

Distributed Software Development

Final Questionnaire

First and last name	Miraldi Fifo
Country you are from	Albania
Course location (FER / MdH / POLIMI)	MDH
Project name	Real-time Bridge Monitoring
Your role(s) in project	Testing Manager

Local site

Rate the overall quality of work coordination at the local site (0-no local communication, 1-very bad, 10-flawless)	10
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Describe good experiences
The coordination was flawless, since at the beginning we met each other every day and this helped us to have a better organization of work. A very good experience was that many times, we spent many hours in the university, working together and have physical communication. This way, we helped in the increase of the overall coordination in the local site.

Describe problems and what caused them
One of the big problems in the local site, was that different members had different courses and that caused problems with schedule. We solved this problem by taking into consideration the course schedules of each member and then finding empty slots for a meeting with all local members.

Describe the intensity (not quality!) of collaboration with each of the local team members with the number 0-5; 0-no contact at all, 5-very intensive collaboration	
Local team member	Intensity (0-5)
Dzana Kujan	5
Nikola Radisavljevic	4
Jörn Tillmanns	4

Describe how that collaboration changed over time (and in different project phases)
At the beginning of the project we followed the “scrum” model in our local site, in Sweden. We had physical meetings almost everyday and worked together for our project. This was until the implementation phase. Then, we decided to work separately, in order

to focus on our different tasks. I had a very intensive collaboration with Dzana, since she was our team leader and an intensive collaboration with Nikola and Jörn.

Remote site

Rate the overall quality of work coordination with the remote site (0-no remote communication, 1-very bad, 10-flawless)

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Describe good experiences

The coordination of work was good, since Andrea provided us tasks every week through a “task” document. So we knew our tasks from the beginning and this led to a better organization of work and coordination between the members in the remote site. The communication between the group members during the whole course was awesome. We had two weekly meetings in order to facilitate the communication and discuss the main issues about the project. The jokes and the laughs made the meetings awesome. This fact contributed not only in the strengthening of our relations as friends, but helped also in a good outcome of our project. Also we had daily chat conversations where we discussed problems and that helped also in our coordination.

Describe problems and what caused them

The problem of the coordination aspect was the period of vacations of the end of year. During that period our coordination was not very good, since some members wanted to enjoy vacations, meanwhile some other members continued working in order to fix some problems in the project.

Describe the intensity (not quality!) of collaboration with each of the remote team members with the number 0-5; 0-no contact at all, 5-very intensive collaboration

Remote team member	Intensity (0-5)
Andrea Bottoli	3
Lorenzo Pagliari	3
Marko Brcic	3

Describe how that collaboration changed over time (and in different project phases)

At the beginning we decided to have a weekly meeting and then have many chat meetings

during the week, in order to solve problems. Later, during the implementation phase till the end of the project, we decided to have two weekly meetings in order to facilitate the communication in the remote side and discuss in a better way the problems and the tasks.

Communication

Rate (1-low usage, 5-very intensive usage) and describe which communication tools have you used for communication and their usefulness, and in which project phases (requirements, design, development, testing, documentation etc.)		
Tool	1-5	Project phases and tool usefulness
Skype	5	Skype was one of the tools that we used to communicate in our project. Skype was very useful in the chat conversations that we had every day. Also it was useful for sharing some files (especially presentation files) in order to take feedbacks from other members. We used Skype during the whole project's period.
Git	5	We used Git as a repository, so that we could find any necessary document or program code and give feedbacks or improve that document by changing it and committing it again. This was the main tool that we used for sharing documentation. We used Git during the whole project's period.
Google Hangout	4	We used Google Hangout for the weekly meetings by having video conferences. Google Hangout was very useful, since we could not use any other tool for video conferences due to the restricted functionalities for free accounts. In order to have video conferences in Skype at least one member should have a premium account, but nobody of us had one. Also the quality of the video conferences was really good in Google Hangout, even if we connected from many locations.

Describe how you prepared for team meetings

Regarding this aspect, Andrea provided us a document called "meeting agenda" where

we could see the agenda for the meeting. So, everyone could see what we were going to discuss in the meeting (that we always had at 7 o'clock in the evening) and which were the topics related to his/her responsibilities. Then, during the meeting, I knew already what I was going to talk about.

Project work

What are, in your opinion, important issues in group work and why?

Issue	Why?
Work Distribution	Maybe the work distribution was not perfect. Some members worked more and others worked less. This was due to their responsibilities in the project. I think that this task requires some managerial abilities that only experienced persons can have. So I don't think this problem was the fault of somebody in our group. It was a problem caused by the lack of experience in that area.
One member left the group	Ghazaal joined the group during the design phase of the project. Maybe it was too late for her to get informed with all the requirements and get totally involved in the project.

What were the causes of conflicts and how were they resolved (if they were resolved ☺)?

