

# Coaching Team For Independent Studies Course

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## Learning Report

**Abstract**—This report describes and documents all the learning process and knowledge acquired during the execution of the activity of the MEIC's Independent Studies III course. The activity consisted on guiding and coaching the remaining students of the course and assuring that they would complete their own activities successfully. Due to the large number of students enrolled, each coach team had two elements, in this case me and my colleague Carlos Martins. Therefore, this report presents the soft-skills developed during the coaching activity, like time management, communication skills, negotiation and problem solving capabilities.

**Index Terms**—Coaching team, academic support, Independent Studies.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

THIS report describes all the lessons learned regarding the execution of the coaching activity for the Independent Studies III course. The main topics of reflection will range from student communication and interaction, to team management and organization. And, since the main objective of this report is to provide a description of what was learned, some of the developed and acquired soft-skills will also be referred.

## 2 COACHING

The activity performed consisted on guiding and providing support to other students enrolled on the Independent Studies III course. Therefore, in this section, some of the acquired skills/qualities during the execution of the activity will be presented.

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Manuscript received February 2nd, 2015.

### 2.1 Communication With Students

Since one of the core task to perform as a coach member is to provide support to the enrolled students, communication plays a major role. During this processes of providing help, most of the students where compliant and corresponded to our expectation. However, there were some cases where students felt frustrated and replied to some of our emails with an aggressive manner. This not only required a more subtle approach but also sometimes providing a more strict answer, standing our ground. The teacher was always a valuable help in these hard cases and i, personally, learned a lot on the matter. During the semester, more regular and normal cases had taken place too. So our coaching had to deal with some students that didn't have activities and were confused how to contact their second proposal, students trying to change their activity and also students who want to delay their reports delivery. These set of events not only developed my capabilities on problem solving but also allowed me to adapt myself to very difficult situations.

### 2.2 Grader Perspective

As a coaching team, our work was not only restricted to providing support to our fellow

(1.0) Excelent (0.8) Very Good (0.6) Good (0.4) Fair (0.2) Weak	LEARNING					DOCUMENT						SCORE
	CONTEXT x2	SKILLS x1	REFLECT x4	S+C x1	SCORE	Structure x0.25	Ortogr. x0.25	Gramm. x0.25	Format x0.25	Title x0.5	Filename x0.5	
	2	1	4	0.9	7.9	0.25	0.2	0.25	0.25	0.5	0.5	1.95

students. We were also in charge of a pre-evaluation of the reports of the student at our supervision. This task proves itself harder than i anticipated. At first when i first thought of what i had to do, it looked simple, just giving a grade scaling from 0 to 1, to some of report parts. However, given my lack of experience in the field and the underlining responsibility of grading someones work, it required an extreme amount of concentration and focus, in order to correlated some of the grades between students. Posing as a challenge, this grading task provided me a way to develop my grading skills, by comparing some abstract evaluation, while following the criteria provided by the teacher. Finally, this task also allowed me to expand my sense of responsibility towards the work at hand.

### 2.3 Overall Responsibilities

Since the work as a coach means to be able to help someone overcome their problems in order to successfully complete their activities, a lot of responsibility falls upon us. Students had to enroll in activities, and in many cases we had to communicate with the entities providing them. Our responsibility was to assure a cohesive communication channel between the student and the entities, and in some cases make sure that all student were accepted to the activities they were enrolling. One everyday aspect that i acquired with the course, was checking my email inbox more often. In some cases where the subject was more delicate, i got worried that a student may find himself quitting the course. And i tried to adjust my schedule so i could be more available to check and respond emails if needed. This experience made me realise the impacted i had on other students academic performance, and in a more specific case i changed one student mind when he was about to quit the course. That alone made me fulfilled as a coach member.

## 3 TEAM WORK

The coach activity was developed in teams. The coach team 3a, was formed by me and my fellow colleague Carlos Martins. The fact

that this was a group activity posed some challenges that needed to be overcome and also allowed us to improved in some areas. Due to the large amount of students enrolled, the teams had around 15 student to supervise and support.

### 3.1 Labor Division

To better provide the support the students deserve me and my colleague decided to split the student among ourselves. This not only allowed us to provide better assistance but also to create a relationship with the students we were in charge. Since each of us had around seven student to support, we could focus a lot better and keep track of the problems we had to deal with. With grading the same process was applied. Each of us graded and evaluated half of the reports and in the end we gathered all the work in one final document. With this experience, my team management skills greatly improved by realizing that some actions and decision we made as a team, had a real impact in students lives.

### 3.2 Cooperation

As a team we often communicate and cooperate in order to overcome some challenges we faced. When we had problems with some of the support we had to give to the students, and some action we didn't knew if were correct, we always acted as a team. We discussed most of our problems because most of them could relate and the answer was the same. Since me and my colleague Carlos Martins are long term friends, it greatly helped to work as a team. Maybe if i was with someone i did not knew i would learn more, but this way i feel that i was able to be more helpful for the group we were giving support to. Due to our synergy as a team and to the cooperation we always tried to maintain, i feel that our work as a coaching team was appreciated and we contributed to the course's success.

### 3.3 Communication and Synchrony

As described in the section before, our work as team went pretty good. This fact may be

due to our ability to manage and divide the work among ourselves. These two qualities were only accomplished through a well structured organization, communication and team synchrony.



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#### 4 TIME AND SCHEDULE MANAGEMENT

It is a main concern for all the students in independent studies, to manage their time efficiently in order to conciliate their activities with the other courses. In this semester i think i managed to provide enough time to independent studies course and still complete all my other courses with a great grade. During the semester, i scheduled Wednesdays and weekends to provide help to my students, but when an email with questions appeared and i had the time, i quickly answered it or if the subject was more delicate i tried to find the appropriate solution. Overall i think i made a good scheduling of the academic duties and my activities in order to succeed in both.

#### 5 CONCLUSION

To conclude, the coaching activity was one of the best i have been so far. Not only i understood many of my colleagues difficulties and learn from their problems but also experienced a professor grading facet. Therefore, as intended coaching allowed me to improve my communication, comprehension, team work and responsibility soft-skills.

*In this type of document (technical), the conclusion should start with a summary of the subject addressed and then should highlight the results.*

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is my great pleasure to thank to professor Rui Cruz for all the support and aid he gave us during the activity. Being a coach is not an easy task, some decision were hard to make and i, personally, learned a lot from the professor's approach in some of these cases.