven learning style. There isn't really any structure and there aren't grades, and what you get out of the class is based on what you strive to achieve. This was nice because it allows for a flexible schedule and lets people make progress regardless of skill level.
- What learning goals did you set for yourself?
 - I'm not the strongest programmer. One of my biggest complaints about ISAT is the lack of classes where we sit down and code, and because I'm always so busy doing work for other classes, I rarely get a chance to sit down and do it recreationally. And if you're a beginner (in any discipline, not just computer science) it is difficult to teach yourself something because it is going to be more tedious than fun. I know if this is something I like doing and plan on doing in the future, I should really find time to do this on my own time outside of classes, but we are all human. With music and work also taking my time, I feel like it would have been nice to just have a couple more classes working on programming fundamentals.
 - As far as goals went, I knew I wanted to do something that would allow me to work on my programming skills and build on what I learned in ISAT 252. I knew I wanted to if possible work on a game because that is a huge interest of mine, because I love the artistic and creative possibilities that are inherent to creating a game, but also because I felt that starting on something like that I could really get into it and become motivated to learn. And it worked, to an extent.
- How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester? At first, when I was experimenting with different gaming engines and working on the first few games, I really was developing coding skills. I was learning about scripts and AI and integrating them into an web page. Then as our group narrowed our goals into a 3d shooter in Unity, my time was spent not coding but more about just learning how to use Unity and Blender software. I spent hours watching tutorials and learning about how these programs worked, and yet I've barely scratched the surface. Instead of hard coding scripts, a lot of time was spent scrounging the web looking for pre-made ones and figuring out how to integrate them into our game.
- In what ways did you feel you were successful? Please refer to specific, concrete artifacts that would serve as evidence of your successes.

- Well in this class alone I made my very first working game; even though it was made using a thorough tutorial it still wasn't the easiest thing for me and every time I completed a step it was very rewarding. Making my first 3d model and render in Blender was very rewarding as well; I was excited to have made my first steps into the world of graphic design. In our 3d shooter, it was difficult enough just to get a player controller that could move, and look around with the mouse, while still being bound by natural look movement, speed, and gravity. Learning about animation and then getting walking zombies that could chase you down the hall was a very cool as well. Im glad I did that, and I know I will pursue game development independently regardless of where my career or classes take me.
- 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.
 - Like with any project, there are so many things left to work on. The animations left something to be desired, textures were poorly done, and there are just so many things to be improved. If only there had been more time, I was a little more disciplined, etc.. All I can do is keep working.
- My biggest regret is not having a good programming foundation already, because had I done that, I feel like it would have made understanding the scripts and code and building the game easier. I could have worked more on codeacademy, actually implementing scripts, MVC... theres always so much to learn.
- 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 enlightened, both from what I did learn and what I learned that I don't know. This class gave me a better idea of what I may want to do in the future regarding software development. I love games that totally immerse you in new worlds and ask you to think critically about important issues, I'd love to work on something like that. I also really enjoyed just setting up aesthetic environments and working on 3d models.
 - Another thing I learned about ISAT: compared to the CS majors, we really do learn a LOT about communication. With all of our group projects, and presentations, I have learned a lot about getting work done with a group of other students. The thing is, while the CS students were definitely stronger than I was at programming, they were AWFUL at working together. It was never an issue with laziness; they just didn't want to work with others on a goal. Getting the group together was a huge ordeal for some reason. Work

was mostly done independently and then meshed together, whereas with a little more communication it could have been done a lot smoother.

- How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do the same or differently? I really enjoyed the flexibility and the lack of a grading system got rid of a lot of stress. Since there were so many varying degrees of skill levels in our class, it eliminated the possibility of anyone feeling bored or getting left behind in a classes agenda. While some may argue that there was a lot of people who just slack the whole time because they aren't pushed to do anything, the reality is if they want to get a job doing something with software development they are only hurting themselves in the long run. And besides, there are enough tedious classes in ISAT, so it was nice to have a less stressful computer science class for once.
- 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 an A. Why? I legitimately put forth an effort in this class. I want to learn and I made an effort to do so. I may not have accomplished everything I set out to do, but I did make progress. And if everyone else is asking for an A, I might as well too. At least I attempted to earn it.

Reflection Paper

- What were your expectations coming into this class?

Coming into this class I expected basically the same format of a class as I had seen in ISAT 252. I expected the surveys every week, meditation to start off every class, and an open ended learning style allowing each person to look up and learn more about what they really want to.

- What learning goals did you set for yourself?

When entering this class my main learning goal was to learn more about programing, while I am not yet sure that I want to go into programing as a profession I definitely know that it is a growing market and I would like to at least be able to understand the different computing terminology as it came up in my work place. While I would also like to be able to do every thing that I want on a computer I have realized that if you know the foundations of what you are getting yourself into when entering a programing assignment, then when you actually want to start programing specific functions then you can always refer programmers and videos online who can help you out. I have learned that there is literally enough information online to be the next Mark Zuckerberg if you simply apply yourself.

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

My goals stayed pretty consistent throughout the course of the year. As the year progressed however I saw myself developing from the person just wanting to learn the talk to actually walking the walk; trying with my group to look different things up online and implement them into our project.

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

In my group I was successful by getting our webpage up and looking nice. I was originally helping Alec out with the Objective C side of our project but then after one of our group members left I moved over to the web development towards the end of the semester. I was able to look up everything that I could imagine how to do online and had developed what I thought was a really solid and professional looking website by the time the semester came to its close. I was epically proud that I was able to figure out how to put sample background pictures going across the top of our

website. I have also grown as a person this semester as I have for every semester. While the person I came into college as and the person that I am now are not exactly the same I believe that it is a good thing because I have been learning a lot about others and my self through the years and changing to fit who I want to be accordingly.

- 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.

The biggest failure of the semester for me, and my group, was not actually to get the desktop program to fully carry out the function that we had hoped it would which was to be able to change the background of someone else's computer from your own to leave a nice gentle surprise to the person's day. We were able to get all three aspects of this project running separately but were not able to implement a system for them all to communicate and carry out the actual function that we had hoped that it would. I also failed in not attending Friday class when I specifically told Benton that I would. I like to stay true to my word and I was pretty ashamed of this even though he was just joking me about it. Outside of class I failed in not joining a club or being a part of something new as I had hoped to. Hopefully I can change this by the time next semester starts and find an organization that suits me.

- 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 defiantly feel very much more educated now than I did at the beginning of this semester. I am not sure that I have become more enlightened this semester however. I have always been a fairly rational guy but I'm not sure that I have become anymore enlightened than I already was. My activities this semester have greatly contributed to me having a better grasp on what I want to do in the distant future. I was also in a composition class this semester and coming into it I was not that great of a composer but I have used the same tactics that I used to become better at programing to better my self at piano. In this class I would constantly be listening to other people and taking bits and pieces of what they do and incorporating it into my own songs. I have also been looking up tons of different videos on YouTube to learn more about the different functionalities of my key board,

how to master tracks, and just different things that can be done when writing a song in general.

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

The style of course definitely worked for me personally. If I am going to really learn something I have to want to learn it and crave learning more of it and that is the kind of environment that this class created. Perhaps some sort of loose grading system would have been nice though just to keep me on task throughout the semester. It was just hard for me personally sometimes to do work for this class when I had work from other classes that had due dates and grades hanging over my head. I believe if all courses were structured like yours then this system would work perfectly but since that is not the case some sort of reward or punishment for completion of the work needs to be implemented to be able to compete for time with other courses.

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 an A to be reported to the registrar, because even though our group did not actually get the final product up and running we all learned a lot in the process of it and bonded as a group.

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- What learning goals did you set for yourself?
- How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?
- 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.
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- How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do the same or differently?
- 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.

Of all the classes I have taken at JMU, ISAT 340 was the one class I was able to take the most out of all in my years. Not in terms of just learning about the subject, but about life, humanity, goals, morals, etc. Coming into this I thought it was going to be like any other class, where it was going to be structured with a full guideline of things that were expected to get a certain grade. I did not think I would learn about things like meditating, burning mind project, and life experiences. These lessons were the things that were probably even harder to grasp because you had to take really hard look at yourself in order to understand it. We did learn a lot about programming and collaborating with one another in order to complete a project so I did take away a lot on the subject as well. I enjoyed this very much because I have been working just about every summer for the past few years and you can always learn on the job so with this class being more project-based rather than a bunch of homework and quizzes, I thought it was a much better approach to teaching.

I set all types of goals for myself to complete this semester in and out of the class ranging from learning code on Code Academy, running, eating, coding more in C#, speaking up more, studying a set number of hours, etc. Often times I felt that I could have set the bar higher for myself but I put what I wanted to get done for the week. I came to understand that by making things into a certain habit, it became a part of my life. I switched majors from the Engineering program so I didn't really know anyone from the ISAT so it started off a little lonely. But as I started getting more involved in things I feel like I became a much better person and

became happier with the things around me. Rather than being cynical, I had a better attitude, and my family could really tell that I was doing much better.

I wasn't doing well in engineering at JMU, always just getting by and never really striving to excel, just in case I need a cushion for a grades or something. Even though I could have stuck with it, engineering became more of a duty to my parents and family rather than coming to JMU and wanting to actually learn something. My whole family is made of electrical engineers so to me, they all live such boring lives with the only thing in mind is making money and living comfortably better than the average person. I always thought this was a dumb way to live but for my mom, I went along with it. I never found the engineering program hard at all, and for the most part, I never really struggled with learning the material. It was just kind of bland to me with no sense of creativity and too much emphasis to get accredited rather than try to make the students want to strive for something amazing. Forcing myself to do things that I hated over and over when I wanted to do something completely different with my life. I started feeling like things were out of my control, and that I couldn't do a thing about it because even if I could, I wouldn't have any desire to and I have no idea why. It was always either I was passionate about something and would not stop until it was perfect or I just wouldn't do it at all. I disappointed my father, mother, felt like I was kind of a failure even though they knew I had potential, yet, no matter how hard I tried I wasn't getting the results that I wanted. I've always been smarter than my little brother and even he's doing amazing in electrical engineering at Florida Institute of Technology and on a tennis scholarship. I can still beat him any day at tennis but I guess somewhere in this roller coaster of what I call my life I just lost fire to fight and succeed. I thought that it was time for a change, which is why I switched majors to ISAT. I needed something with computers because it's the one thing I have never let go since I was 6 years old. I've screwed up more machines than I can even remember. With different sectors I could choose from I could start exploring the things that I really liked to do. It was a complete change for me so at first it was a little overwhelming. I was lonely because I didn't really know anyone and the people who I studied and hung out with since my freshman year were still over in engineering. I still wasn't completely sure if ISAT was the right program for me, not until the week before Thanksgiving break that something really hit and all of a sudden, I became motivated not just in my class but I'm hungry for information and though that I found a couple of ideas that I wanted to do for making apps and even though I have to go to California the Saturday right after finals, I almost just want to stay in my room all winter break and just figure out how to do what I want to do to make this program work. Success to me isn't about just getting the degree, it's about finding some area of my life that I want to pursue to the utmost fullest and just be happy for once. Having a goal that no one has to tell me do is really nice for change. So overall, I say this semester has been pretty dang successful.

