Agile Process

Recitation 11, CMU 17-313, Fall 2020

Goal

The goals of this recitation are:

1. Practice and reflect about within a team.
2. Reinforce the knowledge of team dysfunction issues and mitigation strategies.

Context

Potentially all teams are dysfunctional. This is inevitable because they are made up of fallible, imperfect human beings. Fortunately, there is hope. The causes of dysfunction are both identifiable and curable. However, they do not die easily. Making a team functional and cohesive requires levels of courage and discipline that many groups cannot seem to muster.

Preparation:

Use the following spinner to get a random number from 1 -7 that will determine your role.
Keep your role secret from the other people in your group!

To know how you are supposed to act, reference page 2 of this document for the role description based on your number.

Part 1: Trade-off meeting (15 min.)

As a team, research and find a tool to support the payment system of your graduate application. Compare the strengths and weakness of the tools. At the end of this activity, your group should have agreed on a tool to use.

As part of the preparation, each team member should have a role assigned. Each member should keep their role secret and try to act accordingly during the meeting. Try to identify the roles played by your team members and, if possible, fix the dysfunction.

Part 2: Group discussion (10 min.)

As a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What dysfunctional characteristic did your teammates display?
2. How would you handle those dysfunctional characteristics in future situations?
3. Prepare responses for the questions in part 3. Some of the questions will have already been addressed by the group discussion.

Part 3: Reflection (15 min.)

As a class, discuss the following questions:

1. Was the meeting effective? Why? Or why not?
2. What team dysfunctions did you observe during the meeting?
3. Are you able to identify the roles played by the other member of the pair? What problems can be caused by this behavior? Can you think of mitigation strategies and solutions to avoid them?

Roles / Personality traits
Here's a description of the roles and the behavior each role has.

1. **Act normal, aiming for general team success:** discuss solutions with your team. Ask for their opinion and demonstrate engagement during the activity.
2. **"Watch the master":** You think you are extremely experienced and know how to solve the problem on your own. Act like you do not need help and just tell your team to watch while you search for the tool. Try to influence the other members to find information about the tool.
3. **Act silent:** pay attention to the meeting, but simply do not suggest anything. You assume your team members know everything and don't feel you need to say much. Remain passive but friendly.
4. **Agree with everything:** do not question the decisions of your team. You are afraid of raising conflicts; so just agree with everything during the activity.
5. **Hitchhiking**: your goal is to do a little work as possible for the assignment. Be friendly but not productive. If made to perform an activity, try to get other people to step in for you, for example you can act confused with the task and say that you need someone else to do this for you. You may have to make a quick, bad attempt to make it look like you tried to figure out the task.
6. **Focus on correctness and security:** your personal goal is to be known for using the most secure and correct tool. This means that all your projects need to address security, even if the assignment does not address this explicitly. Make sure the tool is secure and not exploitable.
7. **Perfect minor details:** your role is to make sure the tool's source code is readable and aesthetically perfect and that also includes perfect comments. You should argue for or against the tool based on these minor details.