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ISAT 340
Final Paper
12/9/14

When I first signed up for ISAT 340, I had no idea what exactly I would be doing. The title of the class says "Software Development" and so I expected the class would have something to do with programming, but that's not quite what I found out. On my first day of class, I showed up expecting to have someone explain just how difficult the class was going to be. Instead, I found a student who said he wasn't really sure what all he was supposed to tell us, other than what we had already received in the email that Dr. Benton had sent us a few weeks prior. This made me somewhat nervous, as I was very unsure of how exactly to do everything that was contained in the email. I went back in my email history and found the instructions that were left for everyone in the class and I began my attempt at completing everything on the list. A few things were pretty simple, such as read everything on the ISAT 340 webpage. I spent all the first and second day on this. When the third class came around, it was Friday and I was one of the first people to show up to class. The guy that Dr. Benton had left in charge was there and about 5 minutes after the class should have started, I asked the guy if we had class today, since there were only about 3 people there. He told me that Dr. Benton still wasn't back from Burning Man, and that as long as I signed in, no one would ever know that I left the class so early; So I left. After this, my expectations for the class were somewhat low. I still wasn't sure just how serious I was going to have to take this class since I still hadn't met Dr. Benton, but that day was coming quick, and I'd soon find out. Once Dr. Benton showed up for a class, I realized that this class was going to be only as difficult as I made it. As long as I kept up with my work, I wasn't going to have to worry much, and since I got to choose my own grade, I knew I was going to have to really motivate myself to keep on top of everything.

Every week this semester, I received an email from Dr. Benton, asking me to talk about what I did the previous week, and whether or not I met the goals I had set for myself that week. Most weeks, I had my goals set to what Dr. Benton expected us to accomplish that week. Such as setting up my development environment, or writing my social context analysis. As the semester progressed and we had fewer things expected of us, I started putting in more personal goals, such as meditating more outside of class time. Even though I had fewer class based goals, I still spent just as much, if not more time working on those goals, since they would often require more work. Most weeks I would accomplish at least 3 out of the 5 goals we had to set for ourselves, but some weeks, I really just didn't quite understand what I was doing, so it'd take me a little more time to finish those goals and get to the point where I wanted to be for the previous week.

I feel as though there are several places where I succeeded this semester in ISAT 340. Towards the beginning and middle of the course, I spent quite a bit of time learning the basics of Javascript. Before this class, the only programming language I had ever encountered before was Python, and my understanding of that language was still rather limited. I picked up on the different structures of Javascript fairly quickly. Learning the

indentations and how to use the different brackets was the easy part for me. Remembering how to use the different arguments and how to pass certain variables was the part I had the most trouble with. However, I started creating my app using the storyboard in Xcode about half way through the semester, and I realized that knowing Javascript wasn't going to be a huge benefit for me. I had started watching YouTube videos on how to make apps using Xcode, and I saw how easy it was to just look up the code you wanted to use in order to make something happen in an app. Once I figured this out, I stopped learning Javascript. Even though I stopped learning Javascript, I still feel as though this was a success for me. I may not have mastered JS by any means, but I learned more about it than I ever thought I would, and I did it all on my own. Another place I feel I succeeded is learning how to use Xcode. Before this class, I had never opened the application on my computer. I had known about it, and knew what it could do, but I didn't think I'd ever be one to be able to use it. When I first started using Xcode, I basically sat in my chair and stared at it, hoping that everything I was imagining in my head would magically appear before my eyes. I wasn't fortunate enough to have this happen to me though, and so I went to the place anyone would go to in order to figure out how to use something; Google. I started finding articles that ranged from learning the basics of Xcode, to how to integrate an intricate button into an app. Most of the articles I read about learning the basics were all fairly similar. They explained how to make simple designs and how to link everything together to make the app work the way you wanted it to. With this, I began storyboarding my app in Xcode. Once I had all the different pages set up how I wanted, I went to the next best place to learn something new; YouTube. My friend had suggested a channel of someone whom had a video for practically anything you could want to do in Xcode. His name was Geeky Lemon, and he appeared to be from England, based on his accent. Geeky Lemon showed me how to make my app do what I wanted it to do. He had videos on so many things, that I started reimagining what I could make my app look like. I hadn't thought to include things such as a map view or address for the parking garages, but after seeing how simple it would be to make such things work in my app, I decided I should include them and take my app one step further. At this point, I felt really good about where I was headed with my app, and I feel as though I succeeded at this part because I was able to basically teach myself not only how to use Xcode, but know that I can do so much more if I just look a little harder for a guide on how to do something.

Not everything went according to how I planned this semester. There were times where I definitely put this class on the back burner because I had a significant amount of work for another class. Some weeks I wouldn't even show up to class because I hadn't done anything outside of class, so I felt like I couldn't show my face in class. Plus, whenever I would go to class, I would typically only pretend like I was doing work for the class. I always had a hard time actually getting work done inside of class time. There were several instances where I would skip the class to go sit in the lobby of ISAT and work on my app there instead.

I always got more work done when I was by myself and not worrying about how far everyone else was compared to me. But I feel like I could have done a lot more, a lot sooner had I used class time to ask questions instead of strolling through Facebook. This is one of the things I wish I had been better about and feel as though I failed to achieve my attendance goal. Another thing I wish I would've liked to have done better is understand Github. I knew how to

post different things for my project in there, but I couldn't figure out how to link it to my Xcode project. I did create a Github repository with my app in Xcode, but I don't know where exactly it is saving anything. I also never managed to use the website I bought, mainly because I wasn't sure that I needed it, but I should have asked and made sure I wasn't missing a step instead of thinking that the website didn't pertain to my app development.

After completing this course, I feel as though I am more educated and more enlightened. I learned how to make a basic app and through that process I was enlightened on how simple it really is to do something that you know nothing about. All I had to do was research a few things and I was able to find a seemingly endless supply of how apps are made. I've always managed to figure most things out in life by either looking up how to do it, or simple trial and error. But for some reason, I never thought I would be able to come up with something that seemed so complex, no matter how much research I did. For this reason I feel as though I lived up to the JMU Mission Statement through this class.

From this course, I have definitely learned more about myself. First off, I had never meditated before this class, and that alone has brought me so much more peace in my life. Just before the semester had started, I went through a breakup with someone that I deeply cared about. I had the hardest time focusing on anything other than ways that I could convince my ex-girlfriend to give me a second chance. But once we started meditating in class, I started getting a clearer head and was able to actually think about other things. I began meditating at least once a day after this, sometimes even meditating three or four times in a day. Through this, I was able to handle my emotions a lot better and it helped me get work done not only quicker, but I feel as though I also produced better work. However, when it comes to me learning about how I do work without a professor incentivizing me, I found out that I suck. Knowing that I didn't have to worry about failing this class since I get to choose my own grade made me procrastinate work for this class on more than one occasion. Not having deadlines meant that I could play video games with my friends at night instead of learning more about coding in JS or how to make a fancy button on my app. I am definitely disappointed at the amount of work I did compared to what I know I could have done. My app still has a lot work that needs to be done before it will be anywhere near a version that I could release. But I want to finish my app and make it available on the app store and hopefully make a few bucks off of it.

If I were to take this course again, I don't think there is anything I would change about the way it is taught and presented. The one thing I would hope for every time I went to class was time to meditate. As the semester progressed, we meditated fewer and fewer times, and I always looked forward to those few minutes of peace.

As for my grade in this class, I would like a B. I know I definitely could have done better, but I also think that I spent a lot of time and effort on this class, and a B is justified in my opinion. I do wish I would've talked with you more in class, you seem like an awesome person in and outside of class, and I feel like it was more my fault for not getting to know you like everyone else in the class seemed to. But I do thank you for a good semester and I hope I will see you again. Have a great winter break Dr. Benton and happy holidays.

Preston White

ISAT 340

Benton

December 9, 2014

I really was not sure what to expect coming into this class. It was exciting to hear on the first day that the goal of the course is to create an app or website by the end. It feels like my roommates and I are always coming up with random ideas for apps, so I thought it would be easy to start working right away. After rattling off a few ideas of random app possibilities, Jon and I realized that it would take a special app for us to settle on. Not only because we couldn't agree on a top choice, but once agreed upon, we couldn't find apps that were worth spending so much time on. We knew we wouldn't be able to build up enough drive to work a whole semester on something like a fart app. It had to be a project that either of us could sit at the computer and work on for hours because of a lasting intrinsic motivation. We wanted to be able to say at the end that the time put into it was worth it.

Before this course, if someone gave me a computer and said build an app, I would have had no clue on where to even start. These days apps just kind appear out of nowhere as if they grow on trees, but that's not the case at all. My learning goals for the semester started out very broad because I was entirely unaware of what was actually involved in this process. Initially, they were along the lines of "learn Kivy" or "design user interface." Once I realized that goals like these have numerous steps involved, I began to break down my larger goals into much more specific goals like "design a home page" or "choose a database/platform." These were things that I previously assumed answered themselves. Neither Jon nor I knew there would be so many options when it came to these types of things. It took real consideration to make such decisions. Now, I feel I can at least safely say I know where to start and even what to do to reach completion. The only obstacle to reaching that end was learning fully understanding the various computer languages involved. An unfortunate amount of content was lost in translation between what I had in mind with what the computer needed in order to work. An example that comes to mind was trying to set the background color for all of the pages in the app. We wanted football turf green, which was simple enough in theory, but describing that color to the computer proved to be incredibly more difficult than assumed. This roadblock popped up in many of the steps involved in the design process. Because we started out with so little experience, we had to make some aesthetic sacrifices for overall functionality. We thought it would look nice to have an image of a logo for the app appear upon opening it the way Facebook does, but it proved to be a gratuitously difficult feature to include, so we just settled on leaving it out.

Looking back, I wouldn't say I failed to achieve my goals. I just think my initial goals were too big and I was too unknowing of what was really involved in the entire process. What kept us from achieving our initial goal of creating a fully functional app were a number of factors. I think what really slowed us down the most was when we had to link our app with a database. The process of giving life to this program was fairly complicated and way outside the realm of computing that we had experience with from previous classes. This was also a really hard semester with lots of labs, papers and other time-intensive work. Work for other classes for a number of hours each day took a lot of motivation out of me by the time I was available to work on this. As Jon was in a majority of those classes with me, we were each very pressed for time because of it.

Overall, I was really impressed by the layout of the class. I think it was a great idea to allow everyone to work at their own pace. It was a bit disheartening to see people drop off and not come after a certain point, but they could just be working on their projects at home. The bad part about that is that at no point would I, a fellow student, be able to see what they've made. I think if you were to make one amendment to your current policy, it would be a mandatory presentation day at the end of the

More
Realism

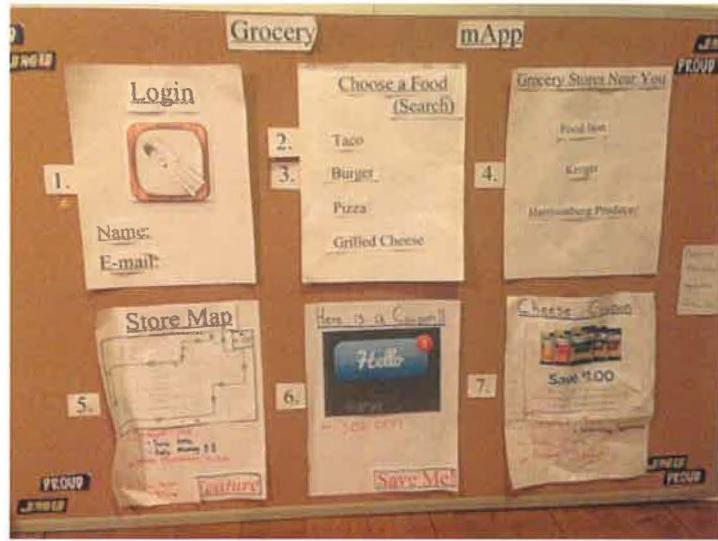
semester. That way, we could see the amount of progress that we made as an entire class. It would also give the less motivated students an extra incentive to actually participate because of the added pressure of impressing your peers.

The difference between where I was when I started to where I am now is huge. I think I can also speak for Jon when I say we were both very surprised with how much we ended up accomplishing. Regardless of how the project physically looks or functions, I think we are light-years ahead of where we started in terms of understanding what we were working with. At the very least, I will have gained valuable exposure to the world of software development, which I can say a lot of people haven't. Looking solely at what I was able to learn in this class, seeing as how that is the ultimate goal set in place because attendance and other factors aren't fair indicators, I will be asking for an A in this course.

Over the course of this semester, while working on this, I experienced times of great success and times of great failure. That's life though. Every now and then you run into difficulties, but they can also serve as learning experiences with the right attitude. With this in mind, looking into the future, any and all experience I had in this class, good or bad, will benefit me because I was able to learn and grow from it. In no way has it deterred me from studying computers in the future. If anything it has increased my intrigue into the field.

A Narrative

My expectations coming into this class are as follows. I expected to come into class, pitch my idea and pull interest from individual who wanted to contribute and participate alongside me in the pursuit of the mobile application I had envisioned. I had expected the professor to be ‘present’ not only physically but also mentally in class for the aide in the execution of the mobile application. I had expectations of completing the application. I had expectations of learning a new framework to a coding language. I had expectations to receive an ‘A’ in the class overall. I had expectations to have fun alongside learning a lot. I had expectations to be ‘present’ myself and place a higher responsibility on myself for the outcome of the mobile application than my partner, if I was able to acquire one, or the professor. My goals evolved over the course of the semester drastically, however everything started as planned. I believe structure is important for overcoming obstacles down the road, by plans always get in the way, a catch 22 if I ever read the book. The main deviation in the plans turned from producing a specific mobile application via scratch, to producing a website that was mobile friendly via web hosting and a WordPress template. My goals essential transformation occurred around my comfort level with my group member, and my teacher’s ability to contribute to the project. Seeing, as I needed a lot of direction for the route I was heading I relied on the people closest to me for directions when in fact I needed to be more proactive, in hindsight this maybe was out of personal fulfillment to be more proactive and a leader that I strive to emulate. However this may not be required, I felt like it was necessary in part due to the level of commitment the teacher had with outside obligations, teaming up with my confusion and in general and uncomfortableness with the technology. My success through the semester came from this drive to learn on my own. The teacher had provided the medium, and had support and plenty of enthusiasm to keep me excited about the subject. As a result, I entered the Mad Hack-a-thon and the group I was a part of received “honorable mention” from the members of capitol one, who joked and said they were going to quit their job and join us on our idea that we developed and was the brainchild of some storming I did a week earlier with another professor.



My success can further be noted at the website www.usa12k.com, a domain I bought with hosting I set up and a website I developed. There is also a front end of the initial mobile application that I pitched to the class including, documents such as a problem statement to support that development of the idea that was never fully produced. Overall I failed to achieve the original goal of developing the ‘Class Pass’ mobile application. I learned from my failures that I learned something along the way, in fact making it a lesson more than a failure. Picking up new bits and pieces of coding, learning some basics of multiple languages (CSS, JavaScript) and how to go about problem solving for such languages without the direction of someone else. Meaning, I took learning into my hands and out of the classroom. I indeed feel more educated after this class, and enlightened to say the least. Needless to say I have learned a thing or two about myself along the way. First that I set my goals high, really high in fact, maybe to the point that I know I am going to fail all the time while not expecting it. I easily get caught up in the excitement and rush and get swept off my feet throwing days’ worth of time into a topic or subject which is sometimes unnecessary or irrelevant to the core of the project. It is a waste of time, to the degree that it could have been spent better elsewhere. Sometime when I feel lost I stick to what I know, and if I am intimidated by a subject I will attack the easier to envision, more straight forward sections then the harder, more in-depth parts that are probably more essential. Second, that failure is ok. As long as there is an essence of adaptation in the presence of knowledge, you cannot fail. This style of course structure worked for me, a highly motivated individual that found the opportunity to lead himself through a strong work ethic. However, there

are flaws in this, and it come with those people not like the one I described in the previous sentence. My recommendations are that you make quarterly or 2 deliverables where you set up meetings with people on an personal basis to check in on them. With accountability low, you will see more people slide by and get through by doing the minimal work, sometimes at the expense of putting this subject or learning on the back burner. Prioritizing a class schedule and work load would tend to do that in a logical since. Attendance could be made “mandatory,” which would require a more structured class, but would drive accountability and learning in a context in which you could promote alongside your learning style if it was done right, with class member and teachers being more present. Maybe you have the kids during the second half of the semester present on their progress and teach the class something new. This would encompass accountability and a deeper level of presence with everyone involved which I could see fitting in well with your innovative teaching style and class structure. I would like an ‘A’ so I can get a 4.0 and raise my GPA to an overall 3.0 and get into a graduate school program and become a doctor or master in ____ with a wife and kids, preferably a girl (at least one) named Rose-Marie (and her friends call her rosy). Moreover, it would help justify to future employers my college experience, which as you know, and spent a semester trying to teach us, is completely and utterly ass-backwards. It is not what you earn but what you learn.

Your friend and chess mate,

Jackson

p.s. I heard a funny joke..

Interviewer: So I see you have great grade but what real world skills do you have?

Interviewee: Well, I am good at taking test.

Final Essay

Coming into this class, to be honest, I was not sure what to expect. I had heard from previous students of how the course was taught, and was interested in seeing it for myself. Taking ISAT 252 the previous semester, I understood the basics of programming using Python, but not much more. I was also accustomed to a fairly strenuous work load with that class, so hearing about the grading policy definitely made me feel more excited about the class. The expectations for this class focused primarily on learning more in depth coding, and that was about it. My learning goals for this class changed as the semester went on. At first I was a lot more excited and wanted to learn all kinds of app development skills, however I realized that as the semester progressed I was limiting myself to the things I wanted to learn. The workload of all my other classes, mixed with the fact that I had no assignments that were necessary to turn in, led to less time dedicated to this class. This in turn resulted in my initial learning goals not having as much weight behind them as they did at the beginning of the semester.

In certain respects I feel like this semester was very successful. I have managed to keep my grades in the A and B range in all my other classes, which is helping bring up my GPA. I also made it through my first semester as a TA for chemistry and did well enough to be offered the job again for next semester. Maintaining a good GPA as well as having a good first TA semester were two of my overall main goals for this semester. On top of that I have discovered for myself what I am more interested in with regards to careers and where I want to end up in the next several years. I have had more time to decide what sectors of ISAT I really want to focus on, and which ones do not really ‘click’ for me as much. In regards to this class specifically however, I would not say I had a very successful semester. I did not learn nearly as much coding as I originally planned; partially due to lack of class attendance as well as lack of personal effort. However, I did reach out to my brother -in -law who works for Athena Health in Austin, TX. He has experience with creating apps and he and I plan to start work on one during this Christmas break. So in that action, I find a success. Another success I found I had in this class was keeping up with the weekly evaluations. Though my attendance was far from perfect I did stay on top of my weekly evaluations. Granted this is a very minor success, but a success none the less.

In regards to failures of my goals for this class, I believe I failed in the sense of not learning nearly enough coding to be productive in a class formatted for writing code. My lack of attendance certainly did not help me gain further knowledge for the class, and the time I spent trying to teach myself how to program was minimal compared to the time I focused on my other classes. In all honesty the lack of time focused on this course was not entirely out of lack of interest as much as it was not having the amount of time I would have liked. Having five other classes, most of which require either weekly quizzes, weekly homework, or weekly reading took away from the amount of time I dedicated to this course. This lack of time in turn limited the amount of material I learned/taught myself. In this I find a failure of my goal to learn more coding and become more computer savvy.

If I have learned anything from my failures from this class, it is that I should better apply myself in a class that is partially “self-taught”, as well as actually attend the classes. The last point is a no brainer, yet I still did not end up having even half decent attendance for this class. From my failures in this class I have also learned that, in regards to actually learning material, it would be wiser of me to select the option that does not allow me to choose my own grade. This is because choosing my own grade, while a very nice set up for when the rest of the semester is extremely busy, limits my desire to learn. At least in respects to writing code. Now that is nothing against programming, however this semester has shown me where I like to focus most of my time, and that is with the biotechnology and environmental science sectors. Originally I thought I was really interested in programming, but being allowed the opportunity to teach myself and learn more about programming has shown me that it is in fact not as high on my list of things to learn as I originally thought.

In regard to JMU’s mission statement, I do feel more educated. This semester has taught me several things, both in regards to personal realizations as well as actual course work that I can hopefully use when I graduate. Biotechnology has been an interest of mine since the beginning of high school, and this semester has allowed me to really dive into the heart of it and learn even more about what it entails. As far as feeling more enlightened I would say I do in some respects. For instance this class has helped me to learn how I respond when given the opportunity to select my own grade. Now, in regards to this class specifically, I would not say I feel more educated. I did not learn nearly as much programming as I originally thought I would. Again though, that is because of my own doing.

My actions this semester have had a strong impact on helping me understand what I really want to focus my time and energy towards. At the beginning of the semester I believed that even with no mandatory assignments, I would go to class and want to learn more on my own. To be honest though, it was almost the complete opposite. My activities this semester have taught me that, at least when it comes to programming, I need a guide telling me things I need to do and when they need to be done. Now in biotechnology for instance, this is not the case. This semester I have spent the majority of my time learning about more biotechnology applications and what all can be done with it. These searches have led me to potential employers who are doing some amazing stuff that I would like to be a part of later down the road. So in a way, the option to choose my own grade has been constructive in the sense that I now really understand just how important biotechnology is to me in regards to other classes. I have known since high school that it is the field I want to focus my time on, but it was not until this semester that I learned just how much time I wanted to dedicate to it. This semester’s activities has helped me to realize that my goals, as of now, are to graduate as planned in 2016 and then concentrate my efforts on working with biotechnology. Cancer research and treatment has been my dream job for a long time, but this semester has helped me to realize that even if I do not start out in that field of work, there is still plenty of time to end up doing that later in life.

As mentioned above, this course’s style worked for me in both positive and negative ways. With regards to programming, the course style proved to be somewhat detrimental. I only say that because I did not spend nearly as much time learning information for this class as I

originally planned. Focusing on a personal level however, I would say this style of class really helped me. This is because it shed light on how important programming was to me when compared to my biotechnology classes. Overall, for the classes I did attend, I really liked the structure of how they were run. I really enjoyed starting each class with sessions of meditation. I have never taken a college course where that would be even remotely acceptable, let alone encouraged by the professor. I enjoy the relaxing ‘vibes’ that the class had. I know that sounds weird, but it has been one of the only classes I have taken at JMU where the room atmosphere does not seem tense when you walk in. I think it was smart to allow the students to make a choice between choosing their own grade and going off of a point based system. As I mentioned earlier, if I were to do the class again I would likely choose the point based system, especially if my workload was heavy for other classes. I think the course was done very well, and I would not suggest changing much of anything.

For this class I would like to receive an A. Now looking at the contributions I made to this class; low attendance record, weekly evaluations, and a poor attempt at starting an app, I am sure many people would not think I deserve an A. And I understand that. However, when looking at the bigger picture, I believe it is acceptable for me to receive an A. I have done well with my TA job, I have maintained high grades in the rest of my classes, and because of this class I better understand how I want to spend my last year and a half here at JMU and what I want to focus on. I understand that asking for an A may make me look pretentious and selfish, but I also understand that this society bases way too many decisions on the GPA of college students when hiring. Companies say they do not look at GPA’s, they look at experience through internships. That may be true. The problem is that in order to get an internship the student, more than often, has to have a high enough GPA. Usually around a 3.0. Though a 3.0 may seem easily attainable to some, for others it is not. Not because they are necessarily less intelligent, but because maybe they are not the best test takers, which is how the majority of college classes are assessed. Because of the weight my GPA has in helping me get a job, as well as my belief that I have taken away more from this class on a personal level than any other class taken at JMU, I would like to have an A.

Good example of
non-participant

A

Riley Sung

End of Year Paper

My initial expectations for the class were very unclear as I thought to myself, “how can there seriously be a teacher who allows the students to choose their own grade?” After attending class the first few days, I began to understand why, and started to create some expectations from what I wanted to gain from the class and what I expected of myself. These expectations started with a very broad theme of simply learn how to make apps, which now I understand is a bit more specific due to the complexity and variances involved in doing so. Nonetheless, this is my starting point for what I wanted from the class; whereas, what I expected from myself throughout the semester was a little different. I did not initially have a clear end result or application I really wanted to create until about the third week, so I mostly just fiddled with my thumbs thinking about problems in my life that could be solved with an application or, of course the grand old question, “what app can *I* make, that will make *me* rich?” Around the third week of class, I found a kick-starter course from a previous apple employee offering a full thirty-one day course to learn how to make iPhone apps in Swift. The creator of the course had created a structure where the students are supposed to put in at least an hours of work everyday for thirty-one days in order to successfully complete the course, making this an expectation of mine to do so everyday until the course was completed. During the time period waiting for the course to begin I had finally come up with an application idea that I really liked, and still do—an all-encompassing study-aid app for students to use to guide them toward good studying habits and methods. The two most important utilities of the application I would like to include are helping students manage

their time more efficiently and provide good studying methods. However, other features I have considered are implementing an easy way for students to collaborate on their work, in a google doc manner, i.e. being able to use another student's flash cards they've created within the app. These expectations and goals of mine generally stayed the same throughout the entire semester, except for when I found myself pretty far behind the schedule of the kick-starter course, where it became more of a goal to simply finish the course on time, requiring much more discipline than I previously displayed.

When reflecting back on my successes and failures, unfortunately there are more failures than successes. The marginal successes I had include, figuring out an app that I still feel quite inspired by and creating a few simple apps from what I did participate in the kick-starter course. On the failure side, I was unable to (or unwilling to, is more appropriate I suppose) work on the kick-starter course everyday for even just one hour, finish the course all together (I complete 40%), and most importantly to me—I failed terribly to maintain the discipline I expected of myself throughout the entire course. I do not contribute the failures due to family events going on during the semester, however the events certainly did not help me at all. The most important lesson I believe I learned from this class, which to me may also be the most important lesson I learned this semester is one of two things; I either need to have more structure in my education, or I definitely need to take this opportunity to improve my discipline to follow through with the expectations and goals I set for myself. I think this is possibly the most important lesson I've learned all semester because, I've spent a lot of time this semester thinking about the kind of man I want to be, and disciplined and hard-working are pretty high up there on the importance scale.

Because of the previously mentioned, I feel thoroughly more educated and enlightened about myself; however, I feel a less educated in the course worm than I should have been. But, like I said learning that I really need to work on my discipline is an invaluable lesson making this class worth it. From this gained knowledge about myself I will become more disciplined, along with finishing the course over winter break. In fact, I have been considering this to be a possibility for my Senior ISAT Capstone project. As the semester is coming to a much anticipated end, looking back I am aware the path I chose to “Choosing Your Own Grade” may not have been the best choice in the best interest of learning more about coding, however I believe more good came from my failure than the successes I can still have down the road. If I were to retake the class all over again, I would undoubtedly choose the same path, but really put more effort into following through with my goals. Before coming to a conclusion, while I was working on course-related maters, I found I was in a mindset I have never been in before while doing schoolwork. Normally I confine myself to “put in x hours to get x grade,” whereas here I noticed I was simply just *doing*, not to get a grade, but to merely learn and enjoy. I found this process of just doing because I wanted to was much more freeing and efficient to actually learning, that I would love to retake the course. To finish off, I would like to apologize for not attending classes, it is of no reflection of you; I preferred to use the extra time it would take to travel to campus for the kick-starter course as it was around class time I usually worked on the kick-starter course. Thank you for providing this opportunity to fail without consequences that brought forth a deeper understanding of myself. The grade I would like is an A, because I feel what I learned about myself is way more valuable than a lot of information I’ve learned from classes I have achieved an A.

Melvin Gonzalez
Benton 340
12/12/14

Personal Reflection

To be honest I really thought that this semester was going to be the one where I finally got everything squared away. I had planned on kicking myself into gear by giving myself the heaviest workload I've had yet in any semester, hoping that the added pressure of more classes would give me a little more incentive to do better in school. Looking back on it, I wouldn't go so far as to say that it was a terrible mistake, it was more of just a huge let down. By this point I kind of had high expectations with regards to where I'd be academically and that by no means is the case. I let so many opportunities just slip through my fingers and I just really wish I could just have a redo on all of them. However having said that, I can still honestly say that I enjoyed this semester and most of the experiences that I was able to be a part of.

At the start of the class this semester I came in ready to actually work on redwood the genealogy website I was so excited about with you. I had taken some online html and css classes over the summer on code academy and lynda as I had said I would, just not as in depth as I could have gotten with the time I had. However when the class started in the beginning of the fall I for some reason got the feeling that that wasn't really the BEST idea I could come up with and work on. So then I moved on to thinking about app ideas and ended up coming up with Convoy. I was ecstatic about the idea and was even happier to hear that you also were into it, yet for some reason it all just stopped there. I had a partner in Marshall who sat next to me at the beginning of the semester and I thought we were going to get somewhere with it, but after he decided to try to do his own thing for whatever reason I really just lost enthusiasm in the project. By no means am I trying to blame him at all for my productivity, that's all on me, its just that for some reason that's where I really hit a wall in terms of trying to get things done for this class and showing you what I am capable of learning/doing in a semester. I still am hoping to one day prove to myself that I can find some intrinsic motivation in learning how to do these things but as of right this moment I really can't seem to push myself to get up to that level yet.

Slowly over the course of the semester my priorities started to change much like they always do and sadly I'm pretty sure that this is the case with most students. I came in thinking that I'm going to get things done right for once and of course a month in to the semester I'm looking at myself asking what is the least amount of work I can do right now to squeeze in the highest possible grade. The path to getting there is still a little fuzzy for me because I know it happens every semester and is seemingly inevitable. I don't know when the actual transition from enthusiastic to lackadaisical actually happens and its one. Whatever it is, I just know that as of right now I am not in the position that I want to be in academically. I feel so far behind my peers at this point and its almost embarrassing how little I know about the subject I plan on concentrating in. In no way is that anyone else's fault but my own. It seems like for me at least, programming is the easiest thing to find an excuse to not do. There's just so much online course material and subjects that's so easily accessible that I feel like I could just put it all off until the breaks that I have and I just really tell myself that I'll just get to it later, as if magically all the information will just come naturally to me.

For some reason I can't stop making it sound like I hate myself in this narrative so I'm going to dedicate this paragraph to all the things that I am truly proud of accomplishing this semester and all the goals that I was actually able to reach. Last year I was still having a hard time trying to adjust to this school and the people around me. Last semester I tried to mention that there was a community here in ISAT that I felt so comfortable with and glad to be a part of but yet it still was only the beginning of where I feel I am right now. Having now been involved in multiple programs and organizations here at

JMU I really feel as though I am welcomed by this campus. I'm not in any way trying to say that before now I felt in any way uncomfortable with the people around me, but it just didn't feel like home in the way that it does now. Having now also had the opportunity to mentor a group of my peers and seeing their growth in leadership over the semester is also something that was beyond exciting. I had been waiting all year to meet my council (group of underclassmen that my partner and I were in charge of facilitating for a program here called Make Your Mark on Madison) and having finished I couldn't be happier with the group that I ended up getting.

However, its not only social aspects that I want to commend myself for this semester as I do in fact feel as though I did learn a lot about myself in the sense that I have a better scope of the world due to some of my classes. Philosophy in particular is one of the classes that I feel as though everyone should take at least once in their lives. Granted a lot of courses like this gen-ed for most students are very heavily dependent on how well the teacher can present the material, but regardless the course helps you explore areas of your religious views and how in tune you may be with your spirituality. Too often do I find people that write off others beliefs almost immediately after hearing them. Ignorance is probably one of my biggest pet peeves in the world, and when there are classes out there that help you gain a different perspective in the way you should be thinking, I don't see why there is a reason not to take it. Another class that I feel has really affected me is 253 with Dr. Salib. This was so far one of the hardest classes I have ever taken and I wouldn't have had it any other way. Salib is one of those teachers who you can tell cares deeply and genuinely about how much his students are learning under him, and though at point the workload seemed to be completely unfair it still seemed possible and we were happy to see ourselves accomplish it.

