Transforming a Course with a Traditional Evaluation into a Competency-Based Assessment Approach: a Practical Experiment

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Context and Motivations

- **Transform a course** with the focus put on evaluations
    - Better individualised/personalised evaluation process
    - Continuous evaluations to reduce students' stress
    - Mastering competencies instead of obtaining a grade

- Three questions about how the transformation **improved**...
    - ...teachers' confidence about the evaluation process
    - ...what students actually acquired after succeeding the course
    - ...students' involvement with the course

Competency Based Assessment

- Course objectives defined with basic/advanced competencies

  Acquiring basic ones is mandatory to succeed the course

- List of assessments to cover all the competencies
  - Students choose the ones better fitting their learning profile
  - Several types of assessments: MCQ, quiz, project, interview...

- Students prove they master competencies with evaluations

  Do not fail anymore, may just miss an opportunity to improve

Course Transformation

- From a course with a traditional evaluation method...

    - Second year bachelor students in computer technology
    - IT development course teaching how to integrate a dev team
    - Theory (2 ECTS) and practice with a project (5 ECTS)
    - Evaluation: project, computer-based and paper-based exams

- ...to one following a competency based assessment approach

    1. Defining precisely the course objectives as competencies
    2. Planning the course to identify when competencies are covered
    3. Identify and design the available assessments

Experiment and Results

- Less students succeeded the course at the end of the first term

  26 students out of 89 (29%) compared to 37% previously

- Transformed course globally appreciated by students
  - According to a survey answered by 21 students
  - Main strengths are autonomy, lower stress, assessments choice
  - Weaknesses are mainly related to the risk of procrastination

- Slight increase in teachers' workload due to transformation
  - Interaction with students from fruitful to almost non existing
  - Overall quality of the evaluation seemed to be better
  - Better transparence about the evaluation process for students

Conclusion and Future Work

- **Transformed course** seems to have achieved the pursued goals
    - Improved the quality of the evaluations for teachers
    - Difficult to design and provide enough assessments
    - Time management for interactions with students is crucial
    - Worked very well in a remote setting

- Several possible ways to improve the method **in the future**
    - Think about how to foster interactions outside of evaluations
    - Improve students' motivation to progress continuously