

Pangaea Reflection

Eben Bitonte, Faruk Parhat, Guillermo Vargas, Jonathan Batscha

Peer Reviews:

Jonathan Batscha:

Faruk - Faruk was awesome to have on the team. He always made himself available to meet, and consistently contributed quality code and good design ideas. He took charge of setting up real-time-chat, and, along with Eben, contributed a lot to the front-end of the app. Additionally, Faruk was generally easy to talk with whenever we had to make important design decisions. Overall, Faruk was fun to work with and contributed a lot to our team.

Eben - Eben was a true leader in our team. Along with his code contributions in setting up the matching-system and getting the front-end to look polished, he was often the driving force behind organizing meetings. Additionally, he was helpful and easy to work with, and had a vision for making our app look great. Overall, Eben was fun to have on the team, and contributed a lot of value to the final product.

Guillermo - Guillermo was a very valuable asset for our team. Along with setting up the Bing translate functionality (among other features), he was always willing to help others, whether in making important design decisions or in more menial tasks such as debugging. Like Eben and Faruk, Guillermo always made himself available to meet. Overall, Guillermo was fun to work with and contributed both great design ideas and quality code.

Eben Bitonte:

Faruk Parhat - Faruk was an extremely reliable and knowledgeable group member. His responsibilities were not only completed on time and done well, but he was very available to help with others' tasks, and was a great resource for help, personally. He very willingly volunteered to take on the most technically challenging aspect of our app (chat), and created a great product. In terms of improvement, I would recommend that Faruk really take the time to add that extra layer of polish to his work, making sure every detail is production ready.

Guillermo Vargas - Guillermo displayed a complete grasp of the course material in creating a beautiful translation section of Pangaea. Working with him was fantastic as he was willing to volunteer to take on additional work

and was also extremely willing to collaborate with others. I would love to work with Guillermo in the future. In the future, however, I would urge Guillermo to take a greater role in development - I know that he has the ability to do awesome work on a bigger scale, and would love to see that.

Jonathan Batscha - Jonathan provided a critical eye to a lot of ideas that were behind Pangaea. From the first day, he challenged the group to think about the real motivation behind the app's concepts. Unfortunately, I believe that not having completed the third project was troublesome for Jonathan, as he was missing critical technical knowledge to complete tasks for which he volunteered. In the future, I would encourage Jonathan to understand his level of understanding and other commitments before undertaking more time intensive tasks.

Faruk Parhat:

Eben Bitonte - Eben was great at organizing meetings and helping polish much of the documentation and design of the project. In terms of improvements, I believe that because the idea of our project stemmed from his original concept, he should take more of a leadership role and not be afraid to make certain design decisions on the ideas and stick with them.

Jonathan Batscha - John was great at giving great criticism on ideas and concepts we developed. Due to his criticisms we were able to see flaws in our designs. However to improve his groupwork skills, he should be more aware of his conflicting responsibilities when agreeing to work on certain tasks. I believe that if he were to better improve his time management skills he would greatly improve.

Guillermo Vargas - Guillermo was a great developer and an overall solid team member. He was very easy to talk to and would complete his tasks on time and with solid code. To improve his abilities and attain his potential he should definitely take on more responsibility as a developer. He should speak up and argue more for the correctness of his designs when criticised.

Guillermo Vargas:

Eben Bitonte - Eben was always very motivated and willing to take on any task. He often made sure things were complete and polished before submission. My only suggestion for Eben might be to work on picking up new tools. Occasionally when using a new tool he would be slow to make it work. Overall he was great to work with.

Faruk Parhat - Faruk was very skilled technically. He would undertake any technical challenge no matter how daunting it seemed. He was quick to grasp new tools and ideas. Faruk came through with great code when he needed him most. He also brought a great attitude to the team. My only suggestion for him is to improve his code readability with specs and comments.

Jonathan Batscha - Jon had many great ideas, but failed to show the technical and communication skills necessary for being a part of a team. He almost rarely completed his part of the work, and would not ask us for help until it was too late. Jon could improve by putting more time and effort into his work.

Team Evaluation:

Jonathan - I think our team worked well together. From the outset, we were all motivated to do well on the project, and to make a product that we (and others) would find unique and useful. I think we did a good job from the outset of truly developing the key ideas behind our product. Once we had a good grasp of the main concepts, we went on to the design part. In working on the design doc, we iterated constantly on the big ideas behind our app - what was important and what was not. The later phases of the design doc were intertwined with our work on the MVP, the MVP informing the design doc and vice versa. In the last phase, I think my teammates did a good job writing quality code, and that we can all be proud of the end product: Pangaea.

Faruk Parhat - In terms of a team planning perspective, I believed our project turned out to be great. We faced a great many design challenges on our way to the final version and had to drop many features as well as modify some concepts we developed. However I believe we developed a non-trivial application which includes real-time chat/connection, a matching algorithm between users who have desired languages and proficient languages, and we incorporated a third party api to for easy use during chats. Furthermore I don't believe another application currently exists that is similar to ours. In terms of team planning, the majority of our work was done in the last two days (monday, tuesday) before the push to the repo was due. I think however we could have done better if we made a due date earlier such as saturday and then if we couldn't finish we would delegate the remaining duties to people who were free enough.

Eben Bitonte - From the first interactions, our team had very good chemistry, and I believe that the final product of our application is a product of that. Everyone communicated openly and took constructive criticism well in order to make our best possible product. While some work had to be redistributed due to busy schedules and other conflicts, there were no

complaints and members just worked harder to complete their new tasks. There were no issues with team members missing without communication and everyone was more than willing to devoting huge stretches of time to complete the app.

Guillermo Vargas - From a managerial perspective, I think we succeeded in producing the desired application. We did a good job of defining our vision for the product early through brainstorming, mockups, drafts, and discussion. Thanks to this early planning, and thanks to solid communication between the group, we managed to deliver a product that solved a problem in a new way. We faced several technical challenges along the way, and effectively worked together to work past them. Several times when faced with obstacles, we did a good job of stepping back and looking at the application in light of our original vision, then deciding how to handle the technical challenge. Through this method, we were able to prioritize our work well, and do only the necessary amount of work as pressing deadlines approached. I'm very proud of the way our team communicated and worked together to build and improve our applications. I hope that my future teams communicate as well as we did, as that is ultimately what carried us to success.

Lessons Learned:

- Learned to accept the fact that your idea may not be the best and you should not be emotionally attached to your idea or any other ideas
- If you see a weakness in the group or in the features, speak up about it and take up the responsibility if you honestly believe it will not be finished in time or completed properly
- Do not be afraid to criticize the ideas of others because if they cannot defend it, then it might not be such a good idea
- Nothing can ever replace the atmosphere of working together in person in the same room
- Understanding that team members may have other commitments arise, and understanding when to take a hold of development and when to trust them to complete tasks.
- See how one can use what we learn in class to produce an awesome product, and let that motivate oneself to learn more and become a better programmer
- The importance of design-thinking: an early time-investment in hashing out the design will pay dividends later, by making the coding more manageable and preventing redesigns after a lot of code has been written
- Communication is key: don't be afraid to criticize and ask for help from the same teammate