Aside from the classes that I was in this semester I do also want to mention how much I was able to learn just on my own about myself and have even thought of some ways to prevent being so upset with myself when it comes to academics. Last semester you told me to ease myself into things, something that I for some reason didn't at all take into account when scheduling this semester. I guess I've just never even noticed before that I am actually pretty impulsive, which is actually a trait that I find to be quite a bit annoying in others. Surprisingly, I am now seeing and thinking about such a big trait in myself that I haven't really ever noticed as I usually think of myself as someone who is very analytical in most situations and won't make decisions until I'm definitely sure of it. Paralysis by analysis are a couple of words that I have thought to describe me pretty well, however when it comes to important life decisions I seem to not care at all. My priorities are definitely not in the right places I know that but it hasn't really been that alarming up until right now that how I'm acting does need to stop I just need to find out a way how. I've actually become concerned for how well I will be doing in the near future do to my laziness.

On a lighter note I do at least know for sure that whatever path I'm headed, I really want to just be able to travel for at least some time in my life. I'm 20 now about to be 21 and still haven't been outside of the east coast of the US, which is in its own right gorgeous but still just not enough for me. I want to see and experience much more than that. There are entire tribes, villages, and cities full of entirely different cultures and people that would seem so exotic to what I'm currently used to. However, I know that this day will come some time in the future, right now it is only my time to just wait until it comes.

As for discussing this course I've just come to accept the fact that there is just no way that I would be able to actually try my hardest with this kind of set up, at least not right now. I still am at the point that I feel like I need some sort of extrinsic motivation to actually get me going. I don't know if its necessarily grades that will end up working in this situation, because I don't really seem to care about them as much as I know I should be worrying about them, but I know for a fact that there is somehow to get me going and enthusiastic about this material. In all honesty I do really find programming extremely fascinating and exciting especially when given the fact that there are no real ends to the amount of possibilities that can emerge from programming. I seriously feel as though this

really is the right path for me its just sad that I know I'm not taking advantages of the resources around me (or at least not in the sense that I should be taking from them). If I were to offer any suggestions to the course however, I would love to see more guided group talks that students were more encouraged to go to. You're one of the most brilliant people I've ever met and its inspiring, however I can't seem to find motivation to come to class because at times I feel kind of awkward to have to come up and ask how to get started on a project when its november.

As far as the grade for this semester goes I just don't know what to do really. I chose the point accumulation strategy (like I'm sure most others did) and I know for a fact that if I were graded solely on that I would not pass this class. And though it pains me to say it, I can't really see myself asking for anything other than an A in the class if I were to ask for a grade. At this point I don't have anything to really demonstrate for you. I could mention that one of my best friends from back home is actually interested in getting Convoy started with me but there is nothing to show you with that. So that being said I really feel as though I'm taking too much of an advantage of you and the way that you do these classes. Two semesters in and all I've offered are ideas and never followed up on them, only to ask for A's later. However I know that in the long run I'm only hurting myself by not putting any effort forward into trying to actively learn the material.

Coming into this class, I wanted to make an app that I, and others, would find useful. Along with this, I wanted to learn about the different styles of app development. As far as learning goals, I kind of wanted to learn a new language. However, as I began to realize how much more complex creating an app is than I thought, I decided it would be best to stick with what we knew in Python and just try to build off of that. My primary goal this semester was to get a working interface with most of the buttons and functions of our app. After we finished that, our goal was to connect the app to a database, but that is where we got stuck for a few weeks. Between Thanksgiving break and the end of the semester, it ended up not coming together completely.

I feel like we were generally successful. We have a good chunk of code and part of an interface that works. We got the database running locally a few times. However, I would have considered ourselves more successful if we had been able to upload information from our app to the database, and then later have been able to access it and do something with it. It was cool that we got the database running locally though.

I feel like we failed in achieving the goal of being able to connect the app to the database, I was really looking forward to that. I had also initially hoped in putting more effort into the class, but I feel as though I did not succeed in that regard either. Through these failures, however, I learned something important about programming: it will take longer than you anticipate and will likely require more effort than you anticipate. Working on future projects, I will definitely keep this experience in mind and allot more time to the project.

I feel slightly more educated, but mostly in the fact that I have learned how much I do not know in this field. There are so many languages and tools available at my disposal, but knowing my options isn't even half the battle. Learning how to use those tools and what is best for when is a whole 'nother can of worms. I also found that I enjoy meditation, even for just a few minutes.

I have learned a lot about myself this semester, about what I do and don't want to do in the future. I think the biggest step, however, has been finding that I have a substantial interest in wind energy. I am actually meeting with Dr. Miles at 3 this afternoon to discuss potential capstone projects. I have also solidified that I have one more summer of working at camp in me, but it will be my last one.

I have also been recently working on letting go of things and being more spontaneous. Instead of having reservations and trying to be conservative about some things, I've begun to ask "why the hell not?" It's been fun so far!

This style of course did not work for me as well as I had hoped. Other classes with grades throughout the semester and more stringent curriculums began to take priority after the first few weeks and the work loads for them began to increase. My interest for this class did not fade, but my energy level did as I did work for other classes. If I were to take the course again, I would like to see some form of effort requirement or attendance policy. I know it contradicts your teaching style, but it was often discouraging to be one of the only students in class. It felt like everyone else had ditched and I didn't see anyone else making progress. It was dreary at times.

My last request of you this semester is for you to report an A to the registrar as my grade. Although I feel that I failed in several of my goals in this class, I did learn a considerable amount, and we do have a clickable something-or-other to show for it. I spent time in class and even at home trying to make bits and pieces work, and I have somewhat of a better idea of what app making entails.


Joe Hoang
ISAT 320
Benton
12/8/14

340 Reflective Essay

Coming into 340 I planed on gaining a comprehensive understanding of the basic foundational principles of programming. At the beginning of the year, my goals were to gain a better understanding of the techniques and sequential steps taken to develop a program. As the year progressed and my workload for other classes became more demanding, my goals for developing this understanding became less important to me. I still however tried to focus on gaining an understanding of why I was instructed to download third party developer tools and preform unit tests. Throughout the course I have gained knowledge in downloading third party programing tools through mac's terminal. I have gained a shallow understanding of the beginning steps required to develop a program. I have also gained an elementary understanding of the commands used in PHP. Though I do not have extensive concrete evidence to clearly demonstrate what I have accomplished, such as a functioning program, I do have a completion record of time spent in learning PHP from codecademy.

Throughout this course I have failed to gain understanding of essential foundational principles that are necessary for understanding the importance, of downloading third party applications. I have also failed to gain an appreciation of the importance of unit tests. This lack of understanding is largely due to the fact that I was never exposed to the problems and difficulties faced in developing programs without the use of these developer tools. As a beginner I had no understanding or appreciation of the power of using these applications. I was blindly downloading these applications because I was told that that is what I was supposed to do. This lack of fundamentals made the material in this course difficult to resonate with. For example, one cannot gather an appreciation for the practical implications of education as a preschooler. All he/she understands is that rewards are given to students for obeying instructors, and punishments are received when a student disobeys their instructor. As that preschooler matures throughout his life he gathers first hand experiences of the difficulties faced when he does not have the proper knowledge to solve a problem. Having this experience gives him an appreciation and understanding of why that knowledge is valuable and how the knowledge can be applied effectively.

In the future I will not be pursuing the understanding these foundations because currently I have no required use for computer science. However, if my academic passions cause me to drift towards a field of work that requires the integration of computer science, I would not be hesitant in the pursuit of gaining a deeper knowledge of this field.

By encountering complications when developing a program I have gained a greater appreciation for individuals who do pursue this field. This experience has

also given me a greater appreciation for the technological tools that would not exist without the development of programming.

This semester, like many semesters before this one, has altered my philosophy on the way I live radically. In the pursuit to finding who I am, I have been drifting from being open-minded to being unintentionally closed-minded and back to being open minded. Due to the microscopic amount of life experience I have however, I have found it difficult to pinpoint who I am at a fundamental level. This limited understanding of life and myself, has inspired me to pursue knowledge more openly and embrace the philosophical paradigm shifts that come with it.

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS
GOOD

This course is tailored toward someone who has an intermediate to advanced understanding of programming. If I were to recommend this course I would not recommend it to someone trying to learn the fundamentals of computer science or app development. Even though the idea of creating your own app is interesting and exciting, initial perceived student expectation is too inflated for someone just trying to understand the basics of programing. Many of my peers during the beginning of the year had found it difficult to come up with an original idea because there are so many apps already created for practically every problem. Students inflated ideas of searching for the perfect million-dollar idea weakens their morale and interest to actually learn the subject material. If I were to restructure this course, I would give each student a choice of creating several already structured applications or creating their own. I would also give students who have elementary programing experience, a very basic environment to program in, so as they encounter problems they can understand how developer tools are beneficial in the programming process.

Though I have little evidence to show for my efforts in this class I would like to receive an A to balance my GPA. It is contemptible that I want an A for the sole purpose of GPA maintenance especially when I feel an A does not reflect the accomplishments in this class. In my defense however the accomplishments I did make were all intrinsically motivated and self-taught, which I find has more merit. I feel as though the guiding knowledge dispersed and the perceived expectations for this course do not correlate. I was discouraged because it felt like I was trying to play ball in the major leagues while being a rookie. This method of diving in to the material with no solid structure is impleading to the progression of learning.



The Jasper Project

This course was one of my most highly anticipated ISAT classes yet. I have always been into little coding projects and was looking forward to extending my media choices to a mobile platform... that being said, I never actually worked on a mobile app this semester, but I'll address this later. I had also heard that there were no grades in this class, and that intrigued me. I had an understanding of the basic idea behind your grading system from your presentation in Eric Pappas' class my freshmen year, but did not fully understand what I was getting into.

Going into a class where I would assign myself a grade, I knew I would have to set goals for myself if I wanted to take anything away from it. This turned out to hold more truth than I realized at the time. At the beginning of the semester, I planned to work on a mobile application for musicians with a group. After a few weeks, our group had not made any progress and I realized that I would never have the proper motivation to work on this project in a class of this style. I knew I would have to think of a project that appealed to me enough to where it didn't matter if it was for a class, I would want to do it anyway. So I sat down and asked myself, how can I still accomplish my goal of extending my available coding platforms, and also have it be a project I will want to work on? What I came up with, is a project that I have always had in the back of my mind, but could never justify the economic costs of. I wanted to make a home automation system. At the initial conception, I had lofty goals about what I wanted my system to accomplish. I did some research, made a shopping list, and reigned in my expectations. Towards the end of the semester, I started to target my goals to my accomplishments instead of the other way around. This was a process that did not serve me well.

I successfully built a (buggy) Jasper home automation system for my room. I would consider this my biggest success. The github link is at the bottom, and I recommend taking a look at it. I underestimated how satisfying it would be to have a talking computer with a British accent. My second biggest success would be gaining the experience from working towards the goal. I learned a ton of new stuff about Linux, got to work with some unfamiliar hardware like a Raspberry Pi and a web mic, and got a firsthand lesson in hardware trouble shooting. I had never worked with the built in Linux sound architecture ALSA and kind of hope I never have to again. This was definitely the area that produced the most hang-ups as my hardware (mic) did not want to cooperate with my board. A big goal that I failed to accomplish was Spotify integration for Jasper. I was also planning to have an always-on design that would provide the automation aspect. At this point, the system will periodically crash if left on for too long with no input. I also wanted to run it headless, but I use my roommates router and couldn't configure a network to get my laptop and Pi communicating using SSH. These are all things that I plan to fix in the future, but will require more money to be spent on the project; and I honestly don't know when I will be ready to do that. When it comes to hardware trouble shooting, I learned that the solution is always the last thing you try - its usually a matter of how many different configurations you are willing to go through to get everything working together. I learned that this can also include just buying new hardware.

I definitely feel more educated after taking this class. I always end up learning way more than I thought I would when I do these types of projects. I had no clue when I started this project that I would

be learning about Linux sound, but I had to in order to get a better understanding about what might be happening and be able to think of solutions. That is just an example of the kinds of challenges that pop up when you start what looks like a simple project. I learned a lot about how I work when there was a grade at stake and I knew I would have to justify it at the end of the day. I get small pockets of motivation that come 3 or 4 days at a time and then I hit a big problem and sit on it for a while. Sometimes when I come back, the solution is more apparent or in a different place than I was looking initially. I think stepping back is important when working on a diy project like this. Sometimes small differences in your setup and the one you are modeling off of can be crucial.

There is no doubt that I would have spent more time on this course had it been a traditional style, but that doesn't necessarily equate to quality. I don't remember the last time I had this much fun working on a project for a class. I was still under the gun in a sense because time was limited, but the lack of deadlines or test to regurgitate information on made a much better atmosphere for doing this kind of work. I can't say that I have any more direction than when I started this class though. Tech projects have always been fun for me and I hope to complete this one when I can.

Fun vs.
Effort

I like how you started the semester showing off some really cool ideas on Kickstarter to get us thinking. Seeing the diverse range of projects really got me thinking bigger and more out of my box. I have known of the Raspberry Pi for a while and have been wanting to work with one - this was a great chance to get some outside motivation for that. I didn't think much about the grade system at the very beginning, but you really made me want to do a good job. I liked the encouragement you gave when we were picking our projects by saying that it could be something ambitious or something we didn't have experience with or feel completely confident working with. That made me want to do something I had never done before. Instead of punishment for possible failure, I looked at the reward I would get from succeeding at something I had never tried.

I would like an A for this class because I got more out of this experience than other classes I've gotten A's in, honestly. I did more debugging for this project than I did in a semester of 252. The things I learned the hard way, by myself (or on forums hahaha), will stick with me longer than something I just learn for a day to get a grade. I came out of this course with a completely different set of skills than I thought I would. I may have missed the curriculum a little bit, but I'm definitely better for having taken this course. Thanks for an interesting and unique semester.

Jasper page:

<http://jasperproject.github.io/>

Lift That Shit

Coming into this class and hearing I could work on any project I wanted really thrilled me. I had ideas running through my head all day everyday but the one that stuck was an old idea I had, to generate workouts. At the beginning of the semester, I had the main goal of improving my coding skills and hopefully discovering my passion for app development, which I had never explored before this class. Over the semester, the goals I had didn't really change they just became more relevant. As I wrote code, my skills improved more than I have ever seen them improve. I learned jQuery, SQLite, and more javascript than I had ever known before. I created databases that I had never done before and linked an html files with javascript files that interacted with each other. Then my goals collided. I realized that, as I got better at coding, that it wasn't for me as much as I had once anticipated. I don't know if I see this as a failure or as more of a success. I unveiled more about myself this semester than I had previously come to grips with. I decided that my current path wasn't meant for me and a change of trajectory was needed. I believe through this class, I have become more enlightened and educated, although maybe not in the way I first anticipated. The freedom and exploration that this course provided, allowed me to pursue an interest of mine, which permitted me to see what it would be like once I was cleared to work on something I enjoyed. Unfortunately, or maybe fortunately, this helped me see that I wasn't happy where I was going in this field.

As for my grade, I firmly believe I deserve an A, and here is why. Coming into this class, I was scared. I had no experience writing a full program from scratch and felt

like if the real world swallowed me up right now, I'd get eaten and digested without a fight. Through the semester, my coding skills and knowledge increased to a level where, with a little help, the real world wouldn't be that bad of a place. This is besides my main point though. Where I believe I deserve most of the credit is in my self-exploration. I went from wanting to create programs for alternative energy to realizing that it wasn't my personal path in life that would direct me to immense happiness for others and myself. It wasn't the path that would use my skills to create the most positive change in this world.

Through this class, I have learned that learning, isn't all about getting grades, or regurgitating material. It is about knowing yourself, your strengths, your weaknesses and collaborating with others to create a magnificent outcome. Learning is about sharing what you know with others and absorbing what they know like a sponge. Not to be able to answer some question on a test but more to be informed and use that information for a real cause. This is one of the reasons I chose dietetics. I want to use the information I learn to help people improve themselves. I don't want to sit behind a desk, typing on a computer to make the rich, richer, even if it helps myself get a little bit wealthier along the way.

To conclude, I want to thank you. For help coding, and also with creating such an open environment class where I felt comfortable enough to explore whom I really was in a context that I thought was who I was. If that sounds confusing, your class allowed me to see that when I was passionate about coding, I really wasn't and that was perfectly okay. I hope in the future more people approach education in the way that you do because it opened up my life more than any other class has before this one.

Jacqueline Anderson

ISAT 340

Narrative Essay

Before starting this semester I was extremely excited because I was finally hitting my sector courses, which meant I was that much closer to my concentration courses. During the summer I was so sure that Information Knowledge Management would be my concentration; however, things change and new goals and expectations were set for me. Coming into this class this semester I had high expectation for both myself and the course as a whole. Older students had already prepared me mentally for this course by telling me about the “choose your own grade” policy. However, when starting this course I knew I really wanted to put forth my best effort so that I would be able to get all that I could out of this course. I expected to be able to wake up every day and come to class ready to learn as much about programming and computers as I could. As the semester went on, my expectations for this class slowly dwindled into trying to pass my other classes. Even though my expectations for this course dropped my expectations for myself in my other courses increased dramatically.

Goals are a form of ambition and effort. When entering a semester my main overall goal is to do my absolute best and succeed in as much as I possibly can in all of my courses. During the summer I gave myself a goal of trying to learn how to actually program. Last semester in ISAT 252 I didn’t really learn how to code like I was hoping. I struggled a lot in that course which made me hopeful for this course. I had a goal that I would make up for last semester and learn everything in which I struggled with the most. When presented with the option of points accumulation or choose your own grade at the beginning of the semester there was never a question in my mind of which option I would choose. I did however set a goal that I would look at this course differently than my previous programming courses. I also set a goal to try and not be so shy around other people. I wanted to be able to communicate with other people in the class so that I could better my people skills. My goals evolved over the course of the beginning of the semester in not just trying to do well in this course, but to step up in my concentration courses. One goal that evolved is how I had to determine what I wanted to do with my life. I determined through deep thought that programming was not for me. I then decided to not put forth any effort in order to focus on my concentration classes. I decided to concentrate in both Biotechnology and Environment. By me knowing what my concentrations are for sure I then dropped my Environmental Science minor. I originally was going to do a concentration in Biotechnology but my love for the Environment grew over the course of the semester. I later found that a concentration in Environment is equivalent to the Environmental Science minor. These two courses alone are strenuous and in order to succeed and be satisfied with myself I knew I had to set a goal to mainly focus on these courses. A very important goal that I set forth was trying to decide how I wanted to live my life. For instance, do I want to go to graduate school, what graduate program would I choose, where would I live when everything is said and done? These questions were all pondering in my head but I set a goal to have most of them answered by the time the semester finished.

With these newfound goals I was determined to reach them and succeed. In some ways I can honestly say that I did. Up until this point in the semester I was able to hold very good grades in my concentration classes, labs, and minor classes. I was successful in certain aspects of my goals. I was successful in ways that I couldn’t even imagine. I wanted to get out of my shell and become social with other. In other courses I was forced to work in groups to

Jacqueline Anderson

ISAT 340

Narrative Essay

accomplish task. I had to rely on these people for help and support with schoolwork. In this way I feel successful. I am still shy; however, I now know that I have the ability to work in a group and be an important asset. One of my main goals I wanted to accomplish was determining where I was going in life, and in which direction whether going to graduate school or trying to find a job directly out of college. I visited to office of Career and Academic Planning this semester to get advice on how to go about my research. I found that I want to focus more on my concentration of Environment. I decided that I want to apply to the Environmental Science graduate program at Virginia Commonwealth University. This way I can stay at home and save money and I will no longer have to pay rent. I have also been looking into internships so that when it's time for me to get a job I will have some experience under my belt. This was a very important decision to me because making the right choice in college can set you up with a successful future. I also was informed that I don't necessarily have to do internships in Harrisonburg, I can go home and do internships while I am in graduate school. This was a major accomplishment for me because this time next year I would have already applied to graduate school in hopes of getting in. That makes this decision that much more important because time has flown by and I don't have that much time to procrastinate. On the other hand, I did not succeed in all of my goals. I did not learn how to code or program. As stated above I realized that programming is not for me. It's something where I stare at a code for hours and not know anything about what's going on. With this being said, all of the goals I hand set for this course dwindled when my determination for learning how to program disappeared. I felt as though I was already behind learning the basics and trying to learn how to code and make an app this semester would have been too stressful and overwhelming. So when I decided that programming wasn't for me the goal of trying to learn how to program also was nonexistent. Through my failures I have learned that I now know exactly what direction I want to move my life. I have a vision and now it's up to me to follow the path I've put forth in front of me. I know that it will not be easy but you get out of things what you put into it.

The mission statement of this school is very significant to how everyone should focus on their studies to accomplish this mission. JMU's mission is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Overall from this semester I can honestly say that I do feel more educated. This semester I have put forth the most effort I have since I have been in college. I studied and made sure that I could be informed about as much as I could this semester. I love learning new things and becoming educated about new issues as well as old ones. All of the courses I have taken this semester have taught me something. Some of these courses didn't necessarily teach me information but have taught me more about myself that I would have learned without these courses. With this being said I also feel very enlightened on a lot more in life. These courses have opened my eyes to what I want to do with my life. This semester has been the most important semester of my college career. I needed this semester to enlighten me like it did because it allowed me to realize that I don't stay in college forever. I realized I needed to look toward the future because I only have three semesters left at this school. This time next year I would have already applied to grad school and I really needed to know what programs I might be interested in before I could do so. It helps in knowing which schools have what programs so when it comes time to apply it won't be a shock. The wakeup call I

Jacqueline Anderson

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needed this semester was me visiting Career and Academic Planning to help me realize I might be a college student but I won't be forever. I didn't want to graduate and life hit me like a ton of bricks because I wasn't ready for what was to come. Graduation is slowly approaching and I had to understand that I when the time comes I need to have a plan with my life. This semester opened my eyes to so much around me and I am fully aware now of what I want to do with my life. These activities this semester have contributed the most in getting to know myself even better and helping me determine what I want to do in the distant future.

I believe the style of this course work works for me because in every major you have classes that are required for students to take, however, not all of those classes are going to interest the student. Students are more focused and motivated by classes they actually enjoy. When students are forced to take courses that don't interest them they don't take it as seriously and don't learn anything from the course. Whereas, in this course you have the opportunity to take the course and learn something new or you can take the course to fulfill the requirement. I feel like more professors should take this approach because it allows the students to come to them when they actually have questions. They can't hide behind books and other people in the course if they are truly interested in a subject. For example, student athletes that want to make it into the pros put in the work and effort to get better. This goes for when they are in season or in off season. They put into what they want to get out of it. This also goes for classes. If a student really wants to succeed in something they are going to do everything in their power to do it. This also goes for off season, a student's off season is when they are out of class or even on the weekends. I admire this style because it helped me realize that if I can't handle a course like this than Information Knowledge Management should not be my concentration. If I had the chance to take this course over I wouldn't recommend you do anything differently. I learned so much about myself while contemplating this course and everything it had to offer. I appreciate this course and everything it has taught me as a student and a person.

I have thought long and hard about the decision of my grade for this course. However, I have come to the conclusion that I would like an A in this course. My reasoning behind this grade is because even though I didn't learn anything about programming I honestly learned about myself. This course actually helped me realize what I wanted to do in ISAT as well as in my future. Overall I feel as though my semester was successful. I learned a lot academically as well. By far this was my best semester grade wise because I was finally able to focus on the courses that mean the most to me. An A in this course will help make up for the grade I received last semester in ISAT 252. I tried extremely hard in that course and nothing I did seemed to be correct or up to par. This grade will put me even closer to getting my GPA up for next semester. Next semester is the final semester and grades graduate schools will see before accepting new students. This makes it the most important semester and I need my GPA to be the best it can. This A will allow me the push to get my GPA to where I am satisfied to apply to schools. I am my own worst critique and no matter what is done I always believe I could have done better. I thank you for the opportunity in taking this course and allowing me the chance to learn even more about programming and coding.

Alex Martin

An Essay on Things Learned From ISAT 330

My name is Alex Martin. I am a senior at James Madison University, with a major in Integrated Sciences and Technologies (ISAT). I switched into this major at the start of my junior year, deciding that business was not something I could do for the rest of my life (formerly a CIS major). However, in my time spent in Computer Information Systems and Mathematics, I learned that I have a proficiency for analyzing patterns and predicting outcomes using a series of instructions. As I would write out solutions for systems of equations, it became clear to me that these solutions were resembling algorithms. For example, do this when this action happens, unless a previous action has occurred, in which case do this to get this outcome. After meeting with my adviser, we concluded that I would be happy programming and managing databases, but unsuccessful in the business management part of that study. So, he recommended ISAT to me at the end of my sophomore year. I met with Paul Henricksen, the main course adviser for ISAT, and we also concluded that I should check out Information and Knowledge Management as well as Telecommunications. So, after taking a handful of IKM and Telecom classes, I can safely say that I am happy here and now.

I decided to do the point accumulation process in ISAT 330. However, after accomplishing most of everything that was posted, I shifted my focus to more python programming. I spent most of the semester working on a socket server that would do simple calculations between a server and client script. The client would enter a series of numbers, and an identifier that lets the server know what to do with the values. The client gives this information to the server, the server performs the calculations, and then gives the new information back to the client, which the client then displays in a user-friendly manner. This was something that I had read about in discussion forums as a good way to introduce python socket programming to a person with minimal python experience. I feel like I have learned a lot about how clients and servers communicate, and the manner in which they handle information.

Coming into this class, I did not have many expectations. I was ready to buckle down and complete whatever the professor would assign to us as students, just like every other college class I have been a part of. So I set the normal learning goals that I do for every class – do the required course material, study the topics, and come to the professor or fellow classmates with whatever questions or issues I was having. It soon became clear that this class would not be like my other curricula, so I decided to take a new approach to learning. I spent my time reading articles about Github and HTML processing. If I ever got too frustrated with a problem, I would go have a cigarette and cruise around Harrisonburg listening to NPR. I would clear my mind of any distractions, and come back to the problem with a clear mind and new perspectives. This turned out to be a very effective method of problem solving.

I feel as though this course helped me change my outlook on problem solving and stress management. When Dr. Benton spent time in the beginning of the semester meditating with the class and emphasizing to put our worries on our mental back burners, I knew immediately that this class was what I would need to help me get through another semester at college. I am a smart person, but I have never been very good at effectively completing college courses, as my GPA reflects. This does not mean that I do not understand learning new topics well, but speaks more to my difficulty with getting behind areas of study that I cannot find passion.

I have been successful in this course by completing this socket server. This is one of the accomplishments for a college course that make me feel proud of myself. I am more proud of that than I would be for an A in a general education course. I feel as though I failed by not coming to class regularly, and not completing the weekly self-evaluations that Dr. Benton sent to us. These failures stem from my difficulty in completing tasks that I do not find interesting, plus it was hard for me to wake up on time every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to come to the 8am lecture.

Over the course of the semester, I can say that I am happy with the work that I have done, and this may well be one of my most successful semester as far as GPA is considered. It is hard for me to realize that GPA is such a big factor in determining career paths, and it became very disillusioning for me in my sophomore year. I

considered dropping out and traveling the world, but my mother suggested that I just simply finish what I have started, and then focus on more worldly things like travel. I am glad that she helped me get over my depression from school, and am proud of my accomplishments.

This course has helped solidify in my mind that Computer Science and development is something that I could spend the rest of my life doing. I enjoy coming across issues and spending time thinking about and researching possible solutions. This process of research has led to a conclusion that my parents have been trying to instill in me from day one – if you have an issue, chances are someone else has had that problem as well, and has spent time coming to a solution. I found this to be so very true in the study of computer science, and Google has been my best friend over this semester.

As far as being “educated and enlightened”, I do not know if this aspect of my life has changed much by completing this course and semester. I do feel very enlightened as far as world issues go, and I try to stay educated on those topics as well. But, I do not know if taking these classes this semester has changed my “enlightened” status or outlook. That being said, I do feel more educated in certain topics, and less in others. Perhaps some learned knowledge has been replaced by newer information. Something that I have learned, however, is that school is not some impossible mountain to climb, but is more of a series of hills that get steeper and steeper. The hills are not getting steeper to frustrate the student, but are doing so to help push the student to new achievements and greater heights.

This style of course really worked for me in ways that surprised me. I figured that having my feet held to the fire would just simply burn me as it has in the past, but having a freedom to focus on things that I enjoyed helped me be effective in ISAT 330. If I were to take this class again, I would tell myself to skip the points system, and head straight to working on things that I liked.

As far as my grade for this class is considered, I would like an A to be reported to the registrar. A question can be derived at this point – does the grade matter to me. And the answer is interesting. At the beginning of the semester, the answer would have been an overwhelming “yes dear god yes gimme that A”. But now, the answer is different. It

is still a “yes”, but for different reasons. I want an A in this class to help my GPA rise a little, but I would also like a A because I feel like I am proud of my work for this class. This proud feeling is something that I feel very rarely in college, because most classes just offer required materials that everyone does. This class let me express myself and do things I wanted to, which let me guide myself to success.

My expectations coming into this class were not at all close to how this class actually was. I was expecting it to be set up like most other college classes, with grades and lectures. I am very glad that it was not because I think that makes everyone hate what their learning. I was not expecting the “choose your own grade” system, which I now think every class should be using. Basically I thought this would be a traditional college class and it was not.

The main thing I wanted to learn from this class was how databases work. Over the summer I started a website, that could store information is a database. I had a vague idea how it could store information, but I didn’t really know the relationships they could have and how to use the data in them. In the beginning of the semester that was my main goal. However once I learned more about databases and how ruby essentially sets them up for you. I focused on learning how to recall the information. The whole MVC concept took me a while to understand. I am still working on that: I need to go back and fix a bunch of code. Towards the middle of the semester I started a new website project. My new goal was to get this site live. This new project, which I call Project Mind, is basically a form. It is a form, but can potentially become much more. I mostly knew how to code this type of thing from what I learned from the first site. At least I thought I did, it became more complex than I intended, and will not have full functionality when version one goes live.

I also started reading a book called “the lean start up”, which talks about minimum viable products. This is another reason I wanted to put up Project Mind as soon as possible. This book talks about how to learn from customers, in this case users, to make your product into what the user actually wants. This changed my mind set on the original website I was building. The main problem with that first site was I had to learn everything while I was building it, and the concept was to complex. The vision I have for that site might not even be something people will use. That is partly why I started a “simpler” site, in hopes to learn what users want from a website. I look at that first project as a complete learning process, I learned a ton from it, however I do not know if I will follow through to the end. Time will tell.

I definitely feel like I was successful in what I wanted to learn. I just recently started learning more about domain names and hosting. I just bought the domain projectmind.guru however there are still a few things that need to be fixed before version one is ready to go. Ideally within a week it will be live. Putting the site live will allow me to learn what I need to know if I am to put up a more secure site, like the first project. I know very little about security, which is something I want to look into more. The things that I have learned so far will be tested live through Project Mind, in a way that will not be harmful to the user if something were to go wrong. Basically I mean there is not much personal information on the user that needs to be secure.

Specifically what I have learned and done would be easiest to show, but I’ll briefly describe. Using a MySQL database has a table to store a discussion, a discussion being a paragraph entered by a user. Then allow that discussion to have responses, which are stored in another table. The responses belong to a specific discussion and can be displayed as so. Further the responses can have comments, which is another table, linked to the responses. Before this class I knew nothing about Git or GitHub, and now I am using that as a version control. I knew very little

JavaScript, jQuery, or coffeescript. I am starting to implement them into my project. I have focused only on ruby on rails as the main language for the site. Obviously html and CSS are also used, but I already knew those concepts. I learned a lot more about ruby on rails, especially with how to use it to work with a MySQL database. Also the MVC style of programming, I understand the concept now. However I need to go back and change move around some code. I also looked into IOS on a brief level, focusing mainly on their new language swift, and not really objective-c. IOS programming is something that I want to learn. I have read some about about FTP and will be using that soon but have not really done much with that yet.

The main Areas that I have failed to achieve in relative to this class and my goals are going to class and writing tests. Missing the amount of class that I missed was a complete waste of what could have been one of the most valuable resources. It's funny because this is the only class I have this year that is set up in a way to learn creatively, and it's the one I skipped the most. I'm not going to make excuses, because it doesn't matter now. Missing almost every class was by far my biggest failure for this class. I also have not been using tests while writing my program. This is for two reasons, firstly I never spent time learning it and now that I have already started I don't want to go back and write them. This is something that I can see why it is valuable in the long run problems will be a lot easier solved. This is something that I will eventually get around to doing.

In regard to what I have learned this semester, relating to this class, I would say that I learned more then expected. I would definitely consider myself more educated in computer programming. As far as more enlightened, I believe we are all becoming more enlightened everyday. That is as long as we are conscious of what we are doing. As long as we are not complete slaves to this system, we will become more enlightened. I am by no means enlightened, and believe very few actually are however this class did further my in the process. I learned a new way to educate people, and this class could mean more to my life then I realize now. I may be misinterpreting what is meant by enlightened but either way I personally fell more enlightened.

This class has helped me know what I want to do in the future. Firstly I don't want to work for anyone. That is something I have known for a while. Having the ability to create a website, of really any kind, is a way to work for yourself. So my short plan is to make a few websites, maybe an app. When I said I don't want to work for anyone, I think that is something most people also want. However the way businesses are set up now don't allow people to live any other way. What if companies were changed completely? This is what I would consider my long-term goal. Education is probably the most important concept to the human race. It's so important that it can essentially enslave an entire population. I realize there are many sides to this whole problem, and I do not have an answer yet. However I believe this school system that everyone goes through needs a radical update. This class is one of few that are starting to implement some sort of update. I feel like I'm explaining this poorly, if I were to say what my long-term goal it is something like as follows. Be a part of a major change relating to Business, Education and Government, which will allow more people to become enlightened and do what they

love. End global oppression. That's what I would like to be a part of, and I know many are already doing things to make these changes.

I may sound very ignorant in what am I talking about. I realize that is how this could come off. If I am saying things that are untrue I hope I am updated in my thoughts. There are a lot of problems, talking about them is the first step. This is the step really everyone can do, and does. I have done almost nothing to try and fix a single problem. That in it's self is a problem. When I think of how my life circumstances could be better, in regard to what I have access to, there isn't much better. Most of the people around me, myself included start with so much, we have so much opportunity, and money is essentially for all the extra things we want. Everyone has his or her basic needs met, and we are the ones that can actually change things. However were so comfortable that we don't have that drive because if we changed anything it wouldn't really affect us, and if it did it would be slightly negative, negative only in a sense that we might have to give up a convenience. I know that if I don't do something to help people and make those necessary changes, I will have wasted my life.

This course has a great style; if I were to take it again I definitely would, only later in the day. This is the type of update the school system needs, the problem with most classes, which this class does not share, is grades. What I have learned, and you must already know, is that when your learning for a grade you lose almost all passion. Even subjects you once loved will turn into "work". This I believe feeds back into telling people what to do, what to learn, how to learn. That is something this class does not share with most of the rest. It allows you to be creative, do what you want, and learn what you want. If you were teaching this traditionally I would assume you would PHP, thus I would be forced to use PHP. If you look at our class as a whole now, we are more diverse. This diversity is the key to innovation and real change. If everyone knew the same thing then what's the point. That how I view this course, and I would love take more like it. Only next time utilize the class time to my advantage.

As far as my grade goes, I would like and A. In the beginning of the semester I knew I would choose my grade to be an A. Because of this I did what I wanted and didn't worry about "my grade". I could have done absolutely nothing and still gotten an A, so that shows me the passion I have for this subject. I wanted to learn how to do the things I learned. I would have learned them regardless of this class. In the end thought this class taught me much more then just programming. It showed me a new way to something that I already believed was being done wrong. It taught me that there are people out their trying to change education, rather then just follow traditional ways. I also learned a lot from writing this paper, putting some things in words is hard, but once done very useful. It showed me the reality of grades, because at the end of the day I am paying for this A. Really I'm just paying JMU to document that I am educated. What if we made education free? To answer that, it already is free. It's the proof that is being paid for.

Overall you were a great teacher, and I would like to get to know you better.

My expectations going in to this class were much like the last class I took in the Spring where we worked on a project with other students and make a cool application that showed some sort of functionality. However, I wanted to do something a bit more ambitious this time. I wanted to become more familiar with programming languages such as python. My goal was to create this web app that would be able to filter search results based on user input. These goals ended up changing when my computer's hard drive ended up being wiped.

I ultimately fell behind in the coarse and stopped working on my project when I couldn't get composer and larivel installed on my computer. This was very frustrating to me. Paul had managed to get everything to work with his Mac and he was running Yosemite as well, but for some reason we couldn't figure out what the problem was on my computer. By the time I decided that I could just use a computer in the computer lab, I had already become discouraged and gave up.

It was also tough to be motivated to continue the project since I was working alone. Had there been a stronger sense of accountability on my part, I would have tried to solve the issue. I also feel that the unstable nature of my senior capstone project made me weary on the nature of the project for this class. I wanted to work on some sort of program that could help me with my capstone project, but it took me so long to finalize my project that I wasn't motivated to spend time on something that would detract from my capstone project.

I honestly do not feel that I was successful in the class at all; I am honestly sad about that. The last time I had this freedom, I actually made something cool and fun. But this time, I truly feel I missed out on a great learning opportunity. This teaches me that I need to build in some intrinsic motivation for my goals and have them relate to what I want to do. I spent a lot of time this semester thinking about what I want to do and who I want to work with; I believe that next time I need to work in a group. I now feel that I work better when I feed off of other people's energy and am driven when I see other people work hard.

Though, I do feel more educated. I now know that I need to focus on what I want to do; not someone else's idea that I adopt. This semester, I have learned that I work a lot better when I am with people that create a positive work environment. I was previously doing my capstone project with Dr. Altaii, and I can honestly say that I do not like that man. Him and I had a very frank conversation about how we do not work well together and that I should do something that I will enjoy my senior year. And while I was learning from Dr. Papadakis and Dr. Chen, I found that I learned from them a lot better because of their positive personalities. I realize that I am very lucky to be working with people that I get along with; that will not always be the case in a working environment. I feel that I really need to work on working with people that I do not get along with. I have learned that I can be a very bitter person to people I do not like; it is a side of me that I do not enjoy. I have noticed that my attitude is very transparent when I do now like someone and that's a problem I need to work on.

I feel that this style of course did not work for me in an individual project setting. I feel that if I took the course again, I would have to be in a group to make sure that I remained focused on my goals. If I were to take the course again, I would

opt for the point accumulation system. The opportunity to select my grade for the course was too tempting to me and I took it. I would like an A for this course, not because that represents the work that I put in to the class, but because I would be insane not to ask for it.

Derek Hart

340 End of Semester Essay

What were your expectations coming into this class?

-Coming into this class at the beginning of the semester I wasn't exactly sure what I was expecting. I had an open mind to learn about developing software and working with computers in that sense. I knew Benton was a great professor and one of the most down to earth people at JMU and I was looking forward to having him in class.

What learning goals did you set for yourself?

-At the beginning of the semester I had set some goals for myself to at least get a basic knowledge on how to create an app for my iPod. Since we had the choice on basically whatever we wanted to work on or do that's what I had decided on.

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

-As the semester went on I had a hard time trying to stick to my goals. As I started to learn more about developing my app and getting deeper into my project I realized that I really did not have any interest in working on it anymore. I have always been pretty good with computers and liked working with them but for some reason I really had no interest in trying to learn and write code. Part of this could have been that I felt like I didn't have enough time with football season going on. As I got caught up in work for other classes and being stressed out probably led to no longer wanting to learn.

In what ways did you feel you were successful?

-If I had to say I was successful in anything I think it would be getting to know myself a little bit better in the fact that I don't want to eventually take a career path where I would be generating software or websites.

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

-I definitely feel that I failed to achieve my original goals from the beginning of the semester. I've always been the type of person to set goals in all aspects of life and strive to accomplish those goals. But I never really ended up getting an understanding on how to create an app and that is definitely due to the fact that I lost interest in it.

Please reflect on what you think you've learned from your failures, and what, if any, plans you have to address those issues in the future.

-I think the biggest thing I learned from this semester is to just keep an open mind about anything you do and if you don't like it don't spend your time on it. Spending time on things that matter to you will get you farther and make you more successful than trying to do something you don't like doing. It just leads to stress and frustration.

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

-After taking this class I feel more educated about myself and what my likes and dislikes are. I wouldn't say I am necessarily more educated on the subject of software development.

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?

-Like I said above, I definitely think I have a better understanding for myself and my preferences. In the future I may try to spark my interest in the subject again when I feel I have a little more time to devote to trying to learn it.

How did this style of course work for you?

-I really like the idea behind the choose your own grade and being able to choose what you want to work on. It truly motivates people when they can work on something they are interested in as opposed to a teacher forcing students to work on something that they don't want to. I also believe it's a better way to learn because if you care and have interest in what you're doing you will make every effort to learn more about it.

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

-I think the way the class was set up was pretty good. If anything I think I would try to explain the choose your own grade a little bit more so people have a better understanding of it.

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

-The grade I would like for this class is an A. Although I didn't physically learn much about software development I did learn more about myself and that will last me the rest of my life.

Final Benton Essay

Chris Miller

This Semester

This is the second semester that I have taken Benton's class and the second time that I have done the pick-your-own grade system of learning. When I started this course back in September I was quite excited to be thrown in again. There aren't many teachers that let you study what actually interests you in a field so it is refreshing to have that freedom. When I began the semester I thought that I was interested in database design and learning SQL stuff. I thought that I would be pursuing this throughout the semester but that was not the case. In the first few weeks of the class Taka and I decided to try and work together on our UREC and dining hall idea that had been tried by many before with little results.

Unfortunately, our time on that app idea wasn't successful, and we never really got our feet off the ground. It was hard to find cooperation with the people at UREC to get access to meaningful real-time numbers, and the collaboration fell apart. Neither of us had any solid ideas for a while so we just drifted from working with each other on anything.

After my work with Taka came to a standstill, I began, for fun, to mess around with APIs. I got the Steam API to work, but it lacked the functionality I wanted it to have to implement in any cool app or website ideas that I would find interesting. This is when I finally came up with my project idea.

My project idea was to combine two APIs into one tool. I want to use the 8 Tracks API and the Spotify API to create Spotify playlists from 8Tracks playlists automatically. I worked on this project with my friend Carson who goes to the University of Texas. Unfortunately, we don't have much currently to show for it. We're still trying to change information that comes out of the 8 Tracks API into something that we can input into the Spotify API and it is taking longer than both of us anticipated.

Expectations

Since my first time in Benton's class last semester, I have realized that this class isn't an expectation of the teacher, but an expectation of yourself. I know it isn't a huge revelation, but it is one that is totally uncharacteristic of college, and of school in general. I, personally, love the freedom to be able to teach myself, and I think I do a good job at it.

My expectation of this course was to further expose myself to different types of code and to learn how it is utilized in different ways, and to build on the lessons I learned last semester with my work in Python. I also had an expectation to challenge myself with a more difficult project that works with more than one language.

Commentary

While I do think I was successful in my expectations of myself, I am really disappointed that I have little to show for it. That being said, the project taught me a lot, and I had a ton of fun with it. My friend Carson and I are planning on continuing to work on it even though neither of us need it for a class.

I think the main thing that I have learned from this class is to just understand that you know nothing, and that the best way is to just jump in and flounder for a while until you begin to get your bearings. For this project that I have been working on, that is exactly what I did. I jumped right into the sample APIs that Spotify has on its developer page and looked at the code they were using. From there I tried recreating their code on my own to see what each line of text did for the program itself and how the verification process of the API login works. It was a time consuming process but one that I found very rewarding. Because of the nature of APIs, there also wasn't much of a support system should you encounter a problem, either. When I was working in python on my script last semester I found I could hop on Stack overflow for a bit and find all of my answers within an hour. With these APIs there is little troubleshooting that has been done on the internet, and in the case of the 8 Tracks API, there are still glitches on their end because the API is so new.

If I had the knowledge that I have now when I began the course I would do a few things differently. First, I would find a motivated individual that would like to work with me on the API project that I have, and second I would jump into the coding sooner. I was too focused on the big picture to foresee what the actual challenges of the project were going to be. When I first began coding for the project I thought that the challenge was going to be the verification process for the Spotify API so I spent an inordinate amount of time learning all three ways that the verification can be done so I could pick the best method, when in reality any of the three would have worked just as well. The part that I thought was going to be easy was the translation from 8Tracks API to the Spotify API but it was by far the most difficult and challenging. I found it very difficult to understand the json outputs and even harder to manipulate them. Of course hindsight is 20/20 but it was something I would have learned quickly if I just jumped into the project to see where I was going to struggle.

One thing that I really liked this semester were the online resources in the labs that were on the new website. The article on Dev environments and the lab on screen mockups really forced me to think about the specifics of the code before I jumped in to give me a better idea of the problems and challenges I would face. As much as I do believe that you should just jump in, that tool allowed me to forecast a little better than I would have been able to otherwise.

I definitely feel that I have finished this class significantly more "enlightened" than I began it. I think the format of the class is unique, and I believe that smart people take full advantage of it. I enjoy the aspect of support that Dr. Benton offers to his students, and I like the fact that there are no judgements on what you decide to do your project on. There are a lot of

things that I am going to miss about this class moving forward and academic freedom is one of them.

I would like to request an A in this class because I feel have fulfilled my goals that I set for myself at the beginning of the school year. This class was so much fun that I switched my sector to IKM and am looking forward to learning even more next year from Radziwill in my next IKM class. I would also like to thank Dr. Benton for sharing his unique worldview with me and really caring about the well being of the students that surround him. Because of him I have done a lot of research on meditation and even wrote an essay on meditation for my Psychology class because of how much it interested me.

Allyson Ponn
Reflection Paper
ISAT 340

Being an ISAT major, you have to choose your desired three sectors and concentration from six different tiers of learning (all of which, you know). As the student, it's your job to mesh them together with what you plan to do with you life, and incorporate them all into your goals. To tell you the truth, I had no idea what I was doing sophomore year. I took 252, with Dr. Teate and learned a great deal about Visual Basic. I found it fascinating. Frustrating without a doubt, but fascinating. I knew I wanted to sector in environment and biotechnology, but I had a very hard time choosing the third. I was torn between Manufacturing and IKM. My advisor told me manufacturing would be a great choice because of my involvement with food production systems, however I didn't listen. *Typical.* I chose IKM because it was something that interested me, and I also knew I would like the teachers a lot more. I knew I would get more out of classes and I had heard about the learning style, another reason I made the decision I did.

Coming into this class, I was expecting to continue to learn about programming and development in some way, shape or form. I had heard that we were to create something, anything. I was expecting to create and build something fun and knowing myself, something completely useless. I expected to learn other computer languages and set goals to do so. As we met for class and figured out the group situation, I teamed up with Susan, Cameron and Trevor. We discussed many ideas for a mobile app; parking calculator, interactive planner, Tinder filter, and many others. We settled on an application briefly named "Lift That Shit". This app would be able to randomize or customize a workout that complimented different parts of your body and location. Even though it was an idea I wasn't passionate about, I loved my group and figured it would help whip this body of mine into shape for Cancun in the spring. My goals to continue learning more computer languages were complimented by this decision to create this application. We decided to write the front end in HTML and then build the database via JavaScript. I didn't know either language, and I believe that was my main limitation in making progress in this class. I'll be honest, when it came to coding the App, Trevor and Cameron took the crown. They both knew what they were doing and unfortunately, I had no real input on the matter. I did, however, spend a lot of my time on Code Academy trying to learn the two languages and believe I was semi-successful in doing so. When looking over our code, I was able to understand the various functions used, so that's progress right? I don't feel as though I was completely successful in learning the coding languages and if I were to try and create an app by myself right now, I would fail and need tremendous amounts of help. But the door is open.

One goal that developed as the semester went on was to learn to play chess. Now I know this was a programming class, however I feel as though I learned more about myself this semester compared to coding. For example, I am fascinated by chess, but I never played. So I started watching, reading, and eventually went online and played some random kid from Michigan. Luckily the board lit up with where you could move each piece because I had no idea what I was doing. Then I got the hang of it and my first match came to a draw! So I tried again and it was a stalemate. Now I had no idea what I was doing but it was a start to something I really like and knew I would continue to learn about.

In response to the JMU's goals of producing "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives", I feel as though everyday I am here I compliment that mission statement. Like I said earlier, I have learned a lot about myself this semester, not only academically but also mentally and emotionally. I had to fight with myself over and over this semester, however the one thing that remained constant was that I now had an idea of what I wanted from life. I found a path I really like and wish to continue and follow. The idea of being an environmentalist, conservationist, or tree hugger as my family likes to add, I believe has led to grow into the characteristics of the mission statement. Enlightened. Educated. I now know that what I have been putting myself through has a meaning, something I've been very unsure of before. This class and having discussions about my senior project and intentions in life have helped structure the idea in my head and has made me feel more comfortable about my decisions. Even though I find coding fascinating, I don't think it will impact my future decisions or be useful in my career path. I do believe that having the basic knowledge on how development works is important and I am appreciative on having the foundation that I have created while here at JMU. I have certain goals I wish to pursue after I graduate: Food Corps, NRCS, Farm to Table. Coding languages and continuing to develop various applications is not something I see myself doing after I am done with my time here.

I was surprised how much I liked the structure of this course. Coming into it, I was unsure I would be able to still be productive with no deadline or structured tasks because it was my first experience. However, I now find that I more than like how the class was done. For a long time I have had the belief that education system needs restructuring; less on tests, more interaction, more hands on learning. This course only concreted those beliefs, because I now know that it is possible to learn and grow based on what the student solely wants to do. If I were to take this class again, I would be disappointed if it was structured differently than it is now. I think it's great that it gives students the opportunity to learn what they desire while having the opportunity to be creative. It's not something we experience often, so it was nice to have it available.

As for my grade, based on how much I believe I learned, experiences, grew as a person, I think I deserve an A-. Concerning the project, even though I didn't aid in the coding, I was able to assist in other ways, such as the social context paper, scenarios, and also finding information about the various workouts we used. I was able to find the "muscles worked" photos and videos for each workout so that Trevor could incorporate them into the database. I also developed the color scheme using JQuery, so that Cameron could integrate the link into the front-end code. I think by doing these activities with my group, I did continue to learn about group work and about myself. As I stated earlier, I am fascinated by the idea of coding. Unfortunately it's not just something I like enough to pursue. I am appreciative of learning the basics of Java and HTML to the point I did, and think that I could continue and struggle through a different development application. But honestly, I feel as though I could do something else with my time. Other aspects of the semester that integrated themselves into this class include: learning to play chess, increased meditation, making tremendous strides in my senior project, realizing that I love soil and having an idea of who I want to work for, and managing not to become a violent psychopath.

In closing, I do like the class. I like how we have the ability to be creative and develop something that interests us. I appreciate the professors involved and I had a great time learning and interacting with the others in the classroom. I feel as though I took a lot out of this semester. Not just through coding, but new friends and new perspectives.

Joseph C Straub
ISAT 340 Semester Narrative

Last semester, I ended ISAT 252 with very ambitious goals. I had plans to design an app for type 1 diabetes management. I wanted to get IRB certified and begin researching what students with diabetes would want to see in an app. These plans came to a standstill when Maymester began. I was hoping that I would be able to take my idea and bring it to a closer reality by making it my group's business plan in COB 300. However, the group decided to go with a different project. Because that course was 10 weeks long and 9-4 every day, I had to devote practically all of my efforts to that course. I didn't think about programming or my big idea much. After COB 300 I went directly to Baltimore for an internship where, again, I had to devote my time to other obligations. By the time I came back to school for the fall semester, I had not thought about my project for a long time. And when I did think about it, I thought about all of the difficulties and impracticalities. For example, after talking to some of my friends who have type 1 diabetes, it was clear that the last thing they needed was another thing to record and monitor their life. Because of that fundamental flaw, I decided not to pursue that project any longer.

Coming into ISAT 340, I had two projects that I wanted to look into. The first was an app that would allow people to make their own customizable emoji keyboard. I was thinking that it could have the ability to pixelate pictures or allow the user to design their own, similar to any other drawing app. Unfortunately, I really do not have any understanding on how smartphones work and how apps would be able to interact with each other, pulling a keyboard from my app to other apps like iMessage or Facebook. I also did not have any clue on how to turn a drawing into an emoji. This was a big learning curve that I just did not have the time to commit to this semester. I think if I had a friend in the class that I could get committed to this project with me, things might have been different. But this project was something I ruled out relatively early in the semester.

The second project I wanted to look into was creating a personal resume website. After what I learned last semester, I knew this is something that I could accomplish. Thinking back on that day where everything "clicked" last semester, I had a day early this semester where I sat down with nothing else to do and practically made things "click" for me. With guidance from the course website, I was able to set up my developing environment. I registered a domain and hosting with dreamhost. I got Filezilla onto my computer, so I could upload my website to my server. I also downloaded MAMP and Sequel Pro to my computer. I had a temporary website designed, so I tried for a while to get it all uploaded. When it worked, I was extremely satisfied. I never understood how you got files from your computer onto the Internet. Figuring that out on my own was an accomplishment that I could call my own. Since then, I have been slowly but surely updating my website. I tried originally to create a website from scratch. I had different pages and had it formatted mostly correct. However, in the middle of the semester I learned about wordpress. Since then, I have uploaded a wordpress template, but the lack of

customizability is frustrating me. Is there a way to edit the code directly? I plan on messing around with this website more when the semester is finally over.

One of my favorite parts of this semester was being surrounded by the students in the 348 section. Although I did not become with anyone close, I did feel as if I was able to ask questions to those in the class. I looked up to them as mentors and enjoyed watching them progress with their projects. These colleagues were the reason I came to class every day. I felt as if I was emerging myself into a culture that I have never been a part of before. I enjoyed coming to class because it is a refreshing difference from the College of Business.

I think I have a lot to learn from my failures in this course. The biggest thing I need to take away, which I am only realizing now after writing this reflection, is that I need to keep time in my life for doing stuff that I enjoy. I failed to do that this semester. I did not work on projects that were important to me or that I enjoyed working on. Rather, I worked on projects that were required for classes. I have to admit I did not do a lot for this course because there was nothing required for it. As much as I would have loved to figure out some projects, I found there to be not enough time in the day, leaving me to devote time to assignments that had a grade letter value associated with them. Part of me really wished that I committed to the point accumulation system. I think this time around I could have really used that extra push to keep me on track because this time I did not have friends like Katie and Kayla to help keep me on track. The other part of me, however, is happy I did not choose the point accumulation system because I do not think I could have put enough time into the course to get a good grade. The primary reason I chose not to choose the point accumulation grading system is because it was "time" based and not "effort" based.

I also have a lot to learn from the content of this course. Morgan is constantly challenging society and what is right vs. wrong and how we measure it. I have grown up thinking that grades and money are right. Although I still do believe that to be true, I appreciate Morgan explaining the other side to me. This course is structured to make us question everything. Why does it have to be this way? How does that work? What do I have to do to get to that point? Every time I enter the classroom, I end up leaving with more questions than I had going in. My favorite part is that these questions rarely have anything to do with programming, or the "what," but everything to do with the "why." Questioning the why makes me very frustrated at times. It makes me second-guess why I am at school and why I am studying what I am. But the self-realization, I believe, is the most important part of college. I believe, after all of the conversations I have had with Morgan, the right answer does not lie in believing money is greater than happiness or effort is more important than grades. But instead, the effort lies in realizing that there is not ultimate truth or "rightness," rather accepting that there are an infinite number of views on any one topic. The best way to succeed in life, in my own opinion, is being able to comprehend as many of those infinite views, weighing them, and moving

forward in a direction, which feels intuitively correct. Morgan has helped me learn how to become an enlightened citizen.

At the end of the day, I know that the amount of effort I have put into this course could have been improved. I could have put more time into the course, and I truly wish I did. I regret that I did not. However, I still am requesting an **A** in this class. It is difficult for me to make this request, because I feel as if I do not fully deserve it. However, I have learned throughout my life that you must jump at every opportunity presented to you. I do not feel as is requesting this grade is inappropriate or unethical. Whether it is an opportunity is a chance to meet a businessman that will get you a job, or a slim chance that you'll win the lottery, or an assurance that your GPA can remain stable, you should take it as long as you do not do so in an unethical or inappropriate way. By receiving an A in this course, it will give me the opportunity to maintain the high GPA I strive for, which in turn will allow me opportunities to interview with companies I truly wish to work for in the future.

Morgan, thank you, as always, for being a great professor and mentor. I will always look up to you as a man with wisdom and exuberance for helping others.

340 Wrap Up

Susan Andersen

Section 3

After taking 252 I felt like I had a handle on what this class was going to be about, I was not mistaken. I knew the routine even if it did not involve the in depth surveys as to how my mood was each week. Those surveys probably made me looked depressed and suicidal. I was expecting the weekly updates and the goal setting as well. I was glad to be able to meditate in class again, after taking 252 I actually got into listening to guided meditations on YouTube and other sites when I felt stressed or when I just needed to wind down at the end of a long day. I also expected there to be the same choose your grade system from 252 as well. This system is so different from my other classes that it's refreshing. Setting our own timelines and delivering status reports along the way gives us more room to be creative. Having to create a standardized test on programming would be ridiculous, not everyone needs to know the same thing at the same time. With our group it was actually helpful that Trevor knew about JavaScript and Cameron knew about CSS. They taught us, and each other, about both of their areas of "expertise," if we could call it that.

When I first entered the semester I told myself that I would teach myself JavaScript. That was one of my first weekly goals to accomplish. Yeah, that was a little ambitious considering all the other commitments I had this semester. I started the code academy course and I got about halfway through and lost steam and focus. Code academy is fun when there isn't anything pressing in the back of my mind that I need to do. Once it's not fun anymore then I lose interest, it's no longer a game it's a task that's taunting me. I also stopped learning it because Trevor did not need (or want) my help with the actual writing of code. I don't blame him, I'm only good for the simple tasks and that's the stuff that he already knows that he can do. Cameron really didn't want my help in CSS. Ally helped him by picking out some color schemes but other than that he was pretty good by himself as well. So my task evolved into finding something useful to do for this project.

One of my uses was to write parts of the social context. I gave it a solid start and then promptly ran out of things to write. I had found a prompt for it online and then promptly lost the website. It felt like I was just rewriting the examples of how it could be used and that wasn't useful it was just redundant. I know you said that we should be able to write several pages on why our app can be useful to society but ours seemed pretty simple to me. It creates customized workouts for people who want to workout. I know there are other ways to sell it but people aren't going to "impulse download" this thing because its amusing, they're going to download it because they were looking for an app that does what ours does. Niche market.

I was successful in finding the workout videos for all the parts of the body that are being worked out in the app. Last time I checked Trevor and Cameron hadn't been able to get the video links to work within the app, it was being sourced from some database that didn't exist. I was the one who taught Cameron how to

download GitHub. As I mentioned before I did continue Code Academy in hopes of helping with the code writing. I contributed to the brain storming process and helped with choosing the color scheme for the app. I don't necessarily approve of the name "Lift That Shit" but the guys really enjoy it so I guess it's staying. We probably won't be able to release this to the public anyways so its just for our amusement at this point.

I failed to finish JavaScript. I thought I could be helpful with the actual programming, I thought the guys would actually need my help. I was definitely wrong. Trevor was so far ahead of all us in programming (probably, you know, because he is/was a CS major) that he didn't need my help with the simple tasks, as I mentioned before. Cameron laughed when I told him I could help with CSS, so yeah. I'm sure if I sat down and worked on my own project I could figure things out, it would take me four times as long as the boys but I could do it. I just don't know if I would want to, programming isn't exactly my idea of fun. Learning on code academy can be amusing and creating something cool and useful is definitely entertaining but in the greater scheme of my use of my spare time this is not how I would choose to spend it.

My future programming plans are basically nonexistent after 341 next semester. I'm glad I have a basic understanding of how things work and how things are created. I know how many hours all the cool websites take to up keep and create and it blows me away. Pinterest is a feat of the programming gods. Tumblr uses basic html and CSS for their blogs and I can manipulate the code on those now. Maybe some day when I'm a bored house wife I'll create a blog and write about my misadventures in suburbia but for now I can't see myself using coding past graduation in May. Who knows though, I could land a job and become their new programming intern and then I'll be even more glad I took these classes.

Of course I feel more enlightened after taking this class. Honestly 95% of the classes at JMU enlighten me somehow, except for stupid gen ed classes. This class has taught me more about group work and group dynamics. One of the great things about ISAT is forcing us to work in groups and learn how to deal with people from different walks of life. It has taught me that the smallest thing, like a semi-colon in the wrong place, can set you back for weeks. Break throughs can be few and far between but when they finally happen its like finding an oasis in the desert that somehow keeps you from smashing your computer into a wall. Sometimes all it takes is for an outside perspective to look through your code and spot the mistake in half a minute. I feel enlightened but not necessarily inspired to continue with coding. I've chosen this as my third sector and I'm staying with it because it is too late to change sectors at this point but I don't really love it.

The activities in this class have not kept me from discovering what my future holds. I have absolutely no idea what I'm going to do in the future besides just apply to all the jobs I can and hope to land one that pays enough for me to not be homeless. I don't see coding in my future, I see more things like soil testing and field work rather than inside computer work. I don't think I would be happy sitting inside in front of a computer for several hours a day, I mean I do that now for fun but when I'm older I doubt I'll find the internet as entertaining. I really have no grasp on what my future will hold at all but that doesn't really bother me right now.

This style of course work does really well with me in the way that I hate being micromanaged. I like doing things at a pace that makes sense to me and this class enables me to do that. To show the contrast between ISAT classes, last spring I took Dr. Henriksen's ISAT 253, talk about a strict schedule. I love her but it was definitely a confining schedule set to a very fast pace in order to make sure that we learned *everything* we needed to in those few months. I think it made me a better student but it made me a less happy person.

I've had you as a professor twice now and I honestly don't recommend that you change a thing. Your class is a nice change of pace from everything else ISAT majors have going on. We can work on things as much as we want or as little as we want and still feel some sort of sense of accomplishment. Having room to breathe in these classes has made a difference in my semester. It allows me to allot the time that I think that I need to put into things rather than the time that the professors think I need to put into things, if that makes any sense. Honestly I just truly enjoy having freedom in course work.

What grade do I think that I deserve this semester? Well I built upon my preexisting knowledge of html that I learned in 252 and expanded my coding languages to some JavaScript. I have an understanding of how to launch a new app, how to write a social context and examples of uses. I know that it took JavaScript and html and CSS to build our app. I sourced all the videos for the app and came to class almost every day and at least one hacking session. I worked in a group to collaborate and create the idea for our workout app and helped research the idea for the app. I was the one who discovered that there is already someone out there who basically has the same idea for an app and they charge people to download it, so I was the bearer of bad news. I was a relatively useful member of the group, even though Trevor and Cameron basically put the team on their backs. I feel like I deserve an A-. I worked for the team and spent time on the project but I wasn't quite as useful as I would have liked to be. I just didn't know enough coding in the short amount of time it took the boys to almost complete the app. So yeah, an A- minus would be great, I definitely don't think I deserve a full A.

ISAT 360 End of Semester Narrative Essay

Grade to Report - A

Coming into this fall semester, I had high hopes to be able to accomplish a lot this semester in this course. I do not believe that I lived up to my full potential in ISAT 252 due to not being interested in computer programming at the beginning of the semester. I came into this semester much more interested in learning programming having had interned at Accenture last summer and realizing that I enjoyed the work that the development team did more so than I enjoyed the work that the functional team did. After deciding at towards the end of the summer that I would definitely pursue this line of work (technology consulting) and receiving job offers at the end of the summer from Accenture and Deloitte, I knew that it was time to learn some code. Not only did I enjoy it much more now than I did 3 semesters ago in ISAT 252, I knew that it would make me a much marketable in the consulting field. I have seen and heard stories of many employees in the technology consulting field that box themselves in to a functional role and do not have the ability to make the switch to a more technical role if need be, which severely limits their marketability when wanting to switch to a new project. For this reason and others, I decided that I wanted to learn much more about programming this semester.

At the beginning of the semester I feel that I did a very good job holding onto what my initial goals were in the class. I began working the first week on reading through the syllabus and reading through the different pages to become acquainted with what I would be doing this semester. The next week, I began working with Leah Wilkes and Caitlin Shipman on an idea that Caitlin came up with. We had the idea to create a web application that would allow a user to create a library of several different categories of images and switch through these images randomly, essentially producing a randomizer application. The goal of this project was to produce something more than just a simple program to create different random generators, but a platform to allow any set of images to be uploaded. It would allow people the freedom to be as creative as they wished because the app would provide a platform to build whatever they wished. This already was a pretty bold project for the three of us since none of us has much of a background in programming. To combat this we decided to create the project using python since we determined that it would be the easiest language to learn and implement. Since we could not begin programming right away, we continued to work on the social context issues and build scenarios for our project while learning on codecademy. While we worked on producing prose to explain our project goals in a larger scope, I began learning HTML/CSS on codecademy to be able to make our site look aesthetically pleasing, Caitlin began learning how to write unit tests, and Leah began setting up a development environment for which we could begin writing our code and learning how to implement the technical aspects of our final project. At this time we also began writing screen mockups of what we wanted our application to look like.

After a couple of weeks, we had all of the prose written to compose our readme file such as the reasoning behind why we wanted to create our project, the social context of our project, and the scenarios. At this point, we moved another step forward with our project as Caitlin and I began to learn Python on codecademy. This is where, in my opinion, we made the biggest mistake of our semester. Instead of trying to gain a very basic understanding in python, just enough so that we could understand code that we would find on the internet, we attempted to finish the entire python tutorial on codecademy before writing our code. This was detrimental to the timetable of our project because learning a language on codecademy is not a two week ordeal as we initially expected. In order to fully understand the code we were writing in the tutorials, it took much longer than initially expected. The last few weeks of the semester our production slowed, especially from my end. My ISAT 360 semester project quickly began to take over a lot of my extra time and my production in my other classes began to fade.

We definitely could have been more efficient this semester. If we would have done half as much on codecademy and just intertwined preexisting code on the internet, we could have had a finished product at the end of the semester. It would not have been anywhere near the product we had initially envisioned, but it would have been a product nonetheless. Seriously though, with any level of realistic expectations, even if we would have coded from the ground up after learning python, it still wouldn't have been near our initial expectations since none of us had much coding experience. I would have much preferred to have an iffy product at the end that no product whatsoever. Nonetheless, I still enjoyed learning how to more about how to code this semester so I will definitely continue learning and implementing python and HTML/CSS over winter break and next semester on my own time.

Despite this failure to produce a physical application at the end of the semester, I still feel like I learned some valuable information this semester. Writing the prose for the readme file really helped us hone in on the expectations that we would have for the hypothetical randomizer application and deciding how it would function for a user. Learning HTML/CSS and python on codecademy definitely helped me further determine that I am interested in coding and thus I hope to continue learning how to code. Writing the unit test was also an interesting way to figure out how unit tests work and what they are used for. We also hit a few snags along the way with setting up our developing environment and I was able to use some of what I have learned in ISAT 360 to help solve these issues. It was awesome to be able to implement skills that I have learned in another course to help troubleshoot issues in this course. When it came to what I actually learned from the python codecademy tutorials, I feel that I learned a lot from these about the language. Not only did I stop at just what codecademy wanted me to do, but for every single time that I had to "test my knowledge" by creating a program that used the skills I had learned in the previous section, I challenged myself by adding on additional functionality to what codecademy wanted me to do. For example, on one program to create a pig latin translator, the codecademy tutorial wanted me to just create a program that translated words into pig latin.

Their version stopped at just one attempt that would either be successful or fail based on if just letters were entered by the user. I wanted to challenge myself by allowing for an infinite number of attempts until the word was successfully translated. So, being at least a few sections away from learning how to use loops, I researched how to do this and figured out how to implement a while loop that would allow the program to continue running until the user successfully translated a word. Despite being a good way to further my knowledge by challenging myself, I probably spent too much time and effort doing this and this is one possible reason that learning python took me longer than it should have.

Again, despite not having a finished product to show for this semester, I definitely feel that I learned more in ISAT 340 than in ISAT 252. Despite a similar structure for 252 and 340, I feel like this method of unlimited freedom is much more suited for 340 than 252. Having no programming experience going into 252 I was overwhelmed with the notion of total freedom to learn how to code and build whatever I wanted. I think that that course needed more traditional learning styled more so like intro CS courses. I have no problem with JavaScript being the language to learn, but I think we should have had assignments and exercises the first 2/3 of the semester learning it and then a group semester project the last 1/3 of the semester. This would have allowed the ISAT students without coding experience the opportunity to catch up somewhat to the CS students in the class. What ended up happening is that the CS students wrote most of the code while the ISAT students without experience sat there frozen and overwhelmed and had to do more mundane tasks such as reading over the code instead of learning how to write it. I know that many students have no intentions of learning how to code and do not see themselves as ever going to have to learn it, but as a foundational course in the ISAT major, I think that it would benefit all students if the course had a more traditional instructional approach for at least the first half of the semester. The choose your own grade approach could stay in place, or the points accumulation approach, but having the traditional instructional approach for the beginning of the semester would allow those interested in the subject the opportunity to learn a foundation before then going off on their own to learn what they want to learn having the basic understanding to do so successfully. On the other hand, I feel that the nature of instruction for ISAT 340 is done fairly well. For the most part, those who choose the take this course have already decided that they are interested in this subject. Yes, there are still those students who take it to get an A and do not show up to class or do any work for it, but it is a perfect approach for those who want to further their knowledge of programming. I took much more advantage of this class than I did in 252 because I was much more interested in the topic at this point in time. A perfect example of this is the additional functionality that I wanted to build into the programs that I wrote in the codecademy tutorials. Not only did I not attempt to learn that much in 252 due to a lack of interest, but I never would have gone “above and beyond” as I felt I attempted to do in this particular example. Retrospectively, I definitely wish that I had wanted to learn more in 252 so that I could have already had a much stronger background in JavaScript so that I could

have hit the ground running this semester and had a product to present at the end of the semester. Oh well, there's no point at being bent out of shape over it, at least at this point I know that I enjoy it enough to want to learn more over winter break and over the summer! Hopefully, I can start my job at the end of this summer with a foundational background in Python in addition the HTML/CSS that I have already learned. I even aspire to learn some Java because I know from experience that it is the most common language the Accenture specializes in with respect to the federal sector of technology consulting. Too bad my interest in programming didn't develop until the summer before my senior year. If I had room in my schedule next semester (which is jam packed!) or if I had more time at JMU, I definitely would have like to take more programming courses, especially CS 149, CS 159, and more IKM courses in ISAT.

Semester Reflection

Coming into the semester, I was very excited to be taking a course in software development. For my future career I would like to go into the field of Information Technology and I was excited to learn some additional skills in a subject area that I actually have interest in. As the class began I hoped to learn how software systems are created and get some experience actually working in the subject. The class structure exceeded my expectations as it became a class primarily focused around a single project that allowed me to explore the subject through my own individual work on my own time. Beginning the project, I set a simple goal: To complete a mobile app and possibly put it onto a mobile app store. As the semester progressed my goals shifted as I found different tasks that I needed to complete, and I found the process to be more difficult than I anticipated overall.

The project that I worked on throughout the semester is an Apple mobile app developed through Xcode software. The application is called “The Alarm Challenger,” it is supposed to be an alarm clock application that makes the user complete a simple mini game or puzzle before the alarm sound can be turned off. This app is designed to force the user into a state of awareness by obliging them to use their mind right after sleep. I decided to create a native iPhone app because I have an iPhone and a Mac, which allowed me to work on it. Native apps also allow me to use the Apple standard tools in-app instead of creating them on my own from scratch. The creation of the app has taken longer than expected and I am still currently working on it and hope to continue working with it. I found the most problems with creating the app when attempting to learn the Xcode program and more importantly the Objective-C programming language that Apple apps must be written in. Objective-C is much different than languages that I have previously worked with like Visual Basic, Python, and Java. I spent most of the semester trying to learn the language and the basics to get to the point now, where I feel that I have a pretty good basic understanding of how the language works and can write simple lines of code. Despite its difficulty, I plan on continuing to work with the language to better understand it and add to my knowledge as I have already begun learning and I don’t want to give it up now.

The extra time spent learning of the basics of Xcode threw me off my original goal and caused my inability to complete the app this semester, but I feel that I have still learned a lot this semester through this course and I really value the time that I

have spent working on this project. As previously stated, I have plans to look into taking further coursework and careers in software development/engineering after my experience with this course as I feel that it has been a great introductory course for me in the subject.

As for the style of the course, I really enjoyed the hands-off structure. I recently transferred into the ISAT major from the College of Business this semester and I have found the major to be incredible so far and this course is a major contributor for that. Every course in the major that I have taken so far really stresses creativity and real world application, and none of my classes have stressed these principles more than ISAT 340. Though at the beginning of the semester it took me a little while to get used to the idea of working on a project individually without worrying about deadlines and grades, I really have enjoyed the experience. I feel that it has freed my mind to think in a different, more inventive way as opposed to the extremely goal-oriented style of the college of business at JMU. I currently find myself thinking of new ways to be innovative and new applications and websites to possibly work on some day, and I can attribute that way of thinking to this course. If I were to take the class again I would recommend for you to keep it the same, I would only change my approach to the project so that I could complete it within the semester and start something new right afterwards.

After taking this course, I am even more excited for IT and the IKM concentration in ISAT and I may potentially look into more Software systems careers going forward. As for my grade in the course, for the amount of work ethic put toward the project even without any direct pressure to do so, for the time spent toward its completion and in gaining new knowledge and a broader perspective out of the course, I would like to receive an A this semester. I really appreciate the semester that I have experienced and I hope to take more classes with you in my future semesters at JMU. Thank You Dr. Benton.

Katie Kelly
ISAT 340 End of Semester Narrative
Dr. Morgan Benton

Coming into this class, I knew programming wasn't something I could see myself perusing a career in, however, I found it interesting and wanted to learn more about it. So one of my main goals for this class was not to become a master programmer or coder, but instead just do learn and understand more about programming and computers in general. One unofficial goal I set for myself is that I wanted to be able to listen to what Paul, Paulo and other people who are really into the field and understand a good part of what they were saying, even if I didn't exactly know how to do it myself. Kind of like how I took Spanish in high school and can understand enough Spanish to understand the girl I tutor who is from Spain. This kind of goes along with what I'm finding out ISAT trains us to be: not necessarily specialists in one field, but know enough about a lot of fields that we can understand what is going on and find a specialist in the field to help.

Going along with goals I set for myself, I came into class with a clear idea of what I wanted to create, a database based management systems for student organizations on campus to better keep track of their members and events. Being involved in a large organization, a lot of things get lost in the shuffle and a lot of events go unnoticed until a few hours before when girls start frantically posting on our Facebook wall reminding us to show up to these events that most people didn't know were even going on. Since I had an idea, I started to form a team. I talked to Mickey about my idea this summer and she expressed interest in it, so we decided to tag team it. We realized that we didn't know enough about databases to tackle our goal, so we recruited Paul to be on our team as well. We also took on Joe.

Mickey and I both took the same approach to this course, we just wanted to learn a lot of programming, databases, and basically how to apply and integrate all of this stuff we have learned on Codecademy into a working website. Paul wanted us to produce a functioning product at the end of the semester and assured us that it would be possible, so this became our new goal. We have a finished product now at the end of the semester, however I don't feel as successful as I should since I personally did not do any of the coding for the actual project.

When we embarked on the project, we started off strong. I had created a GitHub account, wrote a little blurb out our project and what we wanted to do, and had made several versions of mock up for the website. I had also begun completing the PHP courses on Codecademy. In these things, I feel like I was successful. I can't code in PHP perfectly from memory, but when Paul shows me his code I can understand what it is doing and why it was there. I also feel like I excelled and really enjoyed making the screen mockups. It was cool to see something go from an idea in my head to a design on paper. I installed all the programs necessary (which was wayyy more than I anticipated) to begin coding the program.

One way that I feel like a failed was in initiating communication between group members. I put in a lot of effort to set up meetings, I sent out emails, group texts and doodle polls to try to set up a time that we could all meet. Between the four of us, there seemed to be no consistent time. In addition, no one would ever really respond to my emails, texts or doodle polls, which was very frustrating. Part of this because some group members had little to no motivation to work on the project. One thing I realized this semester, not with just this group and class, but all my other groups and classes, is that I am kind of a push over and have a hard time telling people that I don't think they are living up to their end of the bargain. There isn't much I can do to make someone respond to my emails, but I can let them know in class the next day that I am disappointed in them for not answering the and wish they would pay more attention to it next time. In the future, I will try to confront group members when they aren't delivering what they promised to deliver and take action.

Another way that I feel that I failed this semester was that I didn't actually make any of the code for our project. Like I mentioned before, there were some communication issues in the group. I knew, knowing Paul, that we would want to do our whole project for us and I kept telling him to let me if he needed help or if I could do anything and he kept saying he didn't need anything and to just continue working on PHP and CSS and he would let me know when he needed help. Just like I knew he would, he showed up to class one day with our website and database work done saying he did the whole thing the night before. Typical Paul. I wish I could have helped out and contributed, but Paul did spend a lot of time with me going over what he did and how everything works, which I really liked learning about. Again, I just need to be more assertive. Next time I should do some research and just start the project first and let the group know what I am doing.

In regards to the JMU mission statement to produce educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives, I feel like I have learned a lot this semester about programming, but also about how I function in a group. Like I said earlier, being an ISAT major means know who to ask when you need some help, and I think this semester (with this class and my other classes) I'm starting to realize the power of networking and connections. I also learned that I am good at a more functional role in groups, like delegating tasks and keeping up with our planned timeline. I have been thinking about this a lot recently, since I originally wanted a more "solo" career doing lab work, and now I'm thinking that I may want to pivot into a more collaborative field and help manage people. If this is something I do want to pursue, then this class helped me learn about my leadership and learning styles as well as my weaknesses. Additionally, this helps me narrow down what kind of Masters degree I might want to obtain. I was originally thinking something in microbiology, but now I am thinking more along the lines of environmental management, or possibly an MBA. I'm not sure that I would say that I feel more educated on how to solve problems, but after this semester, I definitely feel more confident in my ability to solve problems. I have started to notice that I am also

more motivated than I thought I was and I think also instills some confidence in me because I know what ever problem I'm faced with, I'm going to give it my all.

This style of course work definitely has its pros and cons. I really appreciated the lenient structure earlier this semester when I was totally buried in ISAT 253 labs and my partner, Kelsey, was gone four days a week for golf tournaments. I had to put a lot more time in that class while golf was in season because I ended up doing a lot of the labs on my own while Kelsey was away. Additionally, my professor had me do all the labs twice because Kelsey missed lab for her tournaments; once at the regular class time so I wouldn't miss class, and again later in the week with Kelsey. With all this extra time I had to put in during those two months, it was nice not to have to stay up any later at night worrying about this class. One con to this style is that not everyone is motivated to get work done. I would classify myself as being a medium amount of motivated to complete work for this class- I'm not about to pull an all-nighter, but I would like to meet up with my group to get some work done. The problem lies in the fact that some group members become totally unmotivated and it becomes hard to get them to come to class or meet up. It is a little frustrating to take someone into your group, have them do nothing, and then have them put their name on the project. I will admit that at the end of the semester, I just gave up communicating to some of my group and just did my own thing.

I really liked how you did the course this year in which people got to choose whether they got to pick their own grade, or complete labs to gain points to determine their grade. I picked to choose my own grade, but because I knew that I picked to choose my own grade instead of that being the default, I feel like I was more motivated to get stuff done because it was more of a reflection on me. I'm not sure if other students feel this way, but even though this structure was the exact same as 252, I like it a lot more that we got to decide and pick how we would be evaluated. With all this being said, I would like you to report an A to the registrar for this class. I had some ups and downs this semester, but I had a really fun time. Thanks for always being there, putting me in a good mood, and reminding me not to take life so serious ☺

Brian LEE

F 14

ISAT 340 Narrative Essay

When I enrolled in this course my expectations were along the lines of what I personally experienced during my enrollment in ISAT 252 with Professor Benton. During the length of that course we were held in my opinion more accountable for things like attendance and actual work. I liked that we were immediately placed into very small groups and would be responsible for ensuring that we knew our group mates situations for absences and other things of that nature. Now coming into the beginning of this course I began to realize that the experience of 252 was not carried over into 340. I do like the freedom of the course but for me it was my own shortcomings that lead me to virtually become stagnant in the production of any tangible product. As time went by I began to miss class regularly without any real reason besides my own laziness. I am kicking myself for that and have decided to focus on fixing that personal issue of mine. The skills obtainable during enrollment in this course would be very useful once I graduate and I've learned that first hand as I search for my first job post-graduation.

So expectations, I did expect it to be laid back and relaxed but not to the degree that it actually was. I thought I would gain a little bit more knowledge about programming and coding and fully knew that the level of knowledge gained would be directly linked to my own participation. I expected the pick your own grade and the teaching methodology that interests me and is so different from anything else I've ever experienced. What I should've focused on were the expectations I had for myself during this course. I gave myself very little expectations and it shows because I really haven't accomplished anything while taking this course and I feel strongly that it is my fault and asks myself, "how come I let that happen?"

Learning outcomes I set for myself during this course were obtainable in my mind at the beginning when I had the whole semester ahead of me. I really just wanted to create a multiplatform mobile application. I had no idea what the purpose of it would be or its function I just knew that I wanted to do it. But my lack of commitment and motivation caused me to miss that mark and in the end I failed myself.

In the beginning a classmate and I decided to join forces and develop a website for thermodynamics that takes the humungous binder of data needed for the complex problems and streamline it into a website that was user friendly and made looking up information related to the thermo course quicker and less painful. I have never taken thermo and never will so my optimism to contribute wasn't there and I sensed a dismal level of creativity in this project and quickly decided that I didn't want to be a part of it.

After this I tried thinking of something to do but didn't really spend a lot of time assessing a problem I experience and potential solutions applicable to this course. As I continued my job search an exciting opportunity arose for me to take part in a final interview at the company's headquarters, the position was application development and it looked very promising. I started working on setting up a development platform to create a multiplatform mobile application using Cordova. I was really motivated and excited to create something and I really wanted to nail the job. After interviewing which was all behavior with no technical questions what so ever I thought I did well. Unfortunately I was not

considered for the position and I was extremely disappointed. After the failure I fell right back into my original rut and this is where I remained for the remainder of the course. Initially I never said to myself "Oh, I just won't do anything because I don't care" because I really don't view myself as being that kind of person. But in the end that is the way I look and it sucks, I blame myself. Every week I felt that I could put off everything pertaining to this course and just pick it up the following week. That mindset was completely wrong. This class started on the back burner and never gained priority.

I've can confidently say that this course has been a personal learning experience in the enlightenment of my own individuality and how I manage my time and resources. I feel that I've been programmed by the education system to basically do as I'm told and complete assignments before their due dates and study material that will be on quizzes and exams. I fall victim to essentially being an academic robot and doing what is required to pass a course. ISAT 340 is a completely different experience and I truly feel inspired by the educational outlook this course provides. However I realize fully now that it takes personal motivation and dedication to achieve any level of success in a course of this variety. I am a firm believer in the saying you get out what you put in, and it's obvious in this course that nothing was "put in" essentially.

So my plan is simple, in the future and for the rest of my life I really need to think long and hard at the beginning of an opportunity whether it is a college course of some kind or a career activity and determine what the opportunity means for me and how do I want to take advantage of it. After through contemplation not only do I need to set realistic short and long term goals I need to lay out a baseline plan for accomplishing those goals. I'm not saying I need to plan out every second of every day but if I can wake up and improve upon myself and my life each and every day then I will go to sleep with a sense of purpose and accomplishment that can be rewarding. Of course there will be cheat days that have literally no accomplishment but those days are needed for me to recharge my batteries and enjoy my accomplishments. So this plan isn't really a hardcore I need to start doing this or that, this plan is essentially a frame of mind that I need to get into. It won't be an easy task but as long as I really deeply want to change then no obstacle is too cumbersome to negotiate.

JMU's mission statement, this entire essay and its contents are a pretty direct example of how JMU has affected my demeanor and ability to intelligently express myself. I certainly don't feel less educated or enlightened, I in a sense did become overwhelmingly more enlightened about my abilities and how I directly determine my gain of knowledge. I did gain a minuscule amount of knowledge of coding during this course but the real opportunity for growth was squashed by my personal lack of motivation and determination. I do tend to try my best to view every failure as a golden opportunity to learn something, I like to think of it as getting right back up on the horse and moving on. I've had my fair share of failures and have learned from some, however there are instances that leave me disappointed and I focus on the actions that lead me to a dismal conclusion, without paying attention to the fact that those particular decisions will become easier in the future because of the experience.

In conclusion for this course I can say that this style of course was great but it didn't necessarily work out great for me, but that is all my own fault and no one else's. I'd take it again in a heartbeat but would approach it completely different. I think that the professor doesn't need to change a thing about

the course. The students myself included need to change I plan on using this experience to better myself and how I will handle opportunities for the rest of my life. So even though I really didn't do anything concrete during the course of this class I do feel as if I've come to a realization that will stick with me forever. I need to seriously focus on how I manage my time and what do I want out of an opportunity and how I can achieve my goals.

Finally, I come to what grade I request be reported to the registrar. I am requesting an A because honestly my GPA could use it, but more so because even with my shortcomings I really do feel that I walked away from this course with a better understanding of myself and my capabilities. I think I know now what I need to do to become a better student and a more enlightened citizen that will live a meaningful and productive life.

ISAT340 Semester Narrative

12/9/2014

Takaki Akiyama

After I took several courses from ISAT, I felt that want to take more class with a developing the project. I know that Dr. Benton's class will be what I expected so I am happy with that. I learned Javascript and css for webpage project last year so I planned to learn and create other than web service. But one thing I did worst this semester is, changed my plan three times.

First goal I set is that create android app for identify how many people at U-REC in real time. I formed team with Chris in our class, but we give up on creating this app because both of us cannot get enough response back from person who taking care of U-REC computing system. Afterwards, we tried to create another android app for JMU. I planned app for similar function with U-REC identifier. The target for new plan is computing lab in JMU because I worked for computer lab help desk this semester and thought it will be easier to get response back from my boss. However, Chris thought he had better idea and do not want to create app that have similar information that you can find from JMU computing lab homepage. I still want to make it to practice my skill for develop android app, so we separate the team and decide to work individually. The process for this project went well. I talk to my boss, Ms. Bridget Moyer, for learn how JMU's computing system works (what are the Images and how that Images are using at JMU computing lab), and what service/application is using at computing lab home page to keep track which computer is in use. The PowerPoint for presentation are created, and she agreed that she will help me if I need any information or application require for my project. However like I said at first, this project did not go through until end.

The device that fascinated me and changed my mind called Oculus Rift. One of my friends from another class I am taking bought trial version and developer kit for Oculus Rift. It is the Virtual Reality head mount display developed by Oculus VR. First impression I saw this is just adding extra monitor on head mount display.

That thought changed one eighty degrees after my friend let me to try Oculus Rift and play the demo game. The head mount display not only cut other visual from real but also make me dive into virtual world. Oculus Rift also has the system that when you move your head the screen will follow you and able show three sixty degree of virtual world.

After tryout of Oculus Rift, my friend ask me to want join the project of create a virtual classroom for people who have difficulty of go to school and take the class. I thought carefully, and decided to work on this Oculus Rift project because I interested more on learning new technology and try developing something by myself. We focused on why we want to create 3D modeling virtual classroom first. To develop product, we must let user to use it so I created several case scenario. My friend thought a case scenario for people who have physical difficulty to go to school and take the class. I focused on other vision, which is making "study" to "game". Bring those students who does not like go to school because of communication issue and make them study more fun. I planned this because there are more students in Japan who do not want go to school because of communication issue (especially because of burry) and in worst case, they will not get out from their room for escapism. The virtual class will help them communication more because there will be time for think if you chat with your friends through typing. In addition, giving them 3D model and visualize what they are doing will be more effective than just getting lecture from Skype or any other chatting application because some people will memorize and learn material from visual rather than listening to lecture.

We done all of planning and research about online classroom at the end of semester. There are many problems regarding to online course especially cheating. People are easily to cheat because administrator only can verify that person by limited information. If one student log-in to their account, then let other student to take exam, the password verifying will not work. Our plan to avoid this are use biometric authentication such as retina scan from Oculus Rift or let web camera to stream students' testing environment. This system wills also helping that if students not focus on class. If student take off the Oculus Rift itself or watching something other than course material teacher will notify it. Those plans are all included in PowerPoint and we also made a prototype of 3D model class room. It

only contains single table yet but it includes several material we need for class (note, text book, white board, and chatting tool). You will notify the big difference when you wear the Oculus Rift and try. Higher place will feel higher, larger object will

I feel it was successful on learning a new technology and had a wide knowledge about online-virtualized class. To plan a new application with new technology requires lot of learning about that technology. I read both English and Japanese document about Oculus Rift and how it works especially how Oculus Rift and other head mount display are different. This new challenge gave me more practice on learning and planning what you have not done at all. I know this type of situation always happens in real world after you start work.

I feel I did not do well this semester as compare to last semester because I had lots of absent in class and changed my project plan twice. It was tough year for me this semester but I should focus more on the course so might able to done more part in my project. The largest failure I made is that time management did not go well. I tried to take easy class first and pushed many hard courses at the end even I have to apply for jobs. This semester I had two 400 courses in my CS major and one of them are the toughest one (CS450 Operating Systems). The programming assignment for that course requires lots of time to read, code, and debug. What I should do next time when I encounter situation like this semester, I should quit some work and focus important work first. For this semester, I should not work as computer lab assistant with five shifts.

I feel I am more educated after talk to my boss for learns about computer lab systems in JMU, study and plan the application for Oculus Rift, and realize I need practice more time management skill. My activities I had this semester contributed from my knowing myself better grasp on what I want to do in future. I want to be a software engineer to create more apps that useful for everyone and help people that cannot accomplish his/her goal because of certain block. If I take this class again, I would recommend do same way.

Thank you so much for this semester again!

Takaki Akiyama

Final Grade

In overall, I would like to give B+ to myself for focusing on class and had effort on learning the material. I had lots of progress on my project during this busy semester but had many absence of class and changed my project twice.

Expectations

I didn't really have any expectations coming into the class. I had heard great things about you; however, not anything in particular about ISAT 340. I did not know until I read the email you sent out before school started that the objective of this class is to create a website. I thought I had been done with programming. The previous programming class was not the best experience.

Learning Goals

Even though I had had a bad experience, I wanted to still get my hands dirty and give it another shot. This class was a better environment and made programming seem like more fun. By the end of the semester I had wanted to learn how to create a website.

The Evolution of My Goals

By the sixth week, my group had just solidified a problem statement and a rough draft for a system analysis. This made me acknowledge that creating a website involves a lot of planning beforehand and that my goal for the end of the semester began to change. By the end of approximately the tenth week, I decided my goal was to learn the programming that is necessary to begin creating a website. Since we had decided to create a website rather than a web app, we needed to learn PHP.

Success

By the end of this semester I can say that I have learned almost all of PHP under code academy and so my second goal was will hopefully be fulfilled after the first week of exam weeks. This will allow me in the future to be able to continue the farther goal of creating a website for ISAT students in need of course guidance. We were also able to concrete an idea, sketch out what the website would look like, and create scenarios. This makes me feel accomplished although it would have been awesome to have been able to have created a

website by the end of the semester. This doesn't stop me; however, from wanting to complete it later.

Distractions

I did enjoy the fact that there were no true obligations to this class; however, in a student's mind that is attempting to apply to grad school, thermodynamics clouded the reasoning for education. I do feel more educated after this class; however, I wish I had devoted more time to this class than I did.

Differences

I like this style of course work; however, I wish there was more teaching in the classroom such as stuff for programming. An example would be if a student was having a problem with his program and he needed help. Rather than cater directly to that student, I think all of the students should be involved in case we ever encountered the same problem.

Grade

I believe that from all of the above statements I should receive an A. Although I had to reorganize my goals, it is a real life scenario that can happen. I plan on completing my final goal and so I believe I deserve this grade and I hope to finish my website in the future.

Written Work

Problem Statement:

The ISAT major is such a diverse major that it is often difficult to figure out what classes to take, where we can get help if needed in a class, know if you have made the requirements to be in an ISAT major, and what future careers people that have graduated from an ISAT major have gotten. The website that we would like to create incorporates all of this along with a location where you can plug in your classes to see if you will be able to graduate on time due to the large number of people that come into the ISAT major as sophomores and juniors. This website will contain more in depth descriptions for the sectors along with the 400 level classes which will ease the decision in which path to take along with what classes to take. With the help of Paul Henriksen and our academic advisor, the site will also include what career paths have been taken before with the specific concentrations along with

resume help and packets. This will improve our alumni network and will better prepare the ISAT students for future internships and careers. This website will also include information for the ISAT Honor Society and when the tutoring hours are and class location for the week so students are easily able to seek help if need be. This website is meant to be the go to place for any ISAT questions and help to better specify what one wants to do with an ISAT major.

ISAT 340 Social Context Analysis:

Needs broader scope and more sources to support it.

Ideas: Career/Course planning, reducing stress during scheduling time

ISAT is a tricky major to have a firm grasp on. With a broad range of concentrations and sectors, there are endless possibilities as to what path a student can follow. The current ISAT program website does not do a good enough job of describing the major, the requirements, and lacks explanations and course descriptions. The program claims to have a wide alumni network, however it is not easily accessed. Our goal is to build a website that will improve upon these issues.

This new website would be a tremendous help in scheduling classes. Having a road map through ISAT displayed for you would allow students to have more free time, by allowing them to access information that would previously require a meeting with an advisor.

Course guides would also improve upon the number of students who would graduate on time. With many students transferring into the major their Sophomore or Junior year, the possibility of graduating from the ISAT program while only doing four years of undergrad becomes less and less likely. The website might give students a better chance at graduating on time. Many students end up completing some of the requirements of the ISAT department with classes like statistics as MATH220 but end up taking ISAT251 anyway. The new and improved website would avoid that ambiguity, leading to fewer students taking unnecessary classes. With the ability to display exactly what courses and requirements are needed of each student the JMU's four year graduation rates would increase. The ability to graduate in four years would mean students would average paying less tuition to receive an undergraduate degree and hopefully have fewer loans when coming out of school.

Another difficulty is how specified the ISAT major classes are. If you are an ISAT major, you are most likely only taking ISAT classes rather than with other majors that have generalized classes such as math or chemistry as a basis. This creates the problem when an ISAT student doesn't understand the homework they are doing. They can ask other students and teachers; however, other departments have a center where they are able to get help on homework. ISAT actually has this within our ISAT Honor Society where they give tutoring hours twice a week; however, most students do not know about it. This new website will be a site where the ISAT Honor Society can post these hours and room number along with any other events with the organization. This will help ISAT students to find where they are able to get help on material, which will allow them to understand it better with the comfort of being able to talk to peers rather than professors.

The final and main problem our website will acknowledge is what an ISAT student wants to get out of the ISAT major. It is difficult to decide what sectors to take and even more difficult which ones to concentrate in. The new website will include a more in depth description on the sectors along with what jobs people have gotten with the sectors they had chosen. Also, there will be more information on each 400 level class. This will help students to decide which concentrations they want to choose based on what career they can see themselves doing along with what 400 level classes within their concentration will allow them to accomplish that.

Scenarios: Ricky Rizzo- Will I graduate on time?

Garret is a second year student at JMU. He has been studying business for two semesters now but has found out that it is not for him. He has heard great things about the ISAT program and they have sparked his interest. He decides to take a look at the new ISAT course guide. He logs onto the website and selects the "Transferring? Find Your Way" function. Garrett is asked to enter in each of the individual courses he has already taken and passed at JMU. Once entered, Garret will be displayed with a list of prerequisite courses that all ISAT majors must take, however repeats of the same course matter are removed (Such as MATH220 and ISAT251). With this function he is shown a list of the various concentrations and sectors he will be exploring in ISAT. At the top of the page there is a blurb written on how the ISAT program works with choosing three sectors and a concentration in which you will do a senior project. Energy sparks his interest so he selects

the energy concentration tab. He is then brought to a page that displays what courses he will need to take, when to take them, and a detailed course description of what he will be learning in each one.

Gregory Baker- Which sector is best for my interests?

Kyle is an incoming freshman looking to make a choice for his major and is strongly considering ISAT among other majors. He is still unsure of ISAT as he doesn't really know what he will be learning and what kinds of paths he can take with ISAT. He hears from a friend about the new ISAT course guide that has information about the program. He finds the page and looks through the various concentrations and classes available. He then uses the schedule planner to map out his first few semesters and see what he will be learning for his first years. While looking into this he sees he can learn about both environment and programming and sees what type of jobs past ISAT graduates have gotten from these concentrations. He chooses to concentrate in these sectors along with help from the website he was able to select which 400 level classes would best suit him.

Alissa Good- Where can I get help on my homework?

Sally a freshman is taking GISAT 151 and is having difficulty in the class since she did not have very good math teachers in high school. She wants to get help but most of her classmates are just as confused as she is and she is a little scared of the professor to ask for help. She then hears from another student that the ISAT Honor Society gives tutoring help and that the new ISAT course guide updates every week where the tutoring sessions are and when. She looked on the website and was easily able to find where she needed to go. She was able to get help from her peers in a comfortable environment and she was able to understand the material a lot better.

Mickey Harding

ISAT 340 Final Essay

Morgan Benton

December 6, 2014

Coming into this class, I was filled with renewed self-motivation after a long summer away from JMU. I was determined to learn a coding language so well that I was completely comfortable and familiar with it. Over the summer, I had begun reading and taking notes of an online Python textbook that my tech savvy friend had sent to me, which made me feel a little ahead of the game, although I wasn't very far into it. For this class, I had a goal to familiarize myself with all of the aspects associated with programming, such as Github and other software that can make writing code easier in a multitude of ways. Along with that, Katie Kelly and I had a goal to create a project to help us learn and understand programming, no matter how simple the project may be.

During our time studying abroad in Malta, Katie and I were talking about how the use of Google Drive by our sorority for events such as bus sign-ups were being anonymously changed and then forgotten about, creating chaos. So we thought of a possible app or website that we called "ManageMyPeeps," which would be a database that allows members of organizations to sign up for events and activities and receive alerts through email periodically until the event. We knew it was pretty simple and possibly already in existence, but we wanted to create it to help us learn.

Over the course of the semester, my goals did evolve. Katie Kelly and I had Joe and Paul join our group, and Paul had higher aspirations for our simple project that we had intended it to be, which I thought was great! My group members also wanted to complete the project using PHP and JavaScript, meaning my work over the summer learning Python would not help me in class, and my goal to learn Python would have to be put aside for a bit. So with that, I created a goal to finish codecademy for JavaScript to be able to help with our group project. I also ended up buying the book "Programming for Dummies," just for kicks in hopes that it might be helpful in the conceptual aspect of programming. So I had a new goal to read that book as well.

I feel that I was successful in this class in a number of ways. To begin, I have almost completed the Javascript codecademy tutorial, I have completed an online Git Immersion tutorial, and gotten sufficiently farther in reading and taking notes on my two aforementioned books. Another way that I feel I was

successful was how I surfed the internet for hours upon hours just reading about so many aspects of programming; I found websites that stressed teaching code, that had ratings and reviews on the software, languages, and books that are most highly recommended for use. This led me to read up on the jobs that correspond to computer programming, and I even followed a bunch of online companies on twitter that focus on teaching programming. This information helped me to realize the immense realm that programming dictates in our world.

As for the project that I proposed, it came out great. My mock drawings and proposed problem statements corresponded well to the final product. I feel part of this project was a failure for me because I don't believe I made a sufficient contribution. A couple of my group members and I were so far behind in learning the chosen language for the project, it left a small time period for actually creating it. Although our team member Paul was most highly versed in the languages, and this helped because he was able to teach us a lot through the parts of the project he created, which was fantastic.

I have learned from this failure that I want to feel informed and knowledgeable about a certain concept or piece of information before I try to implement it into any sort of new idea. I have realized that when I feel capable of something, I am more likely to follow through with it. In the future, I want to be able to look at any sort of situation and break down the steps needed to accomplish whatever I am trying to accomplish. I feel like this would cause me to view the project as less daunting, and this is why I spent most of the semester on codecademy and reading different materials to better my understanding of the language I wanted to learn.

In accordance to JMU's Mission Statement to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives," I believe that my successes in this class have left me much more enlightened and educated than when it first began. Throughout all of this overwhelming information I came upon during my hours researching programming, I realized how fast technology is moving. Technology is moving and improving faster than it ever has, continuously creating new knowledge to be learned and shared. This class has made me realize and appreciate the immense presence technology has in our lives today. And I am not talking about Instagram or how people are now glued to their iPhones; I am talking about the opportunities technology is continuously creating, for innovation and ideas that people had once never even fathomed.

Throughout this class, I realized that I believe computer science to be a very important part of our present-day world, especially in the workforce. Although I do not want to pursue a career in solely programming, I do want to learn as much about it as I can so that I am well informed in my future job. It is very intriguing to me. As for my future, I am still not sure what I want to do. I feel

that a data analyst would be an enriching occupation to aspire to, but I want a career that has something to do with the sustainability and corporate responsibility of a company, which would give my job meaning, and make me feel like I am making a difference in the world.

For this class, I would recommend that instead of weekly evaluations that have certain questions, we should have journal entries to do each week. Then, each student would be able to personalize their goals much more than a survey each week. I believe that given free-reign to create any project we desire is a great way to boost self motivation, however I think some people feel that they do not know where to begin and that might be what contributes to the lack of end products at the end of the semester. I look at it this way: one of my hobbies is movie editing. If I were in a movie editing class with the same outlook as this class, I would be ecstatic that I would be able to create my own project, because I know how my movie editing software works. But with programming, some people may not be at a high enough level to be able to handle the free-reign they are given in this class. That concept is perhaps why this style of coursework does not work for everyone, but I like the fact that we are given labs to refer to and complete, so perhaps an increase in that sort of course material would help students know where to begin in their learning experience.

I believe that I deserve an A in this class. My long consecutive hours spent on codcademy (it takes a while for me to get “in the zone”) and tedious reading of numerous books and websites have taught me many different aspects about programming, along with the help and guidance from my peers. I keep a notebook of my notes for each book, article, or topic I find so that all my findings are consolidated in one place, for me to refer back to when I need. I talked to numerous of my peers in other classes to get their feedback and opinions on certain programs and their applications. Paul was also an enormous amount of help to me and my group, and I am thankful for that. This class taught me to create my own motivation to learn in ways that would not only benefit me, but keep my interest peaked as well, which is what I believe to be one of the biggest components in successful learning.

ISAT 340: Narrative Essay

I found this class to be a refreshing take on the usual classroom experience. On the first day, students enrolled in the class seemed prepared to endure the tedious mental marathon associated with almost any college class. They, as I did, had prior expectations drawn from our experiences in previous classes. Assignments, quizzes, exams, formal presentations, and projects represent the core methods of grading in a typical educational system. However, in this class, the typical standards of education are considered crutches which inhibit a student's true potential. The ability to take risks in class appeals to my personality and strengthens my confidence in what I can accomplish. Because my goals tend to overreach, I have to remind myself to stay within a reasonable parameter, at least until I have a decent grasp on the reality of the task at hand.

Originally, I sought to gain a core understanding of computer programming and mobile application coding. Unfortunately, the experience needed to gain this core understanding far outweighs the actual time allotted in one semester. Once this realization hit me, I adjusted my goals to fit within the time span given. Instead of seeking a core understanding, I chose to settle for a basic understanding which focused mainly on learning simple coding techniques and programming methods. I also decided to attempt the task of creating an application called HiTone Mobile Décor. The idea morphed many times throughout the semester, but stayed relatively consistent in dealing with photos and local artisans. The final concept consisted of a multi-platform mobile application which presented categories of photographs taken and uploaded by people in the local area. These photographs are meant to be fitted onto any android or apple device's home-screen for display purposes. Setting up the development environment was the most challenging of tasks presented. The process consisted of downloading several programs designed to perform different functions within the operating system. GitBash allowed me to install and run specific programs such as Apache Ant and Cordova, the multi-platform system which enabled development of my mobile application. The Android Virtual Device and SDK Manager allowed the creation of my application and JQuery mobile was used to design themes to apply to the AVD project. I feel I was successful in designing the application layout using basic html and Sublime code editor. I was able to design a theme for HiTone and manipulate html in Sublime to establish a layout for the application. I failed to succeed in finishing the application. There were many small coding errors with which I did not have the time to pick out and correct. Given more time, I believe I could clean up my coding and produce an application that actually works well. I did not get to the part of the design with setting up a member account and allowing members to upload their own photographs.

More experience is needed to achieve this task. Learning computer programming is like a mountain in that it takes an intense amount of work to reach the top, or establish a core understanding, but after this has been reached, the following process becomes much easier. Almost like learning a foreign language, coding is just something that comes through experience.

JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." I feel more educated and enlightened in that I feel inclined to continue my education in computer programming. I've only just begun and would like to continue "climbing the mountain" until I can code in confidence. The projects and tutorials I worked on this semester have given me a good understanding of the basics needed to further my experience. I don't expect to use computer programming skills very often in my job, but I want to have a good background in case my expectations are completely wrong. The unique style of coursework worked very well for my personality, since I am self-motivated and curious to learn. I appreciated the nearly private tutoring lessons which I can attribute to the majority of students not showing up. I feel I took advantage of having one-on-one contact with the professor. Had students regularly shown up to class, I would have not learned as much. This teaching style is a good way to weed out students who don't particularly care about learning programming and instead allows more opportunity for students who do care to learn. The only improvement I can recommend would be a more foundational approach to programming. I knew little to nothing about programming and coding at first, making it hard to get started on the mobile application project. Tutorials online are helpful, but learning through exercises would have been more useful for me. I think the style of grading however, should remain the same. I like to think that people who choose to learn programming have an easy access key to education just through showing up and taking risks.

I whole-heartily believe I deserve an A in ISAT 340, simply because I took the time to show up to class and learn the material. I gained an appreciation for the subject through creating my mobile application. I did not finish my overall goal of completing HiTone, but achieved a level of satisfaction knowing I completed more than the majority of my class. There were several class periods where I stayed past the end of class time to figure out coding issues and learn new concepts. The dedication I put forth is worth a good grade, especially in an 8 AM course. I am by no means a morning person, but the commitment I felt towards my education forced me to get out of bed and get to class. Also, college classes are expensive and useful. I see no point in missing out on what could be and was a great experience! I'm very glad I had the opportunity to attend ISAT 340 this semester. I am confident in my abilities to create a foundational application, which is a very useful skill in our technology-driven world. There is more to learn, but I have only just begun!

Leah Wilkes
December 8, 2014
ISAT 340
Final paper

My expectations for ISAT 340 were to continue my knowledge in computer programming, which were extremely beginner level and to grow from learning experiences, not only as a student but also as a human being. I appreciate how your classes are designed so that skills are learned in the context of projects and that ideally we can produce something and understand what it takes to complete something from start to finish.

Therefore, I expected to be able to produce a set project or final assignment at the end of the course. Another expectation I had for this class is the process of setting goals, like we had also done in ISAT 252. I appreciate this aspect of class because I benefit from this and am held accountable from setting goals for myself in and out of class. I realize I don't need the weekly surveys to make myself set goals but doing them for class helps make me do them for my own personal use as well.

Another expectation I had for this course was the meditation at the beginning of class. I thoroughly enjoyed this in ISAT 252 and appreciated this for the first couple weeks of class and was disappointed when we stopped practicing this exercise halfway through the semester. Another expectation I had for this class was to make friends, which I feel I have successfully done. Although not a large number of people came to our class, I felt that I became closer friends with Caitlin and Brandon (my teammates) and even got to know Katie, Justin, and Paul a little bit better. I find it disappointing when I have classes where my peers (and sometimes myself) have the mindset of only being in the classroom room to hear the professor and not having any human interaction with the people sitting around them. I appreciate how through conversations in this class I have started to try and be more conscious and aware of when I need to open my eyes to the world and people around me.

When thinking about my goals for this semester specifically for this class first, I feel that I had to keep reminding myself that although I was in the same class as certain people as Justin and Paul, that did not mean I was expected to produce the same level work as them. I had to keep reminding myself of this because my only experience with computer programming is ISAT 252, which I took two years ago. Therefore, my learning goals are not the same other people's in class but I like I said I had to keep reminding myself that was ok, and especially that this class was designed to have a variety of different skill levels of students. Some of my learning goals for the semester (evolved over the course of the semester):

1. Produce a project for ISAT 340
2. Begin to learn Python
3. Use Django for the project
4. Implementing code we found
5. Meet new friends in classes
6. Work on ISAT senior project and meet with advisor
7. Improve how I balance my time (plan better)

Over the course of the semester my goals absolutely evolved! I think they became more realistic, especially in regards to our project goals we realized what was too big or too broad for us. With Caitlin and I's only background being ISAT 252 and Brandon having a little more background I think our project was just too advanced or we just needed to ask for more help. I appreciate how my team was willing to set such a high goal for us though.

Although our team hit a lot of roadblocks and were not able to complete some of goals, therefore we did not produce a final project I still feel successful in thinking of where I started in this semester in how I basically knew nothing. I think our team still learned a lot and did a great job of working as a unit in how we communicated, delegated tasks, and discussed each others talents and struggles to try and understand who was best qualified for which tasks.

Looking back at the semester, I feel successful also in the amount of time I came to class. Which may sound odd compared to other classes but I think this shows my commitment to the class and to my group. And I knew that I would get far more done in class where I had Morgan and Paul and teammates to ask for help than working alone at the library.

This semester, I also felt successful in the sense of being a senior and feeling that I finally have confidence in my classes and how I do work and do feel more responsible with how I spend time. I think this partly because of goal setting and scheduling and taking time to sit down and think about all I have to do what I want to make a priority in my life and what i know is worth sacrificing and what I believe is not worth sacrificing. These are some of the things I think I have learned in college that will be with me for the rest of my life that I wouldn't have necessarily expected to learn from college, but am so thankful I have!

At the same time, I see that I still have a great deal of room for growth. I think I fall to blame in comparing myself to my peers too often and when people like Paul and Justin who are much more advanced are in the same class as me I get down on myself and expect myself to be at their level, when in reality I have had only one programming class and if we are being honest, while computer programming is important, it is not my forte.

The beginning of the semester consisted of us brainstorming of different ideas we could do. I felt that our lack of background knowledge or experience gave us some advantage in a weird way that we could benefit from learning basically anything so could choose any kind of project we wanted to. We brainstormed lots of different ideas including: a user-friendly app for icebreakers for FROGs, an app showing availability of parking at the different parking garages on campus with live updates, a better website for the Office of International Programs, improvements to the Library webpage, a database or better organization of classes required for majors, and a platform for anyone to create their own random generator.

Once we brainstormed and chose to commit to the "Randomizer" we had to write a proposal, which I learned is more a process and takes a lot more work than I realized. Writing the proposal consisted of researching and considering different scenarios and implications and social contexts of our app that we would have to think about before producing a product and taking ownership of. This took more

time and effort that I expected. We also spent a time trying to write an informative but intriguing proposal that would engage our audience to purchase or use our product. If we are being honest, this made me exhausted! This made me appreciate the job of every website that is out there today. The amount of competition is insane.

Next we worked on a functional spec list, which consisted of our big dreams and started to work on a more small scale and step-by-step process of the project. We then, did a paper drawing of a flow design and page set up of what we would want our final project to look like. At first I didn't realize the necessity of this step. And although in reality, our project didn't get to the step of designing the layout of these pages, the physical act of having to talk about what these pages were going to have to be, made us decide other factors of our project that we wouldn't have realized we needed to decide on.

As a team, we worked on having our Proposal, Social Context, Scenarios, and Sources on our Github Repo up-to-date. We attempted to work on unit tests, like you assigned for us to do. Caitlin got help from her Dad and I believe wrote 1 maybe 2 tests with him. Next we started working on trying to understand Django and learn python. My part was more of to download and try and understand Django. I think I bit off more than I could chew and asked questions almost everyday but still should have asked more questions. I found myself downloading things I didn't really understand that were only part of the Django setup.

Therefore, I feel that I have a halfway understanding of all of it and would have benefited from doing it alongside a group or with someone rather than trying to teach myself all of it from scratch from online tutorials. With all of this being said, I learned a great deal and learned the lesson that when I am confused it is always helpful to ask for help rather than to sit and waste time being stuck.

When we realized with the amount of time left in the semester and what was left of the project we started to search for other codes that would accomplish what we wanted to accomplish. We were able to successfully find a code that did what we wanted to do so switched from trying to do our website with Django to using this code we found. One benefit is that both use Python. The code was also troublesome so was not able to finish the project in time.

Although we did not finish our project and do not have a finished assignment by the end of the semester, I absolutely feel that I still learned a lot from the group and the goals I set for myself at the beginning of the semester. If we hadn't of set such a lofty goal for ourselves we would've never tried.

I came to almost every class, which shows commitment to this class but also to my group. Which I think shows that I was willing to work and desired to learn something and wanted to gain something from the class. Our group was by no means perfect but we had a great group dynamic. At some points we had some communications difficulties but simply because of technological problems but we were also nice and respectful of each other, which if we are being honest is rare. I am thankful for Caitlin and Brandon because they were always honest with what they were doing and what they were capable to contribute to our project. No one was every lying to try and cover up something they should have done. We did a good job of being honest with each other and equally splitting up work. If I was re-

doing this project I think I would have everyone in the group work on Django together and have everyone download the software on their computers together so that everyone understood it and that way everyone had access to it. With it only being on my computer caused a few difficulties but this was the only real problem.

After this class and this semester, and honestly every semester at JMU I do feel like a more enlightened citizen. I think doing activities like goal-setting and meditating and reflecting give you opportunities to think about the important things and not get caught up in the stress and less meaningful aspects of college. I think another reason this semester I feel that I have grown as an individual is because I had the privilege of taking Dr. Warner's class: Leadership and Personal Growth. Hands down my favorite class at JMU. By the end of the class, all of our 30 classmates knew each other's names and were friends. And in class we learned about real issues and leadership skills and techniques but also talked about our lives and who we are as individuals.

I liked this style of class because of the freedom it gives students to learn the best way possible for them to learn individually. But sometimes I did feel that I needed a little more guidelines. But only sometimes, and when I did I would ask you. I think if you were not as willing to meet with students and answer questions, this form of a classroom would not be successful but because of how you have cultivated your teaching style it has worked well! I would take the class again.

I would like to receive an A because I feel that I have been committed to this class and to my team and have learned a great deal this semester. Like I said earlier, I fall blame to comparison a lot but when I look at myself individually and how I have grown this semester I am proud of myself and believe I deserve an A. Thank you and I hope you have a wonderful break and will see you back next semester!

Caitlin Shipman

This semester I came into class remembering next to nothing of what I had learned in 252. Unfortunately, last year I was taking classes such as Organic Chemistry I & II and Animal Physiology, which didn't leave me with time to keep up with coding like I had wanted too.

The first week of classes I met Leah and we brainstormed several quality ideas. Leah and I have both been FROGs, and at the beginning of the semester that was fresh on my mind, so we thought of a few things that could help the orientation process. These included: an app to help with FROG scheduling during Orientation and an app that divides icebreakers into categories such as openers, closers, and getting to know each other better, and then gives you a random icebreaker to do within a category. We also thought of organizing the trips that the Office of International Programs offers, since there are so many study abroad trips that are offered that students don't know, making a more organized website for the library, a parking app that gives up to date information about what spaces are available where, an app that gives better organized way to see what requirements each major has, and an app that gives random cat memes, just to brighten someones day.

Leah and I decided that our last idea - an app that could spit out random memes - was the one we wanted to work on. We teamed up with Brandon and made some lofty goals about what we wanted to accomplish this semester. Our idea evolved into making The Randomizer, a user friendly platform that would allow users to upload a set of photos and then view them randomly. This would actually allow us to complete two of our initial project ideas: icebreakers and cat memes.

To accomplish this project we agreed as a team to come to a majority of classes each week. We used this time to meet and discuss the project and help each other with any issues we may have been having. I believe coming to a majority of the classes shows that we took this class seriously and were committed to learning.

The first thing we did for our project was writing the proposal. We wrote several drafts in order to come up with a succinct explanation of what exactly our idea was. We wanted the Randomizer to be fun-based, accessible to a wide range of users, and give users a creative output. We then wrote a social context, which looked at all of the possible uses of our app. This included analyzing both the possible positive and negative this app may have. To support our conclusions, we researched some of the negative things Instagram have been used for. Each of us then wrote up a scenario where our app would be used. These included instances when someone was bored, needs to relieve some stress, and needed to come up with an icebreaker quickly. This was my first experience writing this sort of proposal and having a social context for a project. I learned a lot from this experience. I really enjoyed analyzing the what sort of social impact the Randomizer could make.

We also made two functional specs lists, one was our "big dream." It included everything our ideal app would include. We listed things such as: home page with buttons leading to previous categories users have made, their friends' categories, and to creating a new category, a way to

upload .jpg and .gif files, a way to store files that have been uploaded by a specific users, a way to follow/connect to other friends using the Randomizer, and a way to share a creation to Facebook. We then made a list for the “first steps.” Which were the essentials functions that we thought we needed to work on first.

After we had a clear idea of what we wanted the Randomizer to be, we started making screen flow drawings on paper. We created two main drawings, one was complex and detailed what the ideal end product would look like and one was more simple and was based on what we thought we could reasonably accomplish. The proposal, social context, scenarios, and functional specs list can all be found on my Github repo: Randomizer.

Deciding on an idea to pursue, writing the proposal, social context, scenarios, functional specs lists, and draft drawings took about half of the semester. The next step of this project was writing unit tests. I had never heard of a unit test before this class, while the concept is fairly logical, it was entirely new to me. While my partners and I could think up many tests that our app would need to pass to be functional, the most basic of which would be just being able to show an image, we weren’t sure where to begin with writing an actual test. All of us had taken 252 over a year ago, but none of us had a strong grasp on any language or real programming skill. So, I sought out the help of my dad. He is a programmer and uses a lot of Python, and showed me the basics of writing a test that would just call up a static image. We wrote the code for the test together and were able to run it successfully on our desktop at home. My dad then shared with me his catalog of python scripts that he uses and lent me a book he had entitled *Learning Python* by Mark Lutz. The unit test can also be found on my Github repo:

cmshipman

At this point, I realized that my coding was even rustier than I realized, and decided it would be pertinent to review the HTML and Javascript that I had written in 252 and how to use MAMP. I went back over the different webpages I had written and was able to pull them up on a webserver using MAMP. I was actually really impressed by how much I had done in 252. I hadn’t realized it at the time, but for being someone with absolutely no coding experience, I was able to write a lot.

Leah and I decided that since we wanted to use python to create the Randomizer, we should also use Django. We started by installing pip, which was more difficult than we expected. Leah ended up taking the lead on installing a variety of things that Django requires, such as MySQL and PHP, and I supported and assisted her whenever I could. Brandon and I set about learning python. Since I already had the book *Learning Python*, I decided to try that first and found that it was not a good medium for me to learn programming from. The next thing I tried was the Code Academy tutorials. I decided to use Code Academy instead of W3schools, which I had used during 252, because many of my peers had used Code Academy and spoke very highly of it. While I was able to complete them, the information didn’t really stick with me the way it did in 252 when I learned HTML and Javascript from the W3schools tutorials. Looking back, since I had such a positive experience with W3schools, I probably should have stuck with what I know. But I don’t regret trying something new, I think it’s important to try new things, even if it is something seemingly small like what coding tutorial you use.

Learning Python was a much more time consuming process than any of us expected it to be. While we were learning some of the basics, we weren't really learning anything that was going to help us build our project. I remembered one of the things I had learned in 252 was that in the computer programming world, you aren't suppose to reinvent the wheel. If something has already been written, and you understand the code, then it is perfectly acceptable to use it. So, I decided to look for code that randomized images. While I found a couple different websites with code and an explanation of it, that one that seemed the simplest and easiest to use was at this website: <http://lost-theory.org/python/randomimg.html>. We spent the rest of the semester trying to implement this code. We saved some of our terminal code as evidence of this.

While I was not able to produce a lot this semester, I still feel that I was able to learn a lot. My expectations coming into the class did not take into account that neither I, nor my partners, had coded in the past year. Still, our main goal for this semester was first and foremost to complete a semester project, and we did our best to accomplish this. I think we were all disappointed that we were not able to complete the project, still, we all tried our best. The work in my Github repo shows the amount of time and effort we put into coming up with a detailed project plan, and in that I think we were very successful.

For my weekly goals, in a effort to push myself, I normally gave myself a little more work than I could complete easily. I also occasionally would add goals not related to class, especially if I was not feeling well. I tried to make my goals specific. For example, instead of having a goal that was "learn python," I tried to say something more like "spend two hours learning python using Code Academy."

It occurred to me that it may have been more useful for us to work on the developing language skills instead of trying to complete a project. But the project is what makes this class fun, so I am not at all upset that we decided to spend our time working on a project instead of doing coding tutorials. However, I do think if we had been more strategized with what we each put effort in, we may have got further in achieving our goal of completing a semester project.

One thing that I do think would benefit this class would be having a day every couple weeks where groups presented the progress they have made on their project. I think this may motivate some people to stay on top of their work, but more importantly, I think it would give people a chance to gain insight from their peers, who may be able to make suggestions or offer help, which builds community (coincidentally, the community between students is one of my favorite things about being an ISAT major).

Working with the group I had this semester was one of the better experiences I have had with group work during my college experience. While we did have some mild communication issues, we were able to meet outside of class, were never negative or critical of each other, and were always willing to help each other. I found going to this class enjoyable because of my group, and also because of the other people I met and became friends with this semester, including Justin, Kelly, and Paulo.

After this class, I do feel more educated and more enlightened. I have learning it is possible for me to work well with a group, which was something I was starting to wonder about before this semester. I think the style of this course allowed me to learn more about myself, how well I work when left to my own devices, which is something I feel is very important to learn as much about as I can, especially before I enter the workforce. Because of everything I have just described in this narrative, the grade that I would like you to report to the registrar for me would be an A.

Reflection

Gabriel Liu

12/9/14

I had no idea what to expect coming into this class. I had barely any experience with programming; I previously took ISAT 252 with El Tawab and that was the extent of my experience with coding. I was hoping to learn how to build a website, application, or anything, really. My goal was simply to learn anything I could. However, if anything, I did expect a little more structure to the class itself.

At the beginning of the semester, I had some difficulty finding a project. It's often counterproductive and difficult to force brainstorming. After a few weeks, I came up with the idea to build an application that keeps track of your FIFA record and stats against friends. This concept came to me when I was playing FIFA with my roommates and we were complaining about how much of a pain it was to keep track of the games by recording them on our phones. I thought it would be great to have a little app where you can quickly and effortlessly keep all of that information.

After this, I wrote a rough project proposal and drew up some screens for it. I initially decided to use Kivy to develop it. The development of the app stopped there, as I needed to know how to use Kivy. For the rest of the semester I tried to learn Kivy using (and still am continuing to use) a book to learn how to build a simple application or game in Kivy.

Recently, I decided to build a website with one of my friends so I can have a dj-ing website. I have a domain and am going to start building the site with my friends help over break.

This class helped me to succeed by actually pushing me to learn coding. For a few years now, I've been telling myself that I'm going to learn programming, but never got around to it. Also, learning about proposals was useful.

I feel that I failed to achieve my goal of building the app, but in the process, I still have learned a good deal of content. Due to the other classes I was taking this semester and also my own procrastination, I did not do as much work as I originally set out to do. Also, I got off to a late start because it took me awhile to come up with a project idea. I think I was less motivated partially because I wasn't in a group. Having partners in a project can definitely help push you and also act as resources to learn from.

In the future, I would definitely try to find a people to group up with on a project. Also, I found the weekly goals that you had us write were useful in trying to stay on a schedule and achieve goals. In general, I need to have more discipline in getting work done. The lack of structure in this class did not help me personally (but I'm not going to complain about it.)

I definitely feel that I feel more enlightened and educated. This course has showed me how challenging programming can be. My interest in programming has become stronger. Coupled with biotechnology, which is my greatest interest, being able to program could be very useful.

I think the labs you plan to have will be extremely useful. Also, I think it would be good if you encouraged students in the future to partner up with others. The weekly goal setting system was very good.

Overall, this semester was challenging for me and I learned a lot about myself. I think, personally, I need more structure to push me to work, but I honestly love to learn and I think your class has a learning conducive atmosphere.

I would love to receive an "A" in this class. I think it drove me to actually start learning programming, whereas, if I relied on self-motivation, I probably would not have gotten to it. Now I have more learning resources and clearer objectives for what I want to do with programming. Also, this class has helped me realize that, even if it isn't my forte, I am interested in learning more. On another note, I could use a GPA booster because I don't think my current GPA really reflects the kind of student that I am. Freshman year, I had a tough time transitioning; I didn't think the transition from high school to college would be difficult, especially because I dual-enrolled at a community college my senior year. Also, coming into JMU, my advisor threw me straight into Calculus 1 despite my reluctance (I hadn't taken calculus in high school.) I barely scraped by with a C and the next semester I received a D in Calculus 2. After spring semester, I had a 1.97 GPA and was on academic probation. Sophomore year, I buckled down and found my stride and ended up bringing my cumulative GPA up to about a 2.5. I'm hoping to continue to raise my GPA throughout college.

Chris Johns: Isat 340

Coming into this class I had little idea what to expect. I have very little history with coding aside from a python class I took a year ago, so I entered the class anxious of my capabilities. My hopes were to definitely to learn more about how and what to use for creating a good site and/or application. Unfortunately, however, from the beginning I felt behind both because I was initially confused by the way the class was run. I guess I am just very used to the traditional lecturing of what I need to know and the means I must go through to achieve it. As I'm sure you noticed my attendance after a certain point through the semester was atrocious. Firstly I'd like to apologize for that, it was neither smart of me nor respectful to you. I do want to make a point that it was not just laziness (there definitely was some) but also confusion and anxiety. I got behind since I did not know where to begin since my programming and website knowledge was not the best and instead of asking for help early, I only got further behind trying to figure it out by myself. I am a pretty introverted person, mainly around people I do not know, so of course in the beginning of the class when we were supposed to find friends and possible partners I sat there quiet and hoped for the best. That is one of my biggest regrets from this semester, because I definitely believe collaboration is both good for creating a product and also learning in general. So instead I stayed in the dark until I began missing class because I was afraid you or classmates would ask about my progress and I knew it was not where I should've been at the time. Luckily I got a little help getting started from a CSS major after awhile and he helped me get started so I could at least begin trying to catch up.

The goals I originally set for myself were to create a good website that was both interesting to visit and also interesting to develop. Originally my goals were to just master html and css because at the time I was unaware all the extra programs that could be used to further advance web development. As I progressed in building my semester project, I realized quickly that html and css were not the only things I was going to need to accomplish my goals for the website. This was one of my main challenges. I struggled for a long time attempting to figure out what programming languages and any other tools I needed to create the type of functioning website I wanted. While this took up a lot of time, since I would start learning something and realized it would not be what I wanted. This was not a total failure however, through this trial and error I was able to see the differences between things like JavaScript, PHP, and ruby; while also getting just a basic foundation for any future project. You tube, php manual, w3schools, code academy, and stack-flow were just some of the learning tools I used throughout the semester. Initially when learning html and css I found these to be extremely valuable and truly think I have a solid grasp on them as a result. I went through and followed multiple video courses on html, css, JavaScript, and php. I do believe that I learned a significant amount of information about coding this semester and I also think I could excel with it if I continued working at it, which I do plan to since I enjoy it. While I did have some successes, I had more failure than I definitely should have. One

failure in particular was not asking anyone for help when there were many times I needed it. This led to a lot of time spent trying to fix small problems that someone with more knowledge of the subject would be able to spot instantly. Unfortunately my website is not where I would like it to be functionally, which is a disappointment. I am proud of what I have because it is truly just my project and I know the amount of time it took me to learn all of the necessary information. My biggest success of the semester was buying a monthly prescription to Lynda.com because that is what allowed me to actually begin expanding my knowledge about php, JavaScript, and MySQL much quicker. I only wish I had gotten it earlier in the semester so I could have never fallen behind and maybe even excelled beyond. With Lynda I went through very detailed and well put together video tutorials on any and all types of programming I used/needed for my project as well as a lot of other information I didn't use. I do plan to keep the registration for at least a couple more months because I want to dive deeper into learning php and MySQL. I want to better these skills so I can improve my website to the level I originally imagined it and I am sure I will accomplish that task. Overall this semester I definitely feel like I developed some valuable skills and learned how to program by myself, which I think is a very valuable tool. I had to learn where and how to find information on the web and how to apply it to my website.

