Evaluation

and its importance

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Introduction

Hello, my friend!

The purpose of this document is to convey to you all the necessary knowledge about the evaluation process. Evaluations are an integral part of the ucode educational program. And you are a part of the community, which contributes to each other's success.

For the system to work effectively and for each of you to be able to get the maximum of knowledge and skills from it, you must follow some rules and be very responsible. So, this document consists of some recommendations and nuances about evaluations that you need to know.

Hopefully, this will help you understand the system better and make your learning process more productive. Please, read it carefully.

Reflection

WHAT IS A REFLECTION PROTOCOL?

So, you have finished the challenge. You can exhale. You've done a great job. Now, it's time to think about what was done, how it was done and why.

Filling out the reflection protocol is a process of retrospection and reflection. Self-reflection is the ability to look inside yourself and try to learn more about your experience. Reflection protocol's questions are very simple. However, they are aimed at important themes. You could, of course, answer the questions haphazardly, but, if you do it meaningfully, you gain crucial experience. The better your answers, the more learning experience you gain.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Analysis of what has been done is an indispensable part of every challenge. You will understand your weaknesses, comprehend your strengths, and, most importantly, understand what to do in the future. Any time spent analyzing will pay off.

This may not be obvious, but the ability to retrospect needs to be pumped. It is necessary to be able to objectively recall and evaluate your work without excuses and embellishments. Only in this way you can make the right conclusions and get new experience. What is the point of lying to yourself?

HOW TO REFLECT?

1. Calm down. You no longer need to think about whether you've done the challenge correctly. You've finished it. Just relax.

2. Take a pause. The work has been done tremendously. You need to break free. Reflection is not an activity that should to be done when tired or emotional.

Hint: The first two points may take up to two days. This is normal and natural. Everyone needs a rest.

3. Gather a team. If it's a group challenge, you must gather all the participants in Zoom, Skype, or somewhere else. You've worked on the project together. Each of you has contributed something. So, you must reflect on the work done together.

4. Reflect.

   (a) choose a theme

   (b) remember how it was

   (c) discuss it

   (d) listen to each other's points of view

   (e) draw conclusions with which everyone agrees

   (f) if there are undiscussed themes, repeat the process

5. Make a conclusion. Draw a general conclusion about overcoming the whole challenge.

6. Become wiser. If you've done everything correctly, this point will be the result of your actions.

Assessment

ASSESSMENT'S IMPORTANCE

Everything starts with Peer-to-Peer. John Dewey, an American philosopher, and educational reformer has written, that education is not an affair of 'telling' and being told but an active and constructive process.
Quality education does not require boring lectures and arrogant teachers. You and other students are the core of this system.

Each assessment is training before real code reviews. Prepare yourself for a real-life collaboration between developers in large companies. At first, people whose expertise is bigger than yours will review your code. But one day you will also review someone's code.

Find out what you can get from EVERY assessment.

Knowledge

It's so unexpected, isn't it? The main purpose of assessments is knowledge exchange. People have completely different levels of expertise. And it is wonderful! You can learn something new, as well as share it. There are three common types of assessments, and here is what you can gain from them:

1. When evaluator and defenders are at the same level. The wildest fights take place here. Arguments, counter-arguments, minor refinements. Both sides can gain some knowledge from each other. Both parties can share knowledge.

2. When the evaluator has more expertise than defenders. Defenders are lucky in such cases. Learn as much new stuff as possible from the evaluator. Ask as many questions as possible! But what about profit for evaluator? Maybe he won't get a lot of new knowledge here, but the mentoring skills are also important for anyone who wants to outgrow a junior level. When there is a sharing of knowledge, explanations, then the understanding and remembering happens even better. There is no good company where seniors arrogantly grunt over questions of colleagues with junior rank. No one likes to collaborate with supercilious people.

3. When the defenders have more expertise than the evaluator. From an immature point of view, this is an easy assessment. But everything from the previous paragraph is true here with a change of roles. Here the evaluator can gain more hard skills, and the defender can gain soft skills.

And, of course, you gain testing skills. Regardless of the challenge and your role in evaluation (evaluator/defender), you can always learn how to QC, by implementing tests, or by watching someone's testing.

