

The University of Queensland
TIMS331
Assessment 2 – Individual Reflection Report

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Introduction

In the TIMS3311 course, I worked with Eclipse Ingredients, a biotech startup developing a Series A funding strategy. Beyond research, I focused on teamwork, communication, and adaptability. Applying Lean Startup, Design Thinking, and Effectuation helped me navigate uncertainty, manage challenges, and reflect on how collaboration and persistence shape real entrepreneurial growth.

Overall WIL Experience (8 marks)

Personal lessons (5 marks):

During my placement with Eclipse Ingredients, one of my biggest learning curves was understanding how essential collaboration and networking are in a project environment. While our main task focused on developing Eclipse's Series A funding strategy, the deeper challenge for me was learning how to work effectively with people both within my team and across the broader professional network.

From the very beginning, Jack, our course coordinator, reminded us that this experience was not only about research but also about building relationships. I saw the truth of that during Eclipse's industry event. Engaging in these conversations helped me realise that networking is not just about introducing yourself, but about maintaining curiosity and empathy, learning how others think, work, and solve problems. I also reconnected with my former boss, which reminded me of the value of maintaining long-term professional relationships. Each interaction helped me understand that good networking stems from genuine communication rather than self-interest.

However, the most difficult part of this project came from within my own team. We were five people, but at times it felt like I was working alone. Some teammates were inconsistent, others unmotivated, and communication was almost non-existent. There were weeks where no one replied to messages or followed through with their assigned work. I found myself constantly creating new systems and plans to get everyone back on track trying to reignite momentum that never quite lasted. It was frustrating because I cared deeply about the outcome and wanted the project to reflect our collective effort, not just mine.

Looking back, I realise I spent more time trying to make the team work than trying to make the project work. I believed that if everyone contributed equally, our results would improve.

But in reality, sometimes leadership means accepting that balance isn't always possible. My "pie" analogy from Appendix 5 reflects this: I started by giving 10% of effort expecting everyone else to give the same, but when progress stalled, now I realised I needed to give 30, 40, or even 50% just to keep things moving.

In hindsight, I would focus less on expecting equal contribution and more on delivering consistent progress, even if it meant carrying extra weight. This experience taught me that teamwork is not about equality of effort, but about shared accountability and sometimes, leading means working harder than everyone else.

Network Established (3 Marks)

Throughout this project, I had the opportunity to connect with several professionals who expanded my understanding of both finance and the startup ecosystem. I reconnected with my former internship supervisor, Firmansyah Shidiq, who works in Islamic finance. Despite my poor performance during that internship, rebuilding that relationship taught me humility and the importance of maintaining professionalism and long-term respect. I also interviewed Khalif Putra, a finance professional, and soon Adam Smith, a Senior Associate at FaBA, whose insights will be focused on commercialisation and investment.

Working closely with Siobhan, Eclipse's founder, also helped me experience how leadership, research, and business intersect. Visiting her lab at QUT gave me a chance to meet scientists and see firsthand how collaboration drives innovation. I also attended one of Eclipse's industry events in Brisbane, where I met several professionals from the startup sectors.

Although my network remains small, these connections are genuine. I learned that meaningful networking isn't about quantity but consistency showing up to meetings, following up, and keeping relationships alive through curiosity, respect, and shared purpose.

New Knowledge, Insights, and Skills (16 marks)

Key Learnings (9 marks)

The two most important lessons I gained from this experience were learning how to apply the Lean Startup model, empathy from Design Thinking, and Effectuation principles in real,

uncertain situations. These frameworks became more than just theories; they shaped the way I approached teamwork, problem-solving, and leadership during the Eclipse project.

The Lean Startup model stood out most because it perfectly reflected my process of constant experimentation within the team. When my teammates rarely responded to my messages or meeting polls, I found myself continuously creating new structures and systems to encourage engagement. I would design a new plan, test it, observe the results, and then rebuild another approach when it didn't work. Looking back, this mirrored the Build–Measure–Learn cycle treating each attempt as feedback rather than failure. It taught me that progress in both startups and teamwork doesn't come from one perfect system but from continuously adapting and improving. This mindset also influenced how I handled research: testing different methods such as using Crunchbase, ChatGPT, or manual Google searches to find the most efficient and accurate investor data. These small iterations helped me learn how to identify what works best and where to focus effort skills that are fundamental to innovation.

