Experiencing the Elicitation of User Requirements and Recording them in Use Case Diagrams through Role-Play

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a role-play exercise used in a second-year tertiary Systems Analysis and Design course, and the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the students’ responses to a survey that solicited their perceptions of that role-play experience. The role-play involved students in eliciting user requirements from customers during a Joint Application Development (JAD) session, thus simulating a common industry practice. Each JAD team had to interact to resolve conflicting customer requirements and record in IBM® Rational® Rose® the use cases necessary for a software solution. Completed diagrams were presented to the class using SynchronEyes technology, for review and discussion. The effectiveness of the role-play method was confirmed by students’ perceptions collected in the survey following the exercise. The goal of the survey was to discover if students respond positively to learning about JAD, and use case diagrams, through role-play, and if they believe that they have improved their knowledge as a result of that experience. Student responses showed enthusiasm for experiential learning in the form of role-play and belief that learning had occurred. After experiencing the role-plays, students were also able to identify some of the limitations in the use of use cases, thus highlighting aspects that would require their future attention.

Keywords: Experiential Learning & Education, Active Learning, Role-Play, Unified Modeling Language (UML)