Monitoring activities of Independent Studies IV, within a coaching team

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Learnings Report

Abstract—Being someone who has never experienced what was like to be a coach or a "guider" to a group of people along side with 2 more colleagues, it helped me develop some soft skills that without this activity I would never gain. This activity gave me an opportunity to exercise my responsibility, cooperation and time management. It helped me achieve a communication, team spirit and also observation and criticism level that I did not have before. Although I would liked to have been allowed a bit more responsibilities with this activity, and therefore increasing the number of different skills I would have developed, but the amount of workload that the course has, it was probably for the best as it was.

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Index Terms—Responsibility, Cooperation, Soft Skills, Coach, Students, Colleagues, Communication, Time Management.

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1 INTRODUCTION

UNDER the course of Independent Studies IV [1], carrying out certain activities and participation, are really important to this day, not only professionally, but also in a personal way. In this report I will present the skills that I was able to gain during the realization of my activity for this course. I will start (in some sections) by mention how I was before being a Coach in a team and from there I will expose what changed in my behavior and what I have learned to accomplish my objectives for the activity.

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2 RESPONSIBILITY

I never had the experience of being a "guider" or coach which have a lot of responsibility so I was a little nervous but also enthusiastic with the idea. This activity gave me the opportunity

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Figure 1. Course's image description.

to verify if I was or not able to do the job. But as a Coach I was going to be able to prove myself as being able to be responsible for a person, or in this case several people. During the tasks I had to face I noticed that one of the difficulties of having this kind of responsibility towards my colleagues was the line between what I should and should not be responsible for. This was difficult to delimit because the

(1.0) Excellent	LEARNINGS						DOCUMENT						
(0.8) Very Good	Context×2	Skills×1	Reflect×4	Summ×.5	Concl×.5	SCORE	Struct ×.25	Ortog×.25	Exec×4	Form ×.25	Titles ×.5	File ×.5	SCORE
(0.6) Good													
(0.4) Fair	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.6	0.8		0.8	0.8	0.8	1.0	1.0	1.0	
(0.2) Weak													

fear of lacking [*failing!*] to the people I was responsibly for could affect their performance on the course, but on the other hand, if I started to be responsible too much, I would be the one to suffer from it. As a coach I had to learn how to set aside what I would like and wanted to do in order to have an overall perspective over what I actually needed to perform. This eventually would help me and my colleagues, to fulfill our objectives and get the best performance out of this course without affecting negatively our lives outside of this course (i.e. by occupying time that should have been reserved for other things).

3   COMMUNICATION

Being a Coach, the main part of the tasks involved communication, i.e. communication with promoters of the activities, students and the professor of the course. Before I started the Coach Team activity I only knew two forms of communicating with someone. Communicating formally, e.g. when talking to an important person or with a unknown person, or communicating informally, e.g. with friends and family. The communication I had to use in this case was different from what I used before because as a coach you should try not to be too formal, as to not intimidate the people I am responsible for, but also not too informal since I needed to be taken serious. My first few contacts with my colleagues was a little formal, but after some time I was able to rectify the way I was addressing to them, understanding it was not the best way to talk to a peer in these cases. Because, although I am responsible for them, if I write to seem more friendly (i.e. more informal) my colleagues wouldn't be so intimidated by me and have a vision of me that would allow them to have no fear of approaching me with questions they might have. This was an important lesson that I will be using for the rest of my life, because it opened my eyes to the way I communicate with others, and how communicating in a different manner can increase the cooperation between me and the people I will work with from here on out.

4   COOPERATION

Even though during the activity we had little problems with the way the team cooperated, there was one aspect that did not go well, the distribution of the evaluation of the reports. This happened because I did not have perception of what could go wrong by distributing the evaluation of the reports by sets of reports, i.e distribute some reports to one person and the other reports to the other person. With this event I was able to learn that when you distribute work, you have to be careful, and consider if the way you distribute a task is the most appropriate one. In this case, it would have been better to distribute by sections where each of us had a look at particular sections of all reports, which would make the grading more even for all students.

Also, the communication between us as a team was excellent. We always knew what to do and support each other, like when someone does not have the time to do something because he is busy or if someone has doubts or needs some help and opinion about the terms of the evaluation of the reports. It gave us strength to continue and also patience with some troubles we had, because we are different people with different lives and we cannot except a reply or an agreement right after we ask among the team for help or the need of something (which also increased our respect and understanding between us). In the end, everything went according to plan.

5   OBSERVATION AND EVALUATION

The evaluation of the reports was a really big challenge for me. Being someone who has some difficulties on writting and few observations and criticism skills, some terms of the evaluation were a little too much for me, because in the end I wanted to be fair and do a rigth evaluation for all the students. This challenge allow me to open more my views of thinking and fairness. Trying my best, with some help of my team, to read every parameter of evaluation and read carefully each report. Comparing reports helped me develop my observation skills, because most of the reports were about the same activity, but also not to be afraid to critic

do NOT use contractions !

some parts of the report that I thought that could be more elaborate or better written. This was a task that really opened my eyes of what is like to be an evaluator. It is not an easy job.

6 TIME MANAGEMENT

This was another challenge. The master's course takes a lot of time and effort even if I had only 4 courses (not including the Independent Studies IV course). One thing I did to solve this issue was to make a schedule with everything I needed to do, i.e. an organized plan with all the works I had to focus, on each day so I could take advantage of every minute that I had. Also, when in times of stress with lots of works to be delivered, it help me reorganized my weeks so everything could be done and not forgotten. Time management was essential for this activity because I could not fail to the people I was responsible for, but also I could not abandon my team mates cause they were in the same situation.

7 PERSONAL NOTE

Although this activity gave me an overview on what being responsible for another person is and what is like to be on a team, I am a little disappointed that my role was not that important concerning the activity of the students I was responsible for, it would allow me to face more learning incidents if the role was more important and informative. Even though I was responsible for a small part of the evaluation of the reports of my team, I felt like, since there was not enough time to get the professor's feedback, I was not able to learn more about how to approach this kind of tasks like evaluation, observation and critic level.

8 CONCLUSION

Being a Coach taught me that being some kind of "guider" or coach is not an easy job. Responsibility is fundamental for the organization and orientation of the course and also for the students. The evaluation of self initiative proposals and reports helped me increase my observation and criticism skills because it is important that everything is well evaluated
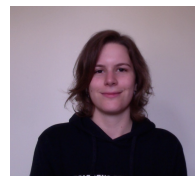
and fair among all students. Also team work (cooperation) is essential for time management, communication and personal doubts. Helping each others' back allow me to plan my work and correct my own mistakes, but also learn new things that I would never thought of learning. I grew up more strong and wise than before, thanks to this experience and I recommend anyone to do it.

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REFERENCES

[1] Cruz, R.S., Regulations of the Activities of Independent Studies IV, Official site of Independent Studies IV, 2015.

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