

# My ESD Learning Journey

A comprehensive portfolio showcasing my learning and growth through the Employability Skills Development module at SLIIT CITY UNI.

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## About My Learning Journey

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This portfolio represents my educational journey through the Employability Skills Development (ESD) module, covering various aspects of professional and personal development essential for career success.

Throughout this semester, I've learned about networking, professional grooming, entrepreneurship, quality assurance, self-defense, and much more. This portfolio showcases the progression of my understanding and the valuable experiences I've gained along the way.

My goal is to continue building upon this foundation, applying these lessons to both my academic pursuits and future career in the IT industry.

[View Lectures](#)

03/06/2025

# Lecture 1: Introduction to ESD

ESD

Professional Development

Foundations

## Session Overview

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This foundational session introduced the Employability Skills Development (ESD) module, outlining the key competencies we would develop throughout the semester. The session covered course structure, assessments, and expectations.

## Learning Outcomes

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- ✓ Understanding the ESD framework and its importance
  - ✓ Identifying key professional skills for career success
  - ✓ Setting personal development goals for the semester
  - ✓ Learning about the session structure and expectations
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## Examples & Applications

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We discussed how employability skills go beyond academic knowledge and include communication, teamwork, adaptability, and self-awareness.

## Extra Research & Insights

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I researched various IT job roles and their skill requirements to better understand what employers look for in candidates.

## Skills Developed

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## Areas of Self-Improvement

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- Building stronger communication and interpersonal skills
- Learning to reflect effectively on personal progress
- Exploring various IT-related job roles and their skill requirements

## Action Plan

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- Engage actively in weekly workshops and discussions
- Conduct additional research on different career paths
- Keep a reflection log after each lecture

## Personal Reflection

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*During the first week, I was introduced to the Employability Skills Development module and its objectives. I learned about the importance of employability skills in shaping my professional identity and preparing for future career opportunities. The session also provided an overview of the assessments, expectations, and weekly structure, helping me understand what I need to accomplish throughout the semester.*

10/06/2025

# Lecture 2: Student Success Toolkit

Well-being

Mental Health

Relationships

## Session Overview

This session focused on essential aspects of student well-being, mental health, and relationship management. The lecture emphasized how self-awareness, mindfulness, and emotional balance contribute to academic success and overall personal growth.

## Learning Outcomes

- ✓ Understanding exam stress and effective coping strategies
- ✓ Learning about brain health and neuroplasticity
- ✓ Developing healthy relationship management skills
- ✓ Practicing mindfulness and self-esteem building techniques

## Class Activities

- Discussion on exam stress and coping mechanisms
- Group activity on relationship scenarios
- Mindfulness breathing exercise practice

## Examples & Applications

We explored Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love which includes Passion, Intimacy, and Commitment as core elements of relationships.

## Extra Research & Insights

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I researched the DOSE hormones (Dopamine, Oxytocin, Serotonin, Endorphin) and their impact on mental well-being and happiness.

## Skills Developed

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Stress Management

Mindfulness

Relationship Building

Self-Esteem

## Areas of Self-Improvement

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- Practicing daily mindfulness (5-10 minutes per day)
- Building self-esteem through positive affirmations
- Improving time management and avoiding procrastination
- Setting healthy boundaries in relationships

## Action Plan

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- Create a consistent weekly study plan with built-in breaks
- Start a gratitude and mindfulness journal
- Engage in physical activity at least 3 times a week to improve focus
- Reflect weekly on my progress in managing stress and building self-worth

## Personal Reflection

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*This week's lecture was eye-opening and deeply relevant to my personal life as a student. I realized that academic success is not just about intelligence or hard work, it's about mental balance, emotional intelligence, and self-care. I learned practical strategies to handle stress more effectively and to cultivate healthier relationships both inside and outside the university.*

17/06/2025

# Lecture 3: Networking & Business Etiquette

Networking

Business Etiquette

Professionalism

## Session Overview

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This session focused on the importance of networking, professional etiquette, and personal grooming in building strong business relationships. The key message was that 'Your Network = Your Net Worth.'

## Learning Outcomes

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- ✓ Understanding networking principles and the 24/7/30 rule
  - ✓ Learning the VCP Model (Visibility, Credibility, Profitability)
  - ✓ Mastering the 10 Commandments of Networking
  - ✓ Developing professional grooming and presentation skills
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## Class Activities

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- Role-playing networking conversations
- Practicing professional introductions
- Group discussion on networking experiences

## Examples & Applications

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We practiced the 'Give First' principle in networking - offering help before expecting something in return.

## Extra Research & Insights

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I explored LinkedIn optimization strategies and professional networking platforms relevant to the IT industry.