Everything is in your hands. The more the assessment participants are involved, the more they will receive. Nothing special here, but methodologists rejoice every time you conduct a good assessment.

Experience

This is an amazing point. Each assessment is a unique process of human interaction. Everyone has their own background, experience, knowledge, and understanding of programming and the world in general. In each assessment, you can:

• get experience in code reviews

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- make a new acquaintance

- find a like-minded person

- have a deep talk about something important for you

- make a connection in LinkedIn

- find a partner for a future joint project

- do many other things together in the future

Yes, sometimes an experience can be bad. In any incomprehensible situation, make conclusions and try not to make the same mistakes twice. It is a fearful and loathful road to success.

Creative assessment

Creative assessment is an assessment where an evaluator doesn't just go through the protocol, but also generates tricky tests on every point. Yes, Oracle will check your work. Automatic verification eliminates the human factor. But Oracle will not give you meaningful feedback. The evaluator, even in the case of a crash, can conduct a detailed analysis of the student's work and thoroughly discuss the mistake. Such a course of inspections will have an extremely useful experience for all participants in the assessment, reducing their chances of facing the same problems in the future.

Good mood

You may feel skeptical about it. But there is nothing better during an assessment than when all participants are well-mannered and friendly. ucode hopes that you either are or soon will be familiar with the sense of satisfaction from a good assessment. In addition to the knowledge, you can always share your positivity. If you're friendly, and your partner is friendly, you will get a good mood for the whole day!

Mentor evaluations

Mentors of your program have an opportunity to view and check your work according to a protocol like your peers.
They can do it at a convenient time for themselves when you have finished your work, until you have not received a final mark.
Think of this as an opportunity for additional advice and feedback.

If a mentor has assessed you, you will be able to see his grade on your challenge page. Mentor's grade will affect your final mark.

But it may also be that the mentor will not check your work. It's okay too.

HOW TO ASSESS

Foreword

Hopefully, you already understand what you can get from every assessment. If not, please re-read the previous chapter. Here, you will find a description of the process of the coolest, friendliest and most productive assessment.

Hmm. Where to start? Oh yes...

Punctuality

Please Listen!
If people asigned to assessments
it is something
that somebody needs?
Someone wants them
to be...on time...

- If you have reach an agreement about convenient time for both parties, do not mess up everything.

- Take into account that there is a minimum assessment time that depends on the challenge. No assessment can be done in less than 20 minutes!

- In case of unforeseen circumstances that make it impossible to proceed to assessment at the specified time, the inspection may be postponed to another time/day with a mutual agreement of the parties before the start of the assessment.

Time management is a top skill of the 21st century.

Politeness

Being polite shows respect to yourself and other people. Politeness is a quality that is always with you. Yes, you can do without it, but why would you artificially complicate your life? Your personal qualities shape a good atmosphere in the community. Remember this. Any assessment will be much more pleasant if all participants in the assessment will treat each other with respect.

Here is a short recipe how to achieve maximum synergy between you and your assessments partner(s):

- stay relaxed. You are an equal member of the assessment;

- smile. A sweet smile and a soft word have a good effect on people;

- greet people. In any way you want;

- don't mess. Dont'mess with anyone, don't scoff. In most cases, it is not funny, but offensive;

- stay calm. Different situations happen, but the trick in these situations is to remain cool. We must always remain humans.

To sum up all of the above, be the kindest and the most polite person you can be!

Actual assessment

After finishing your challenge and filling your reflection protocol, someone will be automatically asigned to you to assess your work. If there is no assessor, system will try find someone for you asap. Use this time to upgrade your mentor skills and help someone.

When you will be matched with someone - it is your responsibility to get in touch with your assessment partner, for example, by writing a massage in Slack. If your assessor does not react on your tries to establish a connection, you will be able to skip them in 24 hours, and system will find you another one. The next step is to find convenient for both of you time and schedule a meeting. Take into consideration: no assessment can be done in less then 20 minutes.

Prerequisites:

- Willingness to spend time.

- Participants of the assessment must meet up at a ucode iMac or in Zoom/Skype.

