Construction Student’s Reflective Log

October 14th

This entry concerns the events of this morning, 14th October. It explains what happened and what lessons can be learned from it. I finish the entry by saying how I intend to improve my practice in the future.

10.45

The concrete arrived and was poured into the prepared footings. In fact, the concrete had arrived half an hour after it was expected. The pouring was finished by 10.55 and we went for a tea break (usual practice at this time of the morning).

11.15

When we got back from tea break we found that the level in the footing had fallen by about 100mm, something had clearly gone wrong and the site manager was called. It was not clear where the concrete was being lost from and the possibility of the floor of the footing being porous for some reason was discussed.

11.25

A really close inspection of the sides of the footing, made easier by the fact that the level of the concrete had fallen by another 100mm, showed that a large crack had formed. The site manager felt the extent of the crack with his hand and said that the concrete was pouring out through it. (We found out later on that it was going into some old drains from when the site was a farm.)

11.30

The site manager succeeded in stopping the leak with a sand bag. However, the damage had already been done because the footing was now a lot thinner than it needed to be. The manager tried to get another delivery but it was already too late; the new load would have sat on top of the old one which had started to set, and would not have formed a solid piece, but rather two separate layers.

11.45

By now it was obvious that the whole footing would have to be smashed out and cleared, before ordering a new load of concrete.
Lessons learned

Don’t go for a tea break just because it is the usual time. Someone should have stayed to monitor the footing

Keep an eye on any old drains which might cause cavities

Trouble might be hidden- keep looking and using your hands to feel, ears to hear etc.

Sandbags are useful to slow down leaks in concrete

Future practice

I’m going to make sure my breaks always take place when it is safe for them to.

I’m going to look into how to get hold of old plans etc of sites.

Very clear, well done