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ISAT 252 Benton  
End-of-Semester Narrative

When you asked each one of us at the beginning of the semester why we enrolled in your class, I explained that the main reason why I enrolled in ISAT 252 was that: (1) it fulfilled my CIS major credit requirement for CIS 221, and (2) because I was interested in coding so I thought I'd give it a shot. In the summer going into high school, my dad signed me up for a light coding course at the local rec center but we barely did any coding and the instructor had no idea what he was doing. Feeling unfulfilled from that time, this is why I still had some interest in learning more about coding, which was enough to get me to send you an email in the fall semester asking for permission to take the course since I was a CIS major.

Some of the expectations I had coming into this class were that I would determine if I wanted to continue with coding, which happened to be the same question you wanted us to figure out throughout the semester. I wanted to understand the basics of coding and what it can actually be used for, and I wanted to be able to show my dad a few things since he was the one who initially wanted me to start coding when I was younger. In addition to that, I wanted to get a good grade in the class.

Now with that being said, like a lot of things in life, it is easier said than done. During this spring semester, I was also enrolled in COB 291 and COB 242, two business classes that I needed to perform well in, to maintain a high GPA and formally be accepted into the business school. Doing well in these two classes was my top academic priority for the spring semester, but at the same time, I didn't want to take a back seat to the rest of my classes.

One of the most memorable moments that I had in class was when you were going over the FizzBuzz example, and I got kind of lost and needed help with writing and running the code. You told us that if we needed help with the problem, kindly ask a classmate to help you not only write out the code but also to teach you what everything meant within the script. I remember asking the only person who was sitting next to me, neither of us introducing ourselves but him immediately helping me write out the steps and actually teaching me what I was doing. I finally got the FizzBuzz code to work, and I remember how good it felt knowing that I wrote my first semi-challenging code and getting the proper results. At the end of class, I thanked him and learned that his name was Ethan, and he said that if I ever needed more help in the class that I could ask him anytime. Even though it wasn't an extremely unique situation, it reminded me of what you said during the first week of class and how coding doesn't have to be a boring and completely individual experience, but you can actually meet friends and make networks with other coders just like how you would do in any other hobby. I would say this is definitely one of

the biggest takeaways that I got from class because I never really thought of coding in that perspective where it can be a social, fun activity.

In regards to JMU's mission statement and if I feel more educated and enlightened from this past semester, I would say that I definitely do and that was due to your style of teaching. One of the biggest lessons I learned from you was on the first day of class when you let us know that if we were having any problems at home or facing any difficult situations, that you would be totally understanding and free to call and text you. I was immediately surprised because no other professor or teacher in my entire academic career ever mentioned that to their students, and I really appreciated the way you emphasized and explained that to us on the first day. Hearing this from a professor actually made me want to adopt the same mentality to everything in life, and to try to be as open as possible to anyone that needs to be understood. Sometimes it can be easy to be selfish and make judgments about people when they don't do something right, whether it be following instructions or turning in an easy assignment, but you reinforced in me that everyone has their own situations. You told us how life is extremely complex for each and every one of us, and that even helped me understand myself better and come to sense with my own problems. You mentioned stories about the awesome relationships you had with some of your previous students, and I think it kind of just made everyone in the class feel more comfortable with you and interacting in the classroom.

At the beginning of the semester, I can honestly say I was really excited about everything we were doing in class and I was using YouTube and some beginner coding websites to learn what I could in my free time. After meeting with our groups and texting each other with questions, I started feeling more comfortable with the class and the environment. As those first few weeks passed, however, I started getting more backed up with assignments and tasks with my classes and extracurricular activities. I started meeting with a tutor for COB 291 once or twice a week, ended up getting an executive position in my fraternity and had to organize a huge philanthropy week, fell behind in COB 242, and other minor inconveniences that every college student faces throughout the semester. Unfortunately, due to this, I would say that my discipline and enthusiasm towards the class slightly decreased over the semester even though I was still getting everything done. I definitely am not happy that it happened this way, but it's hard for me to say whether I regret it because the hard work that I put into COB 291 got me accepted into the business school which I am very pleased about, and I am proud of the extracurricular activities I participated in over the course of the time we were on campus.

To wrap this up, my answer to the questions you wanted us to answer which were: "do you enjoy coding? Do you think you could be good at it?" are that I am not quite sure. Being someone who really likes to do everything the best I possibly can, with the busy schedule I had this past semester I feel like there was some more work I could've put into the class which is

why I don't want to say yes or no. There were moments where I really enjoyed learning about code and finally running a real code, but there were also definitely moments when I was completely fed up and felt like I tried doing everything I could to get this code to work. In the same way, there were moments where I thought I could be good at coding, and moments where I thought there is no way this is for me. However, since our semester took such a crazy turn, this is why I think I am uncertain about both of those answers. I think with more time I might've been able to fully answer those questions. Because I am starting to get really into some of my other passions in life, it just doesn't feel like the right time to try as hard as I can to learn more about code, however, I think coding is something that I can definitely see myself picking back up in the future.