

FIT1049 IT professional practice 2020 Semester 2

**Report on the teamwork with
KPMG2 in assignment 2**

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Introduction

While the phrase — “learning from mistakes” sounds like a cliché, the key is always about how. Reflection is the answer of how we can learn from the mistakes and an important capability for professionals to develop along our career. This report reflects upon my team's performance and my contribution to the process, using the Gib cycle (Gibbs, 1988). Three elements constitute this reflection, namely teamwork, role articulation and leadership, grounded by the theories of Tuckman (Smith, 2019), Belbin (Prichard, 1999) and Cherry (Cherry, 2020) respectively.

Background

This project was challenging. It was my first time working as a group in Monash University. We had five members, three of whom are introverts. We also had to undergo online-study mode where our interaction is limited via Zoom. With the three challenges, I considered myself different based on my personality and ways of working and leading group projects. I will discuss how different based on the challenges and how I tackled them by topics.

1. Role articulation

1.1 Description of the first phase

In the first stage, I realised teammates were rather timid when discussing which roles they did for assignment 1 in the ice-breaking session. They briefly mentioned their roles and muted themselves. While I was trying to open a conversation to break the silence, my questions received only one response. I felt unfair about how I could continue working with them. My unmotivation lasted for a moment as soon I realised this was a real-workplace situation, where often I would be delegated to work with someone I am reluctant to partner with in my future workplace. My mindset then changed, taking this challenge and seeing it as an opportunity to grow.

1.2 Evaluation

After seeking advice from my tutors, I examined their personalities, which eased my task delegation. A successful team has 8 roles within a team (Prichard, 1999). Some can take on multiple roles, depending on the situation and group dynamics (Mudamaster, 2018). I noticed Haonan was the *Plant-innovator* who devised great ideas. His ideas steered our direction of deciding the assignment's topic. Ashton was *The company worker*, who was willing to do necessary things for the sake of the business, even if others do not want to do this. For example, we were reluctant to talk about the ethics and he took it for the project. His critical mind on deciding subtopics helped us establish a foundation. Annie, *The team worker*, was less dominant but skilful in organising our works and E-folio. She was great at communication and synthesized our idea. ZiJiang's tendency on social loafing made me indecisive of allocating a role. Unlike others' personalities, I was prone to be *The Chairman* who recognised others' strengths and weaknesses and knew the reason for working on these challenges. I was also *The completer finisher* who was more output-oriented.

1.3 Analysis

Knowing who were like creators or workers made activities afterwards smoother. I learnt that people with greater capability take greater responsibility. I understood ZiJiang's situation and made him focus on talking about introduction and conclusion. Haonan was the creator and curious about new topics hence I delegated him to discuss data collection. Ashton's critical mind is suitable on ethical issues. Annie's synthesising skills could find the relationship between search engines and social media.

1.4 Conclusion and future plan

Lesson 1.4.1. Considering others' personality is a priority at the first stage.

- Keep :
This role examination made my team work despite distinct personalities. It lets them know me and me know their weaknesses and strengths. What I did great was to ensure everyone was working on their roles with their characteristics. I should keep this up whenever I work in groups.

Lesson 1.4.2. It is me who adopts the environment, not the opposite.

- Stop :
For a moment, my cynicism drove me and my team insecure. I should stop complaining and find a way.

2. Team Composition and Engagement

2.1 Description of the second phase :

The way I worked with this team was different. The online-studying was a hindrance of group interaction. Our team had three introverts who are rather passive workers. During the meetings, our cameras turned off and were rather silent. Not knowing their instant reactions, our group had insufficient engagement.

2.2 Evaluation :

However, the significant thing was that I realised the reasons of lacking engagement. Haonan had a language barrier. I fortunately could understand his expression in Chinese. Ashton was a passive worker, so I needed to delegate his works in advance. Zijian had tendencies on social loafing because of technical issues and capability. Therefore, Annie and I had to decide the topics.

2.3 Analysis

The forming stage was unsatisfactory as we could not make our acquaintance with each other (Smith, 2019). While Zijian was in China where he could not access the internet, some were unwilling to compromise using WeChat as the communication channel. I sometimes felt annoyed talking to them privately and had to ensure everyone was on the same page. Therefore, in the forming stage, communication was inefficient.

2.4 Conclusion and future plan :

Lesson 2.4.1. Understanding why people behave their way lets me understand the root problem in which I could tackle them one by one.

Despite the inefficient communication, it is still better than nothing worked. Nori advised me I should ensure everything operates fine despite those challenges. Indeed, during the project, what I did was to make them realise the aim which was "Get-The-Job-Done" and motivate them. By knowing their hindrance, I believed the ways I did for this project, which was inboxing them privately and telling them to get their job done were the only way.

- **Start :**
As a leader, I acknowledged the problem of communication and I shall show better empathy to them. Leaders are readers. To enhance my communication, I decided to read more books about the pertinent topics. I also need to find a better communication channel. The reason I could talk to them privately thanked to the small number of members. But imagine if there are 20 members in a team, how would I tackle it? Should I use an app like Slack to communicate?
- **Keep :**
Before doing any work, I must understand groupmates' background as much as possible to ensure their problems and assist them.

3. Leadership

3.1 Describe :

At the performing stage, things went smoother as we established the flow but bad things existed. Since we share similar career paths, the rapport existed. We skipped through the storming and norming stages due to insufficient engagement. Another bad thing was the time management. We worked individually. I tried to monitor their work, but not everyone could meet the deadlines. We had not even finished our slides and scripts before the day of presentation. As a leader, this was my responsibility and fault.

3.2 Evaluation :

Based on the above description, I could notice the difficulty when leading this group. However, I perceived that there are different leaderships to apply to different groups (Cherry, 2020). The way I led before was more democratic where my motivation drove from my teammates. However, not in this case, I understand my teammates were rather unassertive and prefer working individually, so I am more autocratic. I made most of the decisions but accepted their input. I sometimes felt insecure about the direction and topic we researched. Fortunately, our tutor's feedback was always useful to give me some guidance. This landed me a path that when I am unsure if things go wrong, outsiders are also an option to give me clues.

3.3 Conclusion and future plan :

3.3.1 Lesson. Different leadership styles depend on types of teammates.

- Keep :
I should take different styles of leadership depending on the personality and background of my teammates.
- Start:
I should dig deeper into the leadership styles so that I will be well-prepared for upcoming projects.

Conclusion

The results went beyond my expectation; our presentation flow went efficiently due to well task delegations. These challenges throughout the assignment gave me lessons on which I could reflect which parts I did right and rooms of improvement on communication, building team dynamics and leadership. As mentioned, there is something to start, stop and keep. I expect myself to pick the skills during my professional career so as to “learn from the mistakes”.

Reference

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