The goals that I have set weren't always all met the way I wanted them to. I wanted to go further into C#, since it is the Microsoft version of Java, but didn't have the time because I had other classes to worry about so I had to set my priorities. And even though I thought I knew the information for the subject, because I didn't apply them, I didn't really know the material at all. After about the first month and a half I also for some reason stopped running a mile more each week than the previous week. Courses started requiring more work and I stopped the healthier lifestyle I was following which, now that I think about it, isn't good for my overall self. I didn't finish all of CodeAcademy like I told myself I would by the beginning of the semester, even though I got most of it done, I should have finished it all the way through. Realizing this I think that these failures have led back to the first goal that I should have made every time I made the survey: do the next survey. By telling myself that these are my goals for the week, I did better than I did without taking the survey.

JMU's mission statement was exactly what I am looking to achieve, and since switching the ISAT program, it has been nothing but great to me. I actually felt like I was learning something rather than cramming useless information into my head to pass tests and I only regret not doing it sooner. I think the burning man project and burning mind project are absolutely fascinating and I would never have learned about it if I didn't come into this program. I love the 10 principles it follows and how it can be applied to just about anything you do. If it wasn't for you talking about it in lecture that one day instead of coding, I think I would still be the same person I was walking into the first day of class. A week prior to that lecture my uncle passes away and I was really upset, and being an introvert, I don't really like to show or tell people how I am feeling. After, I realized I had a lot to be thankful for so rather than asking myself what I should do with my life, I realized that I needed to live, but at the same time, keeping to my responsibilities first. Not everyone has the opportunity that I have so I should really make the best of it. From there I am now a little more at peace with myself, and felt happier. I am so thankful for you showing me the burning mind project!

This style of course work is the best for me. I think that for students paying an institution for a higher education, grades should not be the factor deciding someone's life. It's great for me because I don't really do well with pressures of grading but I love working on things. If I'm not doing schoolwork, I am most likely always working on something or doing something. Letting us decide our projects, learn from our own mistakes is far more educational than just receiving a letter grade for how well I did on an exam because most likely, I'll never need to take that exam ever again and the things I need to know are the things I apply to my life. I would definitely recommend this form of grading again since it has really helped me with the things that I want to do. Even for the group projects, I think that should be done again as well because even though our group was completely unstructured, unorganized, I took a lot out

of it, felt like there could have been a hundred different things I could have done different and I think that's more valuable to me than anything.

I would really like to receive an A. I know I haven't don't all the surveys, didn't go to every single class, but I did do my part of the project. Maybe excellence is doing more than just your part and going beyond of what was asked for but I feel that I deserve the grade because I really took away from the class what you were trying to teach us. Maybe I haven't grasped all of it yet but I think that a lot of what went on in the class, I took to heart and it has made a big impact on me. It's finals right now but I am actually happier than I have been all semester and feel more motivated than I have ever been in a very long time. I'm glad that winter break is coming up but I could care less right now because I'm ready to do the work. It's a strange feeling but I'm excited for next semester already.

Tina Nguyen
ISAT 340
Personal Narrative

Coming into this class I expected to develop new skills in the area of programming and software development. Overall, the learning goals I had this semester did not fit what I had originally planned. In other words I came into this class knowing it would be a lot of independent learning and there would be a lot of autonomy to engage in the topic of choice within software development and or programming. For me as an individual, I enjoy learning skills for the sake of learning new things and overcoming those challenges to obtain those skills. I often learn new skills related to the arts, whether it is drawing, crafting or quilting so in deciding to pursue different skillsets in that area and develop them on my own time. When I took ISAT 252, the introduction to programming class, although I did not have a lot of programming ability, I enjoyed learning about how to pursue a project and the develop that idea into something visible whether it was a simple “Hello World” screen to an attempt in making a fully functional application. From my perspective I viewed this as another art form because of the detail and planning that is required to run a program or creating an application.

When entering this class, I thought I wanted to pursue Information Knowledge Management as my concentration in the Integrated Science and Technology program because I thought that this was one way I could apply this “art” into something that would help others. However, over the course of the semester I was challenged in a few different ways. Instead of pursuing a project and in developing the ability to program as my partner and I had hoped, we decided to pursue the semester project that would in hope, help her senior project group. Although our idea did not come into fruition in a database or website we each did a lot of learning both from the thought process and from one another.

My partner Jaclyn and I had very brief interactions as first year students at James Madison University as we lived on the same hall and had very surface level interactions with the exchange of a cordial “hi” here and there. Each of us started off in the same major, and switched into the same major when we each realized that our intended area of study engineering did not work for us as individuals. Having to work with someone else on the project this semester, I expected to regain my interest in my major and had hoped that by pursuing programming as a new skill that I would no longer feel disinterested in everything around me.

Overcoming a few personal changes within the past few months that stemmed from the previous semester, I learned that I used to be a person who was interested in everything. However, through my experiences as a student I noticed that many of the things I was interested in no longer appeal to me. For example, the area of biology or biotechnology, which was the concentration I wanted to pursue. However, unknowingly that throughout the year my thought processes would change. When doing a lot of reflecting about how I learned, I came to a conclusion finalized on a decision that I am no longer a person that can distinguish what I enjoy and do not enjoy until I experience a topic to gain a different perspective. For me, this was not the case before coming into college because I felt that hard work and perseverance were the qualities that would help me come to terms with a decision as a major I made for myself. My

world was very black in white in decision making, such as pursuing a major of interest because that was what we are supposed to do as students.

However, in doing this and while I proceeded to be a student at JMU, I noticed that my world was no longer just black and white. I noticed that, for a long time I was going through the classes in a numb fashion and almost seemed robotic in the way where I was continuously going through the motions without gaining anything from them. I went from being an individual to being excited about school and gaining new knowledge to questioning my decisions and trying to figure out if the choices I made were the best for me. Realizing this, I know I chose a decision that was practical in terms of my major over making a personal choice of what was doing something “right” for me.

Most of the learning goals I set for myself were achieved in the beginning of the semester. Where my partner and I worked on developing our skills for our semester project we both gained a different perspective. (However, I stopped responding to the weekly survey goals because I could not see what I had previously written.) Over the course of the semester these learning goals shifted where, I stopped what I was doing when our project had a shift in direction and focus. For that reason, I felt that I was successful because I gained a new perspective from our project and about myself. Relating these discoveries to the project, I felt we were successful by being challenged and rejected. Although this was frustrating from time to time, being challenged to view find solutions in different ways by the end of the semester was rewarding because I feel it is important to expand knowledge as an individual but to also put in time to learn about topics that individuals do not know a lot about. (Hence the point of giving individuals autonomy in this class to develop their programming skills that best helps the individual.)

Having the chance to ask questions I feel is not an opportunity students have with their professors. Although others may feel that the project failed due to not creating or having something concrete to present. What I learned about myself this semester no longer made me feel bitter about choices I made regarding being in a place I do not enjoy. (I am from Harrisonburg, so JMU is a bit too close to home.) In addition to this, my failure of recognizing what was best for me was an epiphany moment when I learned there was an alternative option to help me prepare for my next step in life. For the past few years, I felt the major I chose and switched into constantly made me contemplate if I made the right decision for myself. Although ISAT was one solution to my problem because the major gives students a choice to choose and hone in on an area of choice, my biggest take away from this major is the focus on making students question and think though the habits of mind when problem. For me, that is attractive to the major because, whereas as engineering major the focus was finding the solution without the regards of the impact this will have on others.

To address the failure of acknowledging what was best for myself, I plan on making the next year at JMU my best year possible. Realizing there will be different challenges along the way, with the aspect of enjoying my last year here at JMU and with the knowledge that if things work out I will be able to pursue a career where I can lead a meaningful and productive life once I leave has me feeling less trapped. Instead of doing what is practical in terms of a focused career entirely in the sciences. I plan to address this in pursuing a tailored concentration to prepare me

for my future plans. Keeping JMU's Mission Statement in mind, our university's goal is to "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives."

For the longest time I felt I was lying to myself, because I felt that even though I am in college, being "productive", I was not leading a meaningful or productive life. This semester, I feel more educated because I feel less trapped and less like I wasted my years at a school I could not entirely enjoy being at for the past few years. I feel more enlightened, in the fact that I feel I have a choice that will better help me with my future goals. Most importantly, I no longer feel entirely locked into doing and pursuing a career that does not fit me. (Better late than never I suppose.)

Going through the experience of conceptualizing Gift Cycle definitely contributed and detract from knowing myself better and what I wanted to do in the near future. Aspects of Gift Cycle that detracted me from pursuing things further I realized I was not as interested in program as I had originally thought I was. I feel that, if programming were something I discovered on my own I would be more inclined to pursue this because I would be learning to gain a new skill. But because of the fact that I would have been pursuing the IKM route as a future job opportunity did not sit well with me in a sense that I would be doing programmers a disservice. When I intended on making IKM my concentration, I thought I would be fulfilled learning more about this, however as I continued to learn to program for this class, I still had a feeling of dread. Mainly because, deep down inside and looking at myself from the outside looking in I realized I could not see myself doing that career path because I was not doing what I wanted. Once again, I felt like I was wasting my time and not making my life productive as it could have been. I felt that by pursuing knowledge in this way, I was not being fair to myself.

Working on Gift Cycle contributed to the fact that my initial goal of coming to college was so that I could help people. I realize this is a commonly used cliché, however my goal in life is not to make money, instead it is to leave a positive impact on others. Everything in life can be applied to this phrase: "helping people", based on the context, both as a student in a major or in business. Businesses help people through providing a product or service, those in the health field help people rebuild, repair and extend life while teachers and professors educate others. For me, I am in a major to "help people" however; the approach I was taking was not how I wanted to help people in the way I wanted too.

When the option of the "Tailored Concentration" arose, and having meaningful conversations with Dr. Morgan Benton about the direction I wanted to pursue in the future I had a sense of relief and felt less trapped that there were alternative options in reaching my goal of what I want to do in the future.

My future goals post-graduation includes one of two options:

1. Applying to graduate school to a student affairs program. After being an ISAT major, I want to pass on the message of what makes ISAT different from a hard science, and that we are a major that pushes the individual to consider problem solving from all perspectives through the ISAT Habits of Mind. In pursuing student affairs, I hope that as a future academic adviser or future leader in this area I can apply and tailor changes wherever I end up, hopefully in higher education.

2. Applying for the Peace Corps. During my senior year at JMU I will be applying to the Peace Corps and applying to student affairs programs. In hopes of joining the Peace Corps, I feel this opportunity would expand my perspective in what I want to do in the future. As an individual I want to make a meaningful impact on others while tailoring what I do to the people who live there so they are educated and make the most of what they can. (Example: As a Resident Adviser I plan programs based on what my residents want or need.) With this global contribution, I want to work with people; children and adults alike appreciate opportunities even if the odds seem against them. I also want a different experience, and regardless of where I am placed if I am accepted, helping people develop and smile would be my goal.

This style of a course work, felt was necessary for me because it helped me realized what I was truly feeling from my experience here. I knew, while being at JMU I did not enjoy my experience here other than being an RA. Realizing the “why” made things come full circle. I feel that in college, there are not many courses that challenge a student to reflect. Granite, some people may take a course like this for the free grade, however if someone is not being challenged or questioning why they are making certain decisions for themselves I feel that is walking through life blindly. I feel that this course worked well for me, because it helped me finalize what I needed to learn about myself. Although I did not develop or enjoy programming as much as I had hoped I gained other perspectives that were just as valuable in making decisions for myself.

