Reflective Journal

My experience undertaking a Business Analytics degree over the last three years has imparted on me a depth of knowledge and skills concerning the fields of computing and business. Nevertheless, my most profound learning event is not my ability to create a model that forecasts economic growth; nor is it learning to code or creating the best graphical presentation on Tableau. It is simply learning to work in a team of individuals whose approaches and methods differ from my own and it is inevitable that this will continually pose challenges for me in the future.

From observation of this degree, almost all units require some form of collaboration with my peers. Theoretically, this should come as no challenge to me. I devoted my childhood to playing a quintessential team sport called Netball, while my current work life warrants teamwork on most company projects. However, this was all challenged when I entered my third year. I recall undertaking a BUSA3020 unit and sitting on a 95% average, that is, until I received my lowest score of 53% in a group assignment.

It is less likely that this was due to gaps in our knowledge or skillset, but rather largely attributed to my team's poor work ethic. More specifically, the breakdown of communication, the inability of some members to meet timeline requirements, and the disproportionate contribution from different members. Despite this, I believe that my ability to continue to set small tasks and maintain my organisational skills throughout our assignment positively relieved my workload to a degree.

Qualities I could've worked on, however, include being honest about my views and expectations with members, having greater awareness of the team dynamic and not allowing myself to be demoralised by the team's poor work ethic. Most importantly, I believe these qualities all stem from my reluctance to collaborate and share ideas as I inherently believe that I am better off doing the work alone rather than addressing issues with the team. Allowing my assumption – that I would get 'dragged down' by the incompetency of other members – to cloud my judgement is a behaviour that I will need to challenge going forward.

This experience has taught me that generally I hold a negative view about working with others. When there are expectations not being met, I habitually allow myself to underestimate the capabilities of others instead of doing something to improve it. As I progress in this degree, I will need to make a conscious effort in reframing my perception of teamwork. This requires realising that I have everything to learn from individuals, especially those accustomed to differing ideas, skills, and approaches from my own; and realising the value of having constructive dialogue, incongruity, and contradiction in the team. Under these conditions, I would measure my performance by continually asking "Could I be wrong?" or "Am I feeling heard?". Only then, can I reap the benefits of teamwork, as by proven in other aspects of my life, is inescapable.