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My journey discovering

Effective Teamwork

Through the design and building of small, inexpensive all-terrain robots with a team of **5** engineers during my 3rd year.

We spent 6 months working together. My role was **mechanical design lead** and we didn't really have a leader, but we had a member who took the role of manager.

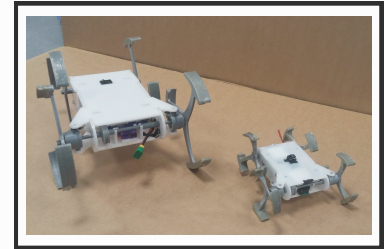
Communication & Active Listening: Managing Information

We started the project off by opening a Whatsapp group, Facebook messenger group and a shared drive. I quickly realised that we had too many information channels flowing in too many directions which led to information and files getting lost and team members being confused. This taught me that spending a bit of time intentionally deciding on how we will communicate as a team pays off in the long run. This is a conversation I have initiated early in every group project since, for example last summer when I successfully managed a mobile app prototyping project.

Strategic Mindset: Learning to Prioritise

We realised that in our enthusiasm for the project that we had set ourselves too large a task, so I led us to prioritise and reduce our workload which taught me that having big ambitions is good especially in the creative phase, but also that cutting it down to an achievable workload that still aligns with the criteria is important to actually achieve your goals. In future projects I will use my enhanced strategic mindset to plan for this prioritisation phase rather than be surprised by it.

our robots!



Awareness of Group Dynamics & Collaboration / Motivation: Resetting our Dynamics

We had our 5th member added to our group right before the project began. This led to some unhealthy group dynamics where we relied on our pre-existing relationships and didn't give him much opportunity to chime in. This was **not good** for his motivation as we quickly learned that allocating him tasks in a way which didn't give him much ownership meant that he didn't complete them in time or to the standard we expected.

What I learned

The group met to have a frank discussion about what was going wrong, through which we realised that the unhealthy group dynamics had demotivated our 5th group member. We realised that we had to intentionally reset our group dynamic to include him better and ensure that everyone felt ownership over their own tasks.

The second half of the project went much more smoothly and I learned a lot about how people are motivated including myself. I now have a greater appreciation for creating a **healthy group dynamic** where all are included from the outset and now understand that members will contribute best and are often **most motivated** when they feel ownership over their tasks.

How I'm applying what I've learned

