Mob Programming:
the role playing game

FOR GAME MASTER/FACILITATOR:

First of all, thanks for helping playtest this game! For your first round of playtesting, you will have shared access to the Level 1 playbooks Mobber, Navigator, and Driver as google documents.

<mark>Your primary duty is that everyone playing treats each other with Kindness, Consideration and Respect.</mark>

Your first time running this game will be awkward. Embrace it! But don't budge on the fundamental rules - treating each other with Kindness, Consideration, and Respect at all times.

GAME REQUIREMENTS:

- **Gather** at least three players to make a mob, upper limit unknown... You facilitate. NOTE: No prior mobbing experience is necessary.
- **Verify** that at least one person in this mob must have some minimum fluency in Test Driven Development; i.e., ability to move fluently through the Red, Green, Refactor stages with minimal code necessary.
- **Get** a shared monitor big enough for all players to see comfortably - you might consider using a projector. Large screen TVs work great.
- **Get** one shared keyboard - consider having some hand sanitizer available to avoid sharing cooties.
- **Get** one or two pairs of scissors and tape - scotch, masking, poster tape will all work.
- **Print** out all 3 playbooks for each player in your game.

BEFORE THE GAME SESSION (before players sit down to play):

- **Set up** an IDE with a test file in a coding language that at least one person in your session will be fluent in.
- **Create** one test failing successfully in a test file in the coding language of choice.
- **Decide** on some way to time rotations for three roles - Driver, Navigator and Mobber. You will lead the rotation of Driver/Navigator positions every 5 minutes. The Driver becomes the new Navigator, the Navigator becomes a generic Mobber. Rotate consistently in a fixed order.
- **Install and Use** the Mob Timer to guide mob role rotations (optional)
- **Plan to solve** the FizzBuzz kata - creating code that generates the output of "1, 2, Fizz, 3, 4, Buzz, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, FizzBuzz, 16...." up to a given number.

- **Create** and label a *Mob Squad* zone, a mob badge parking lot, by setting aside a piece of blank wall or whiteboard that will be covered in mob badges that players complete.

DURING THE GAME SESSION:

Read aloud:

"Hello everyone. We are here to play Mob Programming: the Role-Playing Game. The first most important rule is this: that we treat each other with Kindness, Consideration, and Respect at all times. Can you help me with making sure we remember this when things get tough?... [wait for reply]... Mob Programming is a development practice used for raising code quality and removing obstacles. In practice it usually feels like a bulldozer rather than a racecar - unstoppable and thorough. That's mobbing!

Now, please choose any of these level 1 playbooks - Mobber, Driver, Navigator. Your playbook is separate from your position in the rotation. For example, you may have a Mobber playbook but be at the keyboard as a Driver. This is okay and part of game-play."

"The goal of this game is to 'build your mob' by completing as many playbooks you can in this session."

After each player has chosen a playbook:

"Now look at your playbooks. You'll note that there are specific actions you take that give you 'XP's, also known as "experience points". It's up to you to decide when you have taken one of those actions and then check the box."

"When you check all the boxes you can switch playbooks, but we'll talk more about that once it happens."

Decide the order of rotation, have the players get in their positions as decided by the rotation order (regardless of what playbook they have), Driver/Navigator/Mob. Before you start the timer tell the players:

"The Driver's job is to type what the Navigator instructs them to type. The Navigator's job is to sift the ideas of the mob and instruct the Driver what to type. Any questions?"

To repeat - the playbooks are separate from the players' current role in the rotation.

Barring unanswerable questions, now start the 5 minute timer. Rotate positions when the timer goes off - Driver becomes Navigator, Navigator becomes mob member, mob member becomes Driver.

Every two rotations (10 minutes), stop the rotation and ask the players the following questions (please take notes on their answers):

1. *"What stands out for you? What did you notice about the coding challenge, or the overall gameplay?"*
2. *"Pick at least one time you checked an XP box - tell a short story about the context of what was going on and why you felt you could check it."*

Don't spend more than 5 minutes on this discussion. Make it brief and take notes, restart the timer and go two more rotations again before having another Q&A. Rinse and repeat.

WHEN A PLAYER FINISHES A PLAYBOOK:

Have them bring you the finished playbook. Cut out the icon badge on the dotted line, put tape on the back and stick it up in the mob badge parking lot. This zone is the group *Mob Squad* and will fill up with the various badges as they finish playbooks.

They can keep the playbook they have cut up - the moves can still net them XP, per the instructions on the playbook.

AFTER TWO OR MORE ROTATIONS, BUT BEFORE IT'S NOT FUN ANYMORE:

Stop the game. Count badges and total. This is the mob's score for the game.

Have a more expansive discussion, 10-15 minutes. What was a high point for you? What was a low point you experienced? For any playbook you completed, what did you like? How would you play it differently next time?

FIN

That's it! That's the game, at Level 1. Hope you had fun, get your notes to me, and try running it as often as you like.

Thanks for playing,
Willem Larsen