This semester was a wake up call for me. My early struggles led me to a sort of apathy for a while, not just in this class but also in the majority of my classes. I have realized some critical follies in my approach to learning and some general negative aspects I create in my life. I rarely ever seek help from others, whether it be in class or just life in general. I am definitely guilty of not expressing my thoughts and feelings to people that are there and want to help me. So that is my first resolution I am setting pre-new years. At some point this semester I also think I lost a lot of my confidence. I'm not sure if this was to do with my school struggles or personal issues but I was definitely not in my normal state for on and off periods throughout this semester. Luckily I feel like I have regained a lot through focusing on bettering myself and not stressing as much about things I have no control over. My outlook now is to keep moving forward and not let excuses, laziness, or any other bad habits I've obtained have a chance to slow me down.

In regards to the class style, I think it is extremely refreshing having a class where there isn't an exact guideline you have to follow step by step. I like being challenged to find the answers myself rather than a professor drill information into my head and just see if I can reiterate what was said with no actual cognitive thinking. So overall I think it is a great style and I think there are countless numbers of students who benefit by this type of learning. Some things I think could be improved in the class is providing ways to learn outside of class. I am in no way a fan of homework but I do think it provides a valuable service to people whether they want it or not. For this class it could be as simple as write a simple html website to get people (like me) who have little experience at least dip their feet in the water and see how the simple stuff is done in html, java, php, etc. Homework becomes less beneficial when it takes ridiculous amounts of time however, so there is a midpoint where I think it's a good balance of challenging but not overly time consuming.

As for my grade, I definitely think I put in the work required and feel like I have learned a lot about programming this semester. I now can create a flowing website, I am very good at html and css(which I had no prior knowledge), I am pretty solid at php , and I know how to create and store variables into a database and pull them out later. Except for the attendance factor I believe I put in a large amount of work to learn website design. So I am going to ask for an **A**- Again I'm sorry I did not take full advantage of the help I know you would've been more than happy to give me. Thanks Morgan.

When you come to your meeting please bring me a printed copy of a narrative ESSAY that you will write before we meet. In the essay, I'd like you to address the following:

What were your expectations coming into this class?

This is my 3rd class with you (252 and 340) so I had the same expectations coming into this class as I did from my previous knowledge. Class would be based on my own personal will to get a project completed by the end of the semester. We would meditate for a few minutes before class to get our minds pumped up for learning or just waking ourselves up. At the same time I also expected to learn things from this class I wouldn't normally learn from classes at JMU since we get to learn what we want to learn. The knowledge about life on top of a whole bunch of random things that usually are probably more important than learning how to code, and the time in class to utilize how we choose to do so is always nice to go off and explore other kinds of technologies or code to incorporate into our project, so I always enjoyed that about this class specifically.

What learning goals did you set for yourself?

I set a lot of goals for myself this semester because we were allowed to use our capstone project as the semester project, and having all members of my group in the class was also nice to help keep us on track. I still think for this class it is better to set long term goals than short term but making weekly sprints never hurt anyone. Our project is to create an online application for students to contact each other for used textbooks instead of having to go through the bookstore. So splitting up the tasks, I set goals on how to use an MVC framework, design more modern looking webpages, learn not just about SQL, but NoSQL using MongoDB, Node.js, Passport.js, getting the back and front end of our application to work etc. in order to have a working item by the end of the semester. There were also a few other goals such as making sure I keep up with meditation since is an awesome way to get my mind in check before doing anything and not doing things to my full potential when I should be.

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

I feel that my goals got harder as the semester went on, but there were a lot of mistakes along the way as well as having to do things over and learning newer and more complicated things. It started off as doing things such as creating the html/css, then to JavaScript to try to get some cool features and linking it to the back-end of the project using MySQL Workbench and php. After realizing that this was not the most optimal way, and that we were going to run into a lot of problems in the future, we changed it to using NoSQL (not only SQL) with MongoDB and Node.js, which was completely unknown territory for us. After hours and hours of non-stop learning about this tool, we were able to get it to work with the front-end of our project

and I was even able to finish a draft of our senior capstone report over Thanksgiving break. Our project is far from 100% completed so there will be harder tasks ahead, but I am happy we were able to get a working product and a draft of our senior capstone report before break was over.

I have always been interested in finance for some odd reason and I have been pretty successful at investing doing this as a way to avoid having to work as well as pay for the things that I need without taking out a loan or asking my parents, and so far I have done pretty well. After looking up tutorials and such about NoSQL, MongoDB, and Node.js, I was still lost on this new material so I went on [udemy.com](https://www.udemy.com), bought a few course lectures, and went through all of them. So aside from the project, I realized how much I enjoyed data programming so I bought a few more courses in data analysis and a few on Hadoop, and a beginner to expert for ruby on rails so I could more research the market, which is what I plan to be doing over winter break this year. So in terms of goal evolution, not only did my goals get harder for our semester project, it also allowed me to discover other sources to further my education in what I like to do.

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 that I was able to achieve just about all the goals I set out to do this semester as well as finding goals and adding new ones to the list for me to work on over break as stated above. I think I was also successful in making it finding the information I needed to code because Ross is really good with databases, Colin and I did more of the front-end development but Ross was the only one doing the back-end. Since I already knew how to do most of the front-end development, I wanted to help Ross, so I went off and learned NoSQL, MongoDB, Node.js, etc., and in the end I was able to finish our capstone report.

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."

I learn that when it came to things like JavaScript and Java, I wasn't very good at it. It took me a lot longer to do just about anything in JavaScript than my friends, and we aren't even close to being experts yet. Being able to see my weaknesses, I think I was successful in realizing that if I went out to the real world, I wouldn't have any sort of competitive advantage over my competitors so it was better to work on my strengths than weaknesses. At the same time I realized that it didn't make me any weaker not being good at JavaScript or Java. Webpage and

mobile development have become a pretty mature language with the Internet and smartphone revolution and I wasn't ever going to be better than anyone at it. After doing nothing but JavaScript all semester, being able to do all the loops, linked lists, event listeners, JSON, I think it's time to work on other types of coding I would enjoy more. I will still have to keep doing it because I am using Node.js for my project, but I was able to see that I am just OK at it, and now I am able to create long term goals from my weaknesses.

I came to 90%+ of the classes, but I would say 50% of the time I was either 20 minutes late or 20 minutes early so I wasn't able to keep a consistent schedule when it came to getting to class on time.

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

I always feel that I get more coming out of this class than any other class. You showed us a YouTube video about motivation from Daniel Pink. I thought it was such an awesome clip, I showed my dad so maybe he could try it on his workers. I also took an entrepreneur class a few years ago and I remembered they talked about his book "A Whole New Mind" so I ordered a copy off amazon and read the whole thing in a weekend. It helped me gain more insight a better way of learning for me since I was able to discover that I am extremely more left brain than right brain. It actually really worked! In ISAT 350, I received a 75 for the first exam, but after reading the book and finding other methods of studying such as making, I got a 95 on the second exam which was actually a shock at first because I was almost positive it wasn't my test, and it was all thanks to this class.

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?

Reading Daniel Pink's book was really helpful in learning more about the way I think and why I end up doing some of the things I do but that doesn't mean that I have stopped trying to learn about myself or how to make myself better. Learning about being right brained and finding a new way of studying definitely helped me learn more about myself and how I think. Why I get lost in thought, why I'm creative yet I still suck at drawing, why coding is fun to me but is a lot more difficult than a left-brain person, why I used to find menial tasks or homework a complete waste of time when I could be doing more interesting things with my life. But there are advantages I realized I had after talking with some friends about it such as always having some sort of contingency plan when things go wrong, breaking things apart in my head always seemed pretty natural for some reason (seeing an example always made much more sense to me than textbooks). Things like that really helped me learn about my thought process and how to counter my stagnant kind of learning. I started using VISIO a lot, putting things in pictorial form, I saw coding as a way to build a building or something that involved

using a lot of tools to get the end product, and those methods seem to be working a lot better than just pure grinding out as hard as I could with everything I had in my body. But the best way of getting my mind to just shut up is to do lots of work, go out, and never be so-called "bored"

How did this style of course work for you?

I think this style of course work really is best for students who are self-motivated, and after take Dr. Bernstein's class, I realized how much more beneficial this class was than taking CS 345, which was much more apathetic. That class was structured in a way where he wanted and had total dictatorship of the students, having us meet his exact specifications implemented the exact way, word for word, for the end product because he said that's how the real world works. I have had an internship for a start-up company, the World Bank, as well as a third-world non-government organization (NGO). Having done all of this, I understood a long time ago that people do not EVER know what they really want or need, and it should be up to us to deliver a product that meets their requirement while being able to add a few things of our own that we think would make the product better or look nicer. It can always be deleted later, but effort never counted, only the end result. Doesn't matter how much you learn, just be a robot and do what you're told (just how I felt anyway). Sure, there were beneficial parts of the class such as using JavaScript on a whole new level, but I realized how much I hated that class because it limited my creativity and thinking outside the box was nearly impossible.

In this class we were able to do things on our own, and most importantly, make tons of mistakes in the process, and learn from them, find new ways to get what we want. I think there is a time. If you were to take it again what would you recommend that I do it the same or differently?

I, personally, would like to keep it the same since making mistakes has always been something I have been good at. My brother has always done everything right being a good student, got a tennis scholarship, and follows the rules to the very letter. So when he wants to do something, he asks too many questions, rather than getting his hands dirty and I'm completely opposite of that. Everyone has their own opinion about other in the way they should live, but in truth, we don't really know the right way ourselves so I like this style because it fits my personality but that doesn't mean that it's for everyone.

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

I would like to get an A for this class. I showed up to class, even if I was late, learned a whole lot in terms of the subject and myself, got a working product by the end of the semester, and finished a draft of the senior capstone project.

Chris Vaughan
ISAT 340

Self-Assessment Narrative

Prior to this class I expected for the class to help me better understand coding languages and get a better grasp on building projects and combining code as a whole. My goals for this class was to become proficient in all coding languages to enable me to have the capacity to produce apps/websites. Also I wanted to complete a website in this class to show my development, and proficiency with coding languages. My goals stayed firm throughout the semester, however the end product I was producing significantly changed throughout the semester. Was I successful in achieving my goals? Yes, for the most part I feel I completed the goals I had set, the website I produced is not a finished project, however the fundamentals of the website are there with much of the core content. As part of my goals, I hoped to become competent with most all coding languages, and I can honestly say that I now have a deeper understanding of different coding languages with the capacity to edit code for my own purposes. Despite achieving these few accomplishments, I did fail to complete the entirety of the website, however this was a learning process and what I was able to accomplish was of quality standards, and will provide as a great backbone of a website I fully intend to keep using.

To ensure I keep an adequate schedule for future work, I will allocate more increments throughout my week dedicated for coding. After this class I can confidently say I feel more educated; coming in to this class coding was a daunting aspect, coding languages scared me, however now I am understanding the full potential of such tools. This course also opened my eyes to possible roles I could undertake in the future that require coding for the purpose of building applications/apps. Coming in to ISAT I had no previous coding experience, however after completing a few classes now with coding heavily integrated, I better understand the dynamics behind creating applications, and the prospect excites me. The style of coursework worked great for me, it allowed me to work on a project throughout the semester without the worries of tests or deadlines. Learning solutions to problems or source code for to achieve certain elements out of class, at first seemed daunting, however after delving into the abundant resources available I realize that creating applications does not need to be a daunting task, and that the community available online are happy to offer a hand with those still learning.

If I was to do this class again I would do it in the same format, however it would be nice to have alternative class meetings at a later time. This would be nice as it would allow those who are not earlybirds to still meet with peers for discussion and collaboration. I realize there is a hacking session later at night, however this time slot is not the most convenient as it takes place after all buses run, leaving only the night shuttle. Despite this the format of the class works great as it allows those to cater it to their preferences. For the grade I would like reported, I would request an A, this can be justified by the amount of work done on the website, and although it is not a finished product, the progress I have made since the last class has been significant. If I were to be graded purely on progress I feel comfortable asking for an A, as I feel my progression has come along positively. After this class I feel comfortable reading, editing and pulling code, this progression in my understanding of code alone has been respectable, however I have pulled this knowledge and used it to build something that serves a purpose, and for the most part looks and feels professional.

The website I created served as a mock for an aquaponics business, it provided the company's mission along with the products offered by the company, it also included a newsfeed, a page for useful recipes, and a contact page. This website was extremely relevant to what I am currently working on for my senior project. Along with other ISAT classes, this course has allowed me to create multiple aspects of a potential aquaponics business. This has allowed me to compile numerous documents on aquaponics that would look great on my resume and are all relevant to each other, this may not be achieved in other departments, however due to the flexibility found in many ISAT courses specifically this class, it has allowed me to create a portfolio that is meaningful and relevant.

Chris Lu
ISAT 340
Section 2
12/12/2014

Coming into this class, I was expecting to improve my programming skills. My goals were originally to create a mobile social networking application. That was a bit of a high goal for me considering I only had some basic html knowledge at the time. It was not easy getting enough time in during the week.

My goals at the time were not feasible for me to complete under the time constraints. My first idea was to create social networking website for skateboarders. I wanted skateboarders to be able to post up their favorite skate-spots to go to. The idea was to not only let others know the location of the skate-spot, but to also visualize it with pictures and videos.

There are other websites for finding skate-spots I believe, but none of them have this social aspect that I wanted to create. I wanted to create a forum that allowed skateboarders to create personal profiles. The forum would have allowed people with profiles to connect with each other based on their location and style of skating (freestyle, street, vert, park, cruising, downhill, etc. Users would be able to message one another and share their pictures and videos with everyone on the site. Some people don't want to share their favorite spots with just anyone, so I wanted users to create secret skate-spots and share them within their "friends list" per say. I hadn't really thought of another name for it at the time, but it would basically work like Facebook, where you can choose who gets to see your posts. I also wanted to eventually create a mobile phone application for the website so it'd be easier for people to upload stuff right away. I was thinking it could be a great way for some skaters to get themselves exposed and known about, and maybe even get sponsored because of it. Professional skateboarders these days make tons of money from social media, and I wanted this website to be a gateway for talented skateboarders to maybe do the same someday.

I kept dreaming up ideas for this skateboarding project but the more time I kept dreaming about it, the less time I had to actually do it. Time constraints from other classes made it even harder to get all these ideas into place. Eventually I tried to settle for something I thought would be a bit easier. I had planned for a mobile phone application for paintball. Paintball players use "field layouts" to see what angles and shots they have against their opponents before they step on the field to play. Many teams end up printing a bunch of printed copies to keep track of all the game plans. I thought it would be cool to have a mobile application that has all the field layouts on it, and users could edit them as they please to show different game plans for each layout. It would be a huge convenience for players to have a secure storage place on their phone or tablet instead of handling a bunch of loose papers all day. There was already an app for this unfortunately, and they even made it 3-D so you could see what you would see when you stepped onto the field yourself. My idea was only for a 2-D model of the layout where you could see a bird's eye view of the field.

So after scrapping two ideas already I was stuck looking for another project idea. A few days went by and I got a call about an opportunity to help start, or "found" a new fraternity here at James Madison University. The Kappa Delta Rho Fraternity wanted to start their Lambda Beta Chapter at JMU and reached out to myself, and a bunch of other select gentlemen to get it in motion.

Kappa Delta Rho bases itself on being honorable gentlemen and contributing to our community in a positive way. We want to represent JMU and Kappa Delta Rho as a valuable member to the Harrisonburg community. This semester we already raised almost \$300 for Christmas presents for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities at The Arc in Harrisonburg. I thought becoming a founding father and a potential executive of the fraternity would be something decent to add onto a resume. It definitely isn't an easy task founding a fraternity, and it has taken a decent chunk of time to be a part of it.

I was nominated and voted in as secretary and executive board member of the Lambda Beta Chapter. With this title came a lot of responsibility this semester. I had to attend every chapter meeting, and be there early to talk with other executive board members, and also the advisory board members. I meet with my chapter once a week for a couple of hours to discuss various things regarding getting our official charter and our constitution. I also meet my executives once or twice a week for an hour or two at a time to discuss official business of the fraternity as well.

All of this fraternity work made it tough to fit in with my programming work. An executive member of the national office for Kappa Delta Rho came down to visit us and suggested we get a website for ourselves instead of just a Facebook page. Because I needed a new project idea I decided that I would take on the task, as the other computer science majors (about two others) didn't seem interested.

Because I had some experience with html I decided to make a basic outline of the website and added in some css to make it a little prettier. I showed my brothers what I have done so far and they seem to like it. I just need to touch it up some more. Eventually I want to add more pictures, but because we are a new fraternity, we do not have that many at the moment. The calendar I have currently is also temporary. I copied and pasted the coding for the calendar from our national office's website. It was just a basic table made with html. I want to make it easier for an administrator to post on the calendar instead of coding it into the website all the time. I also want to make it easy for an administrator to upload pictures to a slideshow or gallery on the site. I also considered creating a brothers only forum but the chapter decided it was best to remain as transparent as possible to the public.

I also want to get a PayPal account or some kind of way to deposit directly into our chapter's bank account linked to the donate section of the website. The Lambda Beta Chapter actually existed at James Madison University previously but died out for reasons I do not know. Anyways, some of our alumni are pretty wealthy, and they seem interested in getting the chapter up and running again, and I think a nice website would be an easy way to coax them into donating some of their precious money to us. All the money we get goes into running this fraternity, supporting the brotherhood, supporting the community, and also our philanthropies.

After this semester I definitely feel more educated about programming. Codecademy and w3schools helped me a lot. Using their tutorials I was able to create I have currently for the chapter's website. It may not look like much but I'm proud of what I have done so far, and am excited about what I will be able to accomplish with it in the future. I believe creating website is a handy skill to have, and probably a decent way to make some money on the side. So I think I will definitely continue to work on this website as a duty to my fraternity, and also to better myself as a programmer. I have some knowledge in HTML and CSS and am about to get started on some Javascript as well. I want to eventually master these languages and learn more about other languages, including ones for mobile applications.

This style of class was definitely relaxing for me. It allowed me to put efforts elsewhere when I needed to. I had time to do other class work, and didn't feel stressed about needing to complete all this work for this class. I could also enjoy my hobbies of skating and playing paintball too without worrying about programming. I could also make some money on the weekends by refereeing paintball tournaments across the country without having to frantically put together some codes when I get back home late, drained of energy, on Sunday nights. Also getting to sleep in when I needed to was always a nice thing to have.

I will say that it was hard to get myself to code at times as well. Not having someone push me to complete a task definitely has its pros and cons. I didn't feel stressed about the work, but I also didn't feel quite stressed enough to sit down and do work. Other things would come up that sounded way better than being on a computer all day so I would prioritize those activities more sometimes. Programming takes a lot of patience in

my opinion. I am not a patient person. I am a very antsy person, and am quick to jump into situations that I didn't take much time to think about. The meditation in the mornings was a great way to calm me and I appreciated that. I would even meditate in my room sometimes to help calm me down this semester because it helped in class. Time management has also been a huge issue with myself, and I am not very good at scheduling things correctly. My girlfriend tries to help me organize, and even got me a planner, but over the course of the semester, things just get more and more disorganized. This is definitely something I have to work on as a person, and not just a programmer. The

If I did this semester over again, I still think I would pick the "choose my own grade" option. This was a pretty stressful semester so I wanted to get out as much as possible. Some stress is good though, so I would recommend requiring students to attend at least one class a week to work on programming, ask questions, show off what they've been working on, and/or get recommendations on their projects.

Learning more about programming has provided me with some ideas about what I can do in my future. Computer programming is a good market right now, and after this semester I've learned that I have all the resources I need to learn how to code on the internet. If I put all this free information to use then I could potentially make a decent living from it. Programming isn't too hard; it just takes lots of patience and the right work etiquette. I definitely still need to adjust my scheduling and work etiquette in order to become a better programmer and student. Everything I need to become a successful programmer is about a click away, I just need to force myself to do it.

With all of this in mind, I choose to receive an "A" in the class. I believe I put in some hard work in what I have, and that what I have learned justifies it. My fraternity appreciates what I'm doing for them and I'm proud of what I have so far considering how much time I've put into it. I've gained a certain appreciation of programming after getting this far with my project and I think I will continue to better myself as a student and programmer after taking this class.

Jonathan Vaughan

ISAT 340

Dr Benton

12/12/14

ISAT 340 Narrative Essay

Prior to coming in to the class i expected a very relaxed learning environment in which each individual can cater their learning experience to their interests. Coming from a background of little to no coding experience (except through 240), I expected to be able to learn coding at my own pace. Moreover I expected to be able to choose my own goals and material on which I work on. For me this meant choosing material which I am enthused to work on in order to facilitate a productive and enjoyable environment.

When choosing my goals for the course I aimed to become more proficient with HTML, CSS, and Javascript. This involved not only being able to compose and edit these text languages but also to understand the relationships between them, and when best to use each language. I hoped to have my own project (website) to show my progression and competence with coding languages. It was also my hope that this website will link with my other skills to help improve my academic competitiveness. I also hoped to increase clarity of my skills to potential employers through the website I developed. Lastly, I aimed to get a better knowledge of my enjoyment and skills with coding.

My goals evolved over time dramatically. To begin my goals were less defined and not linked to my other courses or skills. As the course progressed however I refined my goals further. I came to appreciate how much easier it is to set achieve goals once my direction and interests were clearly defined. This meant that I had a slow start to the semester due to a lack of direction. Ideas later came to me and I decided to integrate my website with my senior project, other courses, and my overall vision towards sustainability. My studies at JMU have me specializing on the topic of sustainable systems, particularly sustainable agriculture. Pairing with my Environmental

Management Plan in ISAT 422 and my aquaponics senior project, I decided to develop a website that was a site for a theoretical aquaponics business named Neptune's Garden. It is our vision that Neptune's Garden will be a sustainable farm which employs eco-friendly and sustainable techniques to produce cash crops and aquatic meats. The website's focus was on increased clarity within food production, sustainable food production, and environmental stewardship.

I believe I achieved all of my goals and perhaps more. I am very pleased to have a semi-functioning website which will be the foundation for a personal website about my skills and interests. This website can both provide information about my studies and environmental vision, and showcase my proficiency with coding languages. This website changed in vision and scope over time but I am happy with the progress made. The site will provide me a base to continue my coding practices while sharing my interests with the public. My overall knowledge of coding has increased substantially as I am now much more familiar with HTML, CSS, and Javascript. I have come to appreciate the functions of each of these languages and how relate to web functions. I have also come to appreciate how open sourced coding is and how to use this to my advantage. This is evident through the website I helped develop. Here we took a template, modified and added to the language to develop a website.

I did not attend many class sections due to working late frequently, this meant I did miss some information in class to further my coding knowledge. Within my schedule however, I think my decision my not a bad once since I was able to code at my own pace during my own time and still manage to code a website. My failed attendance has taught me that I can be unmotivated to attend early class sessions particularly when attendance is not enforced. This was evident in other courses too. One way I can address this issue is to work earlier during the day, or implement a punishment policy on myself for missing classes. I have learned however, that I am able to teach coding to myself using internet resources. This has motivated me to further my education on coding once this course is over. I can do this by continuously improving the website I helped develop.

I do feel further educated by this course both about the class material and about myself. As stated earlier, my knowledge of HTML, CSS, and Javascript has furthered as well as my information about the coding process and community. I have learned that I am perhaps most productive in a structured course, at least while all other courses I am enrolled are structured in the same way. If all courses were structured with the “choose your grade” policy I could better divide my work better these courses. Since this is not the case however, I find it difficult to add weight to material in 340 due to commitments in other graded courses.

This course has helped me appreciate how easy it is to learn how to code from home. This newfound appreciation has motivated me to continue work on the website I developed. The website and course as a whole helped me define what is important to me by choosing what I want on a personal website. Once my interests were clearly defined I was motivated to code about this material.

The course structure is very agreeable when learning to code since there are so many internet resources available. The high freedom and abundance of resources makes learning code at your own pace very achievable. This was shown by how Chris and I were able to teach ourselves and compose a website. The course allows me to learn at my own pace making coding enjoyable and easy to approach. Laziness can however get in the way of things when so much freedom is granted. The course helps address this issue by choosing what is important to me.

Since 240 my coding ability and knowledge has progressed substantially, and i now have my first working website! I have managed to generate a visible progression of my coding skills through this website and I am proud of this progress. The site is meaningful and adds continuity to my other work at JMU. I plan to continue work on this site to further my knowledge on coding. I believe I achieved all of my goals for the course despite my poor attendance and have a proud way to show this via the website I helped develop. It is because of this I believe an A- will be a fair grade for my efforts.

Zach Bogdan
ISAT 340
Dr. Morgan Benton
12/12/14

End of Semester Essay

This semester I signed up for a class that had a choose-your-own-grade option. Like everyone else, I thought to myself, "Awesome, a class I can take where I get to pick my grade at the end! What could be better?" I first heard about choose your own grade when I took 131, where we discussed the idea briefly in class. From that moment, I had decided that I was intrigued by this kind of a system and was curious as to how it could be implemented. When I heard that you were teaching ISAT 340, I knew I had to try it and see what it was all about. I had never been in any class with this kind of structure before so going into it I didn't really know what to expect, but I was hoping that I would find out what things I am intrinsically drawn to.

Going into the class, I thought that choose-your-own-grade was a great idea. I like the way it forces you to find what you are really interested in. It forces you to learn about the subject, not cram facts into your brain so you can use them for one hour on your exam then forget about them another hour later. It causes you to make the conscious decision that the reason I am reading about this or studying for this, is because I am actually invested into this material. No one is making me do it except for me and this was really appealing to me. I have read about how Denmark, Finland, and other top rated countries for academia around the world handle their education system and found that their system just makes more sense. In these countries, students are rarely made to do homework or take many tests. This helps children develop a positive relationship with school and makes them actually want to go because they know they are going to learn, not to work. Also, every university in Denmark and Finland is free because they feel that higher learning is important and therefore they offer it to everyone. Education in Finland after the age of fifteen or sixteen is noncompulsory, however, over eighty percent of children seek higher education and that is because they have learned from a very young age that school is a place they want to go. In an education system like this, where kids are motivated to learn, is where I think a choose-your-own-grade system would shine. This is where the problem lies in our system, from a very young age children are forced to do tedious assignments and hours of homework against their will and it gives them a negative outlook on school for the rest of their academic career. On top of that, even the children that are willing to work hard and put forth great effort will not be rewarded for their dedication because they fail to recall the exact piece of information they need during a one and a half hour exam. There has to be a better way for students to demonstrate what they have learned from a class besides a standardized test. Everybody is different, we all learn differently,

so how can we all be judged the same way? This is how school becomes a place you have to go and not a place you want to go very quickly and it is what turns children away from education.

This is where my end of the story ties in. Choose-your-own-grade, what could go wrong? For me, a lot I guess. I started out the semester with the goal of staying focused in order to learn the things I needed for the class. This might have been where I made my first mistake, because I was focused on what I needed to learn and not what I wanted to learn. I made a lot of mistakes last year and found myself in the doghouse GPA-wise at the beginning of this semester and my confidence was very low. I found myself instinctively going into autopilot mode and I was only focused on what it would take to pass. It is so ingrained into the minds of Americans that the only things worth working for are a paycheck or a grade, and I fell right into the rut. After I found out that I didn't need to actually do anything for the class to succeed, that's exactly what I ended up doing. That's the one regret I have from this semester, I feel like I didn't learn enough about software development in order to succeed in ISAT 341, and I have no one to blame but myself. What's even worse was that I ended up shutting down from every class; I had given up. I felt that I was sinking and I started to become comfortable with the notion of not coming back to college after the semester was over. I feel like I failed myself by not attending classes and not taking advantage of the opportunity I had just waiting there in front of me.

The semester was not a complete failure however, because it taught me more about myself than any class I've ever had. The way the class is setup simulates a laid back work environment in the field of software development which led me to contemplate my future. Your class really forced me to actually sit down and think about what I am going to do when I get out of college, and the truth that I found terrified me. Not only did I realize that I actually don't have a plan for after college, but I also realized that I didn't even have a plan for my remaining time in college. I found out that I have no idea which concentration I want to declare for ISAT and that really made me take a step back for a second and think about myself. I learned that maybe programming is not the best option for me. I found myself thinking while researching HTML5 online, "Is this what I really want to be doing every day?" This class allowed me to see how it would really be if I had a job in the programming industry, and after long deliberation I decided that maybe software development isn't the right career path for me. The more I questioned whether or not I was willing to work in this field, the more I found myself doubting whether or not I actually wanted to learn the material. This led to me going to fewer classes, and putting forth less effort. I made decisions about my future that I would have probably never made if I hadn't taken this class. I have learned that right now, I do not have the self-discipline for a class with no guidelines. Also, I have decided, after heavy contemplation, that I am going to take a semester off from college in order to regain my center and my focus. I needed to stop aimlessly wandering ahead and find a direction. Everyone deserves a second chance. There is a lot of life left and I feel as though I may have rushed through the beginning of

it. I realize now that I have enough time to do whatever I want in life, and if rushing through it causes me this much grievance, it can wait. Maybe I didn't learn what I thought I was going to learn from this class, but it has taught me more than any other class probably ever will.

This semester has been one of the most difficult periods of time in my life. I have had failures, accomplishments, setbacks, and progress. I've learned a lifetime worth of knowledge about myself and I have matured probably tenfold this semester. I think that choose-your-own-grade is great because it embraces the true meaning of what it is to learn. Although it didn't really work for me this time, I think that coming into this class with a different mindset would have helped tremendously. I think that maybe instating something like a mandatory attendance policy could help future lost kids like me with the choose-your-own-grade, and help them find what it is to learn again. As for my semester grade, I would like you to report a (B) to the registrar. My reasoning behind my decision is that a (B) shows that I have learned a great deal from the course, which I have, and I feel an (A) would be dishonest because like I said earlier, I have not mastered the course material. Also, I am very hopeful about the insight that I will gain about myself from completing a semester off from school and I want to have the option to come back to JMU. In order to do so, I have to have a decent GPA for this semester and a (B) would help so much more than I can describe with words. I appreciate everything you have done this semester, and I thank you for exposing me to this new mindset and look on life.

ISAT 340 Narrative Essay

What were your expectations coming into this class?

Since I had taken ISAT 252 with you I had a good understanding of how your class works. I was prepared to do some deep meditation and to work on a project of my choice throughout the semester. I have had some experience coding in the past but I was interested in stepping my game up a little bit.

Unfortunately for me, things didn't go as planned. Over the course of the semester I did a fair share of codcademy tutorials, but I never attempted a project on my own. I think I just got out to a bad start of putting this class on the back burner in the beginning and I continued the trend as time went on. Even though I did not attend, I did stress/think about this class a good deal. I truly wanted to create something awesome of my own but never set aside the time to do it. As the semester went on, the rest of my classes picked up and I decided to focus on that instead of a project. I wish had the opportunity to take this course another semester because coding really does interest me and I know I could be good at it if I put in the time.

What learning goals did you set for yourself? How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?

Coming into this semester I had goals on my performance in school, but didn't really set myself a goal that I wanted to learn a specific thing. One of the things that I expect to be able to do after each course, regardless of how well I do, is to be able to have an intelligent conversation about the material that was covered. For this class especially, I felt like I had heard all these terms and vocab that I slightly knew what they meant, but definitely couldn't explain to someone else what they were. Between my telecom class and all the reading I've done, I have definitely improved my overall computer lingo this semester. Over the course of the semester my goals tended to become more task focused as deadlines for projects and tests started to draw nearer. As of now, my biggest goal is completing my senior project. Over the past few weeks I have definitely hit a wall on my design progress from my lack of experience with SolidWorks. I have been doing a lot of reading and tutorials to increase my knowledge of the software, which has helped a lot, but I still have a long way to go.

In what ways did you feel like you were successful? In what areas do you feel like you failed to achieve your goals?