If I were to take this course again, I appreciated the fact that we were able to learn about database models. Although, instructions such as, “work on tutorials” are great, I feel that a class resonates differently if the professor is engaged in the topics with the students. The most valuable aspect of this class I feel is the one on one meeting about our projects and the development being made along the way. I can’t say if other teams took advantage of this, however my partner and I did and met with each other and Dr. Benton on a weekly basis (minus one or two meetings). This helped us stay accountable to working on a project and meeting with one another so we could show our progress, and that we were not just doing anything. Some people may interpret our results that way; however the research and unnoticeable values helped us grow as people. When people can say, “I’ve never thought of things that way before” I feel has more impact on a person than they realize.

As far as the grade I would like to be reported to the registrar’s office, I feel comfortable saying I want an “A” for this class. Reason being, I can finally say I learned a lot about myself and that I no longer feel like I am fully trapped in doing something I know I won’t enjoy in the future. The other reason is that the work my partner and I put into seeding the idea of Gift Cycle definitely help me gain a different perspective, both in the readings, research and challenges we faced conceptualizing this project idea.

Nathan Irving

ISAT 340

December 11, 2013

Semester Narrative

This semester was almost exactly what I thought it was going to be. I assumed that there was going to be programming and coding associated with the class, along with having a semester project that would have to be completed by the end of the semester. This was all based on the previous classes that I have taken in the past. I knew the class would have a lot to do with databases because it is a web development class which have a lot to do with databases. So I was not surprised by anything that was covered during class.

Before the class I set a goal to learn as much as I could about developing a functioning webpage. I thought that by the end of the semester I could develop a basic informational website. Over the course of the semester, my focus changed to trying to develop our mobile app for the semester project. I feel like we had to get that part of it all done before we could work on getting the database portion of the project done. So instead of learning more about how to make the database itself and set it up to be able to retrieve information, I think I learned more about how they actually work rather than being about to make one myself.

I do feel like our semester project was somewhat successful. We didn't completely finish the project because we could not figure out how to tap into the android's geolocation programming in order to track our position and trace our movement, but the idea was well thought out and pretty original based on the fact that I don't think many people have done this kind of thing before. We were able to get the program to show a fully functioning map, and design the layout for the mobile app. But since we got stuck for a very long time on getting the geolocation to work, we didn't get much more done than that. And as I mentioned before, I was able to learn a lot about databases used in web development, but I am not exactly able to create one myself due to the amount of programming that is involved. But I could probably read the code and describe what different parts do and why they are important.

The hardest thing to deal with based on the outcome of the semester is that my group and I didn't produce something that was fully functional to show at the end of the semester. If you remember back to ISAT 252, my group then was not able to completely finish the Snake program that we were working on then. We got half way through the project and couldn't get the program to stop when you touched the borders, or to get another plum to generate after the snake touched it. I also think I could have learned more about how to actually make the database and how to apply it to a webpage, which was the overall purpose of the class. But I think that would have changed if our project was different or if we had actually finished it and was able to apply the database portion to the app. In the future I guess we could create something that could be done within a reasonable amount of time, because you told us at the beginning of the semester that it would be a very long process to get the project done.

I definitely think that I came out of the semester more educated than I was before. I think it also made me realize that my specialty is not in the programming field. But I do feel like I learned a lot of things about how the principles behind how databases, websites, and mobile apps work when it comes to making them and how they operate. So I guess there is a bittersweet feeling about the semester. I did learn a lot about myself in terms of how I can be more productive and manage time better and to somewhat efficiently work in a group and contribute my strengths to the group in the best way I can. As for the future, I think that I further proved that I don't want to do program development. I am better skilled at using various programs efficiently instead of creating them, which is the other part of IKM that I did in ISAT 341 which is computer modeling.

I do like the freedom that the class gave in terms of creating your own project that we would work on over the course of the semester. I think that it is good to have a designated time that your whole group sits down with the professor and asks questions about the project and give direction and create goals for the group to do within a week's time. I also liked how the class as a whole had a project that we worked on together that was related to the overall goal of the course. I think that is because it makes it a lot easier to learn if you see it done and all the effects that the codes have on the database all together. Sometimes it was kind of hard to follow along because there was a lot going on at the same time while writing the code, or that things would integrate with each other to the point it was hard to differentiate between what did what. It would also help to have some kind of guidance that the class could refer to on the class website whether it be powerpoints, podcasts, or good tutorials that we could use based on the different type of program we were using.

If I was going to ask for a grade in the class I would ask for a B+. This is because I was able to get some knowledge about web development and databases, but if it was up to me to do it on my own, I wouldn't be able to do it. And I think this solely has to do with my lack of programming skill. As mentioned before I did learn about how the database works, and what they could be used for so it was not a complete waste of the semester. I also think that I learned a lot when it comes to the group project because it was so different from the other projects, and because there was so much other programming that went along with it outside of developing a database. There was a lot of work that had to be done outside of the class and outside of what we were doing in class in order to get the app to the point that we got it to.

Martin Torres

ISAT 340 Narrative

12/11/13

My expectations coming into this class were that I would learn more programming and gain a better understanding about databases and how they worked and coming out with another application like I did last year in 252. I knew what they style of the class would be like since I had had 252 before and I thought that style worked very well for the class so I knew I would like 340 the same. The learning goals I set for myself were to do more tutorials on codecademy to get a better understanding and to pay attention in class to learn about databases. I also wanted to learn how to build a mobile application because I never was able to figure out how to do it last year. I also wanted myself to go to all of the classes and pay attention in every one so I could get as much out of the class as possible. Over the course of the semester, my goals started to evolve because I realized that I enjoyed programming and coding, but that it was not something I wanted to do in the future. I definitely enjoyed understanding some of it, but after a while, it did not interest me as much as other subjects did. Because I was not as involved as others may have been in the class, it made me slack off, which was not good for me. I ended up skipping classes, which I do not normally do. I also did not do as many tutorials on codecademy as I expected myself to do over the semester. I did learn still when I was in class, but my learning goals changed in the way that I did not expect as much out of myself by the end of the semester.

I felt successful in the way that I narrowed down my decisions of what I want to do for a job when I am looking for jobs. I am glad that I gained some type of background in the subject also, and maybe in the future I will pick it up again and try to teach myself. I did not have much success in the class because I could not understand using laravel on my computer and that is around the time where I was getting lost and losing interest. I did have some success towards the beginning of the semester because I just about finish the javascript tutorials and I was having

some progress on the project. I feel like I failed my goals because I definitely could have put more effort into this class and pushed myself harder like I do in other classes. I feel like I failed my goals because I did not really know anyone in class and am a shy person, so I did not involve myself in other people's projects and tried to do it on my own, which did not work out. In the future, I need to learn how to push myself harder even if it is just me alone and I need to push myself to talk to others that surround me.

I feel more enlightened because after this semester, I found out what really interested me and I know what I want to do in the future as a job. I could have learned more in this class if I put more time into it, but instead I put most of my attention towards one of my classes, which I want to concentrate in. I know that I should have put more into this class, since it was my decision to take the class, but then I remembered what you said at the beginning of the class. You said that you wanted everyone to come out of this class with something, whether it being an awesome application or it being the student learning that he/she does not want to program in the future. That is how I feel like I became more enlightened this semester. I know that the energy concentration is where all of my mind is so that is where I put all of my attention and that is how I will be one of the "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." I could easily see myself coming back to learning how to code in the future, but that will be once I have a little more free time, because I did enjoy making things on the computer and would love to learn more, but that is not where my mind is at the moment.

I think this is a good style of class for this type of subject because I do not understand how there can really be grades put on this. I do not think this would work in some types of subjects mainly because of the general student's mindset on school and they would not try as hard as they could. That could eventually change, but I do not see it any time soon. I think that this class should be done the same as it was and ISAT 252 should be the same as well because it is a good structure. I just wish that I knew more people in the class and I think that it would have enhanced

my learning. I knew there were some class bonding activities that I should have went to, and maybe that would have helped me in the long run of the class because I would have known more people in the class, but my schedule was very busy at the beginning of the semester and I rarely had free time during the week and weekends.

I would like for you to report an A to the registrar. Even though I did not put as much into this class as others, in my opinion I still got a lot out of this because I got a better grasp on what I want to do in the future. No offense to programming, but it is just not something for me like I thought it could be. I know I could have put more effort into the class than I did, but I put most of my attention on my energy sector class. I did have a great time every time I was in class and did come out with more knowledge than I came in with.

- What were your expectations coming into this class?

I expected to learn about databases as a general expectation due to the class description. A more in depth expectation is that I wanted to learn what different types of information can be used in a database, how to effectively create one, what do you need to do to maintain a database, what different tasks the databases can be used for. After the first couple of classes, I expected to learn more about how everything fits together and how to take raw information and turn it into a presentable database with a front end website that is easier to use for the user.

- What learning goals did you set for yourself?

I set goals for myself to learn how to create a database that would be useful in situations that I think I would run into more than just once or twice. I also wanted to learn how to use HTML and CSS in order to make front end user interfaces that are both eye pleasing and functioning.

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

As the semester went on, the goals pretty much stayed the same, but geared more towards how things worked and why so that I could use the information in any situation I need to code something. This changed from just wanting to know how to do specific things because that would be less useful as I ran into different situations.

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

I feel I was successful in learning a lot about HTML and CSS as I spent a lot of time working on codeacademy.com in order to learn about it. I have many “awards” they give out for completing sections or doing lessons days in a row. My partner, Robert, and I also presented our mostly completed and working database. It wasn’t as polished as planned for, but it demonstrated knowledge of the programs we used and the coding that needed to be done.

- 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 failed to achieve a lot of my goals over the semester due simply to time constraints with my other classes and work. They emphasize a lot on grades and as such, are prioritized higher in terms of work needing to be done. I also think that I learned how I need to manage my time better, even if I didn’t complete everything I needed. Some of the issues I’ve had also stem a lot from my personal life and dealing with certain factors that inhibit my ability to work effectively and as frequently as needed.

- 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 exceedingly more educated than before after taking this class, as it has helped learn about many different areas in which I had no previous knowledge. I feel as if I don't know exactly what I would like to do in the near or distant future as I've learned that I'm not very good at some aspects of coding and it may be in my best interests to pursue coding and like activities only as a hobby, and not something I'd study or try to rely on as a means of living.

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

I think this style of course is great. It allows freedom and flexibility to prioritize what is most needed to be worked on, and relieves a great deal of stress when not worrying about what needs to be done and how good of a grade I got on it. However, it is my belief that in conjunction with traditional classes, it makes it hard to stay motivated to learning. The traditional classes punish failure and risk taking and thus deter students from trying new things. I believe that your class is structured very effectively and shouldn't be changed.

- 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 an A reported to the registrar. Simply because in the current system of public education, grades are more important than actually learning something, however, I believe I put in a lot of effort and hard work in order to learn what I did. I didn't always have the most time

What were your expectations coming into this class?

After taking ISAT 252 I was prepared for your teaching style. I welcomed the meditation in the mornings as it was something that I wish I had been able to commit myself to doing more often over the summer. The self-directed learning that you encourage is something that I appreciate. In general your attitude towards education aligns with my own and I knew that I wanted to take 340 with you. The class title software development implies, to my connotation anyway, more of a focus on writing programs within a static machine and less on web development. As I began to realize we were focusing mainly on web page integration with databases as well as on the construction and theory of those databases I was surprised. In hind sight I now realize that there is a trend in technology for nearly everything to be web enabled. Even the tradition of saving a word document to a computer has been desecrated with the storm of cloud applications rolling in. I hardly ever use any software that isn't web enabled anymore and the ones I do use I don't even think of as separate software applications but rather as essentials built into the operating system. For an individual to attempt to create value to others through the development of software at this point requires the novel use of web development. Attempting to create a better built in calculator, timer, music player or any other type of basic application is completely redundant. Not to say that it is impossible to create something good of the nature, but there is very little room left to innovate. Learning software development implies the use of web technologies to facilitate internet integration. In commonplace if you were to hear about a software developer you would most likely jump to assume he or she was an app developer and likely an app that made use of the web. This rambling is meant to express that I now realize that what we learned in 340 absolutely makes sense in teaching students software development. Furthermore it is focused on the education of the most essential aspects, in my opinion, of software development if the goal is to facilitate students creating value to others.

