

Department of Computer Science

TTM4115 - Design of Communicating Systems

The Digital RAT System

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Contents

1]	Problem & Background	3
2	,	Vision	3
3	(Objectives	4
4	,	Stakeholders	4
5	1	Use Cases	5
	5.1	Use case hierarchy	5
	5.2	2 User classes	5
	5.3	3 Use case descriptions	<i>6</i>
6]	Deployment Diagram	9
7	,	Sequence Diagrams	. 11
8	,	State Machines	. 14
9]	Implementation	. 16
A	ppe	endix A - MQTT-overview	. 17
	Me	essage overview	. 17
	1.	create_RAT	. 17
	2. j	fetch_RATs	. 18
	3.	available_RATs	. 18
	4. :	start_RAT	. 19
	5. :		. 19
		_ student_iRAT_done	
		 iRAT_done	
		start_tRAT	
		tRAT_done	
		. timer_expired	
		otnotes	
Δ.		endix B - GitHub Repository	
		endix C – Video Demo	. 21 21
13			

1 Problem & Background

Having the students coming to class prepared is critical in order to have any possibility of deeper classroom conversations and meaningful problem-solving activities. Students need to be accountable for their initial preparation and ready for the activities. As a part of their team-based learning philosophy, the Department of Information Security and Communication Technology (IIK) at NTNU (Norges Teknisk Naturvitenskapelige Universitet) has implemented the Readiness Assurance Process (RAP) in many of their subjects. The RAP is a five-stage process that is used at the beginning of each module in your course. The RAP ensures that students understand the fundamental

concepts, definitions, and foundational knowledge they need to begin problem-

solving.

The second and third steps of the RAP include an individual and a group test, called Readiness Assurance Tests (RATs). When implementing these tests in their classes, IIK decided to do so through scratch cards distributed to the students in class. There are three problems with this approach:

- 1. Inefficiency
- 2. Paper waste
- 3. Unavailability for remote students

Firstly, the current solution is inefficient in that a noticeable amount of time is used to physically distribute these scratch cards. In addition to this, there is no good way to efficiently know when to distribute the team RATs, i.e., when all members of a group are finished with their individual RATs. The time wasted on these inefficiencies could instead have been used for lectures and team-based learning activities.

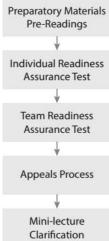
Secondly, the current solution introduces unnecessary paper waste. A class of 100 students, organized into 20 groups of 5 people, results in 120 questionnaires (1 for each student + 1 for each team), in addition to 1 scratch card for each team, having to be printed out for each test. Many of IIK's classes have such tests every week, meaning that for a semester, several hundreds of scratch cards are printed and produced. Adding to this, questionnaires for students that are calling in sick or unable to attend the class physically are still printed, as the current solution for printing assumes all students are present.

Lastly, the current solution does not consider that modern teaching styles and team-based cooperation express the need for digital or hybrid solutions. The pandemic showed the importance of being agile and flexible when it comes to work and communication platforms. The current solution is only available in physical form for the students present in class.

2 Vision

Digital RAT System (DRS) is a digital version of the traditional RAT system used in subjects as a method for team-based learning. The DRS aims to increase efficiency and decrease the usage of paper. Teachers can create RATs, store them in a database, and publish them when wanting to conduct a RAT session for the students.

Through an application, the students will get access to the RATs digitally, allowing them to participate remotely from anywhere at the time when the RAT sessions are held. The DRS does not provide the team with a specified method for communicating during the tRATs. The teams are encouraged to communicate in whatever way they seem to fit themselves. After the iRAT is conducted and the whole team is finished, the team can start the tRAT, which facilitates collaboration and cooperation among



group members into finding solutions to the current week's unit questions. During the tRAT the team gets instant feedback when they answer a question.

3 Objectives

- BO-1 Improve time-effectiveness
 - Automating and digitalizing the RATs.
 - Reduce wasted time by 100%, by allowing a team to start their tRAT immediately once all members are done with their iRAT.
 - Reduce wasted time by 100%, by allowing teams to begin their class activities immediately after they have completed their tRAT.
 - O Automated correction and registration of results.
 - Provide quantifiable data on participation for each RAT and the average time spent.
- BO-2 Increase attendance rate by allowing remote participation
 - Allow for remote RAT participation, which is not possible today.
 - Measurable through attendance rate.
- BO-3 Reduce operating and environmental costs
 - Phase out scratch cards (For TTM4115 this can reduce operating cost by ~\$0.3 per scratch card, ~\$5 per week).
 - Remove the need for printed RATs (For TTM4115 this can reduce paper usage by 100%, ~115 pages per week).
 - Operating costs in the form of labor will also be reduced as there is no need for manual registration of results.