## Skills Developed

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Networking

Professional Communication

Business Etiquette

Personal Branding

## Areas of Self-Improvement

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- Practice maintaining conversations with new people confidently
- Improve my personal presentation (dress code and posture)
- Strengthen my online professional presence (LinkedIn profile)
- Learn to follow up consistently after making new connections

## Action Plan

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- Attend at least one networking event or club activity this semester
- Connect with at least 5 industry professionals on LinkedIn
- Prepare a short personal introduction for future networking opportunities
- Review my grooming and attire before presentations or interviews

## Personal Reflection

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*This week's session made me realize that networking is not about collecting contacts, it's about building genuine relationships. I used to think networking was only for business owners, but now I understand it's a critical skill for all professionals. The grooming section also reminded me that first*

24/06/2025

# Lecture 4: Quality Assurance Workshop

QA

Software Testing

AI

Workshop

## Session Overview

This practical workshop focused on Quality Assurance (QA) testing and its role in the software development process. The session included insights into what QA testers do, the importance of testing in ensuring product quality, and a discussion on the future of QA with AI technologies.

## Learning Outcomes

- ✓ Understanding QA processes and testing methodologies
- ✓ Learning different types of testing (manual, automation, functional, regression)
- ✓ Exploring AI's impact on QA (Generative AI and Agentic AI)
- ✓ Developing analytical thinking for bug identification

## Class Activities

- Website testing activity (identifying bugs and issues)
- Group sharing of test findings and improvement suggestions

## Examples & Applications

We tested a live website to identify UI/UX issues, functionality bugs, and performance problems.



## Extra Research & Insights

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I researched AI-driven testing tools such as Testim, Appliflow, and Mabl that use AI to automate testing processes.

## Skills Developed

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QA Testing

Bug Identification

Analytical Thinking

AI Literacy

## Areas of Self-Improvement

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- Improve attention to detail and analytical thinking
- Learn the basics of QA testing tools and automation frameworks
- Stay updated on AI technologies related to QA
- Develop the habit of documenting observations clearly and systematically

## Action Plan

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- Explore beginner-friendly QA tools like Selenium or JIRA
- Watch tutorials on AI-based testing automation
- Practice identifying UI/UX bugs on different websites weekly
- Read about real-world QA case studies to understand industry standards

## Personal Reflection

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*This session made me appreciate QA as more than just 'testing', it's about ensuring user satisfaction, reliability, and continuous improvement. I realized that QA testers play a critical role in shaping user experience and preventing costly errors. The introduction to AI's impact on QA also motivated me to stay updated on emerging technologies.*

01/07/2025

# Lecture 5: Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship

Startups

Innovation

## Session Overview

This inspiring session was conducted by Mr. Arshad, founder of Flash Health, who shared his entrepreneurial journey and valuable lessons from building a successful startup in the health-tech industry.

## Learning Outcomes

- ✓ Understanding the entrepreneurial mindset and risk-taking
- ✓ Learning the three chapters of entrepreneurship: Education, Planning, and Fear
- ✓ Developing strategic thinking for business opportunities
- ✓ Exploring the concept of Minimum Viable Product (MVP)

## Class Activities

- Brainstorming business ideas with 1 million rupees

## Examples & Applications

Mr. Arshad shared the journey of Flash Health from idea to successful health-tech platform.

## Extra Research & Insights

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I researched Flash Health and learned about its mission to digitize healthcare services in Sri Lanka.

## Skills Developed

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Entrepreneurial Thinking

Risk Assessment

Strategic Planning

Innovation

## Areas of Self-Improvement

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- Develop an entrepreneurial mindset and take initiative in projects
- Learn basic financial management and investment principles
- Strengthen my planning and strategic thinking skills
- Overcome fear of failure by taking small calculated risks

## Action Plan

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- Start brainstorming potential business or tech-based project ideas
- Follow successful local startups to understand their growth journeys
- Take an online course or watch talks on entrepreneurship and innovation
- Practice pitching ideas confidently in class or group activities

## Personal Reflection

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*This session was one of the most motivating so far. Listening to a real entrepreneur's story gave me a clear understanding of what it means to build something from the ground up. I realized that entrepreneurship is not just about money, it's about vision, discipline, and resilience.*

08/07/2025

# Lecture 6: Alumni Talk & HR Aspects

Career Development

HR

Personal Branding

## Session Overview

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This insightful session was conducted by Mr. Cathum Henegama, CEO of Xpress Jobs, who shared his journey from intern to CEO and discussed HR expectations, career strategy, and personal branding in the IT industry.

## Learning Outcomes

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- ✓ Understanding the concept of 'Your Career = Your Product'
  - ✓ Learning about Minimum Viable Profile (MVP) for career development
  - ✓ Identifying common mindset bugs that limit career growth
  - ✓ Developing strategies for personal branding and online presence
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## Examples & Applications

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Mr. Cathum shared real employee feedback examples to demonstrate how attitude affects career progression.