What learning goals did you set for yourself?

Before I even set foot on campus this semester I had the goal of creating technology that would allow the use of everyday technologies to collect and leverage data towards providing further value to individuals. I wanted to create a technology partner, even friend, individuals. I knew some of what would be required to make this happen but I knew that I needed to learn more. I absorbed every aspect of your lectures and demonstrations with the filter of how it could apply towards bringing this dream to life. I also knew that I would be pursuing development towards this goal as my senior capstone project and wanted to kill two birds with one stone by learning about and creating database technologies that would lead me to a head start on my capstone project.

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

As I learned more about how little I actually knew my goals began to veer towards the research and learning aspect of the project. The areas that lacked the most knowledge were in the machine learning and statistical correlation technologies. I spent much of my time for 340

working towards understanding what data types and columns we would be incorporating into our databases and found some answers from academic publications. However I began to rethink this as I realized that really the only web enabled databases we would want would be what the user enters into the app and what is displayed back to the user. There an in between period where the processing occurs and many more data types will be created. Our goals now lie in learning more about how and where to construct this processing engine as well as on the design end with how to take the outputted data types and convert them informative visual displays on mobile and web applications.

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

As it is an ongoing process I do not feel that we can label it a success. We still have much work to completely fulfill our goals of learning how to construct the processing engine. We did accomplish a goal and gain a good grasp on the use of CSS and jQuery to design visual displays of data but we also understand that there are even better solutions and that further research will be required. I feel I achieved success in defining the scope of the project and narrowing down the grand vision into some manageable chunks. I also feel as though I have identified valuable resources for us to contact and learn from. Throughout the semester I have been identifying and tracking the progress of projects and companies who are working on developing similar data products. Jini.co, OMsignal, the Google Now team, Robert Scoble and the reporter app are just a few of them.

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 feel that though we had the opportunity to produce an example of a working product where a user could enter in data points and it would update a database then receive the updated information we failed to do so. I learned that I should avoid getting wrapped up in the planning process and just build something. Excessive planning can be dangerous. I plan on setting limits to the amount of research that I will allow myself to do and begin building sooner. But with this I will hold a compromise that I need to be prepared to change or pivot during the building process as issues arise. You can plan a lot but you can never plan for everything. It is best to attempt to hit a sweet spot between over planned and nothing built and something built wrong because of no planning.

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?

Yes, I absolutely feel more educated. I hadn't the slightest information about a model view controller or that Laravel existed beforehand. Using Laravel we will most likely be able to create our website quicker and also be clued into possible functionalities that we may not have considered before. I also am now much more educated on machine learning techniques that can be used to manipulate our data sets. I would say I do feel more enlightened. In the sense that after performing this work for 340 I have a better understanding of how many different modern technologies work. Knowing this I now have room to think about improvements for them or new applications.

My activities this semester have contributed knowing myself better literally because they are focused on creating technologies to do just that. That aside, the pursuit of bringing this vision to reality has shown me much about myself. One example is that when starting from very abstract ideas it helps if I sit down with a large canvas sized piece of paper and begin to just sketch and write ideas and words. Getting as much out from my brain and into the real world as possible is really the best thing to do in this stage. I now will apply this technique to future ventures, I feel throughout the continuation of what was started this semester I will learn more and more about myself and how I approach realizing abstract goals.

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

I personally prefer this style of course because the only type of work someone should ever do is the kind they are passionate about. It is very rare that a person's passions will line up directly with the curriculum of, for example, a computer science course. However, there are more than likely many aspects of a computer science course that facilitate the construction of something the student is passionate about. This course —by letting students pick their own projects to build— results in them learning the content because they want to, because they want to build something. This is my ideal course structure.

If I were to take it again I would recommend that you require an amount of class time to be solely devoted towards working on our projects, almost like a lab session for a biotechnology class.

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 to the registrar. An A is meant to represent to the world that I know the content taught in the class very well and am capable of applying it accordingly. In this class the content was partly self-directed and partly focused on database creation and PHP frameworks. I have an understanding of the lecture content and I feel that the information I gained from self-directed learning was proficient enough to deserve an A. I am in the process of demonstrating that I can apply this information with my capstone project but you have already seen a glimpse of this in the web front end, MySQL draft and beginnings of context classification of accelerometer data.

Alexander Chamberlain
Benton
ISAT 340
Dec/9/13

End of Semester Narrative

Coming into this classes I expected to embark on a semester long project that would force me to try something new that I hadn't ever done before. This led me to set the goal for myself to learn Objective-C so that I could write OSX and iOS apps. In order to accomplish this I began practicing ObjC from www.codeschool.com. They have a great course to teach you the basics of the language. If you were to pay for their subscription you get access to so many advanced languages and I would highly recommend it if you are trying to find something to learn new languages.

I feel that I was successful in that I was able to create a hello world app and modify existing code to change the background for our Bad Santa Desktop App. Over the course of the project I helped the other member with their code if they got stuck. Especially Colin, luckily we were able to get him to do design of the website.

Over the course of the semester I believe that I was enlightened. I feel that this course lets you learn something, but also do it on your time over the course of the semester. As long as you start from the beginning and then work for the whole time I feel that you can learn a good deal. Not only that having to work with a team is always a learning experience as no group's dynamics are ever the same. This time we were super unorganized, but somehow made it work in the end when we started communicating more. Also when we broke down into groups we had a partner that would work with you on problems.

This courses style works for me because I'm pretty busy working and studying. I also took the early Senior Proposal class, which started half way through the year, which added work unexpectedly. I would report to the registrar a letter grade of A, because I accomplished my goals and was able to help out my group for our semester project.

Now I answered your questions, and I am just gonna write about the semester as a whole, cause life is way busier than those questions can sufficiently answer. Looking back at awesome things that happened this semester. Well, I'm erodr famous lame as that is as of writing this right now there are 1180 users. I started at 1, and that was myself. Granted over the course of the semester I added 10 other reps. My role also went from promoting to being like a manager. I was in charge of 10 colleges kids, which is super hard to do but it really worked out in the end. I was also worried about hiring people I knew but somehow I managed that, I don't know how but it worked out in the end. On top of 1180 users, JMU's activity stats (likes,posts,erodes) stats at tied with the largest campus in the nation, Mizzou where erodr first started. Perks of this job free drinks cause Erodr loves to spend money on its users its sweet, they picked up the tab at Dona's for like 1000\$.

Also I started my senior project early, which is sweet. I came up with an awesome idea that I hope will change the way JMU sets up their computer labs. I want to get rid of desktop computers, cause honestly the future in settings that need lots of computers (enterprise, campus) can be done cheaper, more energy efficient, and with lower maintenance costs. This can all be done hopefully without having to buy into expensive equipment that <http://www.teradici.com> makes which reduces that costs I believe I can cut. I propose to use Cubieboard Truck single computer boards that run this http://www.armtc.net/?page_id=21 OS image, that supports PCoIP with the VMWare View client. These Cubbieboards have 2ghz processors and 2gb of ram, along with USB and Sata slots. Capable of running Fedora full desktop version, this OS is lightweight and only needs to connect tot the ESXi VMware server that we have in the Telecom lab. They also only use 8 watts of power, which is compared to the 80-250 watts depending on computer configuration. So 30 of these could replace all the desktops that are in a lab, but also allowing for access to those VM's over VPN from home. This is pretty lofty but, why not lets turn something upside.

On a real note it's been a crazy semester, thanks for being understanding and believing in your class like you do. It makes me want to go out and do something I want to do and I don't care as long as I'm happy doing it.

Andrew Hoy
December 9, 2013
Morgan Benton
ISAT 340

Semester Narrative

This semester went almost exactly the opposite as I had planned. Starting this semester, I had a few goals that I really wanted to get the opportunity to reach for. I started with a couple of ideas for projects I had personal interest in working on.

I wanted to try and create a way for students in ISAT to more easily access information on potential internships/careers. Most of this information is accessible in some way, but not nearly as efficiently and streamlined as I believe I could make it. I had a very hard time last year finding anything of this manner after weeks of meeting with multiple professors and doing plenty of research online. What I think would have been beneficial would be a database that gathers and displays all of this information in one space, along with other features such as an alumni page where ISAT alums could register if they would like to be contacted by students who are working towards a degree in their field.

The second idea I would really have liked to develop was a mobile app which could be used to crowd source information on different locations of speed traps, speed cameras, red light cameras, and other pesky road law enforcement. This would be done by allowing users to input different locations and types of traffic traps and this information would be displayed for other users of the app who could in turn verify or dispute claims by other users. I imagine a rating system per user would be a great tool to implement to dissuade trolling.

Both of these projects seemed like very fun and personally helpful tools that I would have loved to work on, but my group decided on another route, which I was equally happy with. We decided to take on a project that would allow users to share desktop wallpapers with their “friends.” This is a great idea for a social site with a fun premise. In theory this was a terrific semester project, but our group ran in to a number of barriers which impeded progress.

Personally, I felt that I essentially failed to reach the goal I was striving for. With the work load I had from my other classes and extracurricular activities, I found it hard to stay motivated in the second half of the semester when it felt like none of the progress I had made was really going to contribute to furthering the project.

With the project being what it was, we decided to split the whole group into three subgroups; a mac team, and pc team, and the web team. I was a part of the pc team. Our goal was to create a windows app that would first ask for a username and password of the user and then verify that with a database produced by the web group. Once verified, the application would access the user’s profile, and through the use of a windows service, it would change the desktop image of the user’s computer, based on a queue of images waiting on the user’s profile. The application would then wait a specified amount of time before checking the user’s profile again for another desktop picture.

After spending the first half of the semester learning the ins and outs of a visual based language and program (Visual C# in Visual Studio) I felt that while I still did know really understand how I was going to do what I wanted, I could at least navigate the program enough to try. I completed a login form that I felt was entirely adequate for what we wanted but got entirely stuck trying to connect it to a database for verification. I felt that I could not really go on with the project and the actual meat of the program (changing the desktop image) until I had accomplished the authentication and database portion of the app. After many hours of research, implementation and outright failure to complete this, I found it very hard to stay motivated on the project. The stress I felt from the pressure to succeed in Thermo, the hardest class I have ever taken to date, really held me back from spending as much time on this project it would have taken to attain my goals.

Probably the largest obstacle to the group's collective success lies in the lack of communication we had over the semester. I think this semester was extremely busy for most of us, relative to the past semesters we've had at JMU. From the beginning of the semester, it seemed that Ryan Sheppard stepped up to the plate as our unofficial leader and in that time really helped to work on our communication and our motivation to work towards our goals. It was a major blow to the team when he decided to take the rest of the semester off. After he left, none of us took the responsibility of stepping up and leading the group.

