



Becoming a first-rate web developer; *Heart in the Game, Eye on the Prize*

We've had more than 100 students complete our 12-week Drupal Career long-form training since 2011, working with individuals, teams, young and old, men and women, all with different backgrounds, abilities, motivations and aspirations. We've seen talents explode, helped keep people engaged and even watched interest fizzle. About the only constant is that everyone in every class wants to or needs to learn Drupal, whether they have decided on their own, or need to build their Drupal talent as part of a team.



Every so often, we run into a student who really brings to life our vision of what the course can help people accomplish; someone who does everything before, during and after that just exudes enthusiasm and commitment toward predictable success. Brian Coffelt (@briancoffelt), a student in the Spring 2015 Drupal Career Online session, and now Web Administrator and Developer for Duke Cancer Institute in Durham, NC, is one of those sensations.

Brian, after 15 years of serving as a public school health and physical education teacher, realized he was in a situation that fell short of providing him the professional fulfilment and the type of income potential he desired. "I wanted to challenge myself and better provide for my family," he recalls. "I learned of Drupal from my brother-in-law (Shaun Heath, an earlier DrupalEasy graduate) and began to research how powerful Drupal was. I also saw a great need for quality Drupal developers and a promising job market."

The Drupal job market was actually the key ingredient in the creation of DrupalEasy's long-form career technical education program, which was born as a solution for Florida's Space Coast when the end of the Shuttle program left about 7,000 people, including lots of IT-types, without jobs. The in-person course was a hit, and the positive outcomes led us to make things official, with a license through the Florida Department of Education, Commission for Independent Education, which we continually qualify for and renew annually. Since we moved the course live-online, we've been able to train up people in Drupal from all over the country.

Brian lived in Nashville at the time he started the program. He came with a not-so relevant degree in education, but made up for it with true desire, commitment and hard work. He dove straight into course curriculum as a star student from the first day. "His comprehension was very high, most likely because of his diligence and strong interest in the topics," says Mike Anello (@ultimike), who created and teaches the Drupal Career Online. It also had a lot to do with his self-study before



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the class even started; delving into a roadmap of languages, frameworks, and workflows that Shaun provided and that he researched in preparation.

“During the training, I made it a point to watch all DCO webcasts before class to ensure that I retained the concepts. Mike also recommended additional courses and topics to look into which I took full advantage of,” he explained. He also participated in every optional co-working lab during the course, and completed every assignment and project. Brian was very comfortable with his abilities, and once the course ended, skipped going for an internship and sent out applications and landed a full-time Drupal developer job almost immediately. Brian and his family later relocated from Tennessee to North Carolina for his current position, where he’s found his niche in front-end development for Duke.

Even now, Brian is still eager to learn. “I try to attend the DrupalEasy office hours when it fits into my work schedule,” he says. Mike holds Thursday office hours for all current and former students, to get information and help with issues, both from Mike and the others in the DrupalEasy learning community that’s been formed. The learning community, especially former classmates are important to Brian as well. He keeps in touch with one fellow student several times a week, with whom he has also collaborated on Drupal projects and attend DrupalCamps together.

Brian maintains his status as a rising star in Drupal by seeking out professional development and Drupal learning as much as possible, attending local Drupal meetups as often as he can, participating in the Duke Drupal users group and going to camps and cons when he can. He also spends at least a couple of hours a week reading up on the newest trends in Drupal, although, he explains, “Fatherhood cuts into my reading time quite a bit.”

According to Brian, “the best part of Drupal development is the satisfaction that comes with creating quality work. A close second would be the Drupal community.” He set out with a goal for professional fulfilment and greater opportunities for his family. “My new Drupal career has allowed me to attend events throughout the country. The pay scale and benefits available to me now greatly outweigh those of a public school teacher. I also enjoy the ability to work remotely from home when needed. This flexibility is in stark contrast to my previous profession,” he explains. Mission accomplished!

He also offers a bit of guidance for those looking to become Drupal developers. “My advice to someone learning Drupal is that you get what you put into it. If you sacrifice your time and energy, Drupal can be very rewarding. There's plenty of opportunities for those who are willing to work hard and push themselves.” he explains. He continued, “I can't recommend DrupalEasy enough! It has opened so many doors for me and the instruction I received was second to none!” The next session of [Drupal Career Online](#) starts soon.