

Process analysis – fourth-semester project

Process analysis of thesis development in fourth semester MPBL-AAU

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Introduction

This document is a personal reflection of my learning experience developing the project (thesis) of the fourth and last semester in the MPBL-AAU program. At the beginning of semester 2018-01, I started the process working on my course "Manufacturing Processes II" with the basic idea of evaluating the possibility of using worked examples as scaffolding to learn the fundamental concepts of student groups performing Computer Assisted Manufacturing (CAM) projects. This idea was basically given as an alternative to compensate the few available hours of facilitator for the 80 students of the course. As part of the planning of this thesis idea, I gave great emphasis to the teamwork process of the students. The first element was using a structured methodology, based on diversity of roles, for team-assignment, I also implemented reflection activities on teamwork, requesting the teams to perform a process analysis as part of their report and also to execute, individually, a peer assessment of teamwork in an online survey.

But, towards the end of the 2018-01 semester, the original thesis project could not move forward due to changes in the administration of resources in the laboratory where it was being developed. Finding a new topic was not difficult, when examining the large amount of information I had gathered around students' team work, I became aware that this topic was of special interest to me and that I could propose a thesis project in this area. Then, finished semester 2018-01, I took advantage of the vacation period and working hard, I managed to configure the new topic to develop the thesis. I must say that the need to change the topic was a lucky accident, because the topic of teamwork has seemed very interesting since I began to study it in more detail.

1. Reflections on project management

Being an individual job, it was quite simple to manage the time needed to work on the thesis. However, at the time when the need to change the thesis topic arose, the spent time had to increase considerably, requiring rescheduling and cancelling several personal activities.

The communication with my advisers, Ginie Servant and Mona-Lisa Dahms, was mainly done via email and based on my progress in the working document. In this respect I must say that, during the period of topic change, an large period of time passed without communicating, given that I dedicated myself to structuring the new topic in order to be able to show them a piece of coherent and viable work.

2. Reflections on collaboration

I must mention that, in an inconvenient way, an important part of adjustments had to be made over the time limit to deliver the work, in this respect I thank my counselors having been patiently answering several emails a day to address my difficulties in the process.

3. Reflections on learning processes

This project allowed me to learn a lot about the interesting area of teamwork, and it has given me the tools to better organize the future teamwork of my students, and so that my own participation in work teams can be more effective and pleasant.

The other topic of enormous learning was the use of a qualitative research method. To systematically discover the underlying themes in the language, written in this case, of my students was a very valuable experience to confront with more confidence this type of data, frequent and necessary in education research.

4. Recommendations for future project work

I recommend carefully choosing the work topic, which must be especially interesting on a personal level, which can motivate the pleasant mobilization of your cognitive machine, which potentially should give you great emotional value to the working hours dedicated to carrying out the project. That was my personal experience developing this thesis, and in the future, of course, I would like to repeat it in other projects.