We didn't have conflicts in this project, except the Ghazaal case. I think that she joined the project too late and didn't have the opportunity to keep on track with all the requirements that we already were introduced with. Even though the team, in general, and Andrea especially, as a project leader, tried to make her able to get involved in the project, unfortunately we didn't manage to succeed with this problem.

Rate and describe how pleased were you regarding information flow in your project team, had you been aware of overall project state, important information and events during the project work or did you feel isolated (1-kept in the dark, 5-completely aware)

1-5	Description
5	I have been aware of all important information and events during the project. I am very pleased in this aspect. Maybe I don't know some technical details on some issues, but that is due to the fact that I was not supposed to know that information,

	since I would have not to deal with it. So, I don't consider that an important information.
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Rate and describe have you been aware about other people roles and their work status (1- had no idea about other people's work, 5-completely aware)	
1-5	Description
3	I have been aware of other people roles, but not completely aware of their work status. I have been aware of others work status that affected directly my work. I have not been aware of others work status that has not to do with my work. I am not experienced, so maybe this is the way how it works in real life.

Rate and describe have you been satisfied with your role in the project and tasks you have been assigned during the project (1-very dissatisfied, 5-very satisfied)	
1-5	Description
5	I have been satisfied with my role in the project (testing manager), because I feel comfortable in that area, since I had a previous course that taught me a lot regarding testing. So, in this project I had the possibility to put in practice all the knowledge that I gained in that previous course.

Rate and describe how much you could affect the project decisions (design, usage of certain technologies etc.) (1-nobody listened to my suggestions, 5-my suggestions were always taken into consideration)	
1-5	Description
2	I am not so much experienced in web development, so I gave suggestions in testing and all of them were taken into consideration. Anyway, I did not give further suggestions for other technical aspects.

Describe the way decisions were made in your project: where there was a single authority that made the decisions and was that authority respecting feedback from other team members, or were you using voting, or consensus had to be reached etc. Also rate (1-our decision process turned to be very bad and degraded the project work, 5-the process was excellent and helped the project work a lot) and describe was that way a good one for your project or not.	
1-5	Description
5	The decisions were made in form of suggestions from the responsible team member for the realated phase of project. Then, other members voted that suggestion and the outcome of the vote was the decision for that part of the project. For example, I made suggestions regarding testing. I explained the team the advantages and disadvantages of that way of working and they voted based on this

	information provided by me. I am satisfied with that way of working, since the person who feels more comfortable with a specific part of the project, can explain better how that part is going to work, what are the main issues and then the group can vote judging on that information. Let's say that this way, all the team members give suggestions on what they know better. Then, of course, the group is the one which has to make a decision.
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Rate (1- no clear requirements, 5-very clear requirements) and describe how clear the initial requirements were.	
1-5	Description
1	At the beginning there were not clear requirements, since the customer did not have meetings with all the members of the group, but only with the Italian side. Also Andrea and Lorenzo had to translate information from Italian to English and maybe there was a loss of information during that process.

Rate (1-no or minor changes, 5-huge changes) and describe the level of requirement changes during the project	
1-5	Description
3	Since the requirements were not clear at the beginning, we took some decisions based on assumptions. Then, the requirements became clear and some of our assumptions were wrong.

Describe the process you used in the project (waterfall/iterative/prototyping/agile/model driven/test driven ...). Why have you selected that particular process? How did it turn out – good or bad?	
In this project we followed an incremental process. Since new requirements were added till the final phase of the project, we have followed that process which allows small increments after the introduction of a new requirement that involves new functionalities. In our case, we selected this requirement, in order to fit with the deadlines of the DSD course and by judging that the requirements could change, since we didn't know what the customer had exactly in mind due to the lack of communication with him. This process turned to be good for the reasons that I explained above.	

How much (0-no new things, 5-too many new things) you had to learn new technologies/tools/etc. to be able to do your work in the project? Describe what you had to learn.	
1-5	What you had to learn

3	I had to learn Git, Egit, CSS, HTML.
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What is your final opinion on distributed software development (not on this DSD course!), given in number from 1 (distributed development is useless) to 5 (distributed development is the best), and why?	
1-5	Why?
3	I think that the local development is still the best way to develop a product. That way, it is easier to communicate with each other, which is the main issue in this kind of projects. Perhaps, our case was a particular one, since we managed to eliminate the communication problem through a very good organization of meetings. Anyway, I think that the future is for distributed software development, so I liked this course because it is an initiative in that perspective.

What was the influence of your project system architecture on work division and task allocation?
Our system architecture helped the work division, since it is constituted of modules. Everyone could work on some modules and leave the other modules to other members. This way of working, also facilitated the task allocation due to the existence of different modules.

What were the experiences in integration of your task(s) with other project parts?
My task was to prepare test cases for the other members in order to fit to the requirements. I can say that my task was important in the project, since it helped the other members to develop what was require to develop.

