Dept. of Mathematics and
Computer Science
Campusvej 55
DK-5230 Odense M
Denmark

Phone: +45 6550 2387
Fax: +45 6593 2691
www.imada.sdu.dk
E-mail: imada@imada.sdu.dk

Det naturvidenskabelige Studienævn
Syddansk Universitet

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DM8XX Advanced Topics in Programming Languages, Spring 2009,
Action Plan

The course DM8XX Advanced Topics in Programming Languages was
run as an individual study activity for which 11 students signed up. The
course was evaluated to gather feedback in case a similar course will
be run in the following years. Out of the 11 students that signed up, 9
actively participated in the course. Out of these, 7 have answered the
course evaluation sheet.

The course was run in the following way. In the first meeting, individual
project topics were assigned to each of the students. While the students
read up upon their topic, a number of introductory lectures was given
by me to set the stage. In the third week, the students gave a proposal
talk presenting their chosen topics and what they wanted to achieve in
their projects. A number of lectures complemented the chosen topics
to achieve full coverage of the intended course material. During the
last two weeks, the students presented their topics in more depth and, in
particular, the results of their projects. Final reports including a project
report and half-page summaries of all other topics had to be submitted
during the exam period.

The evaluation was quite positive and there is no indication that major
changes should be made in case the course is offered again. A few minor
concerns should be addressed, though.

First, the evaluation showed that only 5 out of 7 students were happy
with my preparation. While none was unhappy, I should make sure that
my preparation is fully satisfactory in a possible re-run of the course.

Second, one of the comments mentions that it would be advantageous if the introductory lessons were less broad and more focused on the programming languages used in the individual projects. The objective would be to make it easier for the students to follow the presentations of their peers. I will adapt the introduction for a possible re-run to achieve a balance between broadness and specific language details.

Last, another comment remarked that there should be more time for the projects and for the presentations. I agree with this. As the course ran for only 7 weeks and there were 9 active participants, the schedule was rather tight. If a re-run of the course should have a similar number of participants, a third day per week should be added to the course schedule and used in the weeks of the proposal talks and the project presentations.

Peter Schneider-Kamp

E-mail: petersk@imada.sdu.dk