# ICT10001 Problem Solving with ICT

**Assignment 4: Reflective journal template**

## Introduction

Throughout the course, we have learned a lot from the lectures and learning materials, covering many parts of project management, specifically the fundamental terminologies that define what problem-solving truly is and how it can be worked on professionally. The key concepts that will be mentioned in this report are project methodologies, the 7-step problem-solving cycle, and prototypes. These are one of the main and important concepts that my team has reviewed thoroughly to apply to our projects, reports, and the final web product. Our team consists of 4 members, each contributing a different part in our project, from scripting and creating prototypes to executing the final product.

## Project management concepts and team dynamics (1250 words)

Reflect on and discuss:

- How the project management concepts covered in Week 3 were used by your team.
- What worked and what did not work?

*You might like to reflect on specific processes, e.g., the problem identification process.*

The key first step to executing any project is to draw out the main plan, create our goal, and come to an agreement with the customer on necessary details. These are all included in a project proposal, which we have the chance to learn about it and work on a study case to strengthen our understandings as well as find our shortcomings in this essential step of project management(1).

After having a detailed explanation of each concept of a project proposal in the lecture, we have applied it to assignment 1. The definition in 3.2 Project management gives us a clearer understanding of what a proposal is and its importance to being the bedrock to our later projects and assignment. The most important section of week 3 to my understanding is the project proposal framework in 3.3 Your project for the key layout of the proposal, what should be included, and the explanation to what we should elaborate on each part. Apart from the project description and approval, the scope, schedule, risks, and project methodologies are the new concepts that we got exposed to and can be applied to our assignment.

Throughout the working process, we can see that having a clear scope, methodology, and setting out a detailed schedule are helpful and essential for a project to go smoothly and give out a well-functioned, working product that the customer expects. However, as this is our first time giving an on-hand proposal with a case study, things can be difficult when it comes to visualizing the possible risks of the project, given the risks that we have countered in real life are mostly technical malware and less of the factors that can lead to the failure of a project.

Reflect on and discuss:

- What worked and what did not work?
- 'What tasks you completed during the semester. What technical issues did you face and what did you learn from the experience? Remember to reflect on how you resolved the issues
- What collaborative approaches did you use to communicate with your team? Were there any resources that you found useful from the Teamwork module?

Throughout this semester, I have done a good amount of workload, mostly on writing reports and working on an e-commerce website using WordPress. Since this is the first time that I came across these topics and projects, difficulties are unavoidable, especially on technical issues. One of the main issues that I came across is the use of WordPress in general, to be more specific on plugins and backups.

At first, our team was a bit clueless on the plugins, as many functions were not thought of and discovered. However, after viewing WordPress instruction videos in the course Modules, we had a good hold on the basic principles of how an e-commerce website work and what can be further implemented in our website. External sources from YouTube tutorials are also helpful in terms of the minor difficulties we have like in linking the membership discounts for customers to the shopping cart, or how to add social media links and buttons to enhance the interactivity of the website, therefore improving the customer's experience and satisfy the client's requirements.

One of the other main technical issues that we faced is in terms of backups. This issue did not only present in our team, but many teams also had the same difficulty as I can see from the question section in weekly workshops and discussion threads. For our team, we had not been able to back up the website as the Jetpack plugin was not seemed to be the feasible option. After doing some research with the help of the tutorials in the module, we used Backup Guard where the files can be back-up automatically every week without us having to manually do the job.

The approach that our team has used for communication is through messaging via social media website (Facebook) as it is the norm nowadays and hold team meetings every time we need to finalize our assignments so that the team can reflect on what we have done, what are the parts that were carried out effectively and what are the shortcomings, therefore the team can come to agreements and adding the final touches or fixes for our work before submission. This approach has proved its effectiveness throughout the course, and we believe it can be applied for our future courses or even in a professional work setting as well.

Reflect on and discuss:

- What strengths and skills have each of your team members brought?
- What issues did you face both individually and as a team? How did you resolve any issues that you faced?
- How could you leverage each other's strengths moving forward?
- What benefits (regarding team interaction and project management) do you think came from completing a prototype before completing the final version.
- What collaborative approaches did you use to communicate with your team? Were there any resources that you found useful from the Teamwork module?

