Balancing Freedom and Supervision in a Reallife Educational Project
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Practicum Information System Development

• Goals:
  – 1) give hands-on experience with different aspects of working on IT-projects;
  – 2) apply techniques and methodologies in a rationalized and integrated way;

• Implications:
  – 1) freedom to make own decisions;
  – 2) supervision, guidance and monitoring necessary;
ISD overview

- Phases of the practicum:
  - 1) contract phase;
  - 2) project phase;
  - 3) evaluation phase.

- Statistics:
  - duration: 13 weeks (no evaluation included);
  - students: 2 project groups of 7 students each;
  - staffing: 2 (mentors) + 4 (steering committee), 330 staff hours.
Design choices

• Freedom versus steering and supervision
• Steering and supervision by:
  – prescribing parts of the practicum in advance;
  – intervention during the practicum;
• point of departure: all measures should be commonly used in real-life projects.

Contract phase

• Prescribed:
• Steering and intervention:
  – by steering committee and document reviews;
    by mentor. Goal: a sound problem statement and reachable goals.
Project phase

• Prescribed:
  – project plan containing activities, milestones, dependencies and resource allocation.

• Steering and intervention:
  – by steering committee, document reviews, progress reports. Goal: correcting bad project process, protection of the customer.

Evaluation

• Prescribed:
  – final presentation at customer site, list of topics to discuss in a personal evaluation.

• Marking:
  – customers assigns group mark;
  – steering committee assigns group mark;
  – mentor assigns individual mark based on personal evaluation.
Conclusion

• To balance freedom and supervision:
  – specify in advance minimum requirements;
  – implement monitoring and steering instruments during the practicum.
• Measures should be commonly used in real-life projects.