**Professional Proficiency**

Through-out the semester, I have shown that I am human and have flaws. These flaws show up in the form of poor time management and self-motivation. It’s no secret I left things to the last minute and I couldn’t understand why I’m like this. It took a breakdown and some soul searching but I’ve found out that I really do care about this degree and my success. I feel extremely embarrassed that my fellow teammates have had to put up with my self-implosion and I feel upset that I didn’t give it my all. This being said, I feel like I carried myself in a professional manor and went about my group work with being a professional in mind. I worked hard to maintain a level of professionalism that could be found in the work force.

There are aspects of my professional proficiency that I felt I demonstrated extremely well. Communication was one of these. I knew that communication was going to be key in the success of our team. Agile outlines this with suggesting daily scrums in which members of the team share where they are at and ask for help if needed. Although our group didn’t see the need in having a scrum every day, we agreed within the first sprint that every few days would be the best for the team to best get across what we want without the process becoming a hassle. We tried having a scrum each day but it became too hard to get everyone at the same place at the same time each day. We then went down to two scrums a week and this seemed to work best. On a Tuesday and Thursday we would have a scrum at the end of class to outline what we were up to and where we wanted to go by the next time we would meet up. During these scrums there was no clear leader but everyone in the team, including myself, encouraged open discussion and allowed each team member to inform the rest of the team on their progress. I was always encouraging people in these meetings because I knew these scrums were they only way we could physically get across what we want as it was the only time we would be face-to-face with each other. This is in line with what the agile methodology says, “The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation”. As a group we also utilised Facebook Messenger and had a group chat with all of the members present. This allowed us to have quick communication if we needed help with a particular bug or issue. I made myself available almost all of the time to be able to help people in the chat. I would help motivate others by applauding success and recognising others for their help they were providing, even if I was not involved. This was me motivating the other members of the group and using the various ways of communication we had implemented to do so. I fell as though the impact of this can be seen in the screenshots provided where it helps spark conversation but it allowed the other members to feel more comfortable using the chat to ask for help, or get a second opinion.

For the third sprint, we were all assigned on the same one issue and I took more of a back-seat role as Michael and Nick were leading it. I did try and help as best I could, but it took a while to get my head around Laravel. The fourth sprint I oversaw the porting of the homepage from our static site to Laravel. I am proud of this and only ran into trouble when it came time to integrate our existing JavaScript into Laravel. I required a bit of assistance and Nick was able to help me with that one. Things began to finally unravel for me when I was assigned with adding an edit button to the semester’s page. This was easy in theory, so I thought I could do my usual and leave it to the last week. I began to struggle and ended up running into problems with git where I accidentally locked my branch behind a read only SSH key. My team believed that I could do it and allowed me to continue it for sprint six. I approached this with a little more caution but thought it was going to be a simple bug. I however didn’t end up completing the sprint. It was close to being done but I ran into routing issues that prevented me from fully completing the issue in time. At this point my team were understandably mad and upset. It was all down to lack of time management and personal motivation on my part. I unfortunately left the hard work till a few days before the due date. I have learnt this lesson both in this project as well as in other papers this semester. I have learnt the hard way, by letting down not only my teammates but my friends. It was crucial in order to prepare me for project. I now can see that I need to approach each issue differently. I have a clear plan of what I need to do when I am in this project situation again. I need to start it when I get assigned the issue and also need to be working on it when I have free time. I also need to personally focus on the work I have here at Polytech and say no to outside distractions. At the end of the day agile states “Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software” which means I need to ensure I am constantly striving to work on the project to satisfy the customer. These are what have caused me issues and I know I can improve on them to make myself a better teammate and a better developer by using what I have learnt and implementing my plan.

I feel like my team work skills were utilised in this environment. I have always worked well with others, I seem to thrive on a team-based environment. I have a caring, empathetic nature so I always try to help where I can, even if I wasn’t sure myself. In sprint 3, Michael and Nick took charge of making the base Laravel site. I sat behind them and used the opportunity to learn about Laravel by watching them interact and build the Laravel base. I ended that session more confident in my understanding of how Laravel works and I was able to suggest a solution to a small issue facing Michael and Nick. I also used the team based environment to ask for help when needed. The tutorials and such online for Laravel are outdated and for completely different versions. This made finding out what to do, or how to start/ approach a situation hard. I used my group to help me, which was shown in sprint 4 when I asked nick to help me with some of the JavaScript from our old site. I needed to get it to work with PHP and he helped me get started by showing me how to get the two interacting. This led to one of my most proud achievements with this project.