What factors motivated you, and why, for working on your project (and their strength 1-minor, 5-strong motivation)	
Motivating factor	1-5
Group work. Group work is a very required experience when you apply for a job in the industry. If many group projects are present in your CV, there are more possibilities to gain that job.	5
Experience. It is crucial to gain experience with projects like this, in order to be prepared for the real life after school finishes.	5
Credits. In order to finish my courses and take the thesis I need the credits of this course.	5

Meet other People. Meet other people and share knowledge by working together it is very important for me.	4

What factors demotivated you, and why, from working on your project (and their strength 1-minor, 5-strong demotivation)	
Demotivating factor	1-5
Other courses. Till December I had two other courses in parallel with this one. There was a lot of work to do in all the three courses and I had to manage time perfectly, in order to deliver my assignments.	5
End Year Vacations. The period of end year vacations was very demotivating for my work. I flew home for vacations and between meetings with parents, friends and relatives I was demotivated to work in the project.	5

Analyze the differences between predicted and actually invested work hours on the project. What caused the difference (if there was a difference)?
I spent a considerable amount of work hours on the project, but I would have preferred to work even more. Unfortunately, the other courses that I had, took a lot of my time and consequently I was not able to concentrate on this course as much as I would have wanted. Also there was a misunderstanding with the schedule of the course. Since the course is with a pace of 25%, I thought that an amount of 10-15 weekly hours would be the necessary amount for this course. After, I realized that the amount should have been 20 weekly hours. Anyway, I am pleased with my contribution in this project.

What would you do differently if you were to participate in another distributed project (based on your experience from this project)?
I think that this project is one of the best project that I have ever get involved in. The very good communication between the team members was the main good experience of this course. Maybe, in another distributed project I would define less students for one project. That is a bit risky, since the project (especially industrial project) has to be done, the staff is responsible for that and it would have been more difficult for the students to finish it. In the other hand, I think that every student would give his best for the succeed of the project, since he would have been a direct responsible for the failure of his part of the project due to the well-defined roles.

Cultural differences

How would you describe cultural differences you have observed (choose from: <i>no differences/low/medium/high</i>)?	Low. I didn't find too much cultural differences between us, since we were totally focused on the project and worked together to finalize it in the best way.
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Describe cultural differences have you observed and rate their impact on project work with a number 0-5 (0-no impact on project work, 5-high impact)		
Difference	Description	0-5
Organization of work	I organized the work in a different way from the other members of the team, but this didn't affect the result of the project	0
Time management	I am a bad time manager, which is a characteristic of my country, meanwhile the other members were very good in this. Anyway, this didn't affect the result of the project.	0

For project and team leaders only

Describe your experience regarding high level team coordination (task assignment, task synchronization, communication with team members, coordination with remote team, etc.)

Risk assessment - have you foreseen all risks that happened during the project, how did you handle them, which risks you have not planned for, what was their impact on project schedule, product quality, etc?

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How much time (in %) was spent on different project phases (requirements gathering, design, development, testing, documenting etc.), why?	
Project phase	Time (%)
TOTAL	100 %

Speaker's Corner

Answers to questions we have not posed. Feel free to write about anything you find important, but haven't had a chance to do it in answers to previous questions!
<p>I want to share some general experiences that I had in this course. This course was one of the most interesting courses I have ever had. The first and the main good experience of this course is that now I have four more friends. Two of them are Italians (Andrea and Lorenzo), one is Croatian (Marko) and one is German (Jörn). The other two members (Dzana and Nikola) were my friends before the start of this course. The possibility to share knowledge and experience with other persons that belong to other cultures, was another one of the very good experiences in this course. The flight of the Italian side members to Sweden was a very good experience, since it gave us the possibility to meet them physically and consequently consolidate our friendship.</p> <p>One of the big problems of this project was the absence of communication with the customers of the Swedish side and Croatian side. The cause was, in my opinion, the lack of English knowledge of our customers. They wanted to express their ideas in Italian and somehow this was good, since they could clarify better what they had in mind and avoid this way misunderstandings. The absence of communication between customers and other members of the group could cause many troubles in our project, since the main input is supposed to be taken from the customers. In this case, I have to mention the really good work that did Andrea and Lorenzo. Andrea kept us informed, with the information provided from the customer, through some documents called "customer meetings". They have done a great job in translating all the information from Italian to English and introduce us with customer requirements. I would not define a big problem the distributed environment. This problem was avoided through our will to have a good communication in our group. Another risky problem in our project was the continuous</p>

change or addition of requirements from the customer. We had new requirements until the final phase of the project. Also this problem could be a potential hazard in our project, since it is not easy to deal with new requirements in a short period of time. Anyway, this problem was solved by the good communication that we had in our group and by the good explanation of these new requirements from the Italian side members.