- If the assessment is online, the assessors must share their screens.

- No emails, phone calls or anything, except to arrange the defense!

What needs to be done during an assessment?

- Greet each other. Be polite and friendly.

- Start the assessment in the LMS.

  1. The defending team must allow the assessment to begin. But only when both parties meet each other and are ready for assessment! Do not allow the assessment to begin, if you can't contact your assessor.

  2. The assessor must begin the assessment. If there is a message, that it is still not allowed, just reload your page and click on Begin again. Now, the assessor sees the protocol. The defending team must see the protocol. During online assessment, it can be done through the shared screen of the assessor.

- Download the pdf of the challenge. It is available after the beginning of the assessment in the resources section. Don't hesitate to spend as much time on exploring document as you need to fully understand the challenge. This is the only way to assess well.

- Clone the repository. Review cannot be done without a code that students sent for verification. Why is it important? In real life, no one will wait for your last-last-nearly-done changes.

- Challenge must be checked with the Auditor. The preamble part of the Auditor official doc describes in detail why code style matters. So, this step is not random. If the Auditor rules are not respected, that means the grade is 0. There is no "tiny-not-important-at-all" Auditor error. Either the code-style is respected in the whole code, or it is not.

- Personal review. The assessor must personally carefully check the code he has downloaded from the repository for compliance with each item of the protocol: basic and creative parts.

- Filling out the protocol together. The assessor must fill out the protocol by showing his screen to the defending team.

- **Agreement.** Everybody must agree on the results of the tests, as well as respect the scale and the grade. If not, debate until you do. Always give arguments, not emotions.

- **Exchange of thoughts.** An exchange of ideas, hypotheses, and solutions about the relevance and the quality of the product, its factors of success or failure. Think about it like a conversation between you and a coworker.

- **Feedback.** Feedback is also a necessary part of the assessment. The defender's team must describe the quality of the assessment.

How to be fair?

However, despite the critical importance of the assessor, as a teacher who will check all the work regardless of mistakes and share his experience, the equally important role of a witness who just objectively indicates finded problems. If the inspector has found any error, even the slightest mistake that appears in one out of a million cases, then his sacred duty is to give a well-deserved mark, despite any prays of the defending team, while explaining the point of view regarding the found error. After all, this is the only way to teach each other to closely monitor the smallest details of the work.

How to understand that the assessment went well?

Everyone must leave the assessment with a peaceful feeling of satisfaction. Everyone must learn something new from it.

Is something going wrong?

First of all, it's okay. Problem-solving skills are pumped the most in such situations.
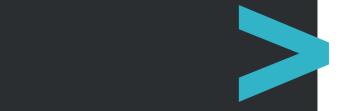
But let's deal with it now.
We are all people. Remember? It just turns out that someone offends someone's interests. Here is a list of obvious things not to argue about:

- Request of assessment without student's iMac. Obviously, this cannot be done.

- Code style error. There are no minor errors. Either the code-style is respected in the whole code, or it is not.

- Crash in some kind of super special case. The program must not crash under any circumstances.

- The assessor begins to demand something different from protocol and challenge tasks. If you are not sure whether to test feature, write in the staff channel.

- A small mistake in the context of something big. The protocols are written so that each item covers a program module with a pair of tests. If any of these tests fail, then something is wrong. In the real world, if the mentor won't notice a mistake, it will ruin something in the production.

If you see a violation or have become a participant in a conflict situation - write to the staff. Human interaction is a very complex process in which problems can arise. And the ucode team is always ready to help you to solve the problem.

Oracle

WHO IS THIS?

In this big complicated world, everyone needs a powerful and objective force. Something that can evaluate without exception and discrimination. The heavy burden of justice in ucode is carried by Oracle - a big mind that checks your challenges.

Do not take it as an enemy or an opponent. Things are quite different here. Oracle is your friend. It is Oracle that will show you the test case your program fails at. He doesn't care who you are, he just checks the task.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Firstly, you must understand that Oracle is not truth in the last instance. But it gives you grades. So, it's logical that Oracle has its own grading system. Here, you can find how this system works:

The final score for the challenge is the sum of the grades for each task that is validated. Each task challenge is evaluated by several tests. Each test has its weight and rating, which adds up to a conditional 100 points per task. For the grade of a task to add to the final grade for the challenge, a certain number of tests of this task must be validated. And this number varies. The number of tests to be validated varies depending on each challenge and task.