I was successful in my performance in my classes this semester. For some reason I had the hardest time getting back into "school-mode" after this summer. This resulted in me having a sub-par start but as the semester went on I picked it up and I think I ended up doing pretty well this semester, assuming that I did well on my finals. As I just stated, the area I feel like I failed on was being diligent towards all my classes throughout the entirety of the semester. Last spring semester was my best semester in my college career performance wise, but it was also the hardest I've ever worked in school. Despite all the time I spent doing on school work, I found that after a while it became an enjoyable routine and it made me feel good that I was being so productive. I got back to that routine about midway through the semester and I plan on sticking with it going into next year.

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

I absolutely feel more educated. Every semester I feel like I learn a ton, whether it be in the classroom or just from experience from getting older. For the school aspect, my senior project and telecom class benefited me the greatest. My senior project has been a HUGE learning experience for me and I have really developed some good skills that I can use in the future. My Telecom class really helps rejuvenate my appreciation for computers. I kind of strayed away from my interest in computers as I took more manufacturing classes but working hands on to really show the some of the capabilities that we can do with computers helped me regain my passion. Each semester the experience I gain just from getting older always makes me feel smarter. Whether it comes from different conversations I've had with people or the different strategies I've used to overcome a problem, every little thing adds up to make me a better, more educated person.

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?

Every semester I've been here I always feel like I get to know myself better. I have always been able to reflect back and know that I am a better person today than I was prior to the semester. Ever since I started college I have been very interested in business. Everything is a business when you really look at it. I did pretty poorly my first two years of school so I switched to ISAT and I have never looked back. As the title of the major states, I really enjoy how everything is integrated and seems to work together no matter what concentration you're in. As an E&M concentration the majority of the classes that I've taken have been mainly dealing with operations and supply chain, which is interesting to a certain extent, but I never fully been satisfied. This semester I found a huge interest in project management after taking ISAT 433 and also found that the design process, although challenging, is very rewarding after it is complete. Both of these subjects can easily be integrated with my other courses that I have taken within ISAT, especially my courses that involved the computer. Hopefully, in the near future, I will be able to find a job where I can put the full extent of my skills to use.

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

When I took your course before, the style worked fine. I think that was because I was in a good sized group and everyone was depending on everyone else do their work. By working alone this semester I found it hard to actually make myself do the work on a consistent basis. Some days I would accomplish something that I wanted to get done, but then it might take me a couple weeks to start working on something else. If I were to take your class again I would probably do the point system so it would at least force me to get something done. The only thing about the point system is that it limits your creativity to a certain extent. The thing I like best about the point system is that you can choose when you do the assignments. I found that to be extremely nice when I took 341 last spring. I also think that providing projects where we are required to perform certain tasks could be helpful. I took a VB class, with no prior knowledge of coding, when I was a business major and the assignments really forced me to learn the material to the full extent. I absolutely hated the assignments because of the time constraints, but I walked out of that class knowing that I learned the material.

What grade do you want me to report to the registrar and why?

I know I do not deserve it, but I would like an A this semester in your class. This is based solely on the fact that your GPA is heavily considered when finding a job for most companies. I apologize to you

personally for not coming to class and putting in the effort and I also need to apologize to myself for not taking advantage of this course and using your guidance to increase my knowledge in this field. Lastly, thank you for your understanding and hopefully my slothfulness won't come back to bite me in the butt!

Daniel Wright

12/14/2014

End of Semester Narrative

This is my second time taking this course so I knew a lot of what I was getting into and I also knew many ways that I failed last year and make sure to improve on those 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. I got very burned out trying to use python and an opportunity came up that an organization I volunteer for and spend large amounts of time at is in need of a website. I started to learn HTML and CSS and made this website as a semester project

Some ways that I felt successful this semester was in writing small programs in Python as I learned how to use it. I also went through code academy for this and learned many things. 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.

A majority of my time was spent figuring out HTML and CSS. HTML was a little tough to get the hang of because of the different syntax than python that I was used to, but it became easier and easier. I feel like HTML is not as complicated and there is more readily available information online to use it. I also felt as if HTML was more forgiving in figuring out where my mistakes were in my code and what was wrong and why. This was not always the case, but it makes things easy to be able to visually see changes.

I reread my narrative from last year and look at some of the ways that I felt like I had failed. Those being not coming to class, not working consistently, not getting help, and not being passionate about things I was working with. Things were very different for me this semester compared to last semester. I had a project that I was very passionate about and will continue to improve and work on for many more months, I got help from a variety of different people, and spread out my work rather than

trying to cram in short intense bursts. I still did not come to class, but I think I work diligently enough outside of class to make up for it.

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. One of the biggest things that I learned was how much easy it is to work on a coding project when you are invested in the project you are making. When I was passionate about my product, it didn't even feel like school work at most times, just a good tool for my organization.

Last year I felt like I would have worked much better if I had a partner or a group for academic accountability as well as for new ideas. I did this half way through the semester I consulted a girl who had graduated several years ago, but still knew a large amount about CSS. She helped with the design and theme of my website. Making thing look good visually or artsy is far from my strong suit and it was very helpful. She also help guide me to many website and videos that teach very specific HTML or CSS tricks. .

I would like to request an A for this class. I learned a large amount of the basics of python and backend coding and feel comfortable enough with the language to do a large project if I needed to. I also feel comfortable with HTML and web design now and will continue to work on those things. I had no idea I would enjoy web design as much as I do. I think the biggest accomplishment for me this semester is how comfortable I have become with the thought of being able to teach myself things when I am invested in the outcome. In the past when I try to teach myself a skill for school it has been for one project and then I want to dump the knowledge, but with these things I want to continue to learn and get better. I also feel comfortable in the fact that there is a huge amount of information I do not know about python and HTML, but I am at the point where I would be able to research and figure out things without being overwhelmed.

**Hunter Hart
ISAT 340
Benton, Fall 2014**

Going into this semester I didn't know what to expect. I had just spent my summer in Berkeley, and I honestly just wanted to be back in California. I flew back into Virginia three days before school started, and surprisingly I only had pre-semester assignments in this class. I read through your email about how you were going to be at Burning Man for the first few class sessions, and I guess this is where I began to formulate my expectations for this class.

I would probably have to do a lot of work on research on my own (something I had done all summer), so I didn't mind that at all. I figured that any professor that was willing to embrace the entropy of Burning Man was probably someone I could relate to, and was someone who was open to different ways of learning. I read through the course overview and syllabus. I saw the subject matter, and to be honest only a couple of things interested me, but I decided that I had to at least try and learn the material, regardless of whether or not I applied it to a semester project. That was my semester goal, to at least learn the basics of the material outlined in the course syllabus. Over the course of the semester the goal I set for myself did not change; I continued to research the backbone provided in the course syllabus.

I definitely think I could have done more to achieve my semester goal. I was not fully committed to learning the material outlined in the course syllabus. I do think that I learned quite a bit of information, but not to the extent that would allow me to develop software under my own guidance. I have to be honest, I'm not very interested in programming, and I guess that's one of the things I have learned over

the course of this semester. However, I do think that in today's evermore-technological society knowledge programming knowledge will probably become one of the most sought after traits in modern scientists. Programs like "R" and Python illustrate the versatility that can be exploited by modern day scientists. As such, I will seek to continue my education in the world of programming and software development, however tedious and slow I may find it to be. I hope my honesty does not cause you any dismay.

I'd like to explain why I did not pursue a semester project. Like many other 21st century Americans I fully enjoy the luxury of technology. I have a smartphone, a laptop, and an HD television, and I depend on these items to entertain and make my life easier. Although, I don't really agree with this philosophy; that modern day humans should depend on technology to make their lives easier. I think that struggle, or at least the everyday struggle of life (like having to look up where to go on a map or figuring out when and where a bus is going), provides us with some knowledge or relationship to ourselves and others that would otherwise be undiscovered; These struggles force us to think and relate in new and distinct ways. Technology, by its very nature, removes struggle. It allows us to look up a bus schedule instead asking the person to our left or right when the bus comes, or to have a computer named Siri provide us with step by step directions rather than a local resident. Yes, it is easier and less awkward to type an address into a phone rather than ask a stranger for directions, but that choice robs you of a human experience.

I came to you early in the semester with an idea about creating an app for the Appalachian Trail. I started brainstorming and writing the social analysis aspect of what I thought would be a new way to hike the trail, but half way through I realized what my app would do. The Appalachian Trail is its own unique experience, and introducing a new technology to this experience would no doubt have a dramatic effect. Just imagine it, instead of asking their fellow hikers where to get the best food in town or which shelter to stay at next on the trail, everyone would be buried in an app suggesting what is in their best interest; it would literally ruin the legend of “trail magic.”

I do feel enlightened as I look back on this semester. I know doubt have learned things that I would not have without the guidance provided by your 340 course. The problems I encountered over the course of this semester have led me to a new way of thinking. I now seek to have novel and distinct experiences, free of technological experience. I know that this is somewhat impossible in modern day society but I fully strive to seek these experiences out.

I feel that both my successes and failures have contributed to my development as both a student and human being. I now know that if I truly want to educate myself in both aspects that I have to put in the necessary work to do so. I have come to know what I can truly excel in and what I cannot. Again, I am not interested in programming in itself, but I am most certainly interested in its applications in other realms of science.

Let's face it; your style of teaching is not for everyone. I appreciated the freedom to explore programming and software development in my own way, but

others may have not. I am a student, and as such I felt it was my duty not to completely waste my time by not educating myself. I feel that I had no real responsibility to anyone other than myself, which was very empowering. I know that at the end of the day I am solely responsible for having learned or failed to learn the course's subject matter, and as a result I do not recommend that you make any changes to the course structure or grading style.

I really did learn a great deal about software development this semester. Studying the process of software development really advanced my own understanding of my interests and myself. Although this course did not spur my interest in software development, I can say that I have gained an appreciation for its work and processes. I feel that the understanding that I have gained and the effort I put in over the course of this semester is something I can be proud of. From what I have experienced in this class the letter grade you report to the registrar cannot actually be representative of the values that were imprinted on me throughout this semester, but as for what you report to the registrar I would like to request an "A."

Gregory Baker

ISAT 340

Closing Narrative

12/12/14

Computers have always been something I have had a great interest in since a young age. I often undertake small project of my own either modifying a device I have or setting up some new software on my computer in order to experiment and learn. Recently I have been experimenting with Android and all of the possibilities creating in it especially after root access. I have also had some time with HTML and CSS. Coding has been a difficult thing for me to learn because it feels like there has been a disconnect between creating an actual program and learning the basics of coding. Over this semester I worked with Ricky Rizzo and Alissa Good with the idea to build a website using php which functioned to help ISAT students map out their four years in the program to help make scheduling less stressful. Other features were considered and planned but we decided to focus on one to begin with.

We first researched development environments as recommended by the class website. It took some time for everyone to set up their respective development environments during class as some of us used Windows and some Mac. There were also hold ups with securities on some computers. This was when I put Sublime Text on my new machine and started working with it. This was by far my favorite text editor I have used and will continue to keep it on my computer for future projects. I also set some time aside to learn how Github works and watch several videos about its function. I used the more basic functions with our group to help plan out our project and write some scenarios. I also learned how to allow other people to edit things I have published as well as how to create new forks for a project.

We worked on php and some HTML on websites like Codecademy as well as some others and finally conquered the php section. Once I finished PHP I felt as though I still wasn't really ready to create a whole project because even though I learned all the lessons online I saw no real way to apply them to what I wanted to do. This was very discouraging because as the first few weeks went on we were very excited to begin work on this site but after this point our excitement faded. In my discussion with Ricky I think we both felt fairly lost as to what to do from this point. After some discussion with Morgan we looked into Laravel as a framework for our website and for PHP coding. By this time we were fairly far along into the year and with finals coming up we only had time to watch some of the informational Laracasts to learn about how it worked. By this time we were at the end of the semester without our website formed. We were both very

disappointed about this but agreed that the online work we had done had benefited us. We both had more knowledge with PHP and Laravel than we did coming in and I had gotten a new environment setup as well as discovered Sublime Text. Ricky and I met before our final interview and discussed the semester. We agreed that while we had learned a lot we were disappointed we had not completed a project. We also agreed that one major thing holding us back was not knowing where to start on an actual project and applying the code to start. To personally overcome this I want to try to find a simple project online I can do to try to get myself over that hump of starting a coding project.

My own drawbacks for this class were probably time management and procrastination. May of my issues with the class boiled down to this one simple thing and it's something I have to overcome personally. I have been overcoming it slowly and have been getting started earlier on some projects. I think if I can get clear goals defined I should have more luck motivating myself to get started or continue working on a project. Since I spent so much of this project with my group trying to figure out where we should start we wasted lots of time before getting anything started. If we had been more proactive in finding out what our next steps were then we would have been more successful in carrying out our project. Another thing I believe my other members agreed on was the stress of other classes as well as trying to find internships capstone projects took away from some of our time to devote to this class. I found that this may be due to conflicting natures of other stricter college classes compared to the free learning in this class. When other classes demand time for a grade we as students give it to them. If every class operated in a free learning/no grade policy like this one does then the system would work much better as equal time could be devoted to the student's largest interests. I would love to be able to learn in an environment where all my classes had this approach.

As I reflect on my personal experience in the class I think about how I can improve myself from here. I would like to look into programming for Android and maybe look up lessons to build simple apps in order to give myself the first push into programming a full project. I have seen in my private projects that I can accomplish a lot once I get started. I have learned that in a normal college environment where classes are demanding a choose your own grade system can be both a blessing and a curse. The freedom allowed me to explore anything I wanted to during the class time however the strain of outside classes prevented me from dedicating the proper time to the class that I wanted to. In addition I was enlightened about myself in that I need to be a better goal setter. If all professors taught in a similar fashion I think college would be a more beneficial to students. It would definitely allow us to divide up time better and would probably reduce stress. I also think more students would leave college with an appreciation of what they learned

because they got to decide for themselves what they would learn. On the negative side I need to learn to motivate myself to work on projects that are not last minute projects. I want to be able to improve my ability to work on something long term and come out with a good finished project. This class really helped me see that side of myself and while I wish I already had that skill it is something I'm glad to have realized. I need to learn to be more of a goal setter when it comes to projects like this. I need to think of my goals as if they were assignments that I had to complete for a class. My time in this class has only made me want to learn more about the IKM sector in ISAT and has made me look forward to 341 next semester. I want to strive to get better in this area next semester and learn more about coding and complete a full project on my own. I think the knowledge I gained in this class has given me new knowledge for IKM and I am excited to expand upon that next semester.

Lastly I would like to ask you to report an A as my grade as I feel I have gained an appreciation for this subject. While I did fail to create a site I do believe my continued learning in the IKM field through this class gave me more interest in the curriculum and more passion to pursue it. This class pushed me to choose IKM as one of my two concentrations where some of my other classes failed to so I consider that a success. I'm currently enrolled to take 341 next semester to continue my concentration and very much look forward to continuing to study the subject. Thank you for giving me a chance to learn more about coding for myself as well as learning more about myself and looking into what I can improve. This class has made me want to be more goal oriented and I believe that is as good of a takeaway as the programming knowledge itself.

Michael Johnson

340 Exit Paper

When I signed up for this class, I expected to learn a lot. I took 252 last year and learned a lot. I was very successful in this learning environment. I like it because it is low stress. In my other classes, when I get a bad assignment back, I really do think that it affects me. It lowers my self confidence in that class and I stress out a lot. When I stress out a lot about a class, I start to overthink things, which is not good. I also came in with very little programming experience. I took a basic computer science class my senior year of high school just as an elective. It was mostly just JavaScript. I really enjoy programming and I want to learn as much as I can. I also took 252 with you and really enjoyed it.

I set two main goals when I first started this class. My first goal was to create property table dropdown menus for my ISAT 310. I wanted to do this because I hated how long it took to look up property tables. My second goal was to increase my knowledge with JavaScript because I kind of forgot most of what I learned last semester, but I still remembered a little. I remember that I only completed thirty five percent of the tutorials for JavaScript in Code Academy. This is another reason why I was enthusiastic about my idea. There is a lot that I still do not know about JavaScript. I did not know how to do dropdown menus until this semester.

As the semester went along, my goals evolved a little. I started my project right away. I used the internet for most of my help. I think this might have hindered my success more so than helped though. The reason I say this is because when I was stuck, I asked Paul for help and he said I made things a lot more complicated than they needed to be. I remember what you told us the first day of class, which was that you wanted us to leave showing that we made something. I really took that seriously because I thought that if I did not leave with something, I would feel like a failure.

I think that I was successful in many ways in this class. The first way I believe I was successful is because I did produce a project. I did not put the finishing touches on it, but at least I was able to create something. I'm am actually very intrigued in my project and possibly plan on completing it over break. I also think I was successful because I chose something that was close to heart for me and created something. I also believe I was successful because I learned a new thing in JavaScript which was my second goal coming into the class.

There are two things that I think I failed at in this class. The first failure was that I did not complete my project fully. I got all the aesthetics together, but I did not finish typing the necessary code to perform what I wanted it to perform. The next thing that I think I failed at was not learning a different language. I used the same languages as I did in 252. The reason I did this though was because I was very enthusiastic about the idea that I came up with. My original plan was actually to finish it somewhat soon so that it could help me and save me time on homework assignments for ISAT 310. Then,

the work started to pile up and it slowed down my progress in this class. I actually completed the majority of my project in the first half of the semester. This was because the workload was not to its peak. I do wish I learned another language though. I think I learned that I just need to ask for more help when I am stuck. I could have easily finished if I would have just asked. I do think that my failures can be attributed to the fact that this was the worst/hardest semester of my life. My other sectors required a lot of attention. However, I did spend time in this class as well.

I feel that I am a more educated person after taking this class. This class teaches me independent learning which is very important in life. There will not always be an instructor guiding you in life. I also feel more enlightened because I do not code a lot outside of school. I always like trying new things and learning new things.

I do believe that this class got me to know myself better. I think that one of the main things that helped me do this was the weekly self-evaluations. I always took them very seriously and never missed a week without filling them out except for the last one. The questions on there really made me think of my life and what is going on in the present. I believe that it is very important to reflect on your life every once in a while. I think you realize flaws better and can fix them more easily this way. Last semester, in 252, I learned that I can do anything if I put my mind to it. I read my 252 exit paper before I started this one and I realized that I came in with no confidence at the start of 252. By the end though, I felt awesome because I created something in the end and finished my project. This class also made me like coding a lot more than last year. I am glad I chose IKM as one of my sectors. I was not sure at first because I did not think my skills were up to par.

I very much liked the style of this class. Like I said before, I think it allows me to learn more and I think other students who actually did work would agree with me that they learned a lot as well. I also liked how you explained why you grade the way you do. You said that in programming, there are always new languages coming out that you will have to learn on your own, so it is important for us to learn on our own. I also liked how you said that grades make people perform worse. I totally believe this is true. I had a lot of experiences like this this semester. I have always been a bad test taker and the tests this semester were brutal. Once I receive the first bad grade, I just can't stop thinking about it and it affects me when I am taking the next one. The whole test I am thinking about how bad I am going to do instead of focusing and working out the problem. Because of this, I think it is the perfect way to teach this class and I would not change anything.

I would like you to report an A- for my grade in this class. I do think I learned a lot and I at least created something. However, I do not think I deserve an A because I do not think I devoted enough time. Like I said before, this semester was terrible for me. I never took a class in my life as hard as ISAT 310 in my life. I was so confused the whole semester and I hope I passed. 310 consumed most of my time. 301 also required a lot of hours per week. Between these two classes, I had very little time. I think this is the

main reason why I was not able to finish my project. If I had more time, I would have easily finished my project.

Coming into this class after taking 252, I expected to improve my coding skills, and maybe learn some new programming language(s). I really enjoyed learning how to code in 252 so I had hopeful expectations coming into 340. Specifically, I hoped to not only improve my basic programming skills, but also learn deeper into connecting a database to a program, so that things can actually be stored. As a whole, I expected to have a greater understanding of software development overall (as the course name reflects). And most importantly I expected to learn more about myself and have an enjoyable semester!

With those expectations, my main goal for the semester was to successfully build a program for a golf practice round. A practice round is a very important part of a golf tournament for any competitive golfer. During a practice round, it is imperative to establish a game plan and gain an understanding the golf course. Recording information such as landing and layup areas, carry yardages, charting of the greens, and overall course conditions are just a few things that important to document that would eliminate paper yardage books and make the practice round process more efficient. Currently, most players will record this information on paper yardage books that can be purchased in the pro shop. Many courses do not have yardage books, and especially in college practice rounds, yardage books are not always available. I planned to create a digital version of a yardage book. Ideally, it would one day be a website/app that includes courses all over the world, and you can simply choose the course you are going to play, and the layouts of the holes with yardage and other information will already be provided. For the short term and my own personal use, I wanted to create a simple version that can be used at any golf course. Overall, I hope to make my practice rounds more productive and improve my performance.

Over the course of the semester, my goals definitely were modified. One of my first short term goals was to research Google Maps, and how that could be incorporate into my program. Initially, I found it really neat that some golf courses, especially famous ones, were traced on the regular map view, which is very similar to what a yardage book looks like. However, I soon realized that was only completed for a few courses, and making the actual tracings could not be included in the Google Maps API. However, I did find that the satellite version of Google Maps would work just fine and there is actually tools that can be included that allow you to draw shapes, lines, and drop pins on the map. This would work ideally for what I am trying to create, so I decided that that would be best to incorporate.

One of my other goals as the semester progressed was to learn the language Python. You had suggested that this would be beneficial for me because I plan to concentrate in Telecommunications, and it would be applicable there, especially as it is one of Dr. Salib's favorites. I was really looking forward to getting into learning this, but did not get quite as a far as I would have liked. I have gotten some good learning done using Codecademy, but I did not gain quite the understanding that I had hoped for in the semester. However, along with my program, I also plan to continue working towards learning Python, especially because I know it will benefit me in the future.

As the semester began to come to a close and I did not have as great an understanding of Python as I would have liked, I decided I at least wanted to put together the framework for what my program could look like in the future. I used some jQuery in 252, so I decided to go back to that to get a feel for what I wanted a graphical interface to look like. Because jQuery is very straightforward to code with, and I already understood how it worked, it worked well for me to get a draft of an interface together. For the future, I plan on looking into other ways to provide a visually pleasing graphical interface that incorporates some new skills I could learn.

My successes this semester, I felt, came in finding something that I really wanted to create and taking steps toward completing that goal. For the future, I am confident I can incorporate the Google Maps shape elements into finalizing my practice round program. I did not reach my ultimate goal, but I am very pleased because I truly like what I chose to work on, and because it would be so helpful to me, I truly am excited to continue working on it. Over any of my breaks, I will have much more time than I had over the semester to work on truly making some progress. Along with this being applicable to me, I know it would also be helpful to other golfers

I think my failures this semester just came overall with bad time management. It has always been an issue of mine, and I still have not seemed to figure it out. Along with that I also realized throughout the course of the semester I was very unprepared for the workload I was going to have. Regarding my program specifically, I've run into some problems in Google Maps with getting parts to works such as the pin or search bar. Also Google Maps did not integrate with jQuery as well as I would have liked. These are small challenges that most likely can be easily overcome with just a little bit of research. Overall, I think I just need to do some more research and really delve into the project and get some good work in.

Not necessarily a success, failure, or even challenge, but more of a decision that I made this semester was to work on my own. In 252 I worked on project in groups, which allowed for collaboration and more coding overall. However, I knew that I had lab partners in both 253 and 360, and trying to work in another group meeting along with golf commitments would probably be nearly impossible. I also knew that what I was working on was very applicable to me specifically, and maybe not as interesting to many other people. I felt that working on my own would be most beneficial to me, which I still feel was best. It allowed me to work on my own time, and learn about myself as a person as well. Although I worked alone, I realized how valuable it is to seek out help, and collaborate with others, which is something I plan on improving upon in the future.

Although my semester did not go as intended, as many things seem to do, I still feel that I fulfilled JMU's Mission Statement of producing "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." I definitely believe that I am more educated and enlightened now than when I began this semester. Obviously, as a student it is our mission to get an education to move forward with our lives. However, we are technically paying for an education, so it is up to us to work hard to not only get good grades, but to become educated in something that you enjoy and want to pursue in the future. For me, I love technology and computers and cannot think of anything

that I'd like to do more with my life. So both IKM and Telecom are very interesting for me, so it is important for me to spend my time on both of those. Although I plan to concentrate in Telecom, 340 has definitely enlightened me in a subject area that I am very interested in, and definitely cannot wait to pursue in the future, hopefully helping to lead a meaningful and productive life.

Regarding knowing myself better, and what is in store for the future, I feel that the activities I completed absolutely added to these things. Although both 340 and 252 are programming classes and, I can also say I learned a great deal about myself, which in my opinion may be just as important. Having a class with no guidelines can let it get put to the back burner, especially if other courses seem to "get in the way." However, I learned this semester especially, that you need to make time for everything. It may be difficult, but if you use your time to your advantage, things will get done. Along with that, the things I learned about myself over the course of the semester will absolutely go into use in the future. Knowing how to improve your lifestyle is one of the most important things in life, along with being successful and achieving your goals. Although I may not have specifically reached all of my goals for this class this semester, I have learned how important it is to set goals for yourself, and work your best to achieve those goals. Choosing goals that are either attainable or can be worked towards in the future is also very important.

I do enjoy this style of course. Although it may allow for slacking on some people's parts, I truly feel that I learn from this style of course. Not only did I learn about the course topic, but I learned about myself, both good and bad. As I stated, I know that time management is something I need to work on more than anything. However, I also learned that if you do put the hard work into something, you really can achieve your goals. I also liked the weekly check-ins that were incorporated in the class. Although they can get tedious, and I did not complete them all, it does keep you in check when you may not be paying the proper attention to the class as a whole. Because the class gives you the opportunity to work on your own, you really don't have to come to class, but I really tried to do this as often as possible to work on things if I could, and also just to make sure that I was around. It is hard to suggest things for using this class structure in the future, just because everyone does learn so differently. And allowing people to complete things on their own truly can allow for either great accomplishment or a lack of.

To close, I would like an A in 340 for the semester. Although I did not quite complete the work that I would have liked to this semester, I am very happy because I love the project that I chose to work on this semester. And I really plan to continue working on this project, because it is so useful and relevant to me. Hopefully you agree that it really is important to put work into something relevant that will not just end as the semester ends. Of anything this semester, that is what I will take away. Choose to put your time into something that you appreciate and can continue to work on even though the semester may come to a close. Thanks for another great semester and I look forward to seeing you in the future!

Kevin Moore

ISAT 340

End of Semester Meeting

12/12/14

Coming into this class I expected something more like ISAT 252, I have had no experience creating apps or websites. I was expecting more of an overview of a programming language or operating system, not to create an app or website. IKM was not my original sector but due to scheduling complications I was somewhat forced to take it, so I really had no idea where to begin. As the class began I looked into which operating system to use as well as github. After learning I would be best off with Kivy for creating my app, since I already had some knowledge in Python, my course goal was to design and make an app since that seemed to be the main objective of the class, however, my personal objective was to gain a better understanding Kivy and python together. A couple weeks into the class I was in a group beginning to look into an app for musicians to get together to jam. The following week one member left the group. The next few weeks were basic design and system layout of the app. The App was originally to be sort of like tinder but for musicians where a musician and basic info would pop up such as; instrument(s) played, style/genres, and location based on how far away they were from your current location. From there the user would select yes or no to be sent the persons contact information. The final app however turned out to be more of a Facebook type program where the main page would be a sortable list (based on genre/instrument looking for) and clicking on a post would take you to that person's page containing a more detailed description of their musicality along with contact information. As an advanced idea we thought of creating a messaging system through the app to eliminate easily visible e-mails and/or phone numbers. Our idea was to have the following screens to begin with, using dropdown text boxes and button widgets to move screen to screen; welcome screen, sign in, sign up, account page, main posting page The next few weeks were spent coding which decreased exponentially very quickly. Around that point my app partner and I decided to cancel the app since work on it had about stopped and no one seemed excited to continue work on it. Being more than halfway through the semester my goals of creating an app had been put on the backburner. My main goals were now just to gain an overall view of Kivy and app development. I would still do some work on the app but only here and there. To begin learning Kivy and its use with Python I went to the Kivy website and began researching what it takes to build an app. I also watched a series of YouTube videos on the different uses of Kivy and how to make them android compatible. To practice my coding I started with coding and testing different Kivy layouts as well as when and where they would be used in an app or

website. For example the game minesweeper used most likely a grid layout or could be made using a relative type layout. The game is made up of a board of button widgets where when clicked a number is shown as well as the same number that happen to be near that certain widget. This game uses parent-children widgets where when a button is clicked that happens to be a 2, the children of that widget will also reveal their number 2. This is a simple thing to do adding widgets into other widget to react together or have the clicking of widget A cause something to happen to widget B. Another example I noticed was creating a home button, on websites where the page logo sits at the top of the screen and if clicked returns you to the home screen is a family of widgets, where the root widget is a button widget with a text widget child. Inside these widgets one can easily change color, font size, background color. Some widgets can even use an uploaded picture for a background or a stencil type feature to create a clean customizable text label. The video played widget can be used to play a video along with ways to allow the control of video and screen size. I then began looking at different ways to clean up a page instead of having 50 widgets find a way to only have 10 using parent-children widgets but also things such as drop down menus. Some widgets I looked into for this were the accordion widget that shows a stack of buttons that when one is clicked it is expanded and closes when another is opened. The pop-up widget is another similar way to do this which would cause information to pop up when a widget is clicked. The bubble widget can be used as either a way to show information or move page to page, it is sort of like the drop down box that pops up when you right click. After learning some of the basic widgets the last couple weeks of the semester were spent playing around with different widgets and seeing how they can work together.

My failures are that I was unable to complete my app. However I am proud of what I have learned in Kivy based off of what time I spent on the class. I also feel I could have gone to class more. It's difficult at 8am walking into class and seeing only 2 or 3 other people, usually working together as a group. I would have and am still interested in what other groups have come up with and designed, which isn't possible when there's only 1 group in the classroom. If I knew this would have been a lot of individual at home class style I would have looked into another class. That's just how I learn better, in a group setting with lots of interaction. This semester has shown me I really need to practice working alone and learning on my own. I think the fact the first two weeks were spent with the TA's not doing much really set the tone for a slow semester, which I personally could have spent more time working. If I were to retake this class I would find a way to make class more mandatory, nowhere in the syllabus on f14.umatter is there anything about class attendance. Maybe instead of weekly surveys, make it so each student must come in 2 days a week (or 1 time if the class meets twice a week) and discuss their project/what's going on with them in the class, or if not in class stop in during office hours. Another idea would be make the first month mandatory that way there's time for the class to get to know each other and help each other brainstorm, giving students more options when

they need help. In many of my ISAT classes I spend lots of time outside of class working with fellow classmates on the class, I feel I didn't really get to know many people in this class other than one of my lab members. It would be helpful if there was a way to view your past weekly surveys to see how far you've come along of to make sure you don't miss a weekly goal and then miss it completely, or if you have to restart your project you can look back to see what previous goals worked and what didn't. The best way to improve this class would be a way to have a big bang right out of the gate aiming that everyone has groups already into their projects within the first couple weeks that way when people eventually stop showing up they will have a solid starting ground. I really liked the meditation done in class; I think if that would have continued to be done I would have gone to class more often. I firmly believe getting everyone on the same mental state helps in the group learning process. I really enjoyed the class website, very helpful and much easier to use than others. It was nice having everything there rather than a big folder of unorganized papers, and run much better than canvas.

As for the grading in the class maybe do a choose your own grade system where the student gives a grade and you give a grade and the final grade is an average of the two, or something like 65% student 35% you. You could even add a percent for completing and accomplishing weekly survey goals. I have been in previous classes that use the points accumulation system and this class I decided to try the pick your own grade system, I like them both however, I feel the accumulation is a better system for me personally. The accumulation helped to keep me on track where choose your own grade I would do a ton of work one week then none the next, it became difficult to gauge how far along I was or should be. For my grade I believe I deserve a A- because even though I don't have a finished app I put in the effort to attempt to make one but when the app failed instead of giving up and calling it quits I rather just changed my goals for the class. I am happy with what I have learned based on the time spent on the class. I feel after this semester I have a much better understanding of process of creating apps and websites as well as the actual widgets and layout that are inside the app. From the JMU mission statement I do feel more educated. I have new knowledge of my learning and working preferences as well as a better understanding of what I wish do in the future. My concentration is engineering and manufacturing, with energy and IKM sectors. However, I believe programming and script writing is an extremely valuable important part of society it's just not for me. ISAT 252 was a good intro class but diving more in depth to everyday use showed me it's not something I would want to do every day as a job. I would not want to go into work every day typing and testing lines of code. I do however find the skills I have learned in both ISAT 340 and 252 extremely valuable tools for me in the future, much more so than other ISAT classes I have taken in the past. Not only the actual coding but more importantly problem solving skills that have helped and will help me not only in other ISAT classes but hopefully in my future as well.

