**Reflective Essay**

One of the greatest challenges my team faced (group ABLM) was figuring out how to connect the user interface, database, and java functionality together to work as one. Right now, the java functionality reads and writes to text files, when it should potentially read and write from the database. I did all of the java functionality coding, and unfortunately, I’m not experienced in SQL. I looked up how to connect the database and functionality, and it takes some kind of hybrid SQL and java coding where the read and write statements should be. Since I don’t know SQL though, I was not able to get these connected. This is the same case with the user interface as well. None of us in the team knew how to connect the user interface and the functionality either, and nothing we tried that we found online didn’t work either. With all this being said, it would be extremely helpful to have a prerequisite course where you learn how to form an entire project (which would involve connecting a database, user interface, and coding functionality together). Maybe there is a course like this at Fort Hays, but I’m from Emporia State University and I’m just taking this one class online here.

In my experience, I think it is better to work on a project that isn’t already defined compared to one that is, simply because if you and your team have the free will to accomplish the project with any means necessary, you don’t have to worry about doing things in a specific way. I think this is more comfortable for everyone, because everyone can do things their own way, and they can use what they already know. That was one thing that was great about this semester project, was being able to create a project however you wanted (as long as it was approved).

I would say the main challenge I experienced working on a software project as part of a team was making sure that we were all on the same path to meet our goals. This includes making sure all of our system designs matched correctly so that the functionality, user interface, and database aligned. Another challenge was just waiting on other team members to get something accomplished, so that I could move on to the next part.

Of course, the main benefit of working on a project as a team is being able to divide and conquer. I know that I wouldn’t have been able to complete all that was needed by myself, especially with the given deadlines. I would have to be working fulltime to do that, and even then, I’m not sure I have all the technical skills to make that happen. That’s another benefit of working on a team: if you don’t have the skills to complete something, another team member might be able to help you out with it if they have the skills needed for the task.

Overall, I think this is one of the best and most useful courses I’ve taken. I want to be a software developer, and this course made me feel like I was. Being able to work on a project all semester long, developing the project itself and the reports for it, was very valuable. I’ve taken many courses where I’ve thought I might not ever use this information, but with this class, I believe everything was useful. Not only did this course develop my software engineering skills, it also greatly developed my teamwork skills, which is also extremely valuable. Overall, this course has definitely prepared me for the real world.