Reflection – year one

So, the end of my first year in university studying IT is almost over. It was definitely a busy year full of ups and downs, and it will be challenging to cover in just this one document. Nevertheless, I will try to look back on everything that happened from start to finish.

From the very beginning I tried to avoid the mistakes I did in high school. I was aware that every action I take in the beginning may have great consequences later on. This is why I always tried to take as may right steps as I could to prevent assignments from snowballing into unmanageable problems. Now that I stand before the end of the first year I consider myself to be successful in this area. Overall, I barely had any significant resits which retrospectively makes the year seem like it flowed very smoothly.

Of course, in the moment things sometimes may have seemed different. Especially the last weeks of any period always seemed to turn into chaos for a few days. I see that we often found ourselves behind schedule and many times this was due to being too forgiving on ourselves during the beginning of the projects. To combat people missing deadlines and not delivering work in every project we had declared a code of conduct. It contained a set of rules that had to be followed by everyone and a striking system to define what would happen in case of breaking the rules. Now that I am done with the projects, I see it clearly that we absolutely did not utilize this system well enough. The strikes were either not respected or not given out at all. While this is the responsibility of the team leader, I must admit that when I took the role of the leader, I also failed to use the strikes properly. This eventually led me to the same issue with late deadlines at the end of the project. I hope I can prevent this behavior in the future, and I must remind myself that every issue like this should be addressed even if it seems excusable at the time.

Strikes weren't the only form of warning people that may be lacking behind. Throughout the year we had to practice giving feedback to each other. Every period we used a slightly different format or a different way and to be completely honest, sometimes I feel like it was slightly redundant. I understand this was to learn different ways to do it and to get used to it. I also must admit that it was nice seeing the positive feedback. It was also a good eye opener to see the negative feedback.

Filling out all these forms and papers alongside the mountains of assignments and all the little micro tasks I had to constantly manage could get quite tiring at times. Tiring and overwhelming to the point that it wasn't hard to think about if I am in the right place in terms of study. Well, in terms of difficulty I don't think switching to another school would necessarily take much weight off my shoulders. And definitely not going to a research university. I really enjoy the practical aspect of what we are doing here. It is why I chose this

course in the first place. I have considered switching to a different course tho. I am certain I am in the right field. I don't have the patience for medicine or the discipline for law. Where I do have a certain passion is tech. At the start of my studies, I was eyeing the neighboring computer science course, but I decided what I am doing here is more suitable for me and also that in the end it ultimately does not matter. I will continue what I have started.

So far, I would say (and my aunt confirms) that I am doing great in terms of my study progress. As I previously mentioned, so far, I have not had to go through many resits. I have been told that my grades are very nice for the Dutch standard. In many projects I have also received the "good job" feedback from the teachers. Even through the fact that as of the time of writing this feedback I do not think it will happen in this last period. Overall, I am still happy with what I have done so far. I can't have it all, I guess.

To further track my improvements, in the fourth period we have been assigned to make a personal development plan. My first goal was to improve my Dutch. I did not want to do anything extreme, so I just challenged myself to keep up my Duolingo learning streak uninterrupted during this period. This meant I had to complete one lesson every day. Unfortunately, in the first few days I forgot to do my lesson thus interrupting the streak. I carried on anyway and till the end it did not happen again.

The second goal unfortunately did not go so well for me. I wanted to improve my physical appearance and health by working out more. I had planned for myself to complete 3 workouts per week but with all that was going on I did not manage to bring myself to do this so often. Despite still did try to get some exercise where I could and I still kept track of it in the tracking sheet I initially set up for this purpose. I would say that it was due to having too much shcool work or the fact that I got ill twice during the process, but I think when it comes to this there are no excuses, and it is important to build up my discipline. I will definitely revisit this one in the future.

My third goal is about learning a new programing language for which I chose Flutter. I will reflect on this using the STARRT method.

The SITUATION was that we wanted to create a mobile app for our project, but we had no experience in doing so. One of the technologies we were considering for this was flutter, which I have wanted to learn for a longer time now.

My TASK was to help develop this app by learning futter and implementing my assigned features.

My ACTION was to study flutters tutorials and documentation and recreate the design to the best of my abilities.

The RESULT of this was that I went from knowing nothing about flutter to developing solid working features in just a few weeks.

REFLECTING on this further solidified my confidence in picking up new technologies and quickly learn to use them in a basic application if I practice real use cases.

In the FUTURE I will remember that to learn something new, all I must do is start and through trial and error I will be able to figure it out.

The first year definetely had its challenges but I would say the positive experiences outweigh the negative ones. I practiced a lot of new skills and learned a lot about myself. I also had so much fun outside of school. I have made so many new friends, I had a chance to travel through a new country, experience a new culture and speak different languages on a daily basis. It is absolutely one of those moments that stand out in life.