

Individual Reflection On Team Earth With The Earth Vitality Center

Alexander Abou Khir

Old Dominion University

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Professor Teresa Duvall

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Being part of this amazing opportunity with CYSE368 has shown me a lot when it comes to individual growth, teamworking skills, and dynamic relationships between client and provider. The groupmates that I was part of overall were great, they did their work individually and collaboratively. I had a stronger connection with one of my groupmates over the other. Our Client, Professor Plag, gave us a solid meeting time and that was consistent with our team which was every Friday. However, even though we did work collaboratively, we did tend to hyperfocus on staying in our roles and following what needs to be done in that role. For example, I was once team leader and then I gave up the role to my other group member as I realized and knew I couldn't provide consistent leadership thanks to my other responsibilities. With other responsibilities consuming my time, one of my other group members insisted they take over and showed eagerness to take control of the situation, so me and my other group member that was creative leader believed and was convinced that we did not have to be part of the meetings as we had the leader at the meetings. I switched to become research lead and started building up our report with research and other findings through the team leaders' findings.

Reflecting back, this seemed like a good step of direction, however our heavy reliance on just ourselves being strict on following our labeled roles created animosity towards each other, even if it was not on purpose, because of the miscommunication that started construing. Having each of the members dabble on other group members roles can create this cohesive and unison framework that can rid ourselves of disparaging thought processes. The reality is that this was only a small issue of a bigger problem, communication satisfaction needs to be set on both parties and must be communicated it cannot be one-sided. When we thought about our project and what we had written was satisfactory and complete, Professor Plag, disagreed with us near the end of the semester right before we presented it to him. Even after our presentation Professor

Plag showed dissatisfaction with our communication as the issues we brought up to him were already close to solving or was solved. This is also what created the finger pointing between the group members at first, but then we realized as a group that this was not just an individual issue, it was more of a larger issue at hand. So, my group devised ways to improve the internship for the next group of students who take the class for future semesters. We came up with clearer ways to show communication is kept up from both ends, for example as communication is established mutually, the TA's and other Staff create transparency on when there is communication with the clients about the group's performance and if there needs to be adjustments with communication, so there can be no unexpected conflicts as there was preestablished check-ins throughout the semester. Another solution we came up with as well was to make every group member be part of meetings with the client to create uniform understanding of what is happening at the meetings and what is being discussed within the meetings so there is no conflict between group members. During the process of making improvements to implement for future classes, it improved the relationship between all group members and made us much stronger as we all took accountability of our own actions and all knew we could improve, it was a messy process but helped us drastically to show our weaknesses during that challenging aspect in our internship.

If our group could do our project differently with the knowledge we gained now, I feel like our creative leader would have been a better leader as she was more of the glue that kept trying to make solutions and finding ways to improve our situations. I should have been research lead earlier, I just didn't know how much my job would take away from putting as much focus as being a leader, and I know myself to be a good leader and collaborator, but when you spread thin, you will always have your limits. I feel like me and my creative lead member wish we were at the meetings more; it would have prevented a lot of time wasted remaking and redoing certain

parts of our reports. Overall, what we dealt with became a rolling snowball of issues that silently kept getting worse out of shortsightedness in certain aspects during the project, however we still did quality work, but was not met to the expectations of the client, Professor Plag. I think we also as a group fulfilled the MOU as much as we could have, I think the weaknesses were more in the team and coordination aspect of the MOU, but it was more nuanced than just meeting frequently with client and faculty.

I think the takeaway from this internship within my own individual growth is what I have already believed in and is becoming more solidified and fleshed out. Take accountability, even when it is not your fault, take accountability when you do make a mistake, realizing an action creates change because knowing what you did starts the process of evolving as a being. Humans are so quick to point out others at fault or are to see it as another party to create this hardship as it is easier to do so than to see the faults within yourself. This internship has helped me become less defensive in a knee-jerking mannerism way, being more calm and taking in the criticisms and still using it to self-improve instead of complete rejection creates a much more holistic mindset and weighs less on your soul because you are not putting extensive energy on it to prematurely drain you, if you do, then you cannot as an individual bounce back or be on cue to create betterment instead of using that energy on lingering bad thoughts. This improvement in mindset for me has made me more efficient with work, and it has also helped me with my relationships with others, platonic and romantic. I feel like this whole experience will help anyone climb the corporate ladder much easier than others who have never experienced this prior. This experience has been a great eye opener and has reminded me that I still have a lot to learn, and I am excited to see what the world has in store for me when it comes to cybersecurity as my profession of choice. I am forever grateful to be part of this internship with the COVA CCI

Clinic and I hope for the future students that are part of this program to absorb as much of it as possible as it will open new opportunities for you as a individual.