4 Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Values	Attitudes	Interests	Constraints
Students	Efficient and well-structured RAT system. High learning outcome; Good opportunities to help each other during tRATs; Solid useability.	Expectations of a well-developed system.	HIGH Simple user experience. System is available from anywhere.	Mobile device with network connection necessary.
Teaching Assistants (TAs)	Easy overview over students' progress.	Strong enthusiasm to make the labs more efficient, interactive and get better overview of students' progress	MEDIUM Overview of students' progress; less administrative work	Mobile device with network connection necessary.

Professors/	Tracking	Enthusiastic to	HIGH	Mobile device
Course	task-progress.	improve a system	Overview of	with network
Coordinator	Adds value to	to help the	students'	connection
	course.	learning-process	progress; adjust	necessary.
		and simplify it.	future syllabus	Change from
			based on	analog system to
			students' results	digital system
			on RATs.	
			Compare with	
			previous years.	
			Indicates	
			difficulty of tasks	
University	Well-educated	Open and	LOW	Operational costs
Management	students; Better	optimistic for the	Gives value to	for database and
	external	system	students, TAs and	server
	reputation.		course	
			coordinators for	
			RATs.	

5 Use Cases

5.1 Use case hierarchy

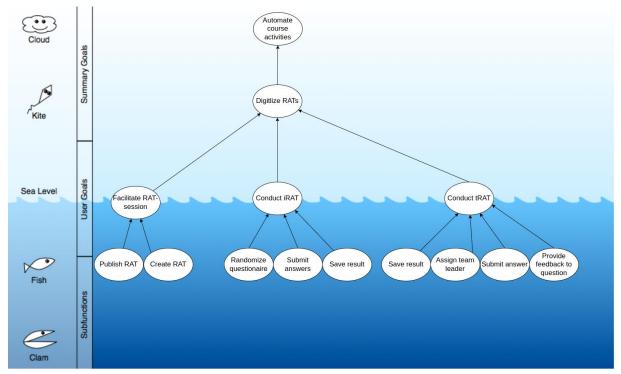


Figure 1. Use Case Hierarchy

5.2 User classes

The various user classes are identified as primary actors for the use cases for the DRS:

For the DRS and in our use case scenarios we have decided not to distinguish between professors, TAs or other people involved in managing class activities. We have made a general user class named

Teacher. For future development of the DRS, a distinction between the different roles regarding the people facilitating class activities and what they are allowed to do, should be considered. I.e., only teachers should be able to create RATs, but TAs should be able to start RATs.

Primary actor	Use cases
Student	 Conduct a digital iRAT Conduct a digital tRAT
Teacher	3. Facilitate RAT-session

5.3 Use case descriptions

ID and name:	UC-1 Facilitate RAT-session	UC-2 Conduct iRAT	UC-3 Conduct tRAT
Primary actor:	Teacher	Student	Student
Secondary	Student, Database	Database	Teacher, Database
actor(s):			
Description:	by entering questions, answer options and the correct answer into a predefined user interface. The system stores the	A student accesses the RAT of the day and must finish it within a specified time limit. The student is shown a number of multiple-choice questions and chooses one answer per question. Upon completion or timeout, answers are sent to the database and the student is redirected to the tRAT waiting room. A student will receive the	delivered their iRAT, one student from the team is chosen as a team leader.
	minutes if not specified otherwise.	iRAT with questions and corresponding answers in randomized order.	database.
Trigger:		A digital iRAT is made available on the DRS and the student begins the test.	The final team member submits their iRAT or iRAT-timer expires.
Preconditions:	PRE-1A Database is established.	PRE-2A RAT is created and the student is logged in when the RAT is made available to the students.	PRE-3A RAT is created and the student is logged in when the RAT is made available to the students. PRE-3B iRAT is submitted and students are placed in tRAT