## Extra Research & Insights

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I explored Xpress Jobs and learned about digital recruitment trends in Sri Lanka.

## Skills Developed

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Career Planning

Personal Branding

Interview Skills

Professional Networking

## Areas of Self-Improvement

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- Build and update my LinkedIn profile and GitHub portfolio
- Improve my communication and interview skills
- Strengthen time management and research habits
- Learn the basics of AI tools relevant to my field

## Action Plan

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- Create a professional LinkedIn profile and start posting updates monthly
- Contribute to at least one open-source or small freelance project
- Watch HR and interview prep videos weekly
- Practice answering common IT interview questions

## Personal Reflection

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*This session was extremely valuable because it combined HR expectations, career strategy, and personal development. Hearing from a successful alumnus who started as an intern made me realize that career success doesn't happen overnight, it's built through consistency and self-improvement.*

15/07/2025

# Lecture 7: Grooming & Professional Appearance

Grooming

Professionalism

Presentation

## Session Overview

This session focused on the importance of personal grooming and professional appearance in the workplace. Ms. Eranga explained how outward presentation reflects personal discipline, confidence, and respect for others.

## Learning Outcomes

- ✓ Understanding the importance of grooming in professional settings
- ✓ Learning grooming standards for different professional environments
- ✓ Developing awareness of first impressions and professional etiquette
- ✓ Improving personal presentation and confidence

## Examples & Applications

We discussed different dress codes: Business Casual, Smart Casual, and Formal attire for various professional settings.

## Extra Research & Insights

I researched professional grooming standards in the IT industry and tech companies.

## Skills Developed

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Professional Grooming

Business Etiquette

Personal Presentation

Confidence Building

## Areas of Self-Improvement

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- Maintain a more consistent grooming routine
- Prepare appropriate outfits for interviews and events
- Pay attention to small details like nails, shoes, and hair
- Improve posture and confidence in presentation

## Action Plan

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- Create a 'professional outfit checklist' for upcoming interviews
- Practice good posture daily
- Keep personal hygiene items in my bag for quick touch-ups
- Observe how professionals in my field dress and model that standard

## Personal Reflection

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*This session reminded me that appearance is a form of communication. Even though technical skills are important, grooming and etiquette often influence how seriously others take us. I realized I sometimes overlook small things like ironing clothes or checking my posture before an interview.*

22/07/2025

# Lecture 8: Self-Defense Workshop

Self Defense

Personal Safety

Workshop

## Session Overview

This hands-on self-defense workshop focused on personal safety and practical techniques to protect oneself in risky situations. The instructor emphasized that self-defense is not about fighting, but about escaping and avoiding harm effectively.

## Learning Outcomes

- ✓ Learning basic self-defense techniques and escape moves
- ✓ Developing situational awareness and prevention strategies
- ✓ Understanding the importance of confidence in personal safety
- ✓ Practicing verbal de-escalation techniques

## Class Activities

- Demonstration of choke escape techniques
- Individual practice of self-defense moves
- Peer observation and feedback sessions

## Examples & Applications

A batchmate participated in a live demonstration of escaping a chokehold during the session.



## Extra Research & Insights

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I explored simple self-defense strategies online, including using everyday objects as defensive tools.

## Skills Developed

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Self-Defense Techniques

Situational Awareness

Risk Assessment

Confidence Building

## Areas of Self-Improvement

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- Practice self-defense techniques regularly to build muscle memory
- Improve situational awareness in daily life
- Stay calm and think clearly in stressful situations
- Encourage peers to also learn basic self-defense

## Action Plan

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- Dedicate 10-15 minutes weekly to review and practice self-defense moves
- Learn additional safety techniques through online tutorials or workshops
- Apply situational awareness strategies when walking in public spaces
- Reflect on safety habits regularly to stay prepared

## Personal Reflection

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*This session made me understand that self-defense is a skill everyone should learn, regardless of age or gender. I learned that confidence, awareness, and knowledge of simple escape techniques are more important than physical strength. Practicing the moves myself gave me a sense of empowerment.*

29/07/2025

# Lecture 9: Music Appreciation Workshop

Music

Creativity

Workshop

## Session Overview

This interactive workshop focused on understanding music, appreciating musicians, and exploring creativity through sound. The session was conducted by two instructors who demonstrated different instruments (piano and tabla) and engaged students in hands-on musical activities.

## Learning Outcomes

- ✓ Understanding basic musical elements and rhythm
- ✓ Appreciating the effort and creativity of musicians
- ✓ Discovering music in everyday sounds and environments
- ✓ Developing collaborative creativity through group activities

## Class Activities

- Group rhythm activity with tapping, clapping, and movement
- Live student musical performances

## Examples & Applications

Two instructors demonstrated piano (melody) and tabla (rhythm) to show how different instruments work together in music.

