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Starting this semester off I didn’t know what to expect, all I knew was it was my last semester and I wanted to make the best out of it by trying new things. That is one of the reasons why I decided to take an entry to a programming class that had nothing to do with my major or my minors. I have always found it interesting how people can code or create apps and that was one thing that I wanted to learn how to do but I knew taking an entry-level class would not teach you how to do that. So a more tangible goal was to just learn the basics to give me the necessary knowledge to get me started or to help point me in the right direction. That was essentially what I wanted to take out of this class or what I thought I wanted before starting this class. Also, no one knew how the semester would turn out before it started. We never thought that we would be part of a global pandemic that would require us to be quarantined at home for the last part of the semester.

Once the semester actually started I honestly didn’t know what I was expecting from the ISAT 252 class. The only thing that I was hoping was that the goal that I had set before the class started could have been accomplished. This was not only the first programing class but also the first ISAT class I have taken. In the engineering program, they let us play with Arduino during our freshman year but we never use them again. We also use Matlab but they never taught us how to use it, they expect us to already know how to use it. The goal was to learn the basics or the fundamentals of coding and maybe write a simple program. I didn’t know how or where to start when this class first began. I knew what a command terminal was but I didn’t know how to use it or how it worked. I also knew that there were different coding languages but I didn’t know how to access them. So having the class set up like how it was it was very helpful to understand how and where to access all the tools you need to get started. Starting with the first badge where we had to get in a group and download all the necessary tools we need. Also, I liked how we would go over how to get started with coding in class and we would write code together. I felt like this gave us a more hands-on experience than figuring everything out on our own.

Since our semester got cut short and we couldn’t go back to school. It was a little different attending online classes for the remainder of the semester. It definitely made it a little difficult to stay focus on learning how to code even though we did everything we would normally do in class but just online. I would follow along as we went through the tutorial of converting Arabic numbers to Roman numerals, but there were times where it was hard to stay focus. It was helpful that the class was recorded because if you missed something you can go back and rewatch it. When you are doing school at home it just doesn’t feel like you are doing school. Other than following the class tutorial I tried to do free code camp. It was helpful to learn the basics of using javascript. We went over free code camp in class to give us another resource to help us start coding. I thought it was helpful but I definitely preferred following the in-class tutorials that Dr. Benton went through. I also went back through some of my freshman year notes on Arduinos because I wanted to see if I could make something using an Arduino. I ended up making two very simple projects one was thermostat and the other was a traffic light. The reason why I made these two projects was that I had the necessary hardware to so. They both ended up working but the thermostat sensor ended up breathing. Also, the one problem that I had with the traffic light was that I only had red LEDs but it still worked. The biggest project I did by myself was making a discord bot. It was still a very easy code but I felt good once I did it. I also wrote two very simple python codes. One was an addition calculator and the other was a program that tells you if the year is a leap year. One thing that I want to do during the summer is, somehow use python to find market trends.

As the semester went on if felt that my original goal was met, so I thought about finding a way that I could change my goal or make a new one that was still tangible by the end of the semester. Since I didn’t know what to expect from the class when I set my original goal, I made it broad but simple. We basically achieved my goals after the first month of the semester. I had felt like I was successful because we learned how to use the command terminal to launch python and javascript. We learned how to wite the most basic code which was “Hello World”. Then we moved onto writing our own iteration of the FizzBuzz code. So I had to look back and reevaluate my goal for the rest of the semester. I changed my goal to be able to write a slightly more advanced code but still at an entry-level. I ended up accomplishing that goal when I wrote the discord bot. I felt that the class was successful in teaching me what I need to learn and what I wanted to learn. The discord bot wasn’t a difficult code to write but it did help bring together everything we learn in the class. I didn’t feel like I failed to reach my goal because I set my goal from the beginning to something that would be tangible. Also when I changed my original goal I know there were resources that I could use that would help me accomplish my new goal. So I never had doughts that I would not be able to accomplish the goals I set, so I never had the feeling of failer. Even though I did have feeling of failer there is something that I would have changed or improved on which is understanding why things have to go in a certain order. This is mostly my fault for not paying attention or staying focused in class. In class, we talked about why we use a virtual environment for python but I wasn’t really paying attention. When I’m writing a python code I use a virtual environment just because that’s the process we learned even though I know there is a better explanation for it. In my mind, I thought I could just look it up and figure out why. That is one area that I would say that I failed in. I have learned that I need to stay focused and that every bit of information is important. This not only helps me to become a better programmer but also helps me as a person to grow. Knowing why something happens in a sequence of events is better than just blindly copying or following a step. Even though I’m graduating I won’t be able to address this issue in a classroom setting unless I decide to get a master’s, but I will be able to address this problem in a work setting.

After taking this class I definitely feel more educated and enlightened. If anything I dont think learning how to program would hurt you. I think it would only help you grow. When I apply for jobs or internships they want you to know some level of programming. I can see how if people had to take this class because of there major how they might feel differently but since I’m not required to take this class I feel like it has helped me extend my knowledge. Also, I think that programming is going to be the future because not only has Elon Musk mentioned the importance of it but so has Mark Zuckerberg. So I think that this class for me has stayed true to JMU’s Mission statement. I know have the necessary knowledge to get started in programming.

This semester has opened my mind to the different things that I can accomplish. It has been a rollercoaster of events but when I first thought about programming I never thought I could do. When I tried to learn it by myself before taking this class I was very lost. I felt like I was looking at a foreign language and I didn’t think I could learn it. This semester has helped me grow not only intellectually but as a person. I can push myself when things get tough and no matter what optical gets in front of me I can work around it. I honestly dont know what this means for my future. I have not deiced what I want to do once I graduate. I definitely want to get a job but I dont really know in what field. What I do know is that I would like to continue to work on programming, it doesn’t necessarily have to be for a job. I enjoyed what I learned in this class and like to continue to work on my programming skills.

I definitely don’t know what grade I have earned but I would like to have an “A” in this class. Based on the goals I had set before and during this class, I think I have earned it. I feel like the goals were tangible and went with what the course description for this class. Since I achieved the goals that I wanted to accomplish from this class I feel like I have earned an “A”. I learned the basics of how to code and how to use different languages, how to write a smoke test, and make my own application.

This semester has been very crazy but I have very much enjoyed taking this class and would recommend it to any person that wants to get started in programming. I have learned a lot that will help me be successful in the future.