			waiting room.
Postcondition:	POST-1A	POST-2A	POST-3A
	RAT is stored in the	Individual scores are stored	Team scores are
		in the "RAT" database after	
	available for later sessions.	completion of the iRAT. POST-2B	database after completion of
	POST-1B	Students are sent to the	the tRAT.
	Global RAT-timer is	tRAT waiting room.	
	started.	-	
Normal flow:	1.0 Host RAT-session	1.0 Conduct iRAT	1.0 Conduct tRAT as
	1. The teacher navigates	1. A student navigates to the	
	to the RAT page.	RAT page.	1. The DRS displays the
	2. The DRS displays	2. The DRS displays the	tRAT to the team leader's
	stored RATs and a	available RAT.	device.
	"CREATE RAT" button.	3. The student begins the	2. The student is provided
	3. The teacher presses	RAT and is the iRAT	withthe questions from
	the "Create RAT"	displayed.	the RAT, with the
	button, chooses how	4. The student chooses one	corresponding answer
	many questions to fill in	•	options.
	the name for the RAT,	toggling a checkbox.	3. The student is given
	and is given an input	5. The student submits the	instant feedback for each
	field for each question	answers.	question, where only a
	and answer.	6. The DRS confirms the	correct answer will let
	4. The teacher inputs a	submission with a pop-up	them continue. Teams
	question, one correct	display.	will only get credited if
	answer, and three wrong	7. The DRS stores the	they answer correctly on
	answers.		the first try.
	5. When finished filling	adds it to the database and	4. The student submits the
	in the questions, the	updates the completion	answers or is forced to
	teacher saves the RAT	status.	deliver the answers if the
	and sends it to the server		time runs out.
	for storing.	to the tRAT waiting room.	5. The DRS confirms the
	6. The RAT is stored in		submission with a pop-up
	the database.		display.
	7. The teacher refreshes		6. The DRS stores the
	the interface with a push		answers, calculates a
	of the button		score, adds it to the
	"REFRESH RATS", this		database and updates the
	prompts the server to		completion status.
	provide a list of		7. The student is sent to
	available RATs in the		the log-in page.
	database.		
	8. The teacher can		
	choose the RAT they		
	just created and publish		
	it to the students.		

Alternative flows:	1.1 Host RAT session with previously created RAT 1. A teacher navigates to the RAT page. 2. The DRS displays stored RATs and a "CREATE RAT" button. 3. The teacher chooses an existing RAT to be published forthe students. 1.2 Teacher wishes only to create a RAT 1. Step 1-5 from normal flow	1.1 iRAT is finished by timer running out 1. Step 1-4 from normal flow 2. Time window passes 3. Step 6-8 from normal flow	1.1 Conduct tRAT non-team leader 1. The student is placed in a waiting room, while the team leader conducts the tRAT on behalf of the team. 2. The student is sent to the log-in page when tRAT is delivered.
Exceptions*:	process1. Teacher exits the"create RAT" process	1.0 E1 Student exits the session 1. DRS stores the temporary answers. 2. Upon re-entering, the student is able to obtain their old answers. 3. If the timer expires, DRS stores the answers, calculates scores, adds them to the system database, and updates completion status.	team leader is provided the question where they left off.
Priority:	High	High	High
Frequency of use:	One RAT is hosted each week.	Approximately 100 students, divided into 20 groups. The students will access the iRATs in the same time window each week.	ŭ
Other information:	1. No RAT should be able to be named the same (this should be handled with exception handling)		

Assumptions:	Students have to be logged in when the RAT session starts to be able to access it.	for the RAT are given in random order for each individual student. The randomization is done	1. The team leader is responsible for communicating the question-and-answer options to the other team members.
		remaining time for the iRAT	2. Students should be able to see the timer for the tRAT in the classroom.
		made available for the students after completion.	3. Team scores are made available for the students after completion.

^{*}We have specified exceptions for the different use cases. Not all these exceptions have been implemented in our sequenceand state diagrams, as we consider them too complex and not worth prioritizing at this point in time. The exceptions have been documented in the use case descriptions to highlight challenges with the DRS that should be addressed at a later point.

6 Deployment Diagram

The physical view of the DRS, illustrated in Figure 2, provides an overview of how the system is configured with respect to its hardware and infrastructure. This view depicts the network topology that is necessary to support the software system. Specifically, the deployment diagram shows how software and hardware resources are deployed in our system, and how they communicate, with the components representing the software artifacts that are deployed on the hardware nodes.

