Modeling of an educational informatics system for the study of computational geometry elements using UML diagrams

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Abstract: - This paper presents the necessary stages in implementing an informatics system used for the study of computational geometry elements, such as determining the parallel and perpendicular to a given line through a point, to verify the property that a point lies within a triangle, verification of the convex or concave property of a polygon, the determination of the convex hull of a set of points. The modeling of the system is achieved through specific UML diagrams representing the stages of analysis, design and implementation, the system thus being described in a clear and concise manner.

Key-Words: - Educational Software, Computational Geometry, Java, Distance Education.

1 Introduction
The multimedia technologies transformed the computer into a valuable interlocutor and allowed the students, without going out of the class, to assist the lessons of different emeriti scientists and professors, to communicate with persons located in different countries, to have access to different information [1]. By a single click of the mouse, the student can visit an artistic gallery, read the originals for writing a history paper or visualize information for a narrow profile, which couldn’t be found five-ten years ago.

One of the main aspects of using computer for lessons is the development of the student’s creative thinking. An optimal mean in this case is the introduction in the computational training means of the interactivity elements [2]. The „interactivity” term means „to interact, to influence one-to-another”. This property of the computational technologies is absolutely unique compared with television, lectures, books, instructive movies etc.

2 Development stages of the educational informatics system

2.1 System’s analysis
Using the UML modeling language, the analysis of an informatics system consists in drawing the use case and activity diagrams [3]. The software utility ArgoUML [4] was used to construct the diagrams.

The informatics system will be described in a clear and concise manner by representation of the use-cases. Each case describes the interaction between the user and the system. The use case diagram is represented in figure 1.

The presented diagram defines the system’s domain, allowing visualization of the size and scope of the whole developing process. It contains:

- an actor - the user who represents the external entity with which the system interacts;
- six use cases describing the functionality of the system;
- relationships between the user and use cases (association relationships) and the relationships between use cases (generalization relationships).

For each use-case in the diagram presented earlier an activity diagram is constructed. Each diagram will specify the processes and algorithms that are behind the use cases studied. Activity diagrams [5] are represented by nodes (with partitions and branches) or conditional blocks (with decisions).

The activity diagrams are used to visualize, specify, build and document dynamic issues related to the informatics system processes. They focus on flow control seeking the transition, in a certain order, from one activity to another.

2.2 System’s designing

2.2.1 Class Diagrams
Conceptual modeling [6] allows the identification of the most important concepts for the system. Since classes are concepts, the following two diagrams present the classes that will be used in the project.
Figure 2 presents the inheritance and achievement relationships used. It may be noted that all attributes and methods of the JPanel class will apply to the derived class Desen, which implements two interfaces, Runnable and MouseInputListener.

The composition and aggregation relationships that exist between instances of the classes in the architecture are shown in figure 2. Aggregation relationship is a partnership where the whole and the part are specified. By analyzing figure 3, it is apparent that an object of type Dreapta or type Graham is part of an object of type Proiect.

Fig.1 Use-cases Diagram

Fig.2 Class Diagram
The difference of the composition relationship, with respect to aggregation, is that the instance of the whole could not exist without part objects. When looking at figure 3 one can see that a type DesenTriunghi instance consists of five Punct2D type items, one Triunghi2D object type and one Graphics2D object type. In such a relationship it is possible for an object to belong to several instances of a whole. For example object type Punct2D belongs to DesenTriunghi, DesenDreapta, Desen, Desen1 and Desen2 type instances.

Both class diagrams shown contain specific classes to the application as well as existing classes and interfaces from Java.

### 2.2.2 Sequence Diagrams

Sequence diagrams [7] describe the behavior of a set of objects in a certain context, emphasizing the temporal aspect. The diagram shown in figure 4 reflects the interactions between objects, the purpose of which is drawing a triangle with specified points. Note that there are interactions between 11 objects, from which the object type Triunghi is already created and object types DesenTriunghi, TextArea, Graphics2D, Punct2D, String and Triunghi will be instantiated during interactions.

These objects are represented on the Ox axis and the messages sorted ascending by time are represented on the Oy axis. At first, execution control is acquired by the object type Triunghi which creates instances of classes DesenTriunghi, TextArea and Graphics2D. Now control is acquired by the newly created instance DesenTriunghi which will allow the creation of the triangle endpoints through interactions with Punct2D, String, Graphics2D and TextArea object types.

Thereafter control is passed to the object of type DesenTriunghi which that will instantiate the object type Triunghi2D. The last post will lead to the redesign of the geometrical construction which will now include the previously created triangle.

### 2.3 System’s implementation

The component diagram [8] allows the visualization of the module in which the system is broken into and the dependencies between modules. The component diagram emphasis on physical software components (files, libraries, executables) and not on logic components, such as packages.

The diagram in figure 5 describes the collection of components that all together provide functionality for the educational informatics system that allows geometric constructions in the plan.
The central component of the diagram Project.class is obtained by transforming the component Project.java into executable code by the Java compiler. It can be noted that this component interacts directly only with components Dreapta.class, Triunghi.class, Graham.class, Poligon_convex.class and Jarvis.class.

3 User interface
The application "Computational Geometry Elements" is accomplished using the Java programming language [9, 10]. The main page of the application contains buttons for selecting the following options: perpendicular and parallel to a line through a point inside a triangle, the verification of the convexity of a polygon, the determination of the convex hull using Graham and Jarvis methods.

By selecting "Parallel and perpendicular to a line through a point", a new window is opened containing the drawing area, an image containing formulas used to calculate the parallel and perpendicular to a line, a text component containing the equations of the lines and two radio buttons to select the type of line (perpendicular or parallel).

The second option of the main window opens another window (Fig. 6) to check if a point is inside a triangle drawn by the user. This window contains a drawing area, an image that contains the formula for calculating area of a triangle, a text component containing the coordinates of peak triangles and their areas, and result verification.

The next option allows the user to open a window (Fig. 7) where it can be verified whether or not a polygon is convex. Selecting "Graham Method" opens a window (Fig. 8) with a program that determines the convex hull of a set of points.
Fig. 5 Component Diagram

Fig. 6 Point inside of a triangle

Fig. 7 Concave Polygon
This window contains a drawing surface, an image that contains the algorithm used, three buttons, two labels and two text components containing the initial points and those points which are in the list determined by the hull.

The last option of the application allows the user to open another window where the convex hull of a set of points using Jarvis’s match algorithm. This window has the same elements as the Graham Scan.

The application was created to facilitate the understanding of some basic concepts in computational geometry. With the help of the "Graphics2D" class, offered by the Java language, it was possible to achieve an application which simulates very realistically the necessary algorithms’ steps needed to determine the requirements of each option.

4 Conclusion
Through the diagram representation all three phases: analysis, design and implementation, the educational informatics system has been described in a clear and concise manner. The use of the UML modeling language for the creation of the diagrams is characterized by rigorous syntactic, rich semantic and visual modeling support.

The diagrams were made using a new approach, multidisciplinary of the informatics application, encompassing both modern pedagogy methods and discipline-specific components. The link between teaching activities and scientific goals and objectives was established through the development of the new methods and the assimilation of new ways, capable of enhancing school performance, enabling students to acquire the knowledge and techniques required and apply them in optimum conditions.

References: