

Memo

To: Monika Smith
From: Tanuj Dargan
Date: 3rd April 2025
Re: Reflection Memo – Self and Team Evaluation for Report 3

Topic & Purpose

The purpose of this memo is to reflect on my individual performance and my team's overall collaboration during the Report 3 client project. Through this evaluation, I aim to identify strengths and areas for improvement to support my growth in future team-based projects.

Memo: Reflection on Client Project and Team Participation

1. Thoughts on the Course's Client Project

The client project was an engaging opportunity to apply course concepts to a real-world scenario and test our ability to collaborate effectively. Although I found it rewarding to work with a client and tailor a solution that met their specific needs, the process highlighted the importance of transparent communication and careful scheduling. For instance, when we discovered conflicting interpretations of the report format, it became clear we had not fully clarified the client's expectations. This misunderstanding impacted our timeline and forced us to rework key deliverables late in the process. Recognizing this helped us adapt our communication strategy - confirming instructions at each team

meeting - to avoid further confusion. From this project, I learned that consistent, proactive dialogue is vital to preventing minor mix-ups from becoming major setbacks.

Observations & Challenges

Although our team strived to keep track of multiple data sources - such as survey findings and official UVic documents -- we sometimes underestimated how changes in one area (like refining the survey questions) could affect other components (like the cost breakdown). This interdependence occasionally caused delays and required more frequent project reviews than initially planned. For instance, we realized late in the process that our survey sample was too narrow to draw firm conclusions, prompting additional outreach and effort that cost us valuable time. In addition, aligning schedules around everyone's class, work, and personal commitments remained a recurring hurdle. Each setback prompted us to refine our processes by planning earlier, clarifying roles in writing, and explicitly noting interdependencies between tasks to keep the overall project on track.

2. Aspects of My Participation in the Team Project That Were Successful

My contributions can be broken down into the following aspects:

- **Active Contributions:**

I contributed to the research on current AI-based sorting technologies, including assembling information from online sources like Digi-Key for cost estimations. During our meetings (as recorded in the appendices), I often took the lead in clarifying questions about budgeting and wrote portions of the discussion and recommendation sections, ensuring that all references matched the findings.

- **Collaboration & Communication:**

I regularly attended all team meetings, actively offered suggestions on the work breakdown structure, and helped coordinate tasks to meet deadlines. I also assisted in proofreading the final sections of the feasibility report before submission.

3. Areas for Improvement in My Participation

While I remained committed to each deliverable, I found myself devoting excessive time to micro-level tasks (e.g., reformatting references, triple-checking citations) which occasionally diverted my focus from major project milestones. To address this:

Goals I Will Set Myself to Keep Making Progress:

- I plan to schedule two dedicated review blocks each week focusing on big-picture items—such as verifying project scope and deliverable quality—before revisiting small details.
- I will be more forthcoming about uncertainties or obstacles (e.g., confusion over aligning survey data with cost reports) by raising them in our team Discord channel within 24 hours of discovery. This proactive approach will help me avoid bottlenecks and maintain a balanced perspective on the project's macro and micro elements.

4. What aspects of your team project worked best and why?

- **Clear Work Allocation:**

Our team assigned tasks according to each member's strengths (e.g., data analysis, writing, or editing). This alignment made each portion of the report move forward at a steady pace.

- **Meeting Structure:**

Based on our recorded meetings (Appendices 6–11 in the report), we consistently used agendas and action items, enabling us to stay organized. Having rotating roles (timekeeper, process facilitator, team leader, recorder) also ensured that each meeting had purpose and direction.

5. What do you think was least successful and why?

The initial misunderstandings about formatting instructions highlighted how easily minor communication gaps can affect overall quality. Because we did not initially verify the client's preferred structure, we had to revise the presentation slides and corresponding sections of the report on short notice, which

increased our workload. Moving forward, I realize the importance of clarifying instructions as soon as questions arise, rather than waiting until the final stages of a project.

Our survey sample size was another shortcoming. Collecting only 10 responses gave us a narrow window into campus perceptions of AI-based waste sorting. While the results were still informative, the limited data weakened our ability to generalize recommendations. In future, I will set a target response count early, then schedule reminder emails or partner with relevant departments to expand survey reach. Had we done so here, our feasibility analysis would have been more robust and representative.

6. Were you satisfied with the overall team dynamics? What helped the team work well together?

I was pleased with our overall team dynamics. We respected each other's ideas and used a constructive approach to resolving issues. Explicit by-laws and a shared sense of responsibility were critical. The scheduled weekly meetings, integrated with regular Discord check-ins, facilitated prompt communication and motivated us to remain diligent about deadlines.

7. Did you experience any difficulties or problems in team dynamics? What did you (or the team as a whole) do to address these problems - i.e. how did you, or the team, try to solve the problems you encountered?

- **Scheduling Conflicts:**

While minor, we sometimes struggled to accommodate everyone's availability. We resolved this by agreeing on a fixed time and place (the UVic library at 3pm on Fridays) and using Discord for urgent items.

- **Document Version Control:**

With multiple members editing the same sections at once, it was easy to overwrite each other's progress. As a team, we created a shared folder and established a "sign-out" rule for editing, so only one person at a time was responsible for final changes.

8. Do you feel one or more of your team members contributed distinctly or significantly to the project's overall success? How so? Please explain.

Yes. Each member contributed in a distinct, meaningful way:

- Antonio: Stepped up as a frequent recorder and often structured the meeting agendas. Antonio also handled budgeting details for the feasibility report.
- Abdullah: Helped compile survey analysis and integrated findings into our discussion sections.
- Tanuj: Provided technical insight for the proposed design solution and handled the concluding sections.
- Vedit: Organized tasks, particularly ensuring references and formatting were consistent.

Their willingness to take on specialized tasks boosted our project's quality and kept us moving forward.

9. Do you feel any team member or members did not equitably contribute to the team project? How so? Please explain.

No, I felt that each member, including myself, gave consistent effort. While we had some variance in how many hours a particular person spent, those differences were due to specific roles (e.g., editing vs. writing). Overall, the distribution of workload balanced out by the end. Moreover, I think any feeling of a member not giving consistent effort should be disregarded to an extent given the varying schedules and circumstances.

10. What's your overall assessment of the team project? What did you learn as your main take-away?

- **Overall Assessment:**

We successfully delivered a thorough feasibility report on AI-powered waste sorting. Despite a few small hurdles in understanding instructions early on, the final product met our objectives and aligned with UVic's sustainability goals.

- **Main Takeaway:**

The experience underlined the value of reflection, organization, and open communication. I learned that

regular check-ins, combined with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, are pivotal to a successful collaborative effort especially on projects requiring both technical and communication skills.

Thank you for taking the time to review this memo. If there are any questions or points needing further clarification, please let me know. I appreciate the opportunity to reflect on my performance and look forward to applying these lessons on future collaborative projects.