A Student-Driven Approach to Teaching E-commerce

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes an approach to teaching e-commerce at a masters level in a course that is entirely coursework assessed. The approach involves students giving weekly presentations of material they have researched based on fairly detailed subject guidance provided by the lecturer. The approach uses extreme programming as an analogy for the structuring of the content and the process through which learning takes place. The way in which subject material is presented to the students, and the learning cycle which takes place are described. Students develop presentation material in response to stories, which set the context and problems, and tasks which set the detailed areas for investigation. These presentations are done for peers and the tutor and are immediately commented on, leading to the revision of presentation material to appear in an assessed portfolio. The e-commerce syllabus is presented in the context of a commercial or government organization seeking to develop and implement an e-commerce strategy. The agile approach leads to the discovery of new ideas and frameworks by students, and to the development of skills in critically analyzing e-commerce concepts from industrial and academic sources. The paper discusses the student’s role as an active developer and deliverer of material in a group environment and the role of the tutor in directing studies, providing support and counsel and assessing student deliverables. In interviews, students commented that the approach was challenging and somewhat daunting, but was a rewarding learning experience. Preconceptions as to what e-commerce involved were challenged through the student-driven research done for the presentations.

Keywords: E-Commerce Teaching, Agile Approach, Extreme Programming, Reflective Cycle of Learning