Communication in a group project

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Situation

In our team research project, I was primarily responsible for the quantitative component. I had initially planned to conduct a variety of assessments, including sensitivity testing by reverse-engineering pricing concepts taught in lectures, particularly for futures and options contracts. Early in the process, I shared my approach (and the analyses I intended to do) and shared this with my teammates. However, once I began working, I encountered limitations due to restricted access to the historical data I needed. After consulting with my tutor, I adjusted the scope of my work to fit the available data, but I failed to effectively communicate these changes or the constraints I faced to my teammates, who responsible for writing the report.

Effect

We had divided responsibilities, and since I was in charge of the quantitative analysis, I left the report writing to the rest of the team – after all, I had spent significant time working on the analysis, and felt it was fair for them to handle the report. However, my lack of communication had significant consequences. I assumed my teammates would interpret the analyses from the exported Jupyter Notebooks as I had intended, but when I reviewed the report just days before the deadline, I found that their understanding of my work was incomplete. Several sections were left unfinished, awaiting analysis that I hadn't been able to complete due to data limitations, and some of the figures I had produced were misinterpreted. This realisation caused stress and frustration, as we had to make last-minute corrections just hours before submission. I felt particularly stressed about ensuring the assignment had the correct analysis and met a good standard as I was already over-capacity with other responsibilities, and the miscommunication added unnecessary pressure on the team.

Action

Looking back, I could have taken more proactive measures to ensure better communication and collaboration. Although I touched base with the team periodically, I didn't organise regular meetings to discuss our progress or the challenges I was facing with the data. These meetings could have provided valuable opportunities to clarify my findings and explain the limitations I was working with. Additionally, I could have written notes about my observations and the trends from my analyses, which would have helped my teammates accurately interpret the results. Instead, I expected them to draw the same conclusions from the data and figures without providing them much context. By the time I reviewed the report, it was too late to avoid some of the misinterpretations, and we were forced to correct the mistakes in the final hours before submission.

Learning

This experience taught me the importance of maintaining ongoing communication and collaboration within a team. It's not enough to complete your tasks in isolation; you need to ensure that your work is properly understood by others, especially when they rely on it for

their parts of the project. Moving forward, it's import to remember to schedule regular check-ins, providing clear notes, and make sure that my team are aligned with my work. I've learned that while it's important to facilitate collaboration and make your contributions as clear as possible, teammates also have a responsibility to check in and ask questions if they have concerns. As the saying goes, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink." While I could have done more to communicate, my teammates also needed to take initiative in seeking clarification if they didn't fully understand my analysis.