Q: Critically reflect upon the role you have played during the simulation project this semester. In your observations, comment upon the team dynamic, the role you have played and how performance could be improved in your group next time. Tie your critical reflections to the academic literature that you have encountered throughout this semester.

Reflecting upon past experience is an important capability for all professionals in order to develop better communications skills, conflict resolution and enhance future performance. To look back on the simulation that was conducted as group work this semester has allowed participating students to gain many practical skills in our industry. This paper will reflect upon the role that I personally played in this simulation activity, as well as critically analyse our performance. It could be argued that our team performed well overall; yet more effective delegation and organisation skills could have been improved. This paper will comment upon the team dynamics, communication style, as well as suggest possible improvements in any future simulation activity.

Our team comprised five members and were all delegated with a particular role within the simulation. Reflecting upon my role as 'key negotiator', I felt at the time that this did not entirely suit my personality profile. Largo and Johns (2008) state than ensuring close matches between simulation and real-life personality traits are more likely to produce positive results. For me, perhaps the most challenging part of being assigned this role was working and communicating effectively with our team in a clear and assertive way. Occasionally, I felt uneasy negotiating with other team members who I felt had their 'own agenda' and seemed unwilling at times to compromise. In hindsight, this was one of the biggest challenges I faced in this activity. However, it also allowed me to build my skills and confidence in these areas over the number of weeks we were involved in the simulation.

Comment [A1]: The introduction starts with some background information to lead the reader into the piece.

Comment [A2]: Reflective writing phrase used here.

Comment [A3]: Student mirroring the assignment question here.

Comment [A4]: The student has embedded their thesis statement in here.

Comment [A5]: The topic sentence here states that this paragraph will discuss 'the roles' played in the group activity.

Comment [A6]: First person 'I' is usually OK for reflective writing. Please check with your lecturer first however.

Comment [A7]: Using the literature to support the student's argument here.

Comment [A8]: Student analyses some of the challenges encountered in the group activity.

Comment [A9]: As above

The role that effective communication played within the simulation was of key importance and the chance to personally critically reflect upon this is also as important. Nixon (2014), Johnson and Wiggs (2011) and Peterson (2012) all state that effective communication within a team dynamic is essential. This is further supported by research (Wu & Xiao 2011; Peterson 2012) that claims that team members need to employ open dialogue and have clear agendas. To comment upon my communicative style, it appeared that I tried to not compromise myself but be as Danks (2012, p. 24) states 'a clear and reasoned thinker and communicator'. For the most part, our group exchanged information well and it could be argued that we mostly achieved goals through effective dialogue, clear understanding and working as a cohesive team. In summary then, it can be acknowledged that our team communicated effectively throughout this simulation and upon reflection, this clearly aided us in reaching our overall goals.

Comment [A10]: Topic sentence here introduces the next idea of this paragraph.

Comment [A11]: Student uses the literature (and brings sources together) to support the arguments being made.

Comment [A12]: Student uses reflective phraseology to analyse their performance in the group activity.

Comment [A13]: Student analyse what was achieved well in the group.

Comment [A14]: A clear concluding sentence rounds up this paragraph to enhance the argument /reflection being made.

Another benefit to reflection is the opportunity to rectify issues that can impede performance. 'To improve the self, shows courage, persistence and effective determination' (DuPont 2013, p. 69). To therefore reflect upon some of the challenges that the simulation brought to our team, and how we could resolve them, it could be said that effective delegation and time management seemed to hamper us. At the time, our team noticed that it was often hard to delegate tasks to team members. This was often due to conflicting schedules, workloads and other commitments. For me, this was a significant handicap in our team and perhaps 'upon reflection' we should have thought about how to delegate tasks in a more effective and clearer manner. Ellis (2012) argues that delegation can offer significant time savings when accomplishing group tasks, and this is something we should have considered more as we often did not take into account the particular strengths or weaknesses of the individuals in our team. In addition, it did appear that we experienced some challenges in our time management principles. In looking back, we had disputes with individuals arriving to scheduled meetings on time, undertaking simulation activities in a timely manner, as well as our team not allocating sufficient periods to successfully complete tasks. These were all significant challenges both to me personally, as well as to the remainder of the team. To reflect on this, perhaps demonstrates the need for 'commitment from each team contributor to be a key agent of change' (Atkins & Lowe 2011, p. 19).

Comment [A15]: Student using a direct quote here as a topic sentence. Remember direct quotes always have page numbers in the citation.

Comment [A16]: Student here is analysing some of the things that didn't work so well in the group work.

Comment [A17]: Student outlining some of the challenges the team faced and reflecting upon them.

Comment [A18]: As above.

Comment [A19]: Student uses the literature to 'support' their analysis of the group dynamic.

Having experienced these issues and to critically reflect upon them, it could be argued that our team should have been more realistic about the timing of activities, clearly determining who was responsible and effectively ensure that we could achieve the simulation goals in adequate time. This understanding has been a valuable lesson to me, and in the future, I will ensure that sufficient planning and ample time are adequately factored into group activities.

Comment [A20]: A strong concluding sentence here summarising what was learnt and how it can be bettered next time.

In conclusion, to reflect upon the role I have undertaken during the group simulation project, it can be maintained that a great deal has been learnt, experienced and confronted. In commenting upon the team dynamics, as well as the academic literature that has supported the learning this semester, it can be argued that a new set of knowledge and understanding has been created. In addition, it has been particularly important to become a reflective practitioner and that in undertaking such observations helps to improve not only one's performance but also enhance discipline-specific knowledge.

Comment [A21]: The conclusion starts with a wide summarising comment.

Comment [A22]: The student comments on what has been learnt and what has now changed.

References

Atkins, S. & Lowe, S. 2011, *Agents of change – a call for effective leadership*, University of Boston Press, Boston, Mass.

Danks, W. 2012, 'The dynamic boardroom communicator', *Communication Performance Management*, vol. 3, no. 3/4, pp. 82-90.

DuPont, A. 2013, *Communication in action – a review*, McGraw-Hill, New York.

Ellis, S. 2012, 'Intellectual teamwork: social and technological foundations of cooperation', *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 32, no. 6.

Johnson, R. & Wiggs, P. 2011, 'Change management--or change leadership?', *Journal of Change Management*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 311-17.

Largo, E. & Johns, M. 2008, *Sensing of change management – rulemaking for the 21st Century*, Swan Page, London.

Nixon, D. 2014, *Communication traits*, Manchester, UK, viewed 16 November 2014, <http://communication traits/industrial_relations.htm>.

Peterson, H. 2012, *Teamwork dynamics*, Smithfield Press, New York.

Wu, Z. & Xiao, L. 2011, 'Team builder: a CSR tool for identifying expertise and team strengths', *Allied Communications*, vol. 12, no. 10, pp. 32-47.

Comment [A23]: All references to be formatted correctly –in this case UTS Harvard style.

Alphabetically arranged –despite the format (web page, journal, textbook).

Note how the titles of the resources are often not capitalised throughout.

*** Please follow the UTS Harvard referencing formatting as shown on the UTS library website.

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