Hyacinth Empinado

Extra Credit Opportunity

I really liked the HTML/CSS part of the course. I have wanted to learn how to code and design a website for a very long time, and finally, I had a reason to do it. I like doing designs and layouts, and I really enjoyed learning a new way to do these things. At first, it was challenging. Trying to remember all the rules to do it and figuring out what they all meant was sometimes frustrating, but once I typed the little div’s and p’s a million a times, I got the hang of it. The online dictionaries were really helpful, too. It was amazing what I can find out just by Googling things or going through the dictionaries.

Before I learned HTML/CSS, I was really confused about how web developers put the different elements together, and how they created the page layout. I didn’t know how they did it without being able to physically drag the different elements to where they wanted it. It wasn’t until I understood the difference between margins and padding that it all became clear. I still get into trouble, though, especially if I have floating elements, and if I have two columns of text and images. They just do not behave like they’re supposed to.

I also liked creating the D3 visualizations. I just tried reverse-engineering available code from the Data Visualization Documents site, and I really enjoyed the challenge. Working on the visualization was like detective work. At first, the code looked alien to me. I did not understand what all the var’s and .attr’s meant, but after going through the online tutorials, and studying the code more closely, I began to see that the code was highly intuitive. It was such great joy when I saw the code work for the very first time. I’ve never been so excited to see circles my entire life.

The most frustrating parts for me were the JavaScript modules. It just did not seem intuitive. I can imagine how hard it was for the Codeacademy instructor to put it all together, but I think the order was not right. We would be using tags in the earlier modules that would be explained in later modules, and I think that was not the best way to go about it. It was just hard for me to go through all those modules, especially when they would be asking you to create your own code. At that point, it was just hard to remember the syntax and the different codes that went along with it.

I think the JavaScript modules could have been ordered better or explained better. It was not as intuitive as the HTML/CSS modules. Sometimes, it was hard for me to understand what the instructor wanted me to do. Sometimes, the instructions were just not clear at all, and I have been told that there are easier ways to do it than what was presented. There were things on there, especially the modules at the end where we were pretty much on our own, which were extremely difficult to figure out. I think the modules needed more hand-holding – telling the student what to do and explaining what the purpose of it was – instead of just letting the student have at it and try and figure it out. At that point, I was not skilled enough to build my own code and structure it correctly.

Also, I think having different versions of a program made the class more confusing. It was annoying to find that the version we had did not have a particular tab or button. I think it would be better if we all used the same version to make everything easier to understand. Especially when we were working on Excel, it was really difficult sometimes to figure things out especially when the button did not exist.

SVG’s were also intimidating at first. I did not know what they were for when it was first taught to us. It was especially intimidating when we were asked to make a 5 or 6-sided polygon. I did not know where all the points were going to go, and what the code meant. I started to warm up to SVG’s when I saw the circles move. I had a great time doing that and making the circles rainbow colors. But now I see their value. They are really useful as containers, so that is what I’ve been using it for. SVG’s are fun to use and makes for a sleeker website. But I still stay away from polygons.

Google Fusion Tables were also frustrating at first because the datasets were not loading correctly on my end. It just took a long time to load or completely failed, but it eventually worked. It was just easier to create the charts in Excel; they were just not interactive, and that is usually fine for my purposes. It was just difficult sometimes getting the titles to show up, or the right kind of data in Google Fusion Tables, and it is just a lot more work for a static image.