Throughout the development lifecycle course, I have been required to take on the various roles that exist on an agile team, Product Owner, Scrum Master, Developer, Tester. First, we took on the role of the Scrum Master. The Scrum Master is an important role because they establish a baseline for the team by creating the operating boundaries and setting up team schedules. They also lead the daily scrum meetings where progress is marked, and daily goals are set and acts as the pivoting point for the project. These meetings help the team understand where each team member is at in terms of development of their given tasks, what needs to be done, what has been done, and what is causing problems.

The second role we took on was that of the Product Owner. The product owner is the poster child of the project and is in contact with the client. It is important as the product owner to understand the clients needs so that the project has a solid foundation of information to build the project upon. In this role you are the middleman, and it is imperative that the team gets all the information you obtain from the client as concisely as possible this information is often called user stories. These user stories provide the team with what they need to mark out the priorities and needs of the project.

The next role was that of the tester and the tester role is one that can often be carried out by any member of the team, but in large projects can become an independent role. In this role you give feedback on the product in its development phase and this feedback is important in telling the team what needs to be improved and what is working as intended. The tester is another role, the same as the developers, that needs to understand the user stories to provide accurate feedback by knowing what the client is looking for in the final product.

The final role is that of the developer. The developer acts as the heart of the scrum team as it is the role that actually carries out the creation process of the product by listening to the user stories and understanding the client’s needs in a way that allows them to make the desired product. As the developers work through tasks, they provide test cases for the testers to go through and ensure that the feature is working to specifications as provided by the client. This role experiences the greatest benefit from utilizing the agile method since it allows for instant feedback on features to ensure it is working to the clients’ specifications before moving on.

While each role is important, they are only parts of the whole and each role contributes in a way that cannot be replaced to help the team reach its end goal. When we compare the way an agile team works to the waterfall method there are clear advantages of the agile method. The waterfall method is a “full send” form of development where you build the whole thing as one rigid structure. This is where the importance of the agile method comes in as it uses building blocks to separate the product into bite sized pieces that can be built out individually with the flexibility to change if needed and then pieced together allowing for each part to be made as needed and then combine all the parts to make the final product.

The scrum process is widely used to help manage large and complex projects to help increase productivity and to create a more valuable end product than would be possible by utilizing the waterfall method. By adapting a scrum process a team allows themselves the flexibility to adjust to changes in requirements in the product without needing to rebuild the product such as with the waterfall method. The scrum process allows user stories to get created by allowing for a more open flow of information between all parts of the project. The product owner obtains information which is then turned into tasks by the scrum master. Breaking up the project into these tasks allows for the team to adapt previously finished tasks to new requirements given by the client and rapidly adjust the project as needs change.

To ensure that each member of the team is informed it is important for the team to utilize a task board of some kind whether it be a white board or post-it notes on a corkboard that shows all the tasks that are incomplete, in progress, and completed. I think another important communication tool for the team to utilize is any form of company IM software that allows each member to keep in contact at their work station in an efficient manner so that no member of the team misses out on changes in project requirements.

I believe the scrum-agile approach was the correct approach for the SNHU travel project. It allowed the team to build the different pieces of the website to specification in a way I do not think the waterfall method could achieve. Through the class we had to adapt to new information on the SNHU travel project and the waterfall method is too rigid to adjust course when receiving information during the middle of development. The rigidity of the waterfall method is a huge con and is often the point of contention when picking a development method.

The agile approach focuses on getting working parts out the door quickly so they can be thoroughly tested and pieced together into the final product. This allows a level of fluidity that cannot be matched by the waterfall method and these two points are the main pros for this method when it comes to utilizing it for the SNHU travel project. The ability to test tasks quickly and adapt tasks to new information is important for a project that has a high user interaction rate such as a travel site. This method also allows for the website to be much more easily maintained in the face of changing data much more efficiently.