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End of Semester Essay Question

         When I began reading the first portion of this assignment “My First Computer Science Lesson” I knew exactly what to expect. Similar to the author, I had my first software lesson my Junior year of high school, but we implemented PB&J sandwiches instead. Truth be told, I was not a confident programmer until I enrolled in more challenging college courses. Typically, Engineering students dwell on the reality of general education courses, but I believe that they drastically improve your logical thinking skills. These courses challenge the mundane busy work of their high school counterparts by forcing its students to solve seemingly impossible problems. This barrier of impossibility, however, is broken by logical thinking skills. Whether you notice it or not, the general thinking skills you learn in your courses and everyday life directly apply to your ability as a software developer. Another topic students dwell on, including me, is applying for jobs and internships. In February, I had the opportunity to interview for a software engineering internship here in Huntsville. My eventual boss was infinitely curious in what courses I had taken, and the code I had written. I described my introductory programming courses for C++, Python, MATLAB, and most importantly Discrete Structures. His reaction to my description of this course made me realize that understanding code is more important than being able to write it. In fact, I modified my program at work to be more efficient by implementing a different data structure and algorithm I pulled from this course (confidential, otherwise I would describe in more detail). This made me realize how important these courses are as they can directly impact me as a programmer at my work, and ultimately provide me with a means to live. As noted above, this course has directly applied to my job, and I believe it will continue to do so. However, if I lose my understanding of the topics in this course, my job will become much more difficult. I personally believe the best way to keep this information fresh is to keep this courses’ book nearby and practice different implementations of the same problem. Doing those simple tasks now and again will help me to be a better programmer and employee. In conclusion, logical thinking skills, understanding algorithms, and applying the knowledge from this course will be fundamental to my success not only in college but in my career.