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Module 12.3: Lessons Learned

Working as a group comes with it’s own set of benefits and challenges – most of which definitely benefited our overall workload and simulated what it would actually be like to map out and code an actual coding project surrounded by other programmers. The benefits included: Fair distribution of workload, leveraging the groups competencies and strengths, and positive reinforcement through encouragement and comradery within a project. Some drawbacks, and there really were less than there were benefits, were simple scheduling and different levels of competencies amongst the group – resulting in a less consistent workflow and a slower resolution than I usually work at. I’ll extrapolate the benefits and setbacks further in this essay.

As for the benefits, I feel as though David and myself, as well as others at certain key points, worked very well during the actual coding stance. Leveraging this we were able to burn through the coding of the Python file and troubleshoot a fairly difficult issue within about 5 minutes. Others in the group were also able to contribute well with the planning and filling in gaps of missing elements and attributes in the ERD as well as formatting the final project and making the PowerPoint more cohesive and aesthetically pleasing, so that was a huge plus. We were all really supportive and if someone had an idea or question, we would actually stop and discuss it while still trying to move, focused, towards the end goal of the project! I personally feel as though we had no issue distributing the work – and I feel like all group members contributed a fair amount to the project, sometimes this portion can be tricky in group assignments. All-in-all, we worked as a group, and in doing so the project was efficient and I believe turned out super well!

The potential pitfalls we ran into definitely had to be in the scheduling and different skill levels. First, the entire group works full-time jobs, as many adults do, and as a result we had trouble nailing an exact time where all group members could meet. We got all members to meet somewhat perfectly week 1, we had trouble getting all group members together (we had to leave one member out and he contributed later) in week 2, and the same took place in week 3 (where we left the same member out and he contributed later). It still seemed totally fair and the alternative times we proposed actually worked worse where only 1-2 members could attend. Also along the theme of times to meet syncing up, we also are on 2 separate coasts! 3 members were on the East coast, and 1 member was Pacific, so that made times pretty drastically align about 3 hours apart from another. We actually met starting at 8pm my time (EST) and ran pretty late to get it done. So meeting times were difficult; Next, we ran into a slight skill gap between myself and another student having prior coding experience in our jobs, and 2 members being (1) completely new to programming and “struggling” and (1) being somewhat versed in tech but struggling to understand SQL and Python in the context of the prompt and “where to go next”. It wasn’t an issue, though, it only led to me and the other experienced member having to slow down the coding, the assumptions and directions we were moving, and explain the code in real-time, provide links to help, really anything we could do to catch those 2 members up at their pace. There were setbacks, but we persevered.

In conclusion, there are so many benefits to working as a group, when all members of the groups are engaged and supportive. There are also components that require the project to take more time and effort, factors such as scheduling and varying skill levels. I personally feel as though I learned a lot from this case study and this class in a whole – and it was a pleasure to work with my group.