A reflection on assignments on a Postgraduate Course in Computer Science

The module had 3 assignments in total to be delivered. Assignment 1 was to write a design proposal for 3 functions of a self-driving car and Assignment 2 was to write the code based on the design proposal. The 3rd and final assignment was for the ePortfolio component of the module where the ePortfolio itself was assessed along with a reflection on the module overall. As part of my professional role, I regularly prepare designs and proposals for solutions and software as well as technically deliver them or manage and support teams who deliver the designs.

When I started my studies on both a previous module and this one, I thought I was going to be able to easily transfer my experience and skills to assignments so did not think that there would be much of a challenge. What I did not expect was the criteria for a design proposal or the criteria for a readme file. While I knew there would also be a word count, I found it challenging based on my experience of writing factual design proposals and delivering on those designs. A recent project I worked on was for an enterprise integration running 24x7 and capable of processing up to 300,000 records with each record having multiple data points. This was a complex design so was highly detailed. The proposal we had to prepare as discussed in my coding reflections was a limited word count that had to include rationale, design thoughts, UML diagrams, academic references and arguments as well as critical thinking. The coding assignment also had a limited word count and applied to a readme file. I would normally associate a readme file with technical detail, how to implement the solution and how to execute it. Again, the request was to deliver a readme file but also include detail of use, execution, academic reference and references to testing. All of these in the industry would typically be as separate documents or a comprehensive design pack with testing results (functional, non-functional and user).

The ePortfolio however I was a lot more comfortable with. Being able to build a website with my creative thought and presentation was more aligned with the way I perceive technology and how I work with it. The ePortfolio itself though had varying reference points around criteria and structure from the submission page to the university grading criteria to other supporting pages.

Whilst is found it challenging the module and the assignments taught me how to be more critical and aware of ensuring I read all applicable content. By taking more time to read the detail I learned more about how interpretations differ between industry and academia and how to express myself.

I know from the written assignments, feedback and the grading of my design proposal I can prepare more accurate assignments and a clearer written style. I also understand from future grades and assignments that I can grow and prepare assignments that are coherent and correct. This knowledge will certainly be transferred to my professional work where I will endeavour to use more critical thought and consideration when designing systems and solutions.