

Final reflection: Alexandru Mocanu

Analysis

Tasks A and B qualify as related to micro-management, as they concentrate on how group members do their brainstorming and meeting management, thus focusing on how meetings take place. Tasks C and D, on the other hand, talk about project documentation management and the convergence or divergence of the project, therefore concentrating on the macro-management.

Based on each task, the things that we proposed were the following:

- Task A
 - At the beginning of each brainstorming session, somebody should be assigned to take notes.
 - Each session should have a brainstorming “master” that would encourage each member to state their own ideas and would direct the discussion towards the central topic.
 - The team members should take some time to organize their thoughts before sharing them with their teammates.

The first and the last of the suggestions were actually implemented after completing this reflection. The second one was a bit harder to implement, so we ended up using more of a decentralized system in our brainstorms.

- Task B
 - There should be a meeting facilitator that would manage time and set the priorities for each meeting.
 - The meetings should have working and break time intervals to avoid getting unproductive and therefore waste time.
 - The meetings should have a participation facilitator that would give the floor for each member to express their ideas and concerns.

The second suggestion was readily implemented during the next meetings after the reflection. The first and second ones were again more sensitive issues given the somewhat limited amount of time, but we did start to better focus on a set of priorities for each meeting.

- Task C
 - The notes should be taken on a sharing platform, like Google Docs.
 - Before starting a new meeting, the notes of the previous one should be briefly reviewed to keep a clear timeline.
 - Notes should be used as a reference when working on the project.

Notes were centralised in a shared Google Drive folder after discussing these issues and team members checked the notes taken when implementing the data analysis tasks for the project. Meetings were sometimes too short or had a very clear target that was not necessarily related to previous work, so the old notes were not always reviewed before a new meeting.

- Task D

- The scope and definition phase of the project should take less time.
- The objectives set should have a smaller scope at first and then expand on it.

This reflection was completed near the end of the project, so the suggestions here stand as a reference for future projects.

Reflection

If there is one thing that I knew and that was confirmed by this project, is that project management is a very important and not as easy to manage as thought part of solving a given task. There are many aspects that you can not control, like various personal life events or other professional obligations that team members have, but there are also things that can be and must be taken care of, like time management, the structure of meetings and the structure of the project itself.

One thing that I observed now and also in other projects is how we tend to be very ambitious at first and treat the complexity of the task very lightly. Over time, we got to have a better understanding of what we actually had to deal with and started lowering the bar on the expectations. Probably the hardest aspect of the whole project was time management. It is easy to lose track of the objective and deviate towards discussions that do not prove useful in the end, thus wasting time. It is also hard, in our context of students with many courses, to find time to concentrate on one given group project. However, with good communication between team members and firmly agreed on meeting intervals, we were able to achieve a reasonable level of effectiveness. Therefore, a very important thing that I have learnt is that communication is key in any group project and that it is of utmost importance that each team member shares their ideas. I think I can say that as a result of this project, I will now take a more down-to-earth approach in future projects and I will try to think more carefully about the various aspects of a problem before diving into solving it. I have also noticed that I have started to manage my time better and I appreciate more the importance of communication in a project and sharing your ideas with others.