Responsible: Timothy Trovatelli

Data collection: Your group has to meet a deadline on which they converge on a given project. Review your notes/minutes of meetings before and after this deadline (if notes are not available, record a video of a meeting after this deadline and review the video).

Analysis

1. In your judgement, to what extent did the group genuinely converge on a precisely-defined project by the deadline?
Out of 4 group members, one participant completed their task fully, two came pretty close and one did not manage to go over half of the task, due to it being too ambitious in the given amount of time.

Were there aspects of the project that were still left vague at this moment?
Yes, at that moment the goals of the project were not clear enough and the tasks were more aimed to be an exploration than to produce concrete results.

If aspects of the project remained undefined at the deadline, when did real convergence on a precisely-defined project take place?
The real convergence took place at the next deadline, once all the goals were defined and each team member felt confident of their abilities to perform their assigned tasks.

2. Looking at the period after this deadline, to what extent did the group stick to the project as defined at that moment?
As the time to meet the deadline shortened, the participants managed to focus more on the project and stick to it at an estimated 85%.

Did the group diverge a little/a lot from the project as defined at that moment?
Yes, as the project went on, it was easier to see what could be achieved or not in a reasonable amount of time and so the project scope was narrowed from its initial state.

Did the group spend time after the deadline clarifying aspects of the project that could have been clarified before the deadline?
Yes, a little bit.

3. If the group diverged from or spend time re-discussing the project as defined, were there benefits to this (i.e., did the project get better in some notable way)?
The project got better because the group now had agreed on all points and became a united front. It was important that the group had one vision.
Were there costs (i.e., was time lost that needed to be spent on other tasks)?
Yes, a lot of time was lost but the group felt that it was a better choice to spend time on narrowing down the project than to waste time on less significant tasks.

Reflection: Write a report on the team's project convergence based on your analysis.
Based on this analysis and my previous experience in a group project, it is usually the case that most projects hardly converge at 100%.

At first, the scope of the project is too big, as the wishes and expectations of the group members are too ambitious. Then, once everyone gets to work, the reality kicks in. There are some barriers that are put in place: first, all the information that should be available is not, the tasks that one would hope to perform may not be feasible due to the amount of time or lack of information, and findings in between deadlines make it so that some topics may be more interesting to investigate than the ones defined for the deadline and so some people would rather investigate these than the initial ones.

Once the participants have experienced a bit of the process of the project, the "real" goals start to be defined and the group begins to see a common trusted vision of the project.

At this time, the participants are all motivated to work together towards this goal and this is when the project really starts to converge. One must note that there are other unexpected factors, such as life events or a high workload in other classes, that prevent the project convergence to reach 100%.

Overall, this team has reached a high project convergence, whilst keeping an amicable atmosphere and realistic goals.

Group reflection: Share your report with the group.

Are there implications for how the team manages convergence/divergence in the rest of this project?
The project was quite advanced and well defined at the time this document was written. Therefore, we couldn't really try to do any better in this project.

The whole group agreed that it might have taken us a little bit too much time to define the scope of the project. But on the other hand, we acknowledge that we only had access to the data after a few weeks and therefore that it was hard to know in advance what could be done.

Do group members think they would change how they manage project scoping/definition phase in future projects?
All group members would like to be able to define faster and more accurately the scope of their future projects even though it is difficult to do and it generally takes experience to do this correctly. Doing this would result in more efficient meetings and fewer time losses.

We do not have enough experience but realised that working the other way around, i.e. setting less ambitious objectives and then expanding the scope, could be a method that is worth trying.