

UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS: HOW NEW GENERATION LEARNERS DESIGN THEIR OWN REVISING PROCESS

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Context

In a research project dedicated to learning instruments for new learners, we asked students to express their revising process for examination. Thus 105 academic students, enrolled in a bachelor's degree in economics or a master's degree in computing science, distributed in groups of 3-4 people, worked together on designing a common way for revision. We then generalized the results in a workflow.

Results

The most frequently activity mentioned takes place before revising the theoretical concepts. The second global process consists in making a revision summary collectively. Arandes&all (2018) identify three phases in reviewing for exams. 1) linking information together 2) organizing information 3) recalling information. This last phase, as identified by Zimmerman (2000), is the most effective in preparing. In the generalized diagram below, the common process of all groups shows that their method is essentially organization (phase 2) and recall (phase 3).

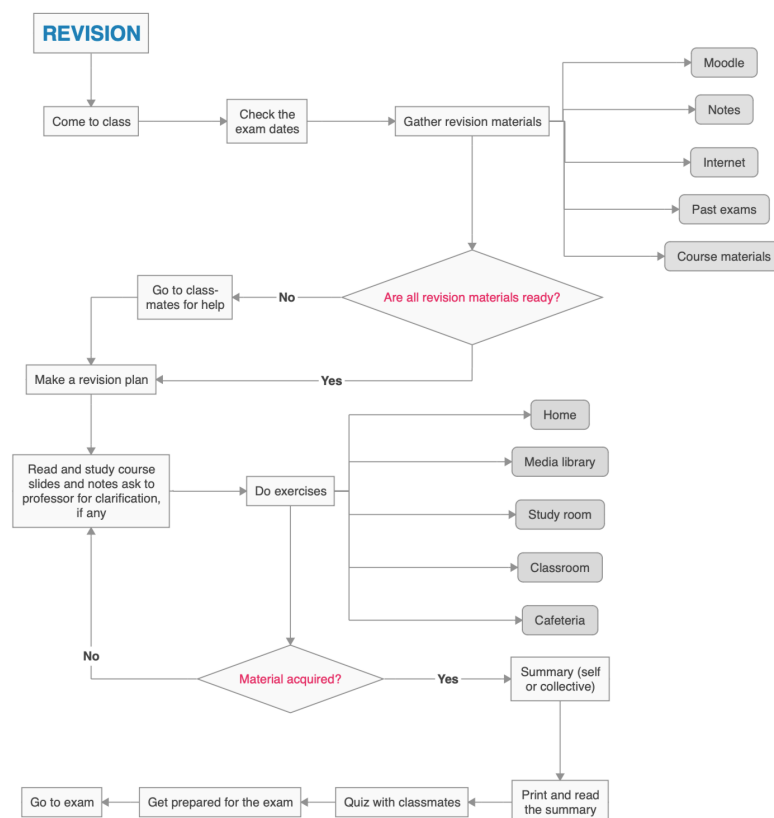


Figure 1 : Generalized revision flow chart

Survey

At the end of the process, all groups answered the following question: "How are group revisions for exams carried out?". Out of 33 groups, 28 groups reported revising collectively, while 5 groups preferred individual revision. Collective revision consists in exchanging notes, asking each other questions and redoing exercises. The revision is done as a group, in a common, physical, or virtual place. At distance, one person shares their screen and does the exercise. The others help and guide him/her to find a solution together.

Findings

We found that the average revision process involves four phases: 1) gathering learning materials, 2) developing a revision plan, 3) redoing exercises, 4) producing summaries.

Phase 1 consists in finding out what is expected for the examination. Phase 2 deals with comparing each other's plannings and amending it to produce a common one. In phase 3, the group does the exercises together. In phase 4, summaries are produced, and the groups challenge each other through common quizzes. They only address the teacher, considered as a simple resource among others, in phase 3-4, if a clarification is needed.

Conclusion

Intuitively, our assumption was that the students would start the revision process by producing the summaries before carrying out the exercises, moving from theory to practice, and will revise mostly individually. The opposite occurs. This result can help both students and teachers to unveiling the average revision process, which is generally unexpressed, and emphasizing the value of the collective and the effective role of theoretical concepts in learning.

References

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