The software artifacts include state machines, managers, UIs, an MQTT broker, and a local database. The nodes in the diagram represent the various hardware components, such as PCs, phones, and servers. Overall, this physical view gives a clear picture of how the system is designed and how the different components interact with one another to achieve its intended functionality

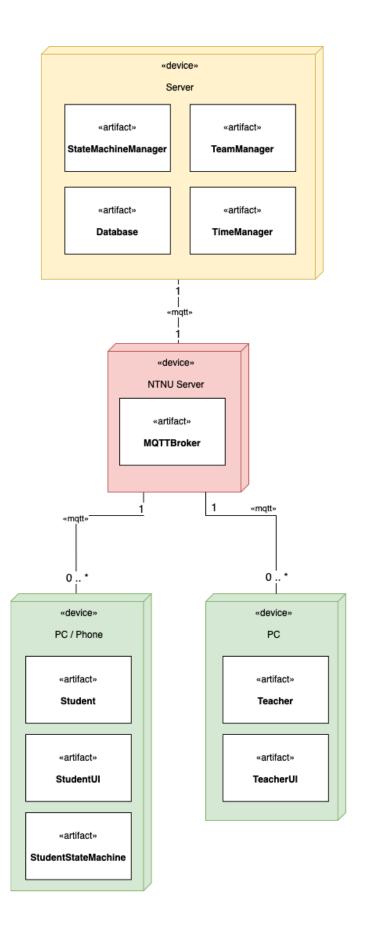


Figure 2. Deployment Diagram of DRS

7 Sequence Diagrams

This type of interaction diagram is designed to display how objects and components connect in a system over time. Sequence diagrams are an effective and intuitive way to describe communication between several communicating partners, through different scenarios, such as user interactions, system events, or software processes. There are four different sequence diagrams to show different interactions that the teacher and student can do. Figure 3 teacher would have to login to the DRS. This interaction must be successful for a user to continue with other interactions.

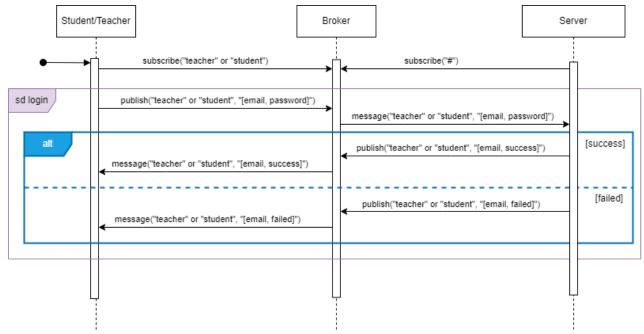


Figure 3. Sequence diagram for logging into the DRS

Figure 4 demonstrates how the systems communicate during an iRAT. The timer can run out before or after the student has finished the iRAT.

- [opt 1] The timer runs out before the student has finished, and any answers that have been submitted up to that point will be sent to the server.
- [opt 2] The timer runs out before at least one of the other students in the group is not finished.
- [opt 3] The entire team can finish before the timer runs out.

Only one of the opt fragments can happen during this sequence. If a student is finishing an iRAT at the same time as the timer runs out nothing should happen, and the student should continue as if they did not receive the t1_expired message.

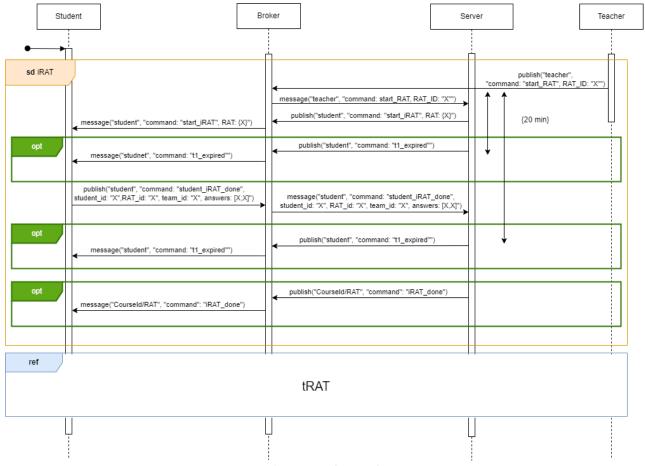


Figure 4. Sequence diagram for tRAT

The iRAT has to be finished by the entire group before the group can proceed with the tRAT. A team leader is chosen by the server and is communicated to the student when publishing the 'start_tRAT'. This action of the team leader is shown in the 'alt' fragment below. The other team members will be sent into a waiting room. All the answers to the questions will be sent from the server when finished, so that the student can get an instant response without having to communicate back and forth with the server.

If the timer runs out before the team leader is finished with the tRAT, then the answers already submitted will be sent to the server. All the team members will receive either the "t2_expired" or "tRAT_done" message depending on whether the timer runs out or not.

Also, for this sequence nothing should happen differently for the system if the team sends the answers at the same time as the timer runs out.

