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PAIR CODING

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What is Pair Coding?

The method known as pair programming (in Spanish, pair programming) is used mainly in agile software development and, more specifically, in extreme programming (XP) . Pair programming specifies that there are always two people working on the code at the same time, and that they sit together as much as possible. One is in charge of writing the code and the other of supervising it in real time. At the same time, they are constantly exchanging impressions: they discuss problems, find solutions and develop creative ideas. Typically, these two workers are assigned different roles: the programmer who has been assigned the pilot role is in charge of writing the code. The programmer who has been assigned the copilot role supervises that code. One of the rules of pair programming states that these two roles are exchanged regularly (at short intervals). In this way, a possible hierarchical gap is avoided: equality between both workers is promoted and a fluid exchange of roles is achieved.

Common Pitfalls

- both programmers must be actively engaging with the task throughout a paired session, otherwise no benefit can be expected
- a simplistic but often raised objection is that pairing “doubles costs”; that is a misconception based on equating programming with typing – however, one should be aware that this is the worst-case outcome of poorly applied pairing
- at least the driver, and possibly both programmers, are expected to keep up a running commentary; pair programming is also “programming out loud” – if the driver is silent, the navigator should intervene
- pair programming cannot be fruitfully forced upon people, especially if relationship issues, including the most mundane (such as personal hygiene), are getting in the way; solve these first!

Reference sources:

<https://www.agilealliance.org/glossary/pairing/>

<https://www.ionos.mx/digitalguide/paginas-web/desarrollo-web/pair-programming/>