Synergie
FACHMAGAZIN FÜR DIGITALISIERUNG IN DER LEHRE | #03

Get the Things done
Agiles Projektmanagement an Hochschulen

agilität

Universität Hamburg
DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

GET THE THINGS DONE
Agiles Projektmanagement an Hochschulen

OER
Open Educational Resources
Agilität & Digitalisierung

Agile Prinzipien – was kann die Studiengangsentwicklung davon lernen?

OER
Open Education und Open Educational Resources – deutsche und europäische Policy im Überblick
Unterschiedlich gesetzte Schwerpunkte offenbaren unterschiedliche Prioritäten – zu begrüßen ist die politische Auseinandersetzung mit den Chancen digitaler Bildungsinhalte allemal.

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AGILITÄT & DIGITALISIERUNG
Agiles Projektmanagement an Hochschulen – get the things done
Mit einem auf die Besonderheiten von Hochschulen abgestimmten Vorgehen kann die nachhaltige Implementierung umfassender Reformen gelingen.

OER
Open Educational Resources in der Schule – Bildung in der digitalen Welt
Lernende werden durch die Nutzung mobiler Endgeräte informell und außerhalb der Schule geprägt. Welche Konsequenzen ergeben sich aus diesen Veränderungen beim Lehren und Lernen für OER?
Dear Willy Wijnands, how did you first get in contact with Scrum, and what was the starting point of your adapting the Scrum framework for the school context?

It started with a bottle of beer and a barbecue in the summer of 2011 with Mark Reijn. Mark had just finished a Scrum course given by Jeff Sutherland at the company Schu-berg Philis in the Netherlands, where Mark works as a software engineer.

Mark was very enthusiastic about Scrum, inspired by Jeff, and he explained it to me on one single (sheet of) paper. That is how it began.

In August 2011 I started one class using Scrum to try out if it works in the classroom. In the beginning I was surprised that it was working.

So I began to use eduScrum in all my classes with success.

For which classes and age groups do you use eduScrum, and what does a representative class session look like?

I use it by myself in all my classes in the high school, the Ashram College in Alphen aan den Rijn in the Netherlands, where I have taught engineering, physics and chemistry since 1976. My students are between 12 and 19 years old.

The students work together in teams — an active, effective and efficient way of working. They have more fun, are intrinsically motivated and work hard.

At the beginning of each class hour all students run into the classroom (the teacher has no own classroom and neither do the students, so in between class hours it is real chaos in the school building). Each team puts their flap (eduScrum-Board with their planning) on the wall. The students hold a stand-up meeting in front of the flap for a few minutes. They exchange work status, reschedule the work, make arrangements for the work they have to do until the next lesson, agree on who does what, what is done in class and what they will take home as homework. Then they just get to work. Students decide on their own homework!

Why does eduScrum work?

I give the students ownership of their own learning process, but most important trust. The students take responsibility for what they do because I give them the freedom and the space they need. The effect is that students are more engaged, more productive and their results are better.

By giving the students the freedom and space to run their own class and learning process they become beautiful people. Freedom is the acknowledgement of borders.

The teacher is no longer responsible for the learning process of his students, but delegates that responsibility to the students.

How do pupils usually react to this new way of teaching?

In the beginning it feels strange to them, because they are not used to working this way. They get a lot of freedom to work together in teams and I as a teacher don’t give them homework. They do the homework by themselves. I give the assignment where I explain the what and the why of the assignment.

This learning objective is subject-specific. The responsibility to define and set the learning goal remains with me (the what...
and why), but how students get there they decide with their own team!

Forming teams in the eduScrum way is also strange for them, they are not used to it. They do work in (boys and girls mixed) teams to motivate each other. Logically; this is one of the basis of eduScrum.

I work with teams of four to five students. I discovered that this works best. These teams are also “cross-functional”, but slightly different than in Scrum. Every student writes and maintains a personal profile. What are your skills and improvement areas (…teamwork, planning, management, explaining…). Subdividing themselves in teams of four, all students in the class make well-balanced teams that address skills and development areas. Even first-year high school students are doing this successfully!

