IT 697 SQL Module Six Reflection Journal

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The sixth week of this course went quite smoothly as I learned about the logical operators, practiced using them with our sample tables in APEX Oracle, participated on the discussion page, and spent a few hours working through practice problems on sqlpad.io. I began on Monday by reading through the web tutorials that were posted on this week’s course page where I learned about the various uses of the logical operators and was exposed to some example queries. On Tuesday I watched two Youtube tutorials from The Bad Tutorials channel, after which I felt ready to practice using the logical operators on my own. The logical operators are extremely helpful when you are looking to filter results based not only on exactly one condition, but rather on all, none, or at least one of certain conditions. With our sample tables, I imagined two situations where I needed to write queries that produced specific results. The first situation was to find clinics located in either San Diego or Hesperia. The second situation was to find medications that did not include a dosage of tablets, on which I also expanded to filter for a price under $20 using the AND operator. After executing queries for these situations, I was able to put together my initial discussion post on Wednesday. I made a commitment in earlier reflection journals to post my initial discussion post before Thursday, and this was the first week I was able to make that happen. My hope was to increase my post’s visibility and receive more responses which might provide feedback, point out something I had not considered, or lead me in an interesting new direction. Throughout the course, I have received either one or zero responses from my peers, and my post this week received one response from Suzanne. I cannot say whether or not posting before Thursday helped with my particular hopes this week, but I do still believe in the long run that I will get more out of this experience by participating in the discussion as early in the week as possible.

Other than the time I spent learning and practicing the logical operators, I spent the remainder of the week working on practice SQL problems on sqlpad.io. I found this blog/webpage while exploring functions last week. The site includes 90 practice problems based on a movie rental database, ranging between easy, medium, and difficult, that cover many of the common concepts found in SQL coding interviews. Last week, I was able to complete two medium level questions that involved WINDOW functions. This week, I worked through as many as I could of the easy level questions from the first half of the problem set questions 1 through 45. I was able to complete 16 total questions, writing complex statements that included conditions, JOINS, and nested queries. There were nine easy level questions in the first half of the problem set that I was unable to answer. I value this portion of the experience because it exposes me to possibilities of SQL that I am not yet ready to execute. Eight of these nine problems involved working with dates. For example, I was unable to find the average cost of movie rentals in May 2020. I now know that I need to learn about how to work with dates in SQL. The ninth question that I was unable to answer was returning the number of films rented by length (short: <60 mins, medium: 60-100 mins, and long: >100 mins). This is something that I would be able to do in the programming language R by creating a new column using the IF function, but I was not able to figure out how it can be done in SQL. I mentioned in last week’s reflection journal that Leon from sqlpad.io sends out monthly top 10 rankings of the points earned by solving these problems. I made it a goal to be in the top 10 for the April rankings. At the end of March, I found out that the final top 10 can claim one of three prizes: 45 minute SQL mock interview, 45 minute resume feedback, or one hour career consultation. I have now earned 32 points by answering 16 easy level questions in April. Tenth place in the March rankings earned 146 points. I am on a decent pace to be in the top 10, and if I am able to answer some medium or difficult level questions, I will be able to earn three and five points, respectively. These practice problems have already been a great way to work through real examples using SQL. I have learned how to figure out what each questions is asking and how I can use SQL to solve it. I have also learned some of the areas where my SQL knowledge has room for growth. I am excited to continue working on this problem set throughout the remaining weeks of this course and I hope that my progress can serve as an example of my learning experience in my final project, not to mention the prize I can earn by making the top 10 of the April rankings.

Project/Coursework Tracker

* Company requirements -> database schema
  + Started in week 4 with the database design podcast
* Live scoreboard/rankings of some kind
  + Not started
* Fitness plan recommendations
  + Planning to start in week 7
* Sqlpad.io movie rental practice questions
  + 18/90 completed