Until the very last few weeks before the presentation, we really did not have much material produced and had not worked together enough to ensure success. Finally though, at the end of the semester, we got together and completed a major portion of the project. Both the mac and PC applications successfully could change the desktop image at the click of a mouse and Collin had set up a very satisfactory web page which could be the foundation for the central hub of our project.

With the pull at the end of the semester to come up with at least a working skeleton of the project we had hoped to complete, I feel somewhat accomplished. Even through failing consistently to meet the goals I had set out for, I learned an awful lot through the semester. First, it's okay to set lofty goals, but you have to be prepared for the possibility of failure. Second, do not let that failure stop you from maybe putting that part of the project down for a little bit to work on another part. I had extremely lofty goals at the beginning of the semester (unbeknownst to me) and I am glad I did.

I worked extremely hard on the project, even if I do not have very much to show for it. Another lesson I learned was that given the timeline, maybe I was not able to put much forward as far as production, but I learned an awful lot, and given another semester of time, I may have been able to produce twice as much as I expected to do this semester. Production in life is not linear. Sometimes there are massive lapses in tangible products but those times are used on the intangibles which can later be applied to a more effective, efficient, and quality product.

As for the course style, I think I have a love/hate relationship with this style. First the hate: it is extremely difficult to prioritize a class which does not utilize the "currency" of grades when I have essentially been (and currently still am being) programmed to care only about the grade I receive rather than the content learned. Hypothetically, with a test in thermodynamics and global politics in a single week, it is extremely difficult to rationalize giving any attention at all to a class where I can simply ask for a grade rather than work for it.

With that being said, I absolutely love this teaching style. I think this really works well towards the way I learn. Being comfortable asking questions and not being publically humiliated for not somehow inherently knowing things I have yet to learn is extremely beneficial. Being able to set my own goals lets me learn the things I want to learn without the constant pressure of performing to someone else's predetermined standards. I wish this was implemented in every single classroom.

There are only two problems I have run into in ISAT 252 and ISAT 340. First, this teaching style is NOT in every classroom. This makes it extremely difficult to prioritize the ones it is in. Second, while it is very nice to be able to set and pursue my own goals, I unfortunately do not know what I do not know, and I think I could still benefit from a bit more direction, though not nearly to the level of traditional course style.

I would like for you to report an A to the registrar. I feel that I spent a very fair amount of time working towards my goals for this project. I learned an awful lot about the structure of C# and possible ways to implement it in the future. Most importantly I learned that in a group project of this nature, communication and group encouragement are paramount to success. I wish I could have completed more parts of the project but I am very happy with what I am coming away from this semester with. Next year, when I take another IKM class, I am going to work on balancing my work load for optimal production in each class and I will work on taking advantage of the invaluable resources at my disposal which can drastically aid in my success.

340 Final Narrative

This 340 Software Development class has been an extreme eye opener. I have never experienced a class that presented such a unique learning atmosphere. Towards the beginning of the semester, after reviewing the syllabus and reading about the loose/non-existent grade expectations, I simply saw this class as an easy, stress-free GPA booster. I thought that because there were no graded assignments, quizzes or tests, I would not have to put forth the effort that I would in other classes. I figured that without being “forced” to learn and being tested to show my improvements in the subject material, I probably would not have the motivation to learn what this class had to offer. I quickly found that each day of class that I attended, my mindset altered little by little. My interest in the curriculum spiked going over database structure, the MVC framework, Burning Man Principles, and even meditation. Even though I did not become an expert in any of these topics, I became aware and educated in a sense where I was able to define procedures that are used in web development, ways to seek out societal change, and methods to put my often stressed mind at ease. I also quickly discovered that in order to learn and maintain this new curriculum, much more effort and time is required than I had originally thought.

The first day of class, I honestly did not know what to expect. I had heard about Dr. Benton’s method of teaching and was intrigued as to how or why he chose to use the “no grade policy.” Even though this was the case, I figured that he would still in some respect, expect his students to turn in weekly assignments or presentations regarding what we would accomplish. I was under the assumption, from reading about the class online, that we would learn the ins and outs of database modeling. I was expecting that we would be involved with weekly/monthly class or group projects that dealt with creating simple applications that would store information in databases. I thought we were going to learn about the various database software this is offered and dive deeper into database structure (relational views, MySQL language, etc.). And we did learn about these things to an extent, I was just under the impression that more would have expected from us, such as doing out of class research daily, or be given multiple project/homework assignments that would assist our familiarity of the material presented in class.

The first month or so of the semester, during our weekly evaluations, I had set my goals toward making progress with my senior class project as well as 340’s semester project. At that time I was unaware of what my semester project was going to be so I thought that I would tie in what I needed to accomplish my senior project. I needed to exercise and learn computer languages as requirements for my senior project, which were also good stepping-stones for what I would potentially need and use in this later in this class. For about a month, I focused on completing CodeAcademy tutorials for both HTML as well as PHP. Even though I was never able to apply this new knowledge in my semester project, I was able to use these skills elsewhere, which I found exciting! I also expected myself to learn all there is to know about MySQL databases. I had the curiosity to learn how to correctly, effectively, and efficiently design and use a database. Even though this goal was not exactly met to the fact of becoming an expert, I do have a much better basis of how they are used, setup logically and physically. And again, even though I was unable to use this in 340, I was able to teach teammates the fundamental aspects that I had obtained, and apply them towards my senior project.

As I had previously stated, at the beginning of the semester my goals were focused on learning computer languages via CodeAcademy as well as learning the logistics of database modeling. However, as the semester progressed, my goals evolved drastically. As my group member, Tina, and I finally agreed on a project to pursue for the remainder of the fall semester, my semester goals flip flopped. From learning HTML and PHP, I went straight into research and brainstorming ways to create a whole new concept regarding “gift-giving” that could eventually be implemented into a web application at a later point in time. My goals were to meet weekly and sometimes biweekly, with Tina as well as Dr. Benton to discuss various ways to go about coming up with a solution to our societal problem. Tina and I read books, researched other websites, and came up with multiple theories until we managed to solidify one that met our overall project objectives.

Even though I was unable to implement any technological learning into this semesters project, I feel that I took a great deal away from this class. From the moment Dr. Benton proposed the idea that Tina and I attempt to think of a social media network that would potentially draw in a community to “gift,” I had doubts. Huge doubts. I continually asked myself, how is anyone going to do something for another person, without getting paid? Money is what makes the world go round, right? After close to two months working together to come up with some sort of logical solution, Tina and I solidified our idea, “Gift Cycle.” This gifting network brings people together who wish to share their talents online to others, and assist people, free of charge, to meet their wants or goals. Coming up with a solution to this problem, was a big deal for me. Researching how and why people would/should participate in communities such as this, made me think in ways that I have never thought before and probably would have never thought if it were not for taking this class. It was actually fun and insightful to spit out ideas and jump over obstacles that Tina and I once deemed as impossible. This project has forever changed my perception of how to create influencing ideas that positively affect others without monetary gain.

I would not necessarily say that I have failed any of my goals. I achieved to reach an understanding in many aspects while in this class. I wish that I would have been able to dwell more on things perhaps, but I definitely do not feel as if I have failed. As I stated earlier, I wish I would have been able to master more concepts of database modeling. I also wish that I had been able to create an application of some sort. I am not sure what it would of created exactly, but I wish I could have implemented something directly to the Internet. In the future, I hope to achieve this. I would like to download and correctly setup Laravel PHP Framework onto my personal computer and become adequately familiar with all of its capabilities. I would also like to create an application that utilizes a twitter bootstrap template, or an other responsive template. Essentially I want to take what I have learned during lecture from this class, and make my own creation.

Personally, this class correlates well with JMU’s Mission Statement that states academia should produce “educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive.” In terms of learning, I feel that I have been enlightened more this semester, in this class, than I have since elementary school. Dr. Benton has been able to light the way to a whole new way of learning. He emphasizes for students to learn what they are interested in, and what they find intriguing, and promotes them to do so in an exciting manner. Because of where he pushed Tina and I with our semester project, I feel that my entire view on the “gift economy,” that he has preached from day one when he returned

from the Burning Man festival, has changed from a negative to positive connotation. Our semester project implemented the same burning man principles that enforce gifting, openly sharing your talents, and leaving a positive footprint on others. Making a better impact on others in everything you do is the perfect way to live and it is important to use your education to help others, without the exchange of money. Reading Alfie Kohn's "Punished By Rewards" has been an inspiration in itself. Dr. Benton loaned me the book to use as research for our project. Kohn had said how America, today's society, has taught people to learn for a reward, grades for example, not for the simple fact that students gain knowledge, something that is intrinsically valuable. This quote assisted us in creating our idea for people to help others and reap the benefit that they have helped another learn. Dr. Benton also uses this concept in teaching this course, and I have found that 340 has given me so much more than other classes. No, I may not have been able to learn as much as I would have liked regarding what the class was designed for, but I did take away many valuable lessons in unique problem solving.

This course style was truly like nothing I have ever experienced. If I were to have the insight and mindset as I do now, at the beginning of the semester, I feel like I would have been able to achieve much more, in regards to applications, etc. I did not find out until later how open Dr. Benton is to his students and how he truly cares about what students want to learn and take away from his class, as well as from a college experience. He understands that college is a place and time for people to grow, and to divulge themselves in areas where they have interest and to grow upon those interests. He understands that everyone is unique in their interests, which may also influence motivation and what individuals will want to take away from classes. I wish I would have keened in on this rare trait in professors earlier on, for I know that he would have been eager to help me in anything that I would have had the desire to accomplish. Overall I enjoyed having one project to focus on all semester. If I could have done things differently, I would have striven to come up with an idea at a faster rate and be able to implement a MVC framework, a database, a login, registration or home page. Setting weekly goals was also an important aspect to this class. Perhaps in the future, there could be a site students could visit in order to see the goals that they had set for themselves as a daily reminder.

I would like an A in this course. Even though I did not take away as much as I had anticipated in regards to a full implementation of a project, I still feel that I gained so much in different aspects in this class. Setting weekly goals was influential in my success in 340, as it was in my other classes. It kept me on track as to what needed to be accomplished and discussed on a weekly basis with my partner. Throughout the duration of the semester project, I accumulated knowledge in many areas. The biggest thing that I took away from this class was developing an idea and researching the details of how or why to create specific functionalities correlating to that idea. It took half of a semester for me to wrap my head around the "gifting" concept and I am so glad that I did not get frustrated and continually tried to understand the theory. While trying to come up with a sound idea, Tina and I were able to come up with many out of the box ideas in between, which I found fun. During class, I was able to learn the fundamentals of MVC framework, database modeling, some MySQL language, all of which I was able to use in my senior project.

Jaclyn Ayers

ISAT 340

December 9, 2013

Overall, I have thoroughly enjoyed this class. I have come to the understanding that there is a whole other dimension to creating applications. Programmers do not just have the sole job of writing code, they also have to put their time and effort into researching an out of the box idea. Dr. Benton has been a one of a kind professor that has taught me technical as well as personal development. I have greatly enjoyed taking this class and look forward to building on new, different and even somewhat radical ideas in the future.

Benjamin Campbell
12/8/13
ISAT 340

ISAT 340: Narrative

What were your expectations coming into this class?

Coming into ISAT 340 I didn't have many expectations other than that I would learn something about central databases and their relation to software development. Other than that I came in with a very open mind and was ready to learn whatever was being offered or taught. I did also expect this course to be held in a manner similarly to ISAT 252 where there would be a large focus on self-improvement and a community based portion where people would share their gifts in order to help an individual or a group.