Do they also have the possibility of returning to more familiar modes of teaching?
Yes and no. They experience this way of teaching and education for the first time, when they come to my class.

Some students don’t like it, because it’s a transparent way of working and the peer students tell each other what to do. Students listen better to their peers than to me.

They do also have the possibility of returning to their own familiar modes of learning. Alone or in couples of two. I’m not a teacher who talks the whole lesson, but I coach and facilitate the students. So when they want to learn in their own way, it’s their choice. And this happens too, but most students want to work in teams. That is a normal, organic way of working. To be a member of a team feels good to people.

What challenges did you face during the introduction of eduScrum to your way of teaching, and how did you tackle those challenges?
The struggle in the beginning can be a challenge. But I knew that if you build a good relationship with the students as a first step, based on trust and respect, it will be easy to implement eduScrum in the classroom. 

eduScrum can give students wings! But if you don’t explain the WHY, they can’t fly.

eduScrum is simple and that is at the same time the difficulty. Really understanding the principles and values is very important.

The other very important issue is that the teacher must have an agile mindset. Otherwise don’t start, because you will fail.

The inventors of Scrum state that in order to ‘do Scrum’, you have to adhere to the rules defined in the Scrum framework – otherwise one cannot call it ‘Scrum’. What does this strict rule mean for eduScrum – a setting in which the teacher personifies a merger of two distinct roles as defined in the Scrum framework, those of Product Owner and Scrum Master?

In eduScrum it is the same. You do it all or nothing. If you take out one rule, it will fail. There are differences between eduScrum and Scrum:

- The way of forming teams.
- The teacher is Product Owner and Scrum Master together.
- The retrospectives are not only based on the subject or product but also on the personal growth as a person and within the team, which is very important.

Differences between eduScrum and conventional ways of teaching become apparent quite quickly – one only has to take a glimpse of the classroom setting and realizes: this is not what I’m used to. The role of the teacher as formal and frontal educator is transformed into a participatory role as educational adviser – a role that has the goal of helping learning groups of pupils along their ways with advice, incentives, and both group and individual support. Hence, the role of the teacher shifts from a formal broadcaster of knowledge towards an education facilitator. Our question here is: how do you make sure that teachers intervene in due time, when a) the independent work of pupils is taking a wrong direction and b) weaker students are left behind?

I walk through the classroom to assist the teams, if needed, in my role as a teacher. The teams do the work and decide on their own process. I’m called in by the teams when they have questions or when they are blocked.
In general, they’re rarely completely stuck. Mostly there is a team member that under-
stands things better and explains within
the team. And if they really don’t know how
to move on, they understand where and
how they are stuck. So, they understand
what they don’t understand. For a teacher
that makes it much easier to give them
a little push in the right direction. Know-
ing what you do not understand, and why
you do not understand this, is already quite
some knowledge. This is teaching!

Besides helping the teams, I glance at
each team’s ‘flap’ to monitor their progress.
That is easy to see, because the flap indicates
the status clearly. Transparency above all.

Because I don’t broadcast the whole
time, I have time to support weaker stu-
dents or teams.

All in all, the move away from ex-cate-
dra teaching and an acknowledgement of
learners’ personalities is nothing revolu-
tionary or completely new in itself. How
can eduScrum be differentiated from other
progressive reformist approaches to edu-
cation? And are there specific educational
research approaches that you draw from in
your work?

I think that in the framework eduScrum all
the educational approaches come together
in an organic way in how you treat students
and people. Students are people too, you
can learn a lot from them. The principles I
use beside the normal didactic and peda-
gogic principles in eduScrum are based on:
Start with Why; Simon Sinek, The Power of
Scrum; Jeff Sutherland, Rini van Solingen
and Eelco Rustenburg; The Five Dysfunc-
tions of a Team; Patrick Lencioni; The Speed
of Trust; Stephen M. R. Covey and a lot of
other books about personal growth, human
and team behavior. Also look at the Hattie
index (reflecting on one’s own learning
process has the highest Hattie Index) and
the learning pyramids (Bales and Dale).

