

**A teaching environment for learning soft skills
applicable to Information Systems Development**

by

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ABSTRACT

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Information Systems development (ISD) is a complex, social process. The art of Information Systems (IS) development has changed over the years and there has been a growing recognition that Systems Analysts need more than just technical skills in order to do their job. Developing these skills, along with the technical skills is the challenge facing IS lecturers today.

IS departments at tertiary institutions have tended to prepare students very well for the technical needs of systems development. They have given the students the tools and techniques that they need to develop systems in a mechanistic way. There, has been some neglect of the skills that the students need in order to be able to find shared meanings, practise argumentation and be effective in working with users, however. This does not mean that the technical should be neglected, but that students should be able to augment their technical skills with business and interpersonal skills.

This research determined a method by which the techniques of Joint Application Development (JAD) workshops could be combined with the techniques of co-operative learning in order to create an environment where students could learn the soft skills that they need while also learning the modelling skills that are necessary for Information Systems development. The research followed a cyclical pattern of reflecting on the situation, doing literature studies to determine how the learning environment needed to be adapted, working out a theoretical framework for the learning environment, applying the learning methodology and analysing the results obtained from that situation.

The result of the research was a framework that was developed that showed how the JAD and co-operative learning techniques could be used effectively in a classroom with diverse students.

I declare that

**A teaching environment for learning soft skills
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is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

T A Thomas

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