Mid-Term Paper

For this mid-term paper, we were supposed to write a personal reflection about what we have learned during the first half of I101 so far. There are a couple areas that I would like to cover in my personal reflection. I will start off this paper with some information about my perception of Informatics and computing as well as my knowledge about technology prior to taking this class in order to show how far I have progressed in terms of knowledge this semester and then I’ll go a little bit into detail about some of the things that I have learned so far this semester and the effect that it’s had on me.

The field of computing and Informatics is something that is very new to me as this is my first year as a student in the School of Informatics and Computing and I am in my first semester as a 2nd-bachelor’s degree student. I graduated from IU a couple years ago with a degree in a different field and worked out in the real world for a couple of years in college athletics. However, I ended up deciding that that career path was not for me and so I decided to come back to IU and study computer science after I became interested in writing software programs and learned a little bit about how to program. So really, before this class and this semester, I really didn’t have much of a perception of Informatics. I knew that Informatics was somehow related to computing and computer science in some way, but I really didn’t have any more knowledge about Informatics than that. In regards to technology, I really didn’t have that much knowledge about technology either prior to becoming interested in computer science and re-enrolling at IU. I was somewhat interested in some of the general consumer technology that was out there like iPhones and TV’s but I was not really that interested in the actual field of technology. So, in conclusion, my knowledge of technology as well as Informatics was basically nonexistent before I took this class.

There have been a number of things that have happened that have changed in this course that have helped to changed my perceptions and allow me to gain more knowledge about the field of Informatics as well as technology. The part of the course that has had probably the biggest effect so far been the lectures that we have every Monday. As mentioned above, I really didn’t have a lot of knowledge about informatics and technology prior to the semester. However, because I’ve attended these lectures, I have gained a lot more knowledge about Informatics and technology. A good example of a lecture that allowed me to gain a lot of knowledge about Informatics would be the first lecture of the semester. While this lecture was not a long one and contained a lot of information about course policies, we also
learned about what exactly Informatics is, how it is different from Computer Science and how a lot of jobs in technology are partially related to Informatics and at the same time contain parts that are related to Computer Science. So just by going to that first lecture and listening and absorbing that information, my knowledge of Informatics had already increased exponentially. This pattern continued with the second lecture, which was the lecture where we learned why exactly Informatics is important and how technology and knowledge is increasing at a very fast pace, and every lecture after that. It is kind of amazing how much I have learned thus far in the semester. Another example of a lecture where I learned a lot was the robotics lecture. Prior to this lecture, I really didn’t know that much about robotics at all. However, I learned in that lecture that there were a bunch of robots that are currently being tested that could potentially be used to teach children in the future or that robots are currently being tested that could in the future be used by the military to carry supplies into battle. Again, like all of the other lectures, this was a lecture that provided me with a lot of new information and is something that I really benefitted from attending. So in conclusion, these lectures have been a huge help for me so far and I’m hoping to learn a lot more through the rest of the semester in lecture as the first half of the class has been very helpful and enlightening so far.

The other thing besides our weekly lectures that have really impacted me this semester and has been our bi-weekly labs. In our labs, we have learned a couple of different programming languages as well as a number of other things related to programming languages and technology. For me, as a computer science major interested in pursuing a career in programming, this is something that has been really informative for me. Prior to this class, I really only had some informal experience with programming. I had either learned how to program through the use of on-line tutorials, programming for dummies books, or just informally practicing designing programs on my laptop. So, having the opportunity to get into a classroom setting and learning about programming and practice programming as well was something that has been huge for me. In addition, getting the opportunity to learn about different programming languages has been huge for me as well. I had previously done a little bit of learning with HTML/CSS and some C and C++, but I had not really done anything with any of the other programming languages. So, being given the opportunity to learn JavaScript and the Python learning language in our lab sections is something that has been really beneficial for me so far as well. I’ve particular enjoyed learning JavaScript because once you know what exactly JavaScript is and how it is used, you start to notice it every time that you go to a different website. A good example of this is the buttons on a page design feature of JavaScript. We started learning about that in our last JavaScript class and learned how to place them on the webpage and how to style them and make them do different things. Now, I realize
every time that I have to click one of those buttons on a webpage that the webpage is running JavaScript so that has been pretty cool. So in conclusion, having the ability to learn about something that is used on an everyday basis in programming like JavaScript has been beneficial and has been something that I’ve enjoyed. I’m not really sure what exactly what I want to do after graduating in terms of programming, but I would like to be involved in coding and learning about these different languages in labs is something that is beneficial to me both now and in the future.

All of the learning that has taken place in lectures and labs have made start to consider whether I want to major in Informatics instead of computer science and I think that there are a couple different reasons why this has happened. The first reason was that while I am interesting in working in technology after graduation, it is not really set in stone yet what exactly I want to do in regards to computers and technology yet. Since this is my first semester as a SOIC student, I am still trying to make sure that this is exactly what I want to do for my second bachelor’s degree and for me, transitioning from working in athletics to computing has been a big change so I am still trying to figure out what exactly I want to do in computing and how exactly I want to do it as well. Another reason that I am currently motivated to take a deeper look at majoring in Informatics is that I am interested in helping improve the world in some fashion that is readily apparent to people. With the technological innovation that was presented in lecture regarding the ongoing technological innovation as well as all of the other information that has been passed along in all of the lectures regarding innovation, it has made me think about majoring in informatics so that I might have the opportunity to potentially help and change the world. The potential things that are currently in development that could potentially change the world is currently staggering such as the robots that could potentially tutor children or the walking robots that could potentially serve as supply carriers for the military. Having the opportunity to potentially change the world with developing these types of technology is something that has really made an impact on me and has made me really consider whether I might want to potentially major in Informatics. At the moment, I think that I want to continue to major in computer science as I love trying to code a program and make it so that it solves the problem that I want it to, but I’m still always open to change and Informatics is something that I’d be potentially interested in changing to.

That is a summary of how I101 has impacted myself and my perception through the first half of this semester, what I have learned so far, and what I101 has done for me so far. I really wasn’t sure at first how this class would go, but after the first seven weeks of this class, I think that it is safe to say that I am definitely glad that I decided to take this class and I am definitely looking forward to the second half of
this class. I am particularly interested in learning more about Database in lab in the second half of the class as this is another programming language that I do not have any experience with yet as well as learning about some of the upcoming topics in lecture such as Careers in Informatics. My perception of technology and Informatics has changed a lot since this class started and I am looking forward to it evolving once again as we complete the second half of this class.