Oracle's great mind is fair and thorough in its tests, so be prepared for all scenarios.

HOW TO LIVE WITH THIS?

- Just do your best. With wisdom comes sorrow. But not in this case. Now you understand how the grades appear.

- Do not perceive your mistakes as something critical and terrible. This is absolutely normal. This is a process of learning.

- In case of success - take Oracle's assessment as a compliment. In case of failure, Oracle will tell you what is wrong.

- Peer assessments and Oracle complement each other. People can be creative. Oracle is always accurate.

Presentation

WHAT IS A PRESENTATION PROTOCOL?

Firstly, what is a presentation? According to Wikipedia, a presentation is a process of presenting a topic to an audience. There is some kind of information which is needed to be presented to some people. As you may have noticed, people usually present something new. For example, ideas, prototypes or ready-made products. So, it could be whatever you want. Films, games, technologies.

Presentation protocol, in turn, is a way to evaluate the objective quality of a presentation. Not just on an emotional level. No cat peed in my slippers, so I am giving you 1 star for your application approach. Evaluate objectively, using specific qualitative characteristics.

WHY IS PRESENTATION PROTOCOL SO IMPORTANT?

The presentation protocol is aimed at the evaluation of the entire presentation process. It is about the delivery of information, information quality, design of the presentation, its duration, and, of course, level of preparation.

Everything is like in real life, isn't it? Business people work hard on presentations. Do you not believe it? Watch presentations from the last E3 expo, or the latest Apple presentation. It is clearly seen that a lot of resources go on presentations.
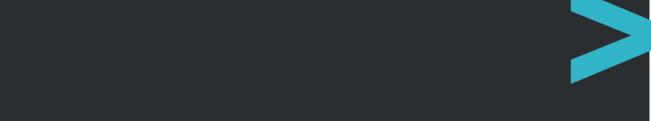
But we would like to focus your attention on people's reactions. Sometimes people greet speakers very warmly. Sometimes all eyes are turned to the speaker during the whole presentation. However, tedious presentations also appear sometimes. People really fall asleep.

The juice is worth the squeeze. It is presentations that sell products. Presentations are used as advertising. Presentations are held in front of investors. You have to give all your best to make everything perfect. And the presentation protocol will help you see some aspects of the presentation objectively.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Duration. You have up to 15 minutes on the presentation. But it also must be not less than 5 minutes.

- Product. What do you present? Show what you've got to the audience! A catching presentation is good. But it is just a wrapper for a real product, so do not forget to show people what you have developed.

- QR. After the assessment by the Oracle, you will see a QR. This QR contains a link to the presentation protocol, which other people need to fill during your presentation. Copy this QR to your presentation to get a final mark. And do not use it before presentation! If you do you will get 0.

- Preparation. You must be already prepared. Nobody wants to watch you turning on the necessary software.

- Equipment. As a listener, take into account that a presentation is not just a set of jpegs. And even if you have an excellent memory, you can still forget something. It's ok. So, always carry a notebook and a pen with yourself on presentations.

- Motivation. Remember why everyone does presentations. It is a real possibility to test your seller skills or to become an investor for a few minutes. This is a rehearsal before presentations of real products.

- Respect. Attend each other's presentations. The more people come to the presentation, the better the feedback will be. In presentations, as always in ucode, you contribute in each other success. You may ask "Why should I go and listen to someone?". The answer is pretty simple: you will learn. You see some features and weaknesses of different presentations. You can be inspired by the work of others. You can draw conclusions.

Epilogue

We understand that it is difficult to take in all the information from this document in one reading. Most likely, even unrealistic. So, re-read this document periodically, please. Just imagine how productive your education can be if everyone starts to adhere to the rules specified here.

It's all about respect. We expect you to respect the system that you decided to become a part of, and to respect the people who want to study hard here.

Thank you for your attention.
Let's build a close and productive collaboration.