Empathy, a core element of Design Thinking, also became crucial throughout this project. I applied it not just toward customers or stakeholders, but toward my own teammates. When Ryan suddenly decided to step up as leader despite not contributing earlier, I initially felt frustrated and doubtful. However, when I tried to understand his perspective, I realised that taking on that role might have been his way of feeling accountable and motivated. That moment helped me understand that everyone has different triggers for engagement, and that leadership is not about control, it's about creating space for others to contribute in their own way. Without that empathy, I would have reacted emotionally instead of constructively, which would have made collaboration even harder.

Lastly, Effectuation helped me focus on what I could control instead of what I couldn't. There were times when I felt demotivated by the team's inconsistency, but the "Pilot-in-the-Plane" and "Affordable Loss" principles reminded me to use the resources and energy I already had, rather than waiting for ideal conditions. I realised that progress doesn't depend on others' readiness but on how I respond to challenges with what's available.

The Future (4 marks)

This course has deeply influenced how I think about entrepreneurship and teamwork. It showed me that no venture succeeds in isolation as teamwork and networking are the

foundation of any business. As I experienced through this project, even with my best efforts, completing a task alone is difficult. Every entrepreneur eventually works with people, and success depends on how well you can align a team's different goals, personalities, and motivations toward one shared objective. Learning to lead through uncertainty, stay patient, and communicate clearly became just as important as the research itself.

This project also gave me a glimpse into what working in a startup actually looks like. Visiting Siobhan's lab and observing her and her team in action showed me how experimentation, iteration, and resilience drive innovation. Seeing the Lean Startup mindset applied in real life made the process feel tangible and gave me a clearer picture of the environment I want to be part of in the future. I now feel more confident stepping into uncertain spaces, knowing that adaptability, empathy, and teamwork are the true foundations of entrepreneurial success.

Course Feedback (3 marks)

What I valued most about this course was the freedom to approach problems creatively and apply theories in a real-world context. It provided a soft, real-life experience, a space where I could make mistakes, learn from them, and build confidence in the process. This course felt like a simulation of a workplace: you either treat it seriously and see how you perform under real conditions, or you treat it as just another assignment. I chose to approach it as if I were already part of a company team. Even though our project did not fully succeed, I see it as a personal success because it helped me understand how I respond to failure and uncertainty in a professional setting. It gave me a chance to test my mindset, emotional control, and adaptability without the real-world risks.

However, I think the course could be improved in three areas. First, the structure relies heavily on group motivation, if a team is unresponsive, the experience becomes discouraging. There should be an anonymous channel or "open-report" system for students to raise concerns or request support early. Second, team leaders should report fortnightly to Jack or tutors to show progress and ensure accountability within the group. Third, assessment should better reflect actual performance in the placement, not just written reflections. The current grading system overlooks effort, initiative, and contribution during the internship, which feels inconsistent with the course's experiential focus.

Overall, the course gave me a realistic yet forgiving environment to grow a soft entry into how work and leadership operate in real life.

References

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Appendix

1. Appendix 1 - Reflective Diary Entry - Leadership Change and Accountability (Effectuation – Pilot-in-the-Plane):

During week 4, when Ryan suddenly asked to become the team leader, I was honestly confused. Up until that point, he had not been active, and I was the one giving direction, dividing tasks, and ensuring progress. The team's slow responses and lack of motivation had already drained me, so when he volunteered, I wasn't sure if it would help or make things worse. Still, I decided to step back and give him the opportunity. Surprisingly, this shift turned out to be a positive one. Having Ryan in a leadership role created a sense of shared accountability he began putting in work on research and checking progress, which made me feel less isolated. It also gave the rest of the group someone else to look to for guidance, which improved overall momentum, even if slightly.

This experience taught me that leadership isn't always about being the one in charge; sometimes it's about knowing when to share control. Applying the Effectuation principle of "Pilot-in-the-Plane," I focused on what I could influence rather than forcing outcomes. By empowering Ryan, I shifted from working alone to working alongside someone equally responsible for results. It reminded me that entrepreneurship, much like teamwork, relies on flexibility and co-creation progress happens when accountability is distributed, not when one person tries to do everything alone.