ISAT 340 Narrative Essay

-Marshall Mayhew

Reflection of this semester has actually been a very common activity for myself over these last four or five weeks. As we close the semesters I have developed some goals that are personally attainable but will require some intelligence and character growth, but the goals that I have set are not too far stretched that they can be reached.

I have had a very eventful semester with a lot of ups and downs. Unfortunately, the "downs" from this semester have weighed a bit more detrimental to me in comparison to "downs" that I have experienced in the past. This semester, I found myself putting myself in very unhealthy situations. There were a couple of unfortunate events that occurred in my personal life during the semester that were distracting at times; however, I thought I was very focused on school work this year; however, I do not think that my grades show that. On the upside to those down, I have learned a lot. I have learned a great deal academically in all my classes and improved study skills; I have expanded my social horizon from being more involved in ISAT and my peers that I am taking classes with and through being more involved in club soccer; and I have learned a good deal about myself and have reflected on what I need to do to take the next step forward to be where I desire to be.

I believe that I know myself and my personal habits accompany my personality well as I have done a lot of reflection on how I conduct myself on daily basis. I learned to do that at the summer camp that I work at, I know that I have told you about when my attendance and participation was better earlier this semester. There are many lessons that we take away from our time at the camp that range from gratitude to sportsmanship, but there are many others that we have. At camp I learned to not lie about my faults; if I were to, I would only be yielding improvement and personal growth. Not to be clique, I could go on for days about my experiences at and how I have applied them to events that have developed in real world; however, that would be an unnecessary detour. I just know that the camp in my life is a major contributor to how I reflect on the day and also how I conduct myself. Camp has also helped me reflect on how I approached this class, which has developed into something that I wish I would have done differently if I were to do it again.

At the beginning of the semester, I was fairly excited for all of my classes and was excited for 340. I picked up the interest for IKM and programming last year when I took 252 and found it to be the best grade of my semester. I had heard great things about the class and I was looking forward to learning more within the computer world. What I did not anticipate was how

much the work load really increased your junior year. I set goals for myself academically and personally and in this class I knew my learning curve would be a bit delayed but I wanted to ensure that I took a good deal of computer knowledge out of it. Unfortunately, I did not let things go that way. I started off strong at the beginning of year, staying on top of the class website reading exploring project ideas, learning about everything that came with building a web based app, and then I lost track of things as my work load got bigger and bigger. I do not lie to myself when reflecting on my faults. I know I am not the most intelligent students, but I think I am creative and enjoy gaining knowledge even though it comes a bit slower to me; I also know that there are a lot of things that I need to work on as a student. Once reaching the middle of the semester, I lost track of my subject, I wasn't getting much sleep because I wasn't finishing work until late in the night. I also found myself waking up at odd hours to finish an assignment, really accumulating some serious sleep deprivation. I have a problem with over analyzing situations and even just homework problem. I consider myself a hard worker and like to put 100% into everything I do, but I usually do just that and take too much time on one task, which doesn't let me reach the other things I have to accomplish. I would then get frustrated with myself and loose a positive attitude, which I find never to really be productive and do not enjoy it.

During some of the reflection it is frustrating looking at how I let myself go and I can see some very specific instances where my decision making skills were not where I wanted them to be. I believe that I have good character and a strong integrity. I wish that I left a better impression with this class; however, I won't lie to myself but I really did not give it my best. It wasn't that I was not doing work because I am usually spend about 5-8 hours in the library a day. One thing that I think about when looking about how I would have done differently is provided myself a better structure to allow myself not to set myself up for a struggle for success, basically failure. I have seen how as the workload as increased over the last couple of semesters, my daily structure has deteriorated and begun to work against me. I know that if I want to learn from my mistakes and be in an all-around healthier state I need to be more disciplined in sticking to the systemic structure because it will help me put myself where I need to be if I want to succeed in the goals that I set myself. I know that there are a couple of further steps I need to take for it to actually happen but I know that it is a start.

I was actually planning on writing this essay to you but in letter form because I knew that we meet with you at the end of the year. At the beginning of the process, I thought I knew exactly what I was going to say but my reflection process lead me to some more progressive thoughts after determining that I failed to reach my goal and pinpointing the mistakes I made, which lead me to this failure. I don't like the word failure because how heavy it sits in the

society, but there is something to take out of it and I see now that it was self-inflicted but is something that needed to happen because I know I needed to change some logistics if I were to accomplish what I want to accomplish here at JMU. When it comes to the JMU mission statement, I do feel some association with it. I am more enlightened with myself after this semester, I have always been a people pleaser and tend to lose sight of personal gain when I make decisions, but I have learned that there are areas where selfishness is not as ugly as it sounds, but necessary in the pursuit of knowledge and growth. As I know I make a lot of mistakes. I try to celebrate them, but I think they have to be celebrated in the right way. So I hope I can take the outcome and the events from this semester and turn them into something that I am happy about and lead to a healthier living with more enjoyment in my daily activities. Like Lord Avebury said, "Most of us can, if we choose, make this world a palace or a prison."

For my grade for the semester, I honestly hesitate to give myself an A; however, I would like to choose an A for this course. Though I did not complete my concrete goals, I think I did take a lot of my experience with this class and did learn a little about web-based program construction. I know because of my decisions in this course, my path for this sector will be much tougher in the future, but hopefully I will follow through with the steps that intend to take towards a healthier life, which will then aid me in being successful in accomplishing what comes in the future.

Cody Labriola
ISAT 340
Dr. Benton
12/8/14

Setting Attainable Goals In Response To Failure

As one grows older they are able to make their own decisions in life. Whether they are good decisions or bad decisions, those are the decisions you have to live with, learn from, and change if need be. I've made many bad decisions that I've learned from and even more good ones that I have also learned in my life, and it is that knowledge that has made me who I am today. One of the best decisions I have made was coming to James Madison University. 4 years ago I came into college as an engineering major thinking that my passion for math and science would help me excel. Little did I know that high levels of physics and calculus would be my career if I were to pursue engineering. Sophomore year I began searching for other options, which is when I stumbled upon the Integrated Science and Technology department. Still having the opportunity to engage in math and science I switched my major. I decided to concentrate in energy with sectors in environment and IKM.

Deciding on my second sector (IKM) was a difficult decision. I did not want to be a programmer simply due to the long hours in front of a computer and all the typing it requires, but after taking 252 I realized I was good at it. Algorithms came to me as easy as riding a bike. All semester I didn't think I really put forth much effort but was still managing an A in the class so I was doing something right. I was not the type of student that would stand out as one to excel or one that would above in beyond to get recognized by the professor. In 252 we used visual basic for our final project and it was our task to write code for a radioactive decay calculator. I did not have a partner and therefore got assigned to work with a student that had been excelling in the class all semester so at first I was a bit hesitant that I would not know what to do. Once our first 'meeting' came around she showed me what she had started and it made no sense at all. I tried to debug it and fix what she had but it just wasn't worth the time so we both decided just to start over. I told her how it should work exactly but she didn't really understand my logic. I then said, " Why don't we do this. Since I hate typing ill just tell you what to write and you can type what I say." She agreed and off we went. Within 45 minutes we had a working program that needed some cosmetic work but was functioning just like it should be with no errors. That one meeting was all it took to receive an A on that project and an A in the class. After receiving that grade I decided that maybe this is something that I can pursue so I chose IKM as my sector.

As my senior year came around it was time to take my last IKM class, which was this class, ISAT 340. Coming into this class I did not know how the grading system would work. I was expecting large projects, tests, and quizzes but after the first week I realized it was all on me. I get out of this class what I put in. Throughout my entire academic career I have always been the type of student that works better on my

own without much of a deadline. I enjoy using my creativity on projects and not following an exact rubric, which is what this class offers. Initially I set high goals where I would learn objective C, HTML, and Java in order to create a mobile application that either has to do with my senior project or social hobbies but unfortunately that did not happen. One of my mottos in life is “to shoot for the stars because at least if you fall short you’ll land on the moon.” At the start of this semester I planned to create a workout application so that one can customize their workouts as well as a website for my senior project. As I dove into the application I hit many unexpected speed bumps, not with the programming, but with functionality of my home computer and time in my schedule. With this, I put the application on the back burner and began to focus on a website for my senior project.

My senior capstone is a residential home energy audit and analysis of a Harrisonburg resident. The scope of this project is to benefit members of our community with knowledge we have learned throughout the ISAT program. This project has led to the discovery that there are simple measures a homeowner can take in order to save them money on their utilities. My goal was to outline these in a website so that someone can calculate their annual savings if they were to make a specific change to their household. I have drawn out how I want it to look and when it came time to put it on the computer, I began with wordpress. I did not have the financials to buy a domain or a premium package of wordpress so I was stuck with the traditional blog version of wordpress. After trial after trial I could not get a design that would suffice my liking so I gave up. I made the decision to take a couple weeks off and dive deeper into my senior project to see if a website was even a viable option. With my spare time I changed my goals for this course and began code academy with my friends account. After a couple of lessons I began to get the hang of HTML and CSS. I started on paper drawing out how I want my website to look and most importantly the algorithms that would be involved in the annual savings calculator. Little did I know that this was going to be a monstrous task. I tried a couple times typing up code but I never got anywhere with it. This is when I realized the coding is not near as easy as I made it out to be when I knew visual basic. With the semester coming to a close and Thanksgiving break just a few days away I changed my goals once again. From shooting for the stars to landing on moon then coming back down to Earth, I set some realistic goals; goals that were attainable and did not pertain specifically to this class. Given it is my senior year I needed to start applying for jobs and scheduling interviews. I was struggling in one of my classes so I decided to focus all my attention on this class and put my IKM sector on the back burner until I could get my other grade up. These new set of goals were priority types of goals that would impact my future. My plan is to still do a website for my senior project but work on it next semester and get help with the calculator over winter break because my friend back home is a computer science major that is excellent at programming and he offered to help out.

As for ISAT 340, I did choose the “choose-your-own-grade” policy and based on what I learned I think that I deserve an A. This is merely because even though I do

not have much to show in terms of work pertaining to this class, I did put forth a great deal of effort but that is not why I would give myself an A. I learned so much about myself and what learning styles works for me, and even more so how to prioritize and set attainable goals. At the beginning of the semester I believed that setting high goals was the way to achieve what I want but by the end of the semester this was not the case. I learned that I need to set attainable goals in order to achieve them because if I'm focused on doing things I'm not capable of I'm more often than not, going to fail. In this I'm not saying that I need to aim low, but I need to set goals that are hard to achieve but not impossible. I will leave with one quote, "The difference between average people and achieving people is their perception and response to failure" - John C. Maxwell. I am not scared of failing because it is what I learn from failing that makes me who I am. Failing is a good thing because you make changes that are necessary in order to be successful and I think that this semester is a great example of that. So I am giving myself an A, not because I have a lot of quality work to show for it but because I have quality lessons that I learned about myself to show how successful I want to be.

Kyle Dewey
ISAT 340
Professor Morgan Benton
End of Semester Narrative

Initially, when I enrolled for this class I expected it to be similar to my other ISAT courses, except it would focus on computer programming instead of environment, energy, or biotechnology. I looked forward to learning more about something that I had previously known little about. I knew the concept of computer programming was difficult, but at the same time it was very interesting because of the multitude of applications it has in today's world. After the first day of class, I knew my expectations would change completely in a positive way. Before attending class, I assumed it might be another one of the classes that would consist of long, difficult lectures in which the professor simply reads off the PowerPoint slides. However, it was the complete opposite; it was a fun, enjoyable, and open class that consisted of you learning at your own pace. I enjoyed the freedom to work on what interests you as well as work at your own pace. It was nice because if I had a busy week I could put my project aside and work twice as hard on it the next week. Honestly, I was a little nervous on how I would perform compared to other students in the class who might have had previous experience. I have to admit I was not the brightest and some concepts did trip me up, but I believe I tried my best to grasp the concepts and apply them to my best ability. I was filled with joy when professor Benton explained his unique teaching methods. Although it was different than others professor, I thought his style of teaching was brilliant and fun. He transformed what could've been a boring lecture into a fun, productive, and informative class. I expected to learn a fair amount of computer programming by utilizing Code Academy, other online resources, professor Benton, and other students in the class. However, since it was my second coding class I did not expect to master a programming language or create a perfect webpage/app. I just wanted to put countless hours into the class and try to understand the basic concepts so that I can use my skills to eventually create something I am passionate about.

In the beginning of the course I set a few main learning goals for myself: I wanted to grasp the basic concepts of computer programming, continue research for my fishing website, build research for my residential energy conservation methods, and attempt to create a webpage for it. Over the course of the semester, I filled out numerous weekly-evaluations. After taking the learning goals seriously week after week I realized that I had learned things about myself that I never took the time to look at before. I also realized that I was getting more accomplished, whether it was for this class, other classes, or personal goals. It also gave me something to strive for. After taking ISAT 252 and doing many of these learning goals week after week, it inspired me to continue doing that outside of class. I looked into some apps for the iPhone that would allow me to be more productive and set weekly goals for myself. After talking to another student and reading countless reviews, I found a free app called Wunderlist. This app allowed me to be more productive with my life. That includes making learning goals, personal goals, to do lists, school related projects,

and much more. I was able to quickly jot these things down in the app as soon as they popped into my head. I could set daily or weekly reminders in order to help motivate me to complete the goals. Once I was done I could check it off and it would be gone from the list; however, you can refer back to all the checked off items in order to remind you of what you have accomplished. This app has transformed my life and made me much more productive. These weekly self evaluations allowed me to set weekly goals for myself, which mainly consisted of learning computer programming concepts, working on Code Academy, continuing research on my General Fishing Knowledge webpage, and working on my energy conservation methods for residents. As the semester progressed I was able to change how I set goals. I still set goals; I would just try to raise the bar for those goals. This presented a challenge for myself at times, but I believe that challenges induce positive stress that helps you grow as a person. I did set and complete several personal goals, which was refreshing once I completed them. Some of my personal goals included applying for jobs, preparing for interviews, and attempting to break my bad habit of procrastination. I was very satisfied with myself when I would set the bar high and reach those high expectations. Although I did not reach them every time I could at least say that I tried my best. Therefore, I can say that over the semester my goals evolved from simple class goals, to more difficult class goals as well as the same transformation for some beneficial, personal goals.

I felt successful the minute I began completing my weekly goals. Although I did not master coding or create some significant webpage/app, I believe I succeeded in learning a substantial amount about computer programming and in building knowledge to be able to pursue the creation of a webpage that interests me. Ultimately, I felt the most successful in gathering the massive amount of knowledge required for my General Fishing Knowledge webpage and energy conservation webpage. This was an idea I came up with last semester in ISAT 252. I just began fishing and I have an interest in learning more about it; however, I don't have a "teacher" that can teach me about it, and I couldn't find any webpages online that would teach me the basics behind the sport. Thus I decided that I was going to learn by doing. Essentially I would research anything and everything about fishing by utilizing books, webpages, videos, magazines, friends, and field research. I also found that talking to people makes for the best kind of research. My grandpa is an avid fisherman. I would call my grandpa a couple times a week to discuss his knowledge of fishing, and even hear some stories about his experiences. This was very important to me because this is my grandpa on my dad's side, who I don't get to visit very often. This research allowed me to have some excellent conversations about him and his life, and it brought me closer than ever to my grandpa, which meant a great deal to me. I did not realize that Fishing had so much information; therefore, it took me countless man hours and nearly all semester to gather the information. Also I was working on another webpage, which ended up turning into a blog about ways residents can conserve energy and save money. I was working on Code Academy all semester, but three quarters of the way through my friend and fellow senior capstone partner (Collin Campbell) told me about Word Press. The way he explained it made it sound very simple to create a webpage. Since I was

struggling with coding, I decided I would give this a try, and sure enough it was very user friendly and simple to develop a webpage. I was able to create what initially I thought was going to be a webpage into what turned out to be somewhat of a blog about energy conservation methods. I continued to work on that along with my fishing research and Code Academy. Another thing that I worked on for several hours a week every week of the semester was finding a job for after I graduate. This was one of my main personal goals that I wanted more than anything.

Unfortunately, my hard work hasn't paid off yet because I haven't had any offers but I have set up countless interviews for over winter break, which is a step in the right direction. I will continue to pursue this personal goals as I progress through my senior year of college in hopes that I can land my dream job. Even though I did not 100% complete all my goals I know that I tried my best to complete them, and I believe that the amount of effort I put into trying to accomplish my goals makes this semester a success.

I believe that I failed my goal to create some significant webpage/app for my fishing webpage. Although I gathered research, I did not have the skills to code it and make it look excellent. Unfortunately, computer programming is one of those topics that I don't understand. I learned that coding does not click for me as it does for others, but I believe that if I put the time and effort into continuing with my Word Press blog I can express my ideas and opinions through that. Procrastination and time management were two issues of mine this whole semester; therefore, in order to fix those problems I will work on organizing my assignments and goals and setting reminders on my phone using Wunderlist to complete them in a timely fashion. I plan on continuing to use Word Press and use that to make my fishing website after I finish with my energy conservation blog, also I plan on continuing to use the Wunderlist app to set and accomplish goals for myself and other classes.

I feel way more educated than I did when I initially came into the class. I knew little about programming but now I feel as if I could have a conversation with someone about it. I feel way more enlightened than I did coming into this class. Knowing more about something I had little previous knowledge on as well as knowing more about myself has enlightened me lots. Although I have not figured out what I want to do in the future, I believe that learning more about myself was an excellent first step.

Learning about my weekly goals and semester goals will allow me to learn about my interests and possible life goals. After my internship last summer I know what I don't want to do, and that is sit in front of a computer all day. Although at times it was interesting, I enjoyed my job much more when I was out in the field and traveling to different job locations. Also I realized that I don't want to pursue computer programming as a career. Unfortunately I don't grasp computer programming as well as others, and I don't enjoy working at a computer all day; therefore, I don't believe this would be the best career path for me.

Like I said earlier, I admired professor Benton for embracing this style of teaching. I feel as if I learned just as much, if not more, than a class where I would have to sit through a boring lecture class. I really enjoyed the freedom to work on what

interests you as well as the freedom to work on it when you want to. I wouldn't recommend that anything be changed.

I would like to you to report an A to the registrar. I believe that I deserve an A after the amount of hours I put into this course. Although putting in hours is important, I believe the amount of information I conceptualized was phenomenal and well worthy of an A. I came into the course knowing little about computer programming was, and I left knowing a great deal about it. Although I did not complete all of my goals, I believe that I learned a great deal and tried extremely hard to complete my goals. I am very proud of the amount of research I gathered for fishing and look forward to building that on Word Press. I am also proud of the web blog I developed for energy conservation, and I hope it can help residents save money in the future. Since I am passionate about the energy field, I have motive to keep posting what I learn into the blog in order to help others learn. I believe my hard work and dedication makes me deserving of this grade.

Thanks for a fun and knowledgeable semester! Have a great winter break!

Will Sharp

Narrative Essay

As I had taken this class last semester, my expectations coming into this class were high. I really loved the education freedom that I had in your last class, and I was not disappointed this time around. However, to be perfectly honest, a lot of my attention went elsewhere this semester. For most of the semester, I was interviewing to find a job for after graduation. This took up a lot of my time unfortunately, which didn't really let me focus as much time as I would've liked too on this class. I would've loved to learn a lot more about responsive design and frameworks and a whole mess of other stuff, but schedule really hindered this pursuit. I still feel like I was successful though.

In spite of this large time commitment, I still managed to meet some learning goals. For starters, as I believe I have discussed with you, I have been trying to learn Russian for about a year. I enjoy learning it, but I found my learning style not consistent enough. I set out to design a program to assist me in this endeavor. I found a simple dictionary text file of the 5000 most common English words and used that to iterate through. Once a day, at about 4:00 pm, my program would e-mail me a random word from the list and I would look up the Russian equivalent. This project was really awesome to me, because it was one of the first times I've ever used my knowledge in programming to actually do something for me instead of school. I think it helped a lot too; even if I didn't necessarily remember the word I had looked up that day, it reminded me to keep trying to learn. I had no plans of making this program at the beginning of the semester but somehow I just stumbled upon the idea and I went with it. I think that concept is what your class is about at its core; to come up with an idea and run with it. Now, I have large plans for my little program. I want to create a web crawler to sprawl through Russian-speaking websites and count the most commonly used words or phrases. I realized that my little dictionary isn't good enough because not all English words have equivalents in Russian. I think this project will be difficult but it excites me to think of the results. It also excites me to build on something I built all by myself.

Mariya and I also worked on a project together this semester. From the beginning, we sought out to learn C#. We definitely have a much better understanding of it, although I think there is a lot more to learn. We created a relatively simple calculator in entirely C#. We wanted to add some odd functionality to it, like time addition or something like that, but we ended up not getting around to that unfortunately. I would've liked to get more done on this project, but we both had fairly hectic schedules this semester so I think with the time we had, we used it fairly effectively.

As far as failure goes, I think not all my goals were met. I had wanted to learn a lot more in this semester but I didn't. I only have myself to blame for that, I wish I didn't have to look for a job and I could've really made something spectacular this semester. There's lots of things I can say I wanted to do, but what matters is what I did. I didn't learn as much as possible, and I regret that.

I don't really know if I feel more educated or more enlightened. I mean what do those entail exactly? Maybe I could convince myself I feel more enlightened because I learned that I can use my knowledge of programming in ways I didn't think about? Or maybe I feel educated because I learned a lot more Russian than I would have without my application? I'm really not sure.

I definitely came to know myself a little better this semester, but again, I don't know how to necessarily express that in words. What does that mean exactly? Does it mean a sense of comfort, or contentment, or what? Maybe its confidence. If it's confidence than sure, I am more confident in my abilities as a programmer I guess but I don't know if I attribute this to the application I wrote or me successfully getting a job. It's hard to dissect a period of time and find what made me feel a certain way. If I had to guess, I would proscribe the confidence to landing a job. I really think that's a difficult question in of itself; what does it mean to know yourself at all?

I really enjoy this style of learning because it allows me to explore things I probably wouldn't be able to explore in a traditional class. If I took this class again I would want the same kind of environment because it fosters independent learning and pursuit of knowledge. This semester, because of my schedule, I didn't really take advantage of this opportunity, which I do regret. I do feel like I made the most out of my situation though. This is why I would like you to report an A to the registrar's office. Even though my schedule was hectic, I still found time to get involved in a project that was far too interesting to pass on and learn a whole new programming language. I would have loved to learned more and get involved in more, but that's now how it worked out unfortunately.

Mariya Medovar
12/10/14
ISAT 340

Reflection

My expectations of this class were a little different than the expectations I had for ISAT 252 last semester. ISAT 252 was supposed to be more about learning the basics of programming while this class was more advanced and about actually developing software. I found that the two classes were pretty much the same. This could be because I already had the knowledge learned in ISAT 252 before I started that class. I don't remember if I expected this, but I did want this class to have more structure; not with grading, but with what kind of projects we had to make. When I found out there were going to be two options for being graded, I thought maybe I can choose the more structured one and get what I expected, but I stuck to the 'choose your own grade' structure. I don't regret it because I still got some work done and it also helped me with other things going on this semester.

At first my goal was to go to every class and work on a project while learning C#. I wanted to use this class as a time to learn a new language that I can add to my resume. Computer science classes usually do not allow students to choose the language they program in because the projects are very specific so the professor has already chosen the language that will be used in his class. So this was the perfect chance to learn a new language without the pressure of due dates and grades. Another goal I had was to complete the weekly survey as soon as I got it. Throughout the semester my goals changed a little and it was more about trying to show up to class at least every Monday and Wednesday to work on the project. C# is really similar to Java so it wasn't something I needed to focus on learning; I could learn it while starting the project. My goal of completing the survey on Friday every week also changed. I tried to get it done whenever I had the chance or remembered that I needed to do it. By the end of the semester I completely gave up on that goal and stopped taking the survey.

Will and I chose to create a Calculator application in C#. Although it is not as complete as I had hoped it would be by the end of the semester, we still have a somewhat functional calculator. We worked on it every time we came to class and put in a few hours outside of class to get it functioning. We were successful in creating a functioning application.

The problem with our application is that it did not have all the functionality we wanted to implement. We had some problems with our implementation that made it hard to add the other buttons we wanted. Towards the end, we tried to think of a different solution, but it was close to the end of the semester, which meant all our Computer Science group projects were due. In my three and a half years as a Computer Science student, I have learned that the beginning and middle of the semester is not very stressful, but the last few weeks of the semester are nonstop group meetings to finish up semester projects. This makes it hard to focus on classes or projects that have less strict requirements. This is one of the reasons I was not very focused in completing my goals. I do want to continue with this project and see if I can fix our current implementation to be able to incorporate the other functionality we had planned. Maybe over the summer, in between graduation and starting work, I can spend some time on this project to make it better and more functional.

This semester has been very different than my other semesters at JMU because I was really focused on finding a full time job for after graduation. I still tried in all my classes, but I

feel like looking for a job was a whole class of its own that I had to put a lot of time into. I had to schedule interviews during the week and chose to schedule them on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday mornings because this was the only class I could afford to miss. So I did miss a lot of class time to work on my project. In my opinion, I think it was okay to miss those classes because finding a job is very important at the moment. Luckily, my hard work paid off and I got an offer at ICF International in Richmond!

This type of course isn't terrible for me, but it also isn't the best. I am good at motivating myself, so grades and deadlines are just a way to boost my motivation. Honestly, I think I would do better with this style of learning if I wasn't taking three other classes that also had programming projects on top of big semester projects. When I spend a few days a week meeting with groups to work on our projects, I lose my motivation to work on the project for this class. The good side of this kind of style is that it is a really nice break from the typical programming class in the Computer Science major. I can feel a lot more relaxed while I do what I love, which is probably not what work will feel like, but I'll enjoy it while I can.

I learned from this class that I do not like Visual Studios. I have been using Eclipse for years and I am probably just more used to it, but I like it a lot more. If I ever have to use Visual Studios in the future, I will have to get used to it, but if I have a choice, I will stick to Java and Eclipse. I did not learn anything from my failures this semester because I knew what I was getting myself into after taking your class last semester. I knew I would have to find my own motivation. If I were to take this class again, I would probably pick the 'choose your own grade' path again. It's just a good change from my other classes.

Last semester when I took ISAT 252, I completed the weekly survey every week. The first few times I went through it slowly and answered every question. Then I started skipping some questions and eventually I just answered them to get it done. This semester, the survey was shorter, which was a nice change, but it still had the same questions. I stopped completing it because it really did not help me with anything. I was just doing it to get it done. Maybe to some people it is helpful to fill out a survey about their weekly goals and achievements. Maybe it helps them stay on track or gives them motivation to actually complete their goals. I found that it had no effect on me other than being a hassle to have to complete every week. I don't know if I am the only one who skips them every week or if other students feel the same about the surveys.

I want to receive an A in this class. I think I put in enough work to deserve an A. Even though we did not come to every class, Will and I still managed to have a working project. If we had not put in some time outside of class, the project probably would not have been complete at this point. Even though this project was not our number one priority this semester, Will and I still tried to put some effort into it. I was balancing this class along with my other classes while also thinking about my future and finding a full time job. I really like the calculator idea Will and I came up with in the beginning of the semester so it gives me a better reason to continue to work on it if I get the chance. I'll need a project to work on during the summer anyway, to keep my programming skills in check before starting my job.

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End of Semester Meeting

After having taken ISAT 252 and ISAT 341 already, I wasn't sure which of those classes would influence this class more. I enjoyed the simulation aspect of 341 and not so much the coding of 252. For 340, I was hoping to connect with someone and help with the design and organization parts of creating a product. I wanted to learn more about that side of the technology as well as become more consistent working with my partner or group. As you know, Jackson and I paired up to work on his idea of a campus navigation application. We spent a lot of time in the beginning month or two of the semester doing an analysis of the project before beginning the production of the app. We completed a social context analysis, individual scenarios, many layout designs of the app on paper, adding the blueprints to google indoor maps (or attempting to), contacting other JMU faculty and students who may be able to help, and general research on how to get started. After google failed to add the JMU blueprints to their map and did not respond to us, Jackson and I reevaluated our situation.

Being so far into the semester, we thought it was improbable to create a whole new app and start from scratch. We discussed this together and Jackson told me about another website he was working on. He told me how there were some formatting issues he was unhappy with, and asked for my help. At this point, I felt my goals for the semester were not really changing, but instead being applied to a new project. I spent many classes learning how to navigate the website and discussing the type of changes he would like to see. I have thought about the layout and some ideas to change the website since then. Due to it being so late in the semester at that point, I figured I would wait until the last week of class to explain my ideas to Jackson and get his approval before implementing them. We were both unable to meet last week due to the amount of huge tests and assignments due for the both of us. Because of that, the website does not display any changes. This week, I decided to make the changes anyways and offer to revert everything back if Jackson does not like it.

I feel I was successful in this course because I learned how to be a better team member, practiced problem solving when running into obstacles, and all the preparation taken before developing our product. The importance of a social context analysis and drawing up designs was really emphasized for me this semester. That is definitely a huge thing I will take away from this course and use in the future. After the website is updated, that will be another completed goal for the semester.

Something I feel I struggled with in this class was getting frustrated at the lack of direction regarding changes to Jackson's website. I feel I am a person who would rather be given a set of tasks with at least a few guidelines than no guidance at all. It made me nervous to make changes since there's no 'undo' button. Being frustrated prevented me from giving the amount of effort I could have towards the project. When I

start to feel this way, I need to be able to either clearly talk about the issue or ask for help from an outside source early instead of waiting. Conflict resolution is a huge skill needed when communicating with others, whether it is with a fellow group member, a boss, or even a friend. Next time I have an issue that I need to get resolved, I plan on writing down a few short notes or points on what I would like to say before having a conversation. This will allow me to think through my thoughts before speaking, list the most important key points, and not let the conversation get sidetracked. I will bring up the issue as soon as it becomes a problem or stressor for me instead of letting it build.

By completing this course and now the IKM sector, I do feel more educated and enlightened. I think the most important thing I learned from this class is thinking about something you are going to do or create before doing or creating it. All too often people jump right into their actions without thinking of the short and long-term consequences. The simulations I ran in ISAT 341 showed how much impact one thing can have on an entire system. This really solidified what was taught at the beginning of this semester in 340. During my internship next summer, I will bring this way of thinking to the table and hopefully be able to recognize potential problems before they happen. I feel this mindset is useful in all parts of life as well and hope to sharpen this skill.

Again, I have fully solidified that I am not a person interested in sitting at a desk and coding all day, every day. I recognize that I am a person who would rather work in a dependable group for increased accountability. I also like having set goals with direction, but am starting to learn how to still complete tasks without structure. Accomplishing things without structure is another thing I would definitely like to work on, so I must learn how to ask for guidance or give the task a shot without fearing failure.

Unlike last semester, I was excited to see that there were two options regarding grades for the course. I really liked the setup that Dr. Radziwill uses in ISAT 341 and was about to select the same option for this course. Once I saw the different tasks available to earn points, I was sort of put off. To me, it seemed like I would easily fall behind and I wouldn't be able to get enough points for an A in the course. I also wanted to focus on different types of goals for the course, which were not listed as point opportunities. Because of those two reasons, I opted for the choose-your-own-grade option. I definitely recommend providing those two options again for future students, but maybe reevaluating the labs available to gather points or lowering the overall point goal for the semester.

I would like an A grade for this course because I have learned skills that will stay with me and be applicable in different aspects of my life. I learned more about myself as well as ideas of how I, personally, should handle different scenarios. I learned how to be a better partner and the dynamic of holding each other accountable. I also now enjoy systems thinking and appreciate the importance of running an analysis of potential outcomes and consequences.