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CSC 450 Capstone Reflection Paper

Professor James Tucker

Going back to week one I really was not sure what to expect out of the course. I had tried to get an idea of what was expected by talking to other professors, however, I was not able to get a straight answer. Once we got started it became clear by the second meeting that we would be building some kind of application and that most teams build a web application. Being someone that has almost no interest in web development, I was hoping to go the desktop or android application route. That was not the case, in fact every group went the web application route so there really was no option for that. Even at that, I have no experience building a functional desktop or android application so that would have been much more challenging.

By the time we had groups and knew what our project was, we were about 2 or 3 weeks into the course. At that point I had it in my head that 16 weeks was nowhere near enough time to make a fully functional and solid web application, let alone now being down to 13-14 weeks. When I build something, I like to see what the product is before I even get started, or at least have a very general understanding of what I am looking for that can be pretty fluid as I build it out. I didn’t have that understanding until we were more than halfway through the course which did not sit well with me. The group had a lot of conversations; however, it was clear there we were not all on the same page. This is where I would say I learned the most and the start of things I would have done differently.

By no means does the capstone need to be the only class you are taking at a time, although, taking the capstone course, 2 other courses, and working full time did prove to be a bit challenging when it came to dedicating time. That said, what I would have liked to have done differently would start from the very beginning. The first thing I would have liked is to know what exactly we were doing before the course even started. Having the understanding that we are building a web application, as a group, would have better prepared expectations going in. I was thinking this would have been a solo project. The next thing I would have changed is having groups decided day 1 of the course instead of around week 2 or 3. Having that time delay added its own set of challenges by not allowing us to start the planning phase of the project in an already tight time frame.

Those couple changes alone would have been a huge help, however that is just from the class structure standpoint. As a group there are several other things, I would like a chance to do over. The more people in the group, the trickier it is to line up schedules, the flips side of that is it makes breaking up the work a bit easier and fairer. That said, I would keep the groups the same, but I would have tried to manage expectations of meetings early on. From my point of view, I would have liked to have more frequent meetings with the group early on and they could have tapered off once we had that better understanding of what our project was. This would have made it easier to get work done than having a week with no contact and only talking to each other during, what became, very flexible weekly meetings. My point here is that I would have liked a better understanding of what our project was and what work we should have been doing before week 8 or 9 of the course.

I learned very quickly the importance of communication and having an agreed upon code and file structure. Having mostly worked on solo projects up until this point it became very clear how it can get convoluted and hard to stay organized without logistics set up ahead of time. Seeing the importance of variable names, database tables, and headers worked out ahead of time would have saved a few pain points. All in all, this course was a great learning experience. I have always believed the best way to really learn is by realizing what you do not like and having the opportunity to start this project over I think would lead to a much more polished and robust application. Thank you for the opportunity and I look forward to doing more development work in the future, especially outside of web development.

Video link: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nQB_STrUL3VPScUu86UKo3qp2g797e4p/view?usp=sharing>

Live web link: <http://csp450capstone.wuaze.com/LoginSignup/login.html>

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