2. Appendix 2 - Reflective Diary Entry – Adapting Team Methods and Motivation (Lean Startup):

Throughout the project, I found myself constantly changing the way we worked because no method seemed to stick. Early on, I created a detailed research methodology for the team to follow, but no one applied it. I tried simplifying the steps showing exactly how to collect and document investor data but the team still didn't follow through. Frustrated, I decided to divide the workload based on strengths: Michelle and I focused on the European strategy, Ryan continued with research, and Yue Chen handled interviews. Even then, progress stayed inconsistent.

Looking back, this constant cycle of trying, failing, and readjusting reflects the Lean Startup "Build-Measure-Learn" principle. Each method I introduced was like an experiment, I built

a system, observed how it performed, learned from the outcome, and then pivoted to a new approach. It was tiring and often discouraging, but I began to realise that failure is feedback. Every time something didn't work, it taught me more about how people respond to responsibility, communication, and structure.

This experience showed me that teamwork, like entrepreneurship, is inherently iterative. There's rarely a perfect process; progress depends on adapting to the situation and learning from what doesn't work. Although it was frustrating to keep restarting, I learned resilience, patience, and how to manage expectations when leading others. Most importantly, I learned that experimentation doesn't only apply to products or research, it also applies to people and collaboration.

3. Appendix 3 - Reflective Diary Entry – Interview Challenges and Learning Consistency (Lean Startup & Effectuation)

When it came to interviews, I struggled with consistency and motivation. Initially, I only wanted to interview “qualified” people such as venture capitalists and professionals deeply involved in startup funding. I thought targeting these high-value individuals would give the project more credibility. However, I quickly realised how difficult it was to get responses from busy investors. Weeks passed with little progress, and I began to lose momentum. I ended up limiting my outreach to people within my own circle, which felt easier but less impactful.

Looking back, I realise I approached this task with a perfectionist mindset rather than an experimental one. If I had applied the Lean Startup “Build–Measure–Learn” principle earlier, I would have treated interviews as iterations, starting small, learning from early conversations, and refining my approach over time instead of waiting for the “ideal” interviewee. I also see how the Effectuation principle of “Affordable Loss” could have guided me: starting with the resources and connections I already had, rather than chasing unreachable ones.

4. Appendix 4 - Reflective Diary Entry – Dealing with Silence and Practicing Empathy (Design Thinking)

Throughout the project, one of the hardest challenges I faced was being consistently ignored by my team. There were times when I would send reminders, create polls, or try to organise meetings, and no one would reply. After putting in so much effort, the silence became discouraging. I reached a point where I felt mentally exhausted and frustrated, questioning why I cared so much when others didn't seem to. It started to affect my motivation, and I realised I needed to find a healthier way to process it.

That's when I began applying Design Thinking's empathy principle not just toward external stakeholders, but toward my own team. I tried to put myself in their position and understand why they might not be as responsive: everyone had different workloads, stress levels, and priorities. Seeing things from their perspective didn't excuse the lack of communication, but it helped me stay calm and think positively. Instead of reacting out of frustration, I focused on what I could control instead.

This mindset shift reminded me that empathy is not weakness; it's a skill that helps sustain collaboration even when conditions aren't ideal. I learned that working with people means accepting that not everyone operates the same way, and sometimes, the best way to lead is to stay patient and steady. By choosing to think empathetically instead of emotionally, I was able to keep myself focused and grounded, which ultimately helped me maintain my commitment to the project.

5. Appendix 5 - Diary Entry – Eclipse Reflection (Teamwork and the Pie Analogy)

Throughout my Eclipse journey, I've realized that teamwork is rarely equal, even if it looks that way on paper. At the start, I imagined our group as five people, five equal slices, each person contributing 20% to make the full circle. But as the project went on, I learned that real teamwork doesn't work that way. Some people contribute more, some less, and the balance constantly shifts.

There were moments where I started by putting in about 10% of the work, assuming everyone else would follow through with theirs. But when I noticed progress slowing down and others not taking as much initiative, I had to rethink my role. I realized that sometimes you need to give 30%, 40%, or even 60% not because you want to do everything, but because someone has to keep the momentum going.

This experience taught me that leadership isn't about dividing work equally; it's about ensuring the whole pie gets completed. Even if others contribute smaller slices, the project still needs to move forward. At times, that meant doing more than I initially planned, but it also taught me patience, responsibility, and the importance of leading by example.

In the end, the Eclipse project helped me understand that contribution is not about equality it's about commitment. Every slice matters, no matter how uneven, as long as the team achieves the goal together.