

Reflection Paper: Developing skills through Teamwork and learning outcomes

1. Introduction

In October, I started the module titled “Deciphering Big Data”. Unlike previous modules, this module requires group work. The team project aims to write a proposal for building a database. I was initially worried about group work for various reasons. First, unfortunately, in my academic career, I did not have many opportunities to work in groups. In addition, as it was my first time doing group work at this university, I had no idea how I would find people to form a group with. Above all, I was afraid that I was not sufficiently prepared to tackle the project and that this could penalize the group.

This reflection paper follows Rolfe et al.’s (2001) approach. I will analyse how the teamwork experience and module learning outcomes have improved my knowledge of data analysis and database building, and my soft skills in communication, problem-solving, and teamwork.

2. Learning through experience: my module learning outcomes

Even though I was afraid that I was not sufficiently prepared for teamwork in database design, I also thought that I had a good understanding of legal compliance in data protection because I had already studied it in my previous bachelor’s and master’s degrees.

During the module, I had the opportunity to delve into EU GDPR compliance, compare it with other laws, and try to respect it during my team and final projects. From there, I discovered that my knowledge was insufficient, that many aspects were unknown to me, and that they were extremely important for database building, data management,

and protection. I understood that it is complex for a team to develop something that respects all the legal requirements mentioned before and all the standards of risk management and information security. This, together with the need to choose the right type of database model and the server to implement it, was a major challenge in the team project and in my final project.

Furthermore, during the module, I had the opportunity to perform some exercises on database building and read some literature on DBMS, which helped me learn more about what is needed to design a good database and the different types of servers that exist. According to the experiential learning approach, a person can learn best through experience (Morris 2020). Indeed, participating in the module activity gave me the confidence to contribute actively to team discussions, propose solutions, and understand the reasoning behind decisions.

3. Reflection on my teamwork experience

During the first six weeks of the module, I worked on a team project. The team comprised three people, and the experience was both challenging and rewarding. During the first meeting, the team decided to draft a contract to set guidelines to follow. As I mentioned earlier, at the beginning, I was afraid of teamwork because of my lack of competence in the topic. In addition, I was also scared of my ability to communicate efficiently and not be able to listen actively.

At the beginning of the project, during the meeting, there were issues with the meeting time because one of my colleagues was always late, which made me feel frustrated. As stated by Driskell et al. (2018), a team that performs well addresses the root causes of conflict to develop strategies that ensure understanding and equal treatment

between the parties. Considering this, I decided to engage in a constructive discussion. As a solution, we agreed on a clear schedule that was acceptable for everyone, which ensured smoother collaboration and a positive team environment.

Once the team was organized, I started focusing on my tasks, as I was responsible for the Logical Design Section. The fact that I was chosen for that part of the project was exciting because one of my desires was to improve my knowledge of how to choose the entities and determine the relationships between them.

While writing my part, one of the major challenges was sticking to the word limit, as I found it difficult to summarize my ideas and ensure consistency with my colleagues' ideas.

Therefore, asking for help from my colleagues was fundamental. They helped me summarize my section, and together we created a consistent and meaningful project.

If I must evaluate my contribution to the project, I believe that my strengths were punctuality and organization. In addition, I believe that I helped choose the server and data cleaning process by participating constructively and proactively in the discussion.

Even though I had the opportunity to express my opinion during the project, I still consider communication to be one of my weaknesses, but this project provided me with a practical environment to work on it.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, after completing this module, I acquired more knowledge of database design, GDPR, compliance, and data cleaning. I have also achieved greater awareness of my strengths and limits. During teamwork, I had the opportunity to apply

the theoretical and practical knowledge learned during the module and, at the same time, to improve my soft skills.

Although initially one of my major fears was clear communication, the project, and the need to manage my colleague's delays, I learned that everything can be managed with a well-shared conflict management plan and common solutions. Initially, in this project, my emotions caused difficulties, but during the meetings, I learned how to manage them and how to express them clearly, improving the team collaboration.

In the future, I will carry not only the technical knowledge acquired during the module but also the awareness that effective teamwork requires clear communication and that any conflict can be managed by planning strategies that ensure all parties understand each other and work collaboratively.

Reference list

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