The team never really had a leader. We followed the agile principle “The best architectures, requirements, and designs emerge from self-organizing teams”. Because of our friendship outside of this work environment, it meant that we could all take direction from each other and it meant everyone was responsible for not only their own progress but the whole teams. This may have meant at times our group could have seemed fluid, but it seemed to work well for us. The results are clear in the final product being cohesive that follows one story, not five different mini-stories. If there was a need for a leader, Michael was generally the leader-like person. I had a moment where there was discussion amongst a few members of the group as to how many scrums we should have. I stepped up to ask the group for their opinions. This showed our democracy style approach to new ideas and also showed how that I could become a leader for an issue if needed. Overall this lead to us producing some brilliant work and meant that at the end of this we are all still good mates. A defined leader wouldn’t have benefited our team much, if at all.

Throughout the semester I have learnt a lot. I have learnt a lot about myself and about the agile workflow. Whether it was the group encouragement through scrums or it was the focus on human interactions over process, my approach to group work has completely changed. I would have never thought to put as much emphasis on meetings and communication but this whole experience has taught me how valuable it is to be able to know where your teammates are at and whether they need help. If I was to change anything about this entire experience it would be starting right away and asking for help early on. It made me look incompetent at best and a selfish, lazy teammate at worst. All this being said, I did put effort into this project and I’m proud of how far it has come. I could have improved but after reflecting with my teammates, I realised I still contributed my share to the project.

**Technical Proficiency**

Going into this semester, I understood HTML, CSS and JavaScript to a basic level. I was able to create a static site that looked bearable. Alongside web 2, this project has help me learn PHP, and understand the fundamentals of a PHP framework, which in our case was Laravel.

Laravel, when we first encountered it, was a scary and daunting task. It seemed to be very different both in structure and complexity to anything we had ever used before. This made every sprint onwards from when we were introduced to Laravel, challenging in terms of both the issue itself and the implementation. I am proud of where I am now and how far I have come. The third sprint we were all assigned to the same one issue. This was to help us learn and understand the Laravel framework. In the beginning, Michael and Nick showed that they could adapt and learn faster than I could, as a result they took charge. I took a more backseat-programmer approach as I tried to watch them and understand that way. I was of a bit of help a few times as I was able to identify similar patterns to other languages that allowed me to follow the logic. This allowed me to continue learning the framework so that by the end of the semester, I was comfortable in using the framework and was capable of utilising the features. I was able to achieve this mostly on my own but if I was stuck, I would ask for help clarifying and the rest of the group was good at helping.

For sprint four, I had to port over the home page from our static site to the Laravel framework and convert our pre-existing JavaScript. This was a significant step for the team as this allowed us to retrieve the dates from the database and generate them on the fly rather than hard coding dates into a table which is what we had in our static site. Although this doesn’t seem like a big achievement, it allowed similar logic to be used in our assignments and semester’s page which were our standout and more technically challenging pages. This was a good example of me implementing a design feature or skeleton that furthers the project.

One thing I have learnt in this paper is how to properly manage source control using Git. Git was the main tool the team and myself used as version control. I had used Git Lab in other papers to show the development process. I used it by only committing changes if I needed to access them on campus or if I had fully finished a large feature. I learnt through this paper that using the integrated Git menu in Visual Studio Code or using Git bash and committing as often as I can is the best workflow as it can be used to roll back changes or better show my progress. I deleted a local version without committing changes so I could roll back. I learnt that I should have used git reset –hard to rollback any changes and restore the branch to the last stable version. Michael and I found this out and immediately shared this with the group. I also learnt that you can use SSH keys on git to allow for faster authentication and no need to type in my credentials. Although my lack of experience with SSH keys caused me to accidentally give myself read only permissions, I was able to quickly resolve this issue after discovering it. I can now confidently use the SSH key function of Git.

This semester I have learnt that I can’t leave things to the last minute and that my knowledge wave I was riding through first year has well and truly run out. I have learnt that I need to take the time to learn new ideas, technologies and implementations. My progress through this project has shown that as during the first couple of sprints I was doing the bare minimum, but as I have progressed so has the amount I’ve had to do. This was true up until the last sprint as the group ran out issues or features and I was given extra time to complete my previous sprint.