252 Narrative

To be completely honest, my first couple of expectations for this class were that I was going to hate it. My reasoning for this came from the fact that I started off at JMU my freshman year as a computer science major. I remember being so excited that I would be able to essentially program as an assignment compared to something such as a test or an essay. To keep it short, I started to attempt to code, and realize it was not everything that I thought it would be. I actually ended up getting a W in one of the CS classes because I did not like it and was afraid that I would not pass. That’s when I really knew that it was not for me. I did not have tons of previous knowledge in any programming language which probably did not help. However, even if I did code in the past, I think I would’ve still realized that I was not the biggest fan of it. I was definitely not the happiest when I realized I had to take another class revolving around programming. I did expect to do fairly well in the class just because of my knowledge from the classes that I took. I was not sure the exact programming languages that we were going to be looking at, but I did already know a good amount about python and Java which made me fairly confident to get a good grade in this class.

I am not sure if I seriously set myself a goal for this class but I did try to be more open minded about the topic because I easily could’ve been mad that I had to take another class in something that I did not truly enjoy. I did somewhat joke about it saying that my PTSD from coding in my freshman year was going to come back, but I was obviously just messing around. I was somewhat interested in the different ways that programming can be taught, though. I did tend to be very confused in my CS classes once we got into the swing of things and I wondered if a different professor or teaching style would help me out somehow. This class definitely put more emphasis into the command line compared to any other of the CS classes that I took. I obviously remember mentioning it because it can be important. We did never use anything to do with Github and I didn’t realize how connected it could be by using the command line to move everything to your own account on the website. I think the most stressful realization in the class was returning to the tests that you need to do for your code. I had totally forgotten about the whole testing environment, and then I remembered how that was probably the worst part for me about the CS classes. For our programming assignments, we had to have code and tests that matched a certain website, and you would not get a good grade until the output was similar to what the website wanted. I remember being stuck on one test for almost an entire day of me trying to figure it out, and that was absolutely the worst part for me. I literally tried everything and still could not figure it out. That began to happen with every assignment and lab that I got and I realized that coding was not for me.

Looking at ways that tried to be successful, my first way started with the simplest of programs with the Hello World. I obviously knew how to do this as that was also the first program that we attempted in the CS classes. The success for me came from looking at this program in lots of different languages and seeing how similar or different they are from one another. I looked at this program in Java, JavaScript, Python, Rstudio, and C++. This may not seem like a lot but I did a good amount of research in seeing differences or similarities. It was interesting to see the different types of syntax that were required for the different languages. One other success came from the fizzbuzz program. I remember the first day we mentioned the program, I went into VSCode and ended up figuring out the general idea of what to do within the first couple of minutes of me hearing about the program. That was good for me because I was actually able to make the connection to a certain type of code to use. I obviously was not able to do that much in my CS classes. The hardest part for me was knowing where to start a lab and that’s what frustrated me so much. For instance, there are multiple ways to start some of the programming assignments and I just never felt creative enough to find those ways to start them. One other success in this class came from the fact that I was able to combine aspects of my 251 Statistics class with this one. The class combined aspects of Rstudio with the ability to do work in statistics, and it gave me more knowledge in programming languages. Some of my github work comes from going off of our lab assignments in that class and going beyond that with other concepts.

I would say that I do feel more educated than before. Even though some of the basic concepts were already familiar to me, I learned more about the command line and about github being such a useful website. I also learned more about the tests of some of these programs more that I did in my CS classes. It definitely helped me to understand it a bit more, regardless of whether it’s something I enjoy or not. It also helped me with knowledge of other programming languages which I never would have thought of learning in my previous classes. When it comes down to what I think my grade should be, I really do not like giving a specific answer because it will obviously be biased. I do think I deserve a grade in the general range of a B+ to an A-. I do not necessarily think I deserve a high A because I do think I could have done a lot more with learning more about programming (Though, I of course wouldn’t mind it.) To back that up, I will say that I ended up with around 30ish points on the website with all badges that I earned. I did lots of work looking at the Hello World programs in all the different languages. I did my 251 stats labs and attempted to make connections with these two classes by going beyond what was said in the lab. I actually surprisingly attempted to look at some of my old programming assignments that I was never able to finish. I did not do much with them, though. Overall, I do think I deserve a grade in that range. However, it is of course not my decision and I would understand if you thought differently.