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Info 101
Midterm
11 October 2015

Personal Reflection

As a freshmen direct admit into the School of Informatics and computing, this was my very first Informatics-related course. I was not certain as to what my classes would involve, however, I have been very pleasantly surprised with my chosen major so far. This class, I101, has been my favorite so far because it incorporates so many different aspects. I feel as if I have already learned so much through both the labs and lectures.

The first week of classes was a substantial adjustment. The first time I walked into the lab, I was slightly overwhelmed. I had never had any experience in programming or coding before, so I was nervous that I would be left behind or very confused during the first lesson. But to my surprise, most people had the same lack of experience as me in the lab aspect of the class. On the first week of lab, the instructor briefed us all on what the class will cover and what will be expected of us. This eased my worries because I had no prior knowledge or experience. We started learning about HTML in week 1, which I really enjoyed because I was able to see my work firsthand through my homepage.

Throughout the HTML lesson, I learned how to compose an HTML skeleton and make paragraphs, lists, tables, and headers. After a few weeks of getting the hang of HTML, we added another component, CSS. I loved how I could move items around and add font colors and styles to my webpage. CSS was basically a way to personalize my labs and make them my own. I did not particularly enjoy the JES lesson because there was not much to do in the language. JES only taught me how to change the colors of a picture, how to make the color gray, and add text, circles, lines, and ovals on a picture. I feel like I have learned a substantial amount more in both HTML and CSS combined than in JES.

However, once we started using JavaScript, my interest and enthusiasm for the lab came rushing back. Even though we have only had one lesson in JavaScript, I loved learning how to make a “Press me!” button and actually make it go to different content on the same page by just a press of a button. By making this happen on my homepage, I finally felt as though I was starting to learn how to make a true website. That specific lesson excited me for what is to come in JavaScript.

While the labs have taught me a great deal, the lectures have also been very informational. My two favorite lectures to date have been the security lecture and the robotics lecture. I enjoyed the robotics lecture because it was all new information. Robots are a foreign subject to me, so I was excited
to learn more about them. I was so engaged in the security lecture because it resonates in me. The guest lecturer, Jean Camp, talked about risks and how to decipher what risks are worth taking. She also explained different examples of security breaches, such as the Target security breach and the Edward Snowden incident (Camp).

This lecture made me think more about a future in cyber security. I could easily see myself specializing in cyber security because I would love to try to prevent something like the Target security breach from ever happening again. I was so intrigued throughout the entire lecture and would love to be able to help in any way I could to try to cease future security breaches. This lecture made me want to look deeper into the provided courses for cyber security. Jean Camp’s words pulled on something deep inside of me and helped develop a possible passion.

The robotics lecture also captivated me similarly to the security lecture check. I was completely blind to the fact that so many robots already exist. I always assumed that robots were a part of our future and, before this lecture; I was unaware of the high-tech robots that are being created for so many different purposes. It amazed me that there are robots specifically made to act as a companion to patients in a hospital or elderly care facility. There is also a robot in Korea that acts as a teaching assistant to help children learn English. According to the guest lecturer, in the near future there will be a robot in every household (robotics guest lecturer). She also taught me that robots are being built and evaluated here on campus (robotics guest lecturer).

While I really enjoyed the robotics lecture, I cannot see myself in the robotics field of work. Robots are an impressive new form of technology, but I am more interested in directly helping others with my technological work. While many robots do directly help others, I would rather be the one to help, not make something that will help. While I do not see myself working in the robotics field, I would love to go over to the R-house lab and see the new creations that all the brilliant people are working on over there. This lecture definitely made me think about going over to the R-house lab and maybe getting my feet wet in the robot department.

One specific lecture that really challenged my way of thinking was the real digital lecture. The subject that really provoked my mind was the binary base and decimal base conversion. I had never seen anything like it before and it took me a while to really get a grip on what was happening. I could not understand what the difference between decimal and base conversion was and why either even existed. But Dan explained the distinction in an interesting way; he said to think of the two conversions as languages similar to Spanish and English. They have the same meaning, but it was just a different way to look at it (Richert).
Another lesson that challenged my way of thinking was from the JES lessons of the lab. Specifically the lesson from Week 5 Lab 2 about changing the colors in a picture was really difficult for me. I could not grasp the concept of changing all three colors and how it worked without adding any numbers to the code. The slides of instructions were not making sense to me and I could not get my picture of a brightly colored flower to change colors. The lab instructor was going so fast through the slides and I became very lost. I was frustrated throughout this lab and never figured out how to change the colors while in class. However, when I went to the computer lab to study for the lab check, I went back over the slides and taught myself how to change the colors of a picture. I was able to take the code used to change a colored picture to a gray picture as a tool to help me understand how to change the colors. When I was finally able to get the colors of my chosen picture to change, I was ecstatic. I was so proud that I was able to figure it out on my own without any help from an instructor or a friend.

The lesson that impacted me the most was definitely the HTML and CSS lessons in lab. The HTML and CSS lessons allowed me to make something that I had never done before. The aspect I am most proud of from this school year thus far is my homepage. Before this class, I had never even dreamed of creating something like this all on my own. After this class has ended, I will able to say that I created my own personal website, which not many freshmen can say after leaving their first year of college. I even gave my parents the link to my homepage so they could be involved with what I am learning in the labs.

The most effective lesson within the HTML and CSS lessons was from Week 3 Lab 2. During this lab, I learned how to make borders with padding, margins, background, font, width, and position. I also learned how to make a div, which is a content container but is much more flexible. They can be moved around and layered on top of each other. I also learned how to make a span tag, which was my favorite part of the lesson. The span tag allows us to contain content and apply a particular style to the content within the paragraph. For example, I wrote “Go Hoosiers” and I changed the color of the word “Hoosiers” to red.

From the beginning of this class, my perceptions of this class have changed drastically. As midterm week comes and goes, I have realized that I really do love this class. I had the preconceived notion that I was going to miserably fail this class because I had no prior knowledge on the subject. But honestly, I am glad I did not have any experience because it forced me to really engage myself in both the lectures and labs. It forced me to exit my comfort zone and become passionate about something that I never thought was possible a year ago. I am so proud of how far I have come throughout these
first eight weeks. I have learned so much, and cannot wait to learn more as the semester goes on. I feel like this class is really getting me ready for a career in Informatics.
Works Cited

