

Self Reflective Report

Working on this project was a real eye-opener; in terms of the lessons learnt by firstly, the informative nature of our piece and secondly, working according to time (deadlines). The initial problem that our team experienced was coming up with a good story to cover. I think that if Sarah had never given us the idea, we would have settled for the "estate agent" story.

Although our hypothesis kept on changing due to the broadness and intensity of the issue with which we were dealing, we could have finished the task on time with a much more powerful story. I think that my team was thrown off by the fact that we could not find subjects willing to admit to defaulting. The fact that this became our main focus resulted in us failing to focus on any other aspects that were also relevant to our story; elements which we could have used to build our story to a much higher level.

We had decided that I would take on the editor's role, while Richard offered to undertake the researching and more administrative part of the production (a role which he fulfilled very well). But in the end, our roles fused as we always work collectively on our productions; we feel that this form of teamwork results in us fulfilling different roles at once and thus we get to do a lot more in the production than just fulfilling one role.

In terms of the editing, I could not start editing early because we had not really fully conceptualised our hypothesis until towards the end, which is what resulted in us not being able to meet the deadline.

Other factors which obstructed us, I feel, are that at times our team is too relaxed when it comes to the early stages of production work. Although we all agree that we work better under pressure, I still believe that we should stop thinking that we are invincible and that our products will always work according to how we want them to be. There is a kind of an egotistical characteristic about the Raging Ferrets that I fear will one day work against us. I have tried to relay this to my team, but it seems that this matter is taken very lightly. It is right to feel confident about one's work, but it is also advisable to work according to time constraints.

The team handled the pressure with maturity and optimism. This was a difficult task in terms of finding our main subjects, but we managed to do so through teamwork and supporting each other. The team came together in times when we thought that we did not have a story to follow. I still feel that the story could have developed quicker if we had just taken the chances that, at the time, seemed trivial to our story.

The initial focus was on the Raphael centre as we thought that the centre would be our source of more connections in terms of subjects that we could use. The idea of going to the Jabez centre materialised after a long time (wasted time) when we discovered that we had reached a dead end relying on the Raphael centre.

I found out about the Jabez from a third year journalism student, who is on the SHARC committee, while having a casual chat to her about our story difficulties; but my team chose to push this idea aside because they were so focused on the Raphael centre. Only to find that the Jabez centre became our main source of information in terms of subjects who were willing to talk to us. In this sense, I feel that sometimes my team becomes too determined on one opportunity and we fail to realise that there are other prospects that we can follow.

I also felt that sometimes my ideas are disregarded and this was proven quite a lot in this production. For example, when we were interviewing people from the Raphael centre outside the AMM, I suggested that we should let them speak in the language that they were most comfortable in (in this case Xhosa), but this suggestion was not taken into consideration because none of our group members are Xhosa speakers; although I did inform them that I do understand Xhosa and the only problem is that I cannot speak the language. This resulted in us not getting the integral information that we were looking for and thus, missing a defaulter. But this problem was later amended as my team realised our slippage. I do appreciate the fact that as a team we are always undergoing some sort of learning experience, and we are willing to learn and amend our mistakes, even though sometimes it takes us a while to do so.

Our preparation for interviews also needs a lot of attention, because I felt that when it came to questions, we did not really plan on ways to get the actual information we wanted, especially from defaulting subjects. There were times when the person who was interviewing would not listen to the interviewee because they were so focused on getting

the preconceived answers and this resulted in us missing some useful information. We were also very lucky to have found people who were so immersed in our subject matter that they would talk freely and intensely about the subject of defaulting on ARVs.

The post production phase was completed very late. I feel that I did not fulfil my role as much as I would have liked to because my team was so absorbed in working together that it became difficult for me to undertake my role independently without my team's presence. I felt that because we did not really have a clear hypothesis to begin with and also the complexity of the progression of the story, it made it difficult to start editing it properly. The presence of the whole team in one stuffy edit suite, giving different ideas, also hinders ones thinking to a certain level; and by the time the team decides to leave, one is too tired and worn out and it is so late that it is impossible to stay behind and try to work appropriately. So the editing was done by all of us, in terms of if one had an idea about how a certain element should look, they were given the chance to do it themselves; but there were some reservations about experimenting with small things in post production and this factor really worries me. It worries me because through these experimentations, significant changes can be made. Whenever I felt strongly about this, and the rest of the group would not be willing to comply, I stood my ground and forced the group to see what I meant instead of just pushing my ideas aside. The ideas worked well most of the time.

This project was a great learning experience for me. I never again want to be caught up in a period of "hysteria" where I feel like I do not know what to expect. I think that the team has also learnt a lot and hopefully we will be able to overcome these glitches in our next project.