What learning goals did you set for yourself?

The learning goals that I set for myself were to at least participate and grasp every concept, programming language, or methodology that was presented throughout the semester. I also wanted to be able to create some sort of project or software during the duration of the class. I wanted to improve a number of different skills including web programming, database structures, database languages (SQL and PHP), and other methodologies that are commonly used in the field currently (Laravel, etc.). The final goal that I set for myself was to be able to share some of my knowledge or skills with someone else in the community in order to help shorten their learning curve.

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

Yes, my goals did evolve over the course of the semester. At the start of the semester, Eric and I wanted to create a basic web application that would simply allow users to enter a number of goals for a day, week, month, etc. (some set amount of time) and then manually record any notes and whether or not they completed this goal in a timely manner. As Eric and I did research and literature reviews about what is currently going on in the field of personal development we started to realize that there were much cooler and better things that could be done with our time. We started looking into wearable sensors and came to bracelet microprocessors that could track anything from activity to sleep to health and diet metrics. By using Eric's intelligence analysis background, my decent knowledge of programming, and both of our loves for self-improvement we decided on trying to work towards creating a better insight engine that any of the companies out there have currently done.

In what ways did you feel you were successful?

I feel like I was successful in that I have found something that I am much more interested in rather than just making a goal tracking web application. If we are even moderately successful with this project then we have the possibility of really affecting our own lives and also the lives of others and that is a pretty tremendous thing as that is what each one of us should be doing with our time. I did also learn a good amount about MySQL, SQL, Laravel, and how applications work behind the scenes. I was also successful in helping a fellow community member out by sharing my gifts with them so that made me feel pretty good.

In what areas do you feel you failed to achieve your goals?

I feel as though I sort of failed to achieve my goals because I was not able to present any sort of tangible working piece of the project except for our plan for future work and also a front-end webpage that helped us sharpen some of our front-end web design skills by using Bootstrap. I am not very worried by this though because Eric and I will be carrying the work we did and knowledge we gained during the semester into the next year and a half and we morph it into our senior project that will hopefully take off with some funding and help from sponsoring professors. I don't see this as a set back at all but rather as a delay to our successes in the near future.

Do you feel more educated? More enlightened? Less so?

I feel more educated after taking this class mainly in the sense that I know myself more and now have a commitment to improving myself and my own productivity and overall well being. Eric and I are not stuck on the idea that in order to become the best individuals that we can be we must first find out what is hindering us from day-to-day and work to remedy that. By tracking every possible metric that we can using existing hardware, software, and our own means we hope to really make a difference. I would not say that I feel more enlightened purely because my definition of enlightened is to be approaching a state of almost complete knowledge in a field and I am nowhere close to that.

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?

The activities and work that I did throughout the semester really contributed to knowing myself better and has allowed me to set goals for what work I want to complete in the near and distant future. Developing this project idea has really excited Eric and me and we feel like it could give our remaining time at JMU even more purpose than it already has because we are involved with the idea on an academic level but also on a personal level. Having this personal connection will encourage us to work harder in order to bring the idea into fruition.

How did this style of course work for you?

I have mixed feelings on this style of course but overall I would say that I enjoyed it. I am used to the traditional lecture style classroom and have become accustomed to learning that was so this style was just a bit of a shock but I do enjoy the freedom that comes along with it. I would say that the best part about this style of course is being able to choose a project that interests you and not one that is assigned by the teacher. Without this freedom to work towards your own interests I don't think the course style would work.

If you were to take it again what you recommend that I do the same or differently?

If I were to take the course again I would recommend that you set some class days in advance that any of the students in the class can choose what to focus on for the day. This would help students that were stuck with a part of their project to get back on track and this would likely teach others something that could be used on their own projects or would just be good to have as general knowledge. I would also have meditation be made an everyday occurrence instead of just randomly done because it sets a good frame of mind going into each class session.

What grade would you like for me to report to the registrar for you, and why?

I would like to report an "A" to the registrar for this course. I feel as though I participated in class and held true to the values of the course in that I helped share my gifts and was willing to learn anything. I also think I did a pretty good job of juggling my 17 credits this semester and want to continue on my quest towards becoming valedictorian for the college of Integrated Science and Technology.

Final Narrative

What were your expectations coming into this class?

My expectations coming into ISAT 340 were high. This was my only ISAT class I was taking this semester due to switching to Geographic science, so I really wanted to get a better understanding of software development and the technologies used in order to create websites and applications. I knew this class would be similar in many ways as ISAT 252. I knew it would be challenging and I was going to have to push myself to put in quality time in order to make progress in this course.

What learning goals did you set for yourself?

Coming into the class I had a lot of cool ideas and goals set for myself to complete by the end of the semester. The main goal was to create the project I proposed the second week of class. I thought it was awesome to figure out and understand how mobile applications work behind the screens and how code works together to create something people use everyday.

Another goal I set was more for myself. I wanted to become more mindful of who I am and where I am heading in the future. We practice meditating in the beginning of class to start the day with a calm, stress less mindset. I have been practicing this not to become a better person or to get something out of it but to be deeper as a person. I find that my concentration and ability to communicate with other have actually progressed.

Through all the deadlines for homework assignments, labs, and test I wanted to get better with how I organized time, so I could have quality experiences with friends and myself. Without structured management of time assignments are nearly impossible to complete in a healthy manner. I guess what I am trying to say is I wanted to own my time rather than let time own me.

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

My goals throughout the semester did changed in some ways as do all with time. My teams idea of the "Track Your Hike" application took a lot of time to just figure out exactly what we wanted to do which held us back a little bit in

the early stages of the semester but once we figured out what type of input was needed to produce such a tool, we started making progress.

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

I feel the most successful in my geospatial tools course because I learned to adequately analyze and produce intensive maps for problems that were presented. I created multiple tangible cartographic maps that I can use in my portfolio when applying for internships and jobs in the future.

Although our team didn't fully complete the "Track Your Hike" 340 project, I learned a lot about the steps that need to be taken when producing such an application and for that I feel successful. I would like to get this application up and running for people in the future because I believe this tool could be relative for a lot of people.

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.

During the semester I was faced with multiple courses, some in which I found more interesting than others. I believe that my focus in the courses I am most interested in, in some aspects held me back from fully learning things I didn't find as intriguing. Certain goals that I failed to accomplish with classes were mainly because of this. Whether its schoolwork or hobbies, I have always tended to put tasks I enjoy doing the most as my first priority. I don't necessarily believe it's a bad characteristic but I do know I need to work on mixing in the not so obvious tasks that may become a true passion of mine.

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?

When reading this question at first I really took a step back because of the complexity of the experiences I've had at JMU. Its really difficult for me

evaluate how educated I am. Yes I learn new things most everyday whether it's in a classroom or on my own time outside of an educational facility. I will say it's very easy to get discouraged by test grades and I don't believe being educated necessarily means getting high test grades. Sometimes I feel like I am tested strictly on what the professor wants me to know rather than studying the bigger picture. I don't believe a GPA should evaluate a person's intelligence. I believe intelligence should be evaluated by a person's performance and dedication to passion. JMU has helped me evolve into a brighter person by all means and I do believe whatever profession I choose in the future, it will be nothing less than what I am passionate about.

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

This style of course work takes time to get used to especially when other courses are so demanding. I liked the meetings every week to discuss and get help with the semester project. I think the meeting should be mandatory for everyone that is doing a project because this way people are expected to have some type of tangible progress.

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

- What were your expectations coming into this class?

- Coming into the class my expectations were to gain knowledge of programming and creating databases so that if I obtain a job that is in need of someone who can help with creating a database for the company I would be able to say I have experience in that field. I wanted having this class and knowledge under my belt so that I would stand out to companies over other potential employees.

- What learning goals did you set for yourself?

- My main learning goals were to gain knowledge of this subject and be as best as I could be at performing them. I wanted to gain as much as I could from this class and create a project that I would be able to show people and say I worked on this by myself and as a team to complete this and have a final product to show for my time spent

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

- My goals for the most part stayed the same all semester where I wanted to produce a functional product that I would be able to show employers, expressing that I do have a skill in this aspect of production. I did have a realization throughout the semester that my goal would be much more difficult than I had anticipated in the aspect that many things can go wrong in creating a mobile application and serve as road blocks in progress.

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

- I was successful in a way that I established a working environment for my mobile application “Track Your Hike”, and that I also was able to follow directions and tutorials to create aspects of the application that were needed. I also think of it being success in realizing that programming is much more to it than people think and is very time consuming but when you finally have a break through and progress begins, is when you feel the success of your production.

- 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.

- In my eyes, I failed to achieve my main goal, which was to have a finished product of

a mobile application that I could show future employers and make myself stand apart from other potential employees. From this failure to finish my application, I have learned that web development can be very frustrating and you must allow yourself applicable time if you are intending on showing this to an employer or perhaps building it for a customer. I've learned that you will meet many roadblocks, but those road blocks are manageable to overcome if you put your full effort into it. I would like to complete this application in the future so I will be able to show companies my diverse skills I could bring to the table. I would do this by watching more tutorials and just using trial and error to overcome where I have been stuck on this project the past few weeks.

- 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 aspect as I now know where to go for help with programming issues and I know all the basics of setting up an environment for developing a web or mobile app. I do feel more enlightened as well in a way because I think I have gained an appreciation for web development and databases because I have had first hand experience in trying to accomplish the tasks that are necessary. This semester has showed me that I am interested in knowing how to perform the skills of programming, but I also have realized that programming is not what I would like to do for the rest of my life in a corporate setting. I want to have knowledge and be able to perform tasks that might come my way but I want a job that pertains to other skills other than just programming.
- How did this style of course work for you? If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do the same or differently?
 - I do agree with your idea of letting the students decide whether they want to be successful in this area of learning but at the same time I think it would have helped out to have a traditional classroom setting where lessons are planned out. However, I do agree with the way you handle the class because when we graduate and are working real jobs it is going to be necessary to be able to solve problems on our own and have the desire to be successful. The material for this class is just a little hard to comprehend and fully understand on your own.
- 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 for you to report an A to the registrar. I think I deserve an A because I have had a lot going on this semester with my senior projects and I had to complete 8 hours of farm work a week for an internship, and I still feel like I put in an appropriate amount of time to trying to get our "Track Your Hike" application to fully work. Although, I do think I could have better managed my time somewhat throughout the semester.

Shaina Hyman
Semester Narrative
ISAT 340

Expectations

I didn't really have expectations coming into this class. I was a little worried because I wasn't too successful in my previous programming course, not grade wise, but by what I was able to do. I learned a lot but was nowhere near the level other students seemed to be on before even starting the class, so I was nervous I was going to feel a little over my head. I figured it would be programming intensive and we would have a lot of weekly assignments and presentations but this was not the case. I also thought we would have a lot of class time to work on projects and to see what other classmates were working on. I figured we would have a lot of time to interact with our classmates and help each other. I knew we would get to choose our grades but I wasn't' really sure how that worked or if I would really deserve the grade I was asking for.

Learning Goals/How They Evolved

At the start of the class I wanted to learn how to program more efficiently in Python, HTML and Java because I really didn't learn enough in my last class. I wanted to be able to put this on my resume but I still do not feel able. Besides the programming aspect of the course, after getting started in the class, my goals changed. I then wanted to learn how to start an ecommerce website and how to pursue my own business.

