

## Report 2 - Experience

17COD280 - Due on 17th May 2018, 4PM

Module Leader: Andrea Soltoggio

Henry Morgan

Student ID: B526505

This report covers my experience with managing the different teams and how my hypothesis, set out in the first semester, worked in practise. The report ends with how my management technique would differ in the future.

## 1 My Hypothesis

I had four main hypothesis going in to the project:

1. Teams are comprised of many individuals each with their own needs and desires, if attention is focused on fulfilling these requirements, for each person separately, then the entire team will prosper.
2. Large projects are hard for people to fully digest and work on effectively, therefore, they need to be broken into small achievable tasks. This not only helps to focus work but also to track progress of the team.
3. An understanding of how teams operate and how management can be the most effective would benefit teams. It would allow them to organize more effectively and help to motivate the following of instructions.
4. Teams should take advantage of the experience of their managers. This can only be effective if the team believes that the managers are invested in the project and it's success. Therefore, by playing an active role in the team I can posit the idea of interest encouraging them to utilize me as a resource as they do each other.

## 2 Weekly Reports

The weekly reports were designed to act like a time sheet, recording every time someone worked on the project. They were comprised of a series of records each containing a brief description of what was achieved, when the work was done and who participated in the work.

They were very effective at recording . . . .

Team 20 was under the predominant managment of a different manager which resulted in the team having to complete a different style of report. This report had the teams assign tasks for what would be completed in the following week. These reports were not overly useful, they contained almost no information. For example, one week they provided a table of containing everyone's names alongside the tasks for the upcoming week. For five of the people their tasks simply consisted of: "Create WordPress account" and "Start developing prototype". With the sixth person tasked to write next weeks report and "Help organize meetings". I do not believe that these tasks benefit the managers nor the team, the tasks are too general and have no defined completion criteria.

Initially I described the reports as recording all the meetings the team had concerning the project. This was a mistake as it resulted in teams only recording times when multiple members would meet to discuss and plan out the system. I clarified, to every team, exactly what I expected to be recorded when I realized this confusion.

There were many instances during the project where teams would add something to their reports which seemed wrong. For instance, one way CMSs are beneficial is that they package many features into a single tool, one of which is a user system. Team 8, however, included in one of their reports: "We also have developed a login system to the website". This indicates that they are attempting to inflate the amount of work they are presenting or have a fundamental misunderstanding of their CMS. Either way it is something that should be addressed. I, however, elected to not confront the group and instead sought avoid conflict which, in hindsight, was detrimental to the team and goes directly against my intentions for hypothesis 4.

When creating the final summary report this was the first time I had reviewed a teams actual progress accross multiple weeks. Previously I would be looking at a single weeks progress in isolation. When reviewing the teams overall progress I noticed many inconsistencies within some of the teams. For instance, team 18 stated in both the 6th and 7th development week report that they “started the testing report”. This clearly shows that the team was not truthful in the weekly reports which is an exact issue I raised in the first report and was the underlying reasoning for collecting actual work entries in the reports rather than a future plan.

- Final Summary
- The meeting tracking worked very well when used as I intended it to be
  - many teams missed the point of it. Better explanation would improve it

In the future I would create a work timeline (as shown in the experience report) for each group as the project progressed. This would mean I would be able to review the weeks report in the context of all previous progress, allowing me to notice any problems within the team such as idling members (as in team 5), or feature regression (something present in team 20).

- Some teams didn’t start development until 4 weeks in, this should have been a red flag.

I would also be more transparent with their usage

I think that one major way the reports could be improved would be to be more transparent with their usage. If I informed the teams at the beginning that would be used to determine how much progress is being made. One, additional, way I could achieve this transparency would be make the timeline available for the groups. This was they could self-reflect and be a longer term reminder of what they have accomplished.

- Tell the people that I will be using the weekly reports to assess them at the end. I believe this would make the groups keep more accurate and complete records of who was doing what. It

### 3 Weekly Meetings

The weekly meetings for the most part were wasted time. I failed to take advantage of them properly.

Each meeting consisted of asking what the team had done

#### 3.1 Final Demonstrations

During the final week of meetings each team presented a demonstration of their system. The demos were meant to be a practise run of what they were going to present to the lecturers. This allowed the teams to receive feedback on their system and the presentation style. The teams were briefed the week prior and were told they should be rehearsed demos where everyone is involved and the complete system is presented via use cases i.e a ticket being created, assigned, and solved.

Although we had been presented with demonstrations prior to this one, this one turned out to be much more useful in terms of gauging progress and providing feedback. Having the system shown in a rehersed manner with user storeies allowed us to spot missing features or potential errors. Where as in prior demos we would be shown isolated parts of the system and it was hard to fully grasp how everything fit together in the larger picture - though at the time I did not realise this was the case.

#### 3.2 Future Changes

In the future I would perform these demos every week. I believe doing this would make the teams focus on features which actually matter. For instance, some teams spent many weeks on design, however, if they had to present their system every week it would likely force the team to make tangible progress as it would be hard for them to justify nothing really changing in the system.

This style of demonstration also see who was and was not familiar with the system. If done regularly it would be easier to determine if someone had not contributed to the work effort which would allow be to delegate and balance work loads, helping with hypothesis 1.

Another thing I would do differently is speak to the assessors before the project in order to understand exactly what they are looking for in a good presentation. I made the assumption that, since the module is a group project, they would want to see everybody involved in the presentation. I instructed the teams that this was the case and even criticized one team for only having a single person do everything. Although I think that this is a feature of a good presentation, confirming it would have been good to ensure the information the teams are given is accurate.

## 4 Teaching Management

The main way I had planned to teach management to the teams was to have them read about and select which of Belbins team roles most applied to them. every member was presented with a list of the roles and a description each one as well as a high level overview of what the roles were for. The purpose of this exercise was to get each member thinking about their place within a team and to have them realise what there skills were in a team environment.

It was found that every team (except one) had at least a single person for all roles barring the *resource investigator*. This mean

There was a single team that lacked the *completer finisher* role.

- Hypothesis 3
  - One thing I did not realise at the beginning was that students lacked motivation and reason to dedicate extra time learning about management methodology. I still believe that the knowledge of the subject would improve a teams performance, as clarity of reasoning can help guide people into following directions, however, individuals need to be given reason to want to learn.
  - When I manage people in the future I shall be more aware of this need for motivation, and explain to the people the exact reason why they should be interested in learning and more specifically how this would benefit them directly.
- The rate in which teams filled in their roles seemed to correlate roughly with the performance of the team. Members who were slow tended to be poorer performers then those who completed it quickly.

## 5 Evaluation

Overall, I think, the managment style contained many good ideas the meetings style being one of the best. But there were many things which could have been improved.

### 5.1 Future Improvements

- Read through my hypothesis frequently.
  - Realised while writing this report that I had forgotten three of the hypothesis

### 5.2 Module Improvements

- Review weekly meetings each week
  - more realistic
  - benifit the managers by keeping them focussed
  - Help to focus on the individual
  - Posco asked us after the final meeting to rate each member individually. We were not able to do this as accurately as I would have liked as I had not kept notice on an individual basis.

### **5.3 Updated Hypothesis**

## **6 Conclusion**

Overall this module provided the opportunity for many new and interesting ideas.