After working on the major assignments of the course in a team, as a leader, I can point out the strengths and skills of each team member. Le Van, as a communicative member, can also write detailed reports and have good writing skills in general. Nhat Minh is decent at managing his tasks to give out the final work on time. Tuan Minh is good with his time-management skills, as he was always on time for team meetings and have a supportive attitude in general.

The issue that I face both personally and as a group is communicating. As the situation of the pandemic is worsening, online learning seems to be the long-term solution. Even though I have come to be familiar with this approach for more than a year and a half, there is still something missing from online learning, as the conversation with either the lecturer or peers, team members can be awkward or interrupted by bad connections. In terms of the team, we initially found it hard to work together remotely. However, with the use of Google extensions like Google Docs or Google Slides, where everyone's work is displayed live as they work, they created a productive working environment, where team members can view each other work and push themselves. The problem was further be investigated and we started hosting online meetings via Google Meets to work and help each other, not just submitting the work individually.

Moving forward, with more projects or research, they can foster our skills, from time management, researching to thinking and working innovatively. One of the things that we find useful in the Teamwork module is the team dynamics and its importance. The definition and comparison between introverts and extroverts gave us a detailed look into our strengths, how we can maximize our work, and the roles that we play in the team.

Regarding prototyping, I believe it is essential for any projects to be carried out with an initial model (or a draft) so that we can have a further understanding of what our final product will look like, as well as the shortcomings that we got from the client's feedbacks to enhance our work, as a part of the Agile Methodology.

- Consider and discuss one key learning that you have had during your journey in this unit. Describe in detail an event/situation/issue during this semester to illustrate this.
- Relate this to theory on teamwork <u>and</u> project management concepts you have learnt from the unit. Explain why you chose this theory.
- Explain how key learning from this analysis will influence your future and why.

In this course, we have come across many different topics, new definitions, and approaches towards planning, executing, and reflecting effectively on project management. One of the key learnings that have been the core of many projects and assignments are the methodologies, specifically the agile methodology(2).

At the beginning of every project, having a clear scope of what method of working will be applied throughout the process is essential to the project's success. The agile methodology utilizes the iterative loops of interactions between the client's side and the project team side, which have the involvements of collaboration and empowerment, trust, and flexibility. The benefits that this method brings are enormous, from delivering flexible and user-friendly deliverables to improving the adaptability of the team. In comparison with the waterfall methodology, which essentially is a step-by-step process towards the end gold, has many drawbacks. Some of the shortcomings are costly changes from last-minute testing, lack of involvement from the customer. Even though both methodologies have their benefits and drawbacks in the process of applying to any project, I find that the agile method is more modern, fits the requirements of today's work perfectly in comparison to its waterfall counterpart.

In the semester, the involvement of essential feedbacks for improvement is the application of this method. To be more specific, Assignment 2A: Website solution – Prototype is one of the key sections to our enhancement towards the final product website. After creating a working e-commerce website for the Baby Hut Case Study, our website still has many errors and room for improvements, from implementing a membership option to backing up the website in case of technical issues. Initially, the team was unclear about these inadequacies. However, with the help of the detailed feedback that Dr. Le Minh Duc gave us, the directions became clear, and we started implementing new features and fixing the presented errors, making the website look cleaner and more professional, with the aim to improve the customer's experience to its best.

After the course came to an end, I believe that the experience and knowledge that the agile methodology gave us can be applied in many circumstances, from working on assignments in our upcoming time in the university to the future of work, where changes are occurring will an unprecedented rate. When changes and innovations are happening, we must enhance our skills to become modern workers, with adaptability playing a crucial part. The ability to not only fit in but also improve and thrive in the new working environment is highly valued to the new generation of the workforce, and I believe that this method can play an instrumental part in helping me achieve these ambitions.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, after attending the course I have a better grasp on the understanding of how project management works, what are the skills required as well as the mindset needed for this specific topic. I found that the engagement to writing reports, working on prototypes, and resolving technical issues useful and effective, as the knowledge and skills can be used to sharpen my cross-domain skills and be widely applied in both working and studying scenarios in my upcoming years.

## References

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