I started having a different outlook on the course. I realized it was not only going to be a learning experience but an opportunity for me to build up a pre-existing idea. Over the summer Lauren Donaghue and I stayed at JMU and developed our own clothing line consisting of high-wasted shorts, made from mostly recycled materials. Our only sales developed from word of mouth so we needed a better outlet. My goals now were to develop a website that allowed customers to easily place orders and view all of our merchandise. We also wanted to expand our business to not only contain shorts, but headbands and other accessories, as well as artwork. We needed to find the best web hosting site, meaning the least costly with the most to offer, and needed to gain an LLC to protect ourselves from being sued for our personal assets.

Success

I felt I was successful in determining which web-hosting site was the best to use, which turned out to be Shopify. We were also successful in pre-planning what would go into this website, page-by-page. We were able to make the site fit pretty closely with the model and were happy with the final product. It was mostly user friendly and allowed us to process orders and have direct deposit without using any

other site. This turned out to be \$29.00 per month, which is not bad at all considering the competition. We purchased our LLC so that we could protect ourselves from being sued for our personal assets. This was obtained successfully which was so exciting because now we are an official business! I think we were also successful in creating an aesthetically pleasing website. The colors and picture filters we used were approved by many of our friends. We were able to upload pictures of our shorts, headbands, and artwork. We realized what it takes to actually start a business and how much money we actually have to spend for the LLC, site and product materials. We were also able to make reasonable and realistic goals, of which we mostly reached.

Improvements

Our picture quality definitely needs to be improved. We need to hire a photographer and have pictures of actual models taken wearing our shorts. It would definitely look more professional and would make us more competitive with other companies. I think we should come up with a product to sell during the winter, such as scarves and hats. We could also model the shorts with tights and boots, some sort of wintery look so they could be sold and worn in the winter. We should also consider posting our website to Facebook and other social media sources so our friends can see our options and product. We could put some of our shorts on Etsy too so we could become a part of that community of creators and get our name out there. We should probably come up with an actual business plan so that we can plan out how we are going to deal with every step of our business and what we expect for the future.

JMU's Mission

We have definitely become enlightened citizens because we now know what it takes to create your own business and that we have to worry about competition as well. We are now aware of how capable we are and how well we deal with stress. We are now able to further our business and make more of a profit but we need to upgrade our visuals and be able to compete with the others out there. We were able to gain hands on experience and knowledge that we can now use in any project, weather it be our senior project or a project given to us in our future careers, I think we could tackle it head on.

Style

I felt that this style of course work was easy to get along with but at the same time was hard to get used to. I had a hard time with the fact that I didn't know what my grade was going to be (even though we get to pick it) or what I should do to make my work better. I liked having the freedom to work on what we pleased and to sort of find ourselves in the course however. I was able to work on a project that will benefit my business and that I will continue to work on when this course is over. I

got to make the course what I wanted it to be and what I thought would benefit me the most, which I really liked. Most courses don't allow you to do this and have a strict structure, with defined grades, which I have gotten used to but I'm not sure are actually the best. Everyone is forced to conform to that structure and we loose site of actual hands on learning. This class felt more like what I would be doing in the real world.

I would recommend that you carry out the same type of freeness in project choices and in the grading style because I think it would be helpful for students to experience this kind of structure. I do think some class time should be used for working on the projects. I wasn't really sure what we were doing during many of the classes and didn't think following along with the project you were working on was really beneficial to everyone. This made me less inclined to come to class because I didn't feel I actually knew what was going on, and knew I really wouldn't need to know, and would benefit more by going to get more hours for my internship. It would give us a chance to discuss ideas with classmates, help or get help from them and you, and talk with you before our weekly meetings. Which brings me to the weekly meetings. I think these are really helpful in letting me know exactly what needs to be done and how to set my goals for the following week. These were honestly more productive then time spent in class. We were provided with further ideas for our site and were helped with the technological aspects that we were unsure how to do. These were casual but helpful question and answer or just talking sessions, which I really liked.

The surveys are really not my favorite thing to do. I think it's a good idea for us to make goals for our project and try our hardest to live up to them but I think they should be kept on our own and not have to be filled out every week, along with our feelings. When we have to say if we accomplished each of them every single week, it just felt like that wasn't enough time to complete everything. I know its okay to not accomplish everything, but many times I felt like I had to make things up or add goals I wouldn't have otherwise, just to have things to fill in the survey with. I think it would have been more beneficial to me if I could just keep my goals written out in my own notebook and when they were completed I could check them off and make new ones, which may be every couple weeks. I know things need to be completed in a timely manner but it's a little unrealistic to expect big goals to be completed within a week.

Grade

I think I deserve and A in this class. I attended all of our weekly meetings and brought new material each time with our goals completed. Lauren and I bit the bullet and purchased our LLC to become incorporated, which took some guts and a lot of thinking and planning. I was able to create more to add to our collection and we found a great web-hosting site that we could easily work with. We sat down and created page by page what we would want our website to look like, although it didn't turn out exactly like this it came pretty close. We also developed our own

logo and just need to figure out how to get professional labels printed. It took time to research and find a site that was going to provide us with all of the essentials and was the least costly. We also bit the bullet and purchased this as well. We worked on it together weekly, changing the aesthetics and making sure our newest product was uploaded and visible to the user. Our site is now active and is easy to use, with our logo visible on the front page. Yes, there is room for improvement, but we are going to continue to keep it active and work on it when we are able. I also kept up with the weekly surveys although not on the computer, but in my own notebook. I recorded my weekly goals and struggles and why my goals were or were not completed. I was honest with myself and learned a lot about myself through how I completed my goals, and through the entirety of the class.

Michael Weitekamp
End of Semester Narrative
ISAT 340

As the course title is "software development", I initially expected to learn the design process of how a single piece of software is created from initial problem formation all the way to a polished product. For myself personally, this meant that I expected to learn how to analyze a problem given to me, then to generate a solution implemented via software and to be able to develop and code said solution. As software development is often a large-scale and long term project, I expected to learn about the different steps of development, even if we didn't have time to physically practice them during a single semester.

After the beginning days of class, I began to formulate learning goals for myself based upon an understanding of both the course description, as well as after finding out we would be working on our own personal application projects. As we were allowed to formulate our own problem to solve, I aimed to do something that I took great interest to. One learning goal for myself was that I wanted to be interested in, and enjoy, the design process of what I was working on. I also aimed to learn more about computers and the design process so that I could apply the process to any programming projects I might work on in the future. Lastly, I set a goal to create at least a run-able program or piece of software that conveyed a purpose and would be something meaningful and that others would want to use when a finished product.

As the semester continued on, and my project developed further, I realized that my understanding of the software development process was limited to small-scale projects. As the project of working on a music-event finding application was much larger scale than I had previously worked on, I realized that I needed to understand how the framework of such an application was setup. As such, I realized that my understanding of computer systems and how individual programs and plug-ins needed to be expanded. As such, I added the goal to learn how each component of the design process worked together to create a program that one could use. My experience up until this point had typically involved an all-in-one suite such as Visual Basic where all of the coding tools and objects were in one space, rather than having to pick and choose what tools I needed to finish my program. I feel that this also was partially due to the fact that I had not worked on a project of this scale where I needed to combine tools, where previous projects had only needed the resources from one tool such as Visual Basic.

As my project involved using multiple tools for the framework of my application, I believe that the integration of each tool shows partial success of my goal to learn and understand the picking and choosing of what tools I need to complete my project. While not completely obvious, I even integrated tools such as a logo-creator to help design my logo for the web-page. The use and integration of such tools shows the understanding of analyzing the pros and cons of different tools, and then applying them to the situation at hand. Continuing to my goal of enjoying the project at hand, I would also consider this a success. While there is no empirical evidence of this, I can safely say that I found the topic of a music-event finding application interesting and enjoyable as I have played within the local Harrisonburg music scene. While the application is not finished, I would like to continue working on it, and would be enjoyable to do so. For my goal of creating a runnable program that conveyed a purpose and was meaningful, I would consider partially successful also. While my program consists of a database-web app as well as a basic web page, there is definitely room for more improvement and usability. Last, I would consider learning more about computers and the design process successful as I was able to design a basic web application from idea to a tangible running program. As I stated earlier, I have been used to creating programs in a single all-in-one environment, so working with several tools such as Laravel, XAMPP, along with other plug-ins has been a great leap in my knowledge of computer systems.

While I would consider much success during this semester, I would also admit that there is still room for much improvement. While I aimed to create a runnable and usable program, there could be many more features implemented into my application. It would be much more usable with a login system, Android application, more fluid design, and a more eye-pleasing layout. As such, I have learned that one should examine what needs the project will have, and determine these in advance so you can budget out your time and resources to have the most efficient productivity. Further, while I consider that my understanding of software design to have grown largely this semester, learning more of the coding needed for such systems would have made it even more successful. While I learned the basic use of HTML, CSS, and some Javascript, my understanding of how these systems are used together is lacking. From this I have learned to invest more time upfront on learning how to do something before implementing or using it, and that practice is greatly beneficial to remembering and further understanding the topic at hand.

In response to the JMU mission statement, I would first take note that I have become more enlightened to how one needs to be self-motivated and start working "now" on a project, rather than later to make acceptable progress. While within this class we worked on a programming assignment, I realize that throughout my career I will work on similar large scale projects that require me to take charge and get things done, as no one will be there to push me along the way. I feel even more so now, that being self-motivated and to take no shortcuts on any goal one works towards is important. Combining this with my experiences from summer internships, it becomes apparent that within the real world there is no one to sit and babysit you and tell you what you should do, but instead you are on your own to do your work and to complete the goals tasked to you to complete. Throughout this semester, I have noticed at periods that I have lost motivation or drive to work on a project or assignment, across all of my courses. I notice that when I begin to lose motivation, I begin to slack and my work ethic drops, especially when stressed, thus producing lower-quality work. As such, I feel it is important that I keep working on learning the best ways to keep my motivation high even in times of high stress and chaotic situations. This will allow me to "lead a meaningful and productive life" as stated by the JMU mission statement, and to produce better quality work throughout my life, whether for my career or leisurely.

I found the open-style of coursework to be interesting at minimum. Up until this class, I have typically had very structured, outlined classes that define what is expected, how grades will be broken down, and what work/goals you will complete. I enjoyed being able to pick the project topic, as this allowed me to work on the music application which both applied to my life, as well as was something I was firm grasp of the "problem" being solved. Being allowed to choose a grade, and not having any graded assignments was extremely different, and an interesting ideology that I have never experienced before. On one hand I liked the fact that I didn't have to worry about getting a certain grade, or doing better than a certain percentage of my classmates. On the other side, not having any graded assignments or formal grading rubric felt "funny" as I am used to having those in place. While different than I expected, I am glad I had the opportunity to experience the style of course work and overall found it to be a pleasant experience. The main downside I noticed with this style of course work was that due to the openness and aim for self-reliance, procrastination sometimes affected me when I had little motivation to do anything. As with a class where there are set graded requirements, I will complete an assignment even if I don't want to, since I would like to receive a decent grade. The ability to choose your own grade was both a blessing and a downfall for me at times,

because I then didn't have that need to finish the assignment for a good grade. Ultimately I was able to push myself to do work but sometimes took a few hour to push myself to work on it. As such, I would find it interesting to see how a hybrid class would work where half the class was graded, and slowly eased into the style that we had this semester. It was almost a shock to jump head first into this open learning style, and others might find it easier to slowly transition into it, rather than jump feet first.

