Course Reflective Journal

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**Description**: What happened? When and where? Who else was involved? What did you do? What did other people do? What was the outcome?

**Group answer:**

During this course, the lectures were held at the FSEGA building and at the main building, in a dedicated room, on Tuesdays, and on Fridays, depending on the week and they were held either by the teacher or by other invited guests. I’ve only participated in one lecture, but it had a great impact on me. I studied exploratory testing in that lecture. The topic made me very curious because it didn’t imply any necessary knowledge in the domain, but it relied more on the tester’s experience. At that lecture, I’ve seen 3 or 4 mini videos, if I recall correctly, and they were all explaining the theoretical background, of this type of testing. All those videos made me really excited about the further tasks that were going to take place. I remember at that lecture I played with Lego and this made me really happy because it took me out of that formal academic environment and brought fun and excitement instead. We were split into 4 teams and we had to analyze a Lego house, for a family made up of Lego, that wanted to move into it. We had to take into consideration the family’s needs and use our creativity to come up with interesting and proper ways to test the house. As I reflect on this activity, I recall that I was very intrigued and it woke up in me a sense of creativity I didn’t necessarily know it was there. We had like 4-5 minutes per team to analyze the house and then write down the problems. We had to be collaborative and split the tasks of writing down the problems due to a shortage of time. In the end, a contest was held and each of us had to vote for the team that we thought asked and found the most relevant questions. The team I took part in managed to ask the most relevant questions according to the family’s needs and we finished in the first place. This activity made me pay more attention to details and also think outside the box, but most importantly to focus on the client’s needs and when is something I am not sure about, to always ask.

**Feelings**: What were you feeling during the situation? What do you think other people were feeling about the situation? How do you feel about the situation now?

**Answer:**

When I think back on that activity, I remember feeling excited and curious, but most importantly I didn’t feel the stress of the academic environment, but it was replaced with joy and calm. I believe the others had close feelings, just like mine, because I remember watching them and seeing how they also had fun when exploring the Lego house. Now when I think about it, I feel nostalgic and proud of what I’ve managed to achieve. I am grateful for that lecture and for what it thought me.

**Evaluation**: What went well? What didn’t go well? What positive or negative things did you (or other people) contribute to the situation?

**Answer:**

During that lecture, the obstacle we stumbled upon was the shortage of time, it was stressful to look at that house knowing we had only a few minutes to analyze it, but a colleague of mine came up with the brilliant idea of taking pictures, so we could look more even when our times is up. Or the shortage of time also affected us when writing down the problems we discovered, but I suggested splitting the work such that each of us writes something down, instead of only one, even if we used different papers.

**Analysis**: Why did (or didn’t) things go well? What theories or research can help you better understand the situation?

**Answer:**

Reflecting more deeply on the activity, I believe several key factors contributed to the success of our team. Firstly, the high level of motivation and enthusiasm amongst us was infectious and led to a shared commitment to excel in the task at hand. This collective drive, I think, was fueled by the competitive nature of the contest, which stimulated our desire to win.

Moreover, our strategy of distributing the task and analyzing different parts of the house was instrumental in making effective use of the limited time we had. It demonstrated our ability to collaborate, leverage our strengths, and work towards a common goal, which in turn enhanced the quality of our output.

On a theoretical level, our experience aligns with the principles of experiential learning and collaborative learning theories. The hands-on, game-based nature of the activity allowed us to learn through direct experience and active participation, which are key aspects of experiential learning. Additionally, our success with the divide-and-conquer strategy underscores the value of collaborative learning, where knowledge and understanding are constructed through social interaction and cooperation.

However, looking back, I think our excitement may have also been a double-edged sword. While it motivated us to give our best, it might have also led to rushing through the task in our eagerness to win, potentially missing out on more detailed analysis.

I believe researches about how games influence learning and the analytical and critical thinking would be very useful to understand the situation.

**Conclusions**: What did you learn from this situation? If this situation happened again, what would you do differently?

**Answer:**

Thinking back to what I did at that lecture, I can definitely say that I’ve learned how to be more controlled with my actions, to be calm and focused on the situation, despite the shortage of time, to think fast and look at the relevant parts, to ask when I am not sure about something and most importantly, the leadership ability because I’ve managed to somehow split the tasks and find a common way for us to the what we had to do. What I would change if such a situation would happen again, is not rushing things, despite that the time is short, to be more calm and focused, to let myself breathe and concentrate on what’s most important, and not be disturbed by small things.

**Action Plan**: What skills do you need to develop to handle a situation like this better? How will you develop the skills you need?

**Answer:**

In the future, I will focus on honing my time management skills. The pressure from the short amount of time we had in this situation was quite overwhelming, so learning how to effectively manage time in high-pressure situations will be valuable. This skill can be developed by setting time limits for tasks in practice scenarios and adhering strictly to these limits, while also ensuring high quality of work.

I also realize that improving my leadership skills would be beneficial. While I did take some initiative during this activity, I believe there is room for improvement. For instance, I could develop strategies to delegate tasks more efficiently or to better motivate and engage team members. I can develop this skill by taking up more leadership roles, reading up on leadership strategies and techniques, and seeking feedback from others on my leadership style.

Critical thinking and decision-making skills were key during this activity, so I would aim to strengthen these as well. I plan on taking part in more activities that require critical analysis and fast decision-making to improve in these areas. This could be through solving complex puzzles, playing strategy games, or participating in debates and discussions that require analytical thinking.

Lastly, I also need to work on my calmness and focus. It's important to stay composed under pressure and not let stress dictate my actions. I plan on incorporating mindfulness and meditation into my routine to improve in this area. I believe these techniques will help me learn how to stay calm and focused even in high-pressure situations.