The eduScrum principles and values:
ownership of their own learning process,
trust. Freedom and the space they need
within borders that give them orientation
and security, developing themselves as
people, discovering and knowing who they
are. The 21st Century Skills (I prefer to name
them the 4 C’s: Creativity, Collaboration,
Communication and Critical thinking), per-
sonal growth and personalized learning.)

Team work, creativity, self-dependent learn-
ing — these are but a few of the keywords
that come to mind when eduScrum is talked
about. In your opinion, what effects does
eduScrum have on pupils, and in what sense
does eduScrum affect the development of
personality?

In my opinion, development of person-
ality is the number one point to work on
and with. The effect is that students are
more engaged, more productive and their
results are better. They discover who they
are and what their abilities are. It is a won-
derful experience to see them developing
themselves!

Within the scope of our current edition of
‘Synergie’, we decided to choose the topics
of Agility and Open Educational Resources
as thematic foci. Both of these topics can be
seen as ways of coping with the changing
basic conditions of our environment and life
realities. In what ways, do you think, does
this also hold true for eduScrum?

The world is changing very fast and every-
body, especially in education, has to cope
with this change. eduScrum is a framework
to cope with and adapt to this very fast-
changing world. Of course students still
have to “deliver” certain pieces of knowl-
dge in our school system. But the beauty is
that eduScrum doesn’t only help students to
deal with the conditions and facts we expe-
rience today, but prepares them to be able
to react to whatever they will have to mas-
ter in the future also. They learn how to plan,
they learn how to adjust and they learn how
to learn.

What kind of training do educators have
to go through before they can actively
test Scrum within the context of their
classrooms?

First of all teachers MUST have TRUST in
their students. Next: an open agile mind-
set and giving students context-content-
based assignments or even better: projects
where students themselves can determine
what they want to learn and most import-
ant HOW. Then the why of learning will
become normal, which fosters a life-long
learning process.

The teachers can follow a two day
eduScrum training to learn how and why
eduScrum works. eduScrum looks easy, but
if you don’t really understand it, you make it
hard on you and on your students.

How do you evaluate this model of instruc-
tion? Do you survey pupils and teachers, or
do you also consider statistical indices about
school profiles?

I evaluated eduScrum by myself and my
students (that’s of course not scientific).
The results are good. The marks are at least
10 percent better (not in the beginning).
In the beginning the marks are mostly the
same, but they did it by themselves and
not by the way of traditional teaching. I see
this also as a progress. Next to that, they
finish earlier with their work and they have
more fun.
People in the world, the Netherlands, England, Germany, Brazil etc. who are working with eduScrum are doing research around eduScrum.

Let’s talk about the omnipresent pressure to perform: Pupils’ fear of being humiliated in front of their peers is strong, particularly during adolescence. Collaborating in small groups within the context of eduScrum quickly makes visible the individual differences in proficiency levels. How do you avoid situations in which learners might feel they are being overly controlled and monitored – situations that might well affect learners’ eagerness to learn?

Working with eduScrum is very transparent. Students are not afraid of transparency, they are just not used to it. When students don’t work within the team, the other team members don’t accept it and tell it to the student who doesn’t want to work in their own peer way of telling. That works very well. When a team member doesn’t want to work in a team at all, then I as a teacher take him out of that team and let him work on his own, alone. I don’t control the students or teams. They do this by themselves.

This is important and belongs to the values and principles of eduScrum: let the students know and feel that the transparency of abilities and working status is not used against them, but for their best learning instead. We need transparency to enable the team and the teacher to support the students in the best possible way. For this, again, you need to build trust within the teams and most important between the teacher and the students.

These days, many schools are confronted with increasingly heterogeneous groups of pupils, who have highly diverse biographical and educational backgrounds. In your opinion, is eduScrum an appropriate means to face those new challenges?

I think this is not a problem at all. Children and students are flexible and agile by nature. Grown-ups lose these abilities.

Dear Willy Wijnands, thank you very much for the interview!
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