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Reflective Essay for CCI 441 – Software Engineering

We experienced technical challenges at every turn it seemed, since this was the first time attempting anything of the sort. The most prominent challenge would have to be trying to get all the different parts of our project to come together and work. This would include the User Interface, the actual code for the program, and the access that is needed to-from the database to be able to request and retrieve the information needed, and how to display it inside of the User Interface properly. Having some pre-requisite work involving User Interface creation, from prototyping to implementation (code), would have been extremely valuable coming into this project.

Of the techniques learned through the semester, the breakdown of object-oriented software engineering was the most useful in our group project. From starting with the requirements engineering and effort estimation, to continuing onwards through software Architecture design and developing the use case modeling from there… This whole design process made everything that we were attempting much more streamlined and gave us a good path to abide by. Seeing the step-by-step process that Software Engineers typical transcend was priceless in our learning journey, trying to start from scratch without these footprints in the sand so to speak would have been a nightmare.

Working as a team was able to enhance the overall process since some individuals have strengths where others may display weaker understanding of certain concepts, and vice versa of course. Therefore, as a whole, you get more knowledge from working with these more experienced individuals in their respective paths, or from reiterating what you already know and solidifying your current understanding. For instance, members in my group are currently working in a field that has similar responsibilities of what a Software Engineer may be required to do at some point in their careers. One group member is working with database management while another is at intern in a Computer Science related position as well.

The only problematic scenario that I can think of from working in a group is from the delegating responsibilities and working around time constraints from each individuals life’s when trying to come together each week to complete the current tasks at hand. These types of scenarios are presented no matter what you are trying to accomplish in any field that one may be working though, so I am not sure that this is just a problem within this project itself. There are other ways that communication could have been increased amongst the group that would have led to quicker, better quality results. For our first Software Engineering project however, I believe we did exceedingly well.

Overall, the course did meet my needs. There were some distractions / road blocks that presented themselves along the way this semester, in spite of those, we were still able to collaborate through every step of the process and construct the software we set out to initially. Having time for after-the-fact project testing by a “professional” to get their feedback would be a powerful tool for us to see what they would be looking for in a real-life situation. It would help us see what, at our current perception, we are unable to deduce. Perhaps it would give a way for potential improvements to our design, code, database set-up, etc. Ultimately it would give insight on the actual optimization process that goes into a piece of software after the initial “due date” is hit.