Given the choice for a grade, I feel that an A - is fair. I acknowledge that there always is room for improvement in the work that I produced throughout this class, and that the more I would be able to accomplish the better. While I have no standard to compare my progress against, I feel that I personally made considerable progress in both personal growth and understanding, as well as working on the semester project. I feel that I participated and was engaged in learning throughout class periods, and overall made a good effort throughout the semester both in and out of class. Lastly, as a humorous argument for my grade, I had purchased the textbook for this class at the beginning of the semester, and seem to recall a verbal comment from yourself on the first day of class, that if you had purchased the book, you instantly received an A.

When coming into this class, my expectations were not that I high. I expected I would learn some basic coding languages that would allow me to use and understand databases. I even believed I would have time to expand my knowledge in other programming areas, such as JAVA.

The learning goals I set for myself were very modest. In the beginning I wanted to know the basics of HTML and Javascript, which was taken care of when we used code academy. Once that was completed I wanted to understand SQL. In that I figured I would learn the tools for databases as well, which included MySQL and PHPmyadmin. My last goal for this course was to understand exactly how Laravel made using databases so much easier than simply writing code. I thought that these goals were simple enough that I would have time to also teach myself information I really wanted to know. Yes databases are useful, but not very exciting.

I would say that I was successful in a majority of my goals. In the first few weeks, I made sure to gain a basic understanding of how Javascript and html could be used together to be very functional. I also realized that these languages were the backbone of many other programs that make up the internet. My second goal of understanding SQL may not have been so successful. I do feel like I have satisfactory knowledge of how to build a database. Besides creation, I understand how to add, modify, and delete aspects of these databases, which allows me to use them to my needs. Understanding Laravel was very difficult. This program is an al-in-one super program for developing apps. I do think that, from this course, I am able to use Laravel for basic use. I was able to use the program to develop a working sign-in sheet for club Dodgeball. This showed that I have an understanding of how the different aspects (controllers, view, etc.) work together to form a fluid working environment.

I can't say that I was completely successful in all my goals this semester. For one, I soon realized that understanding the concepts of databases would give me no free time to learn JAVA like I wanted to. This isn't all bad, since I wanted to learn JAVA in my free time, and I actually had to focus on obtaining my other goals. I do not feel like I truly understand SQL. Yes I know how to use it, but I don't feel as though I can take advantage of all its capabilities. The same goes for Laravel. Throughout my project, I hit road blocks. Some of these I was able to find solutions to, some I required your assistance for, and some were left and worked around. This shows how novice I am when it comes to programming. Simple solutions such as knowing when a form should end elude me, and I find that frustrating. I do not feel as though I understand all the capabilities that all Laravel to stand above other programs. I can't use its functions to speed up processing time, and it takes me forever to understand basic concepts that Laravel users call "basics". I do, however, feel that I am on my way to learning Laravel, and if I keep trying I can learn much that it has to offer. So my plans are to continue working with my app, since it is

going to the Dodgeball team, in an effort to learn these capabilities and eventually understand all it has to offer.

Personally, I feel more educated from taking this course. By allowing me to choose my own topic, you forced me to get involved with my work. I was not able to pass off assignments with a simple, “why are we doing this”. This was unique because very few classes at JMU focus on teaching useful skills, instead of theoretical ones. Because this app was my own idea, and the fact that it had a practical application, I was able to really learn what I was doing, and how the programs functioned. I also feel a little more enlightened this semester. By having to constantly create, modify, and meet goals I was never satisfied with my progress until I was completed. I feel that this is a good way to keep enthusiasm on a task. It allowed me to be completely self-driven, and responsible for my own progress. The surveys also showed me that goals do not have to be all school related, and some self-development is possible. I put in a few of those goals every week in an attempt to better myself as a person and I feel that it worked. I met a few new people, and tried to change my attitude for the better. I also feel that keeping track of my emotions for the week was very beneficial. I was able to visually see when I was frustrated or relaxed, and then I could understand what was causing those emotions. This survey allowed me to keep my emotions in check, by understanding the sources they were coming from and how they were affecting my performance.

At first, this style of teaching was very, very difficult. I was so used to a professor pounding material into my head, that it was strange to find the opposite. In the beginning I was confused, and felt a little behind. How could I possibly be expected to learn something that was never taught to me? However, as the semester went on, I started making sure I knew the information necessary to complete my project. Eventually, I realized that by learning what I needed to, and not just everything, I was becoming knowledgeable in my subject. Though its true knowing everything would be beneficial, but only pertinent information is relevant in co putters. Why should I learn information that I will never use? Once I realized this, my attitude about the course changed. I found myself taking responsibility for my own learning, and was very pleased with the results. The biggest blockade to reaching this self-realization is the school system we were taught in. being creature of habit, it is difficult to understand new techniques, especially in education, but I feel by attempting to understand this new way of teaching, student will be better off in the long run.

I would like an “A” in this course. I feel that I put a lot of effort into my work and have learned a lot in the process.

Lauren Donaghue
Dr. Benton
Final Paper
12/8/13

What were your expectations coming into this class?

Coming into this class I honestly didn't know what we would be doing. I was honestly really nervous because I am still not comfortable with coding. I have taken ISAT 252 and ISAT 341, however, coding is still very new to me. I feel like I know a little bit about everything, opposed to knowing a lot about one type of coding, which is what I feel is more necessary. I felt like I would be in over my head going into this class, but after the first day of being in class I knew everything would be fine.

Morgan has such a great way of approaching the teaching and learning process, that being scared or nervous for this class just seemed stupid. He made me realize that we had to execute a project that we felt confident in. Comparing our skills to other classmates was not option. We needed to do a project that would benefit us, and reflect our own personal strengths and gifts. Not only did Morgan offer an endless amount of help and guidance, but we also had all of our classmates to go to if we needed any assistance or help on our projects. The class focused on sharing gifts and talents with each other, so no matter what, we had a variety of sources to go to if we needed help which comforted me.

What learning goals did you set for yourself?

I wanted to finish a project for the semester that my group and I would be proud of. I first made a goal of wanting to improve my coding skills through code academy and through the creation of our project for the semester. I was planning on doing the code academy tutorials for a while to get more familiar with languages such as HTML, PHP, and CSS, but then after the first two weeks of class, Shaina and I thought of using an idea from the summer to turn into a project.

Over the past year, making your own homemade high-waisted shorts have become a fad that Shaina and I both got into. While we were taking ISAT 212 over Maymester, we found that we both shared the same interest. Using our free time during Maymester to create new creative high-waisted shorts. From this project sprouted an idea of creating our own business. Shaina, Emily and I decided to create a website that would display and sell our products. After this realization our goal was to complete a website.

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

At first our main goal was to create a website that would showcase our work and also give people the opportunity to buy our items. Before we started, we met with Morgan and he led us in a direction that we never even thought of. When we first thought of creating a website we thought it would just be one format. Little did we know, there are so many hosting sites that can be used. We needed to search a

variety of sites and compare and contrast them depending on what they offered and especially the price tag that was put on it. This meeting also led to the discussion of how serious we were about starting this business up. Not only did we need to think of creating a website but Morgan also suggested that we take this project from a business point of view as well. Instead of just creating a website, we made the final goal of creating an established business.

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

We all don't have a lot of skills with computer programming but as our final project we had a completed, well established website and I couldn't be more proud of our work. I realized that just by playing around with things you automatically get the hang of it. I feel like this is how it is with all programming languages so if I just dedicate time to focusing on one type of language, I bet I would catch on more than I think I would.

I also feel that we were successful because we creating more items for our website which expanded the amount of success we could obtain from this website. We have a handful of both shots and headbands to show for it and once we have time over breaks and the summer, we could add a lot more items to each section. To create a legitimate business, Morgan told us an LLC was needed to make sure we wouldn't be sued for our own personal assets. We took this seriously and got the LLC, which was a process in itself and I am really proud that we even did that!

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 near future.

I feel like I didn't necessarily fail to achieve any of my goals, however, I think that I could have gone further with all of them than I did. In my opinion, we could have made more items for the website to really have a good selection. Also, even though we did have a photographer that was going to help us, we should have looked into that earlier and really put a lot more effort into that because our pictures have the potential to look a lot more professional. Instead of just hanging the shorts we could have models posing outside with better lighting or models wearing the headbands and showing all of the different ways that you can wear them. We did make a good alternative by putting the headbands on the hat, however, I think showing them on models will help promote and sell the items a lot better.

Also, I think that if we had more time we could figure out a way of creating a "make your own" section. Right now we say to just send an email with requests, however, it would be really cool to have a section solely for that purpose. This could add individuality to our business and really show that we care about our customers and want them to purchase exactly what they want so they look and feel great.

I have learned that you can't put things off because then they will never get done. I know it was hard for us this semester because we had a lot on our plate,

however, if we did execute these tasks, the likelihood of success of our business would increase a significant amount. What you put into it is what you get out of it. At first we thought that our entire idea of creating this business and website might be a fail, but through the process I learned that there were so many people who were willing to help us out. There are always people rooting for you and are willing to help out no matter what. Morgan was always there to give input and to help us with anything that we needed through the entire process. Also, Shaina, Emily and I were there for each other and each used our own gifts and strengths to help each other out to get the best results we could. Finally, our parents were a huge help too, which was awesome to see. Shaina's dad really helped us out with getting the LLC since he is a lawyer and my mom helped me out with paying some of the hosting site's fees since I am currently a poor college student. She was really excited and interested in hearing about what we came up with though! I guess I've learned that even though it is inevitable to fail, you always have people around you to support and guide you no matter what.

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

Yes I feel more educated as well as more enlightened. I feel like I gained a lot of computer skills especially with shopify, which is what our website worked off of. I was prepared for learning computer skills from this class since going into it I knew that that is what the class focused on. However, I feel like I gained a lot of confidence from this class, which wasn't expected. I tend to doubt myself a lot and also always think that my ideas aren't good enough or are stupid. Morgan taught me different. He made me realize that no idea is stupid. If you are passionate about it.. go out and do it full force. There will always be people to support you no matter what. At first I thought that this "business" idea would never actually turn into something. Morgan thought differently and I am so happy that he did. He inspired us that this really can turn into something. Even if this particular idea doesn't end up moving forward, he inspired me to do something that I am really passionate about because there is something out there for everyone. He has such a great outlook on life and it made me realize that everything will work out in the end and that no idea is stupid. You just need to believe in what you want and put everything you got into it.

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

I typically do better in a class that has assignments and due dates because then I am forced to do the work because I can never just blow off any assignment. However, this class proved that wrong. At first I was a little nervous about taking this class because I knew it was similar to ISAT 252 with the fact that there aren't any assignments. This class showed me that if you work on something that you

genuinely want to work on, you will. Instead of having a bunch of assignments that had due dates, I had an assignment that I actually cared about doing, and enjoyed doing. That is the difference. Classes that have tests and multiple assignments and projects take away from actually enjoying the course. Feeling obligated to do all the assignments take away from the class itself. In this class, that stress is taken off your shoulders and put you in charge of what you learn and get out of the class, which is much more enjoyable and beneficial. I think that doing it the same would be best, but maybe have exercises to do in class when we are learning material? Also, some classes could have been used for a work day? A lot of times my group had trouble meeting all together due to our different schedules and class time is an opportunity when we are all there. Overall, I think the class is great and not only teaches you course material, but it teaches you a lot about other people, but most of all, yourself.

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 that I deserve and A in the class. I did all of the surveys and put a lot of work into our project that was due at the end of the semester. I invested time, as well as money into this project and really hope that my efforts have been shown through our final product.