## Extra Research & Insights

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I explored basic music theory and the benefits of music for focus and emotional well-being.

## Skills Developed

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Music Appreciation

Rhythm

Collaborative Creativity

Active Listening

## Areas of Self-Improvement

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- Develop a habit of actively listening to music with attention to rhythm and melody
- Explore creating music from everyday sounds
- Appreciate and respect musicians and their efforts
- Practice collaborative creativity in group activities

## Action Plan

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- Spend time each week listening to different music genres and analyzing them
- Experiment with creating simple rhythms using everyday objects
- Attend local music performances or watch live recordings
- Reflect on how music can enhance creativity in other areas of life

## Personal Reflection

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*This session reminded me that music is not just entertainment, but a form of expression and connection. I learned to listen more attentively, appreciate others' efforts, and find creativity in everyday sounds. Participating in the*

*group activity helped me understand the importance of coordination and teamwork.*

05/08/2025

# Lecture 10: UI/UX Design

UI/UX

Design

Digital Products

## Session Overview

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This session focused on UI (User Interface) and UX (User Experience) Design and their role in creating user-centric digital products. We learned how good UI/UX design enhances usability, satisfaction, and overall engagement.

## Learning Outcomes

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- ✓ Understanding the difference between UI and UX design
  - ✓ Learning the UI/UX design process and principles
  - ✓ Identifying good and bad design practices
  - ✓ Exploring emerging trends and AI's role in frontend development
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## Class Activities

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- Hands-on app redesign activity

## Examples & Applications

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I redesigned WhatsApp with a concept showing two active chats simultaneously for better multitasking.

## Extra Research & Insights

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I explored Figma tutorials and case studies of apps with excellent UX like Spotify and Airbnb.

## Skills Developed

UI/UX Design

User-Centered Design

Wireframing

Design Thinking

## Areas of Self-Improvement

- Develop wireframing and prototyping skills (Figma, Adobe XD)
- Study accessibility guidelines and inclusive design principles
- Practice designing intuitive user flows for apps
- Learn to incorporate AI tools in the design process

## Action Plan

- Create weekly practice projects to redesign simple apps or websites
- Explore online UI/UX communities for feedback and inspiration
- Learn and experiment with AI-assisted design tools
- Collect user feedback on personal design experiments

## Personal Reflection

*This session taught me that UI/UX is more than making things look pretty, it's about creating experiences that delight and empower users. Designing the WhatsApp screen made me think critically about user needs, multitasking efficiency, and simplicity. I realized that good design requires empathy, testing, and iteration.*

12/08/2025

# Lecture 11: From Code to Cloud – Streamlining Deployment with DevOps

DevOps

CI/CD

Cloud

Deployment

## Session Overview

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This session introduced the DevOps approach for moving code from development to production in a fast, reliable, and automated way. We compared traditional manual deployments with modern DevOps pipelines, explored key tools, and learned about monitoring, rollback, and cloud deployment strategies.

## Learning Outcomes

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- ✓ Understanding the challenges of manual deployments vs DevOps approach
  - ✓ Learning the DevOps workflow and essential tools
  - ✓ Exploring Continuous Integration (CI) benefits and deployment targets
  - ✓ Understanding monitoring, rollback strategies, and cloud deployment
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## Class Activities

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- Live demonstration of CI/CD pipeline workflow
- Comparison of static vs dynamic site deployment

## Examples & Applications

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Maleesha Sir showed how the CI/CD pipeline works on a DevOps website, illustrating the automation from code commit to deployment and monitoring.

## Extra Research & Insights

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I learned about container orchestration (Docker + Kubernetes) and explored serverless architecture for cost-effective scaling. I also studied rollback strategies to minimize downtime.

## Skills Developed

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DevOps

CI/CD

Cloud Deployment

Containerization

Monitoring

## Areas of Self-Improvement

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- Learn CI/CD tools like Jenkins, GitHub Actions, or GitLab CI
- Practice containerization with Docker
- Explore cloud platforms (AWS, Railway, Serverless)
- Understand monitoring and alerting best practices

## Action Plan

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- Set up a small app with a CI/CD pipeline
- Experiment with staging and production environments
- Monitor and analyze logs and metrics for practice
- Use containers to simplify deployment and rollback

## Personal Reflection

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*The session emphasized that DevOps is more than automation, it's a mindset for faster, safer, and more reliable software delivery. Manual*



*deployments are slow and error-prone, whereas CI/CD pipelines reduce human error and allow continuous improvement. I realized that understanding DevOps principles is crucial for modern software development and deployment.*