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Course Learnings

Throughout this course, I've gained a deeper understanding of both programming concepts and how to approach learning a new skill. When I first started, my programming knowledge was limited to basic concepts like declaring variables, simple loops, and working with basic input/output functions. As the course progressed, however, I realized just how vast and multifaceted programming truly is.

One of the most significant lessons I learned was how essential it is to build a solid foundation in the basics. Initially, the topics seemed simple, but as we advanced, I saw how everything builds on these early concepts. For example, learning how to work with data files, such as CSVs, and later with JSON, opened up new possibilities for managing and processing data. These concepts were new to me before this course, and though I wouldn't consider myself an expert, I now feel confident that I can work with these tools and concepts with continued practice.

A key insight I gained was the importance of breaking problems into smaller, manageable parts. Programming often feels overwhelming when you look at a complex project as a whole. However, learning how to decompose a problem and tackle it step by step has been incredibly helpful. Whether it's implementing a while loop or learning about conditionals like else if statements, I began to understand that each piece of code is like a building block in a larger structure.

Another major realization was how integral error handling is in programming. At the start, errors seemed like frustrating setbacks. But over time, I learned that debugging and interpreting error messages are critical skills. For example, when I first encountered ValueErrors and TypeErrors, I felt overwhelmed, but as I practiced, I began to see how errors provide clues to help improve and refine the code. They are not roadblocks but opportunities for growth.

As the class progressed, I delved deeper into more advanced topics like object-oriented programming, unit testing, and writing functions. Understanding how classes, functions and inheritance work was challenging, but it also opened up a whole new world of possibilities. I realized that these concepts are fundamental in creating clean, reusable, and scalable code. The introduction of getters and setters, docstrings for documenting functions, and unit testing to ensure code quality helped me understand not only how to write code but also how to structure it effectively.

One of the biggest takeaways from this course was the importance of persistence and practice. Programming is a skill that requires time and repetition to master. Whether I was working with f-strings, refining my understanding of loops, or testing code, the more I practiced, the more comfortable I became. I also learned that learning to program is not a linear path. Sometimes I

had to revisit earlier concepts to truly understand how they fit together with more advanced topics.

Looking ahead, I feel much more equipped to apply my new Python skills to real-world problems. For example, as a network engineer, I now understand how Python can play a significant role in network automation. From automating repetitive tasks like configuring network devices to analyzing large datasets for network performance, Python's versatility will undoubtedly enhance my ability to streamline workflows and troubleshoot more efficiently. I also feel more confident that, as I continue to practice and build on what I've learned, I can tackle increasingly complex projects in network automation and beyond.

In conclusion, this course provided not only technical knowledge but also a structured approach to learning that I will carry with me. While I've only scratched the surface of what Python and programming in general can offer, I now feel more confident and prepared to continue my journey, whether through further self-study or practical application in my career. The challenges and breakthroughs in this class have made me more appreciative of the programming process, and I look forward to developing these skills further in the future.