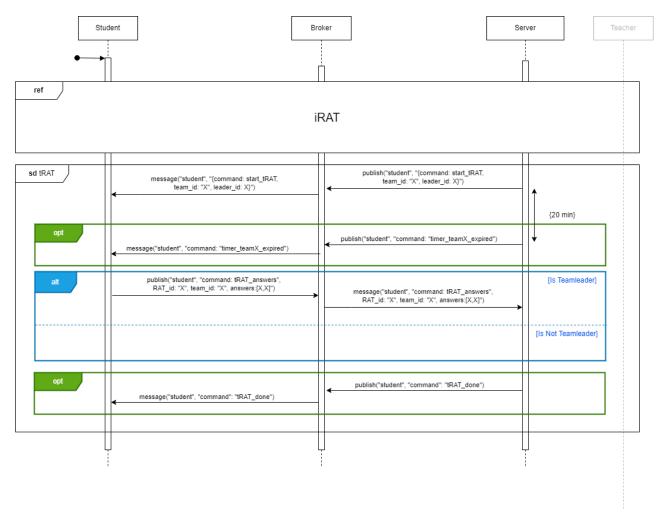


Figure 5. Interactions for the tRAT

Figure 6 shows the teachers' interactions for creating a RAT, refreshing RATs and starting a RAT. The three opt fragments can happen in any order and a opt fragment can happen more than once in a row.

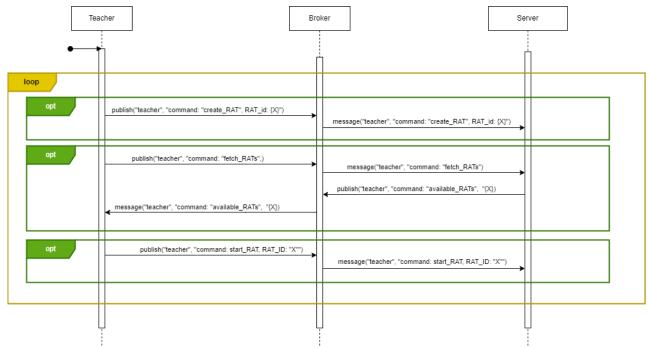


Figure 6. Teachers' interactions

8 State Machines

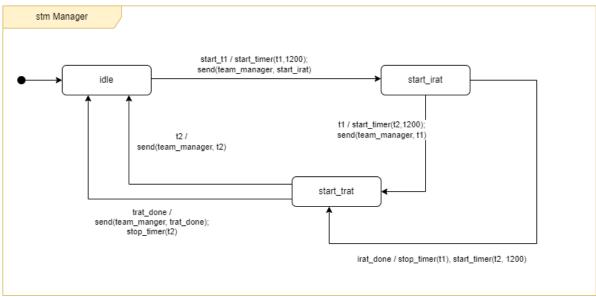


Figure 7. Manager state machine controlling the overall flow of the RAT

The Manager state machine in Figure 7 handles the main logic of the system. It controls the entire flow from start to finish, including start and stop of RATs and timers and sending messages to team manager.

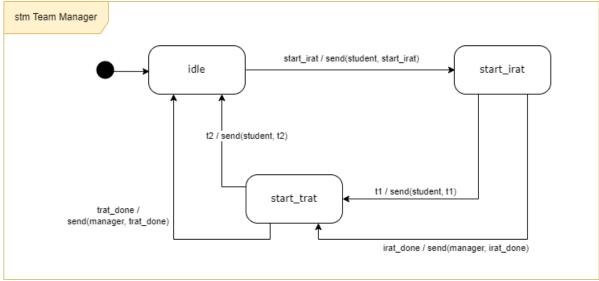


Figure 8. Team Manager state machine coordinating with the manager and the student state machines

The Team Manager state machine in Figure 8 handles the communication between manager and students.

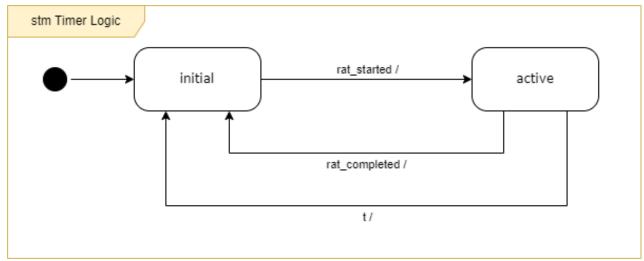


Figure 9. Timer Logic state machine handling the timers

The Timer Logic in Figure 9 is general and can be used to handle the timers for both iRAT and tRAT. The timer starts running when a RAT is started and stops either when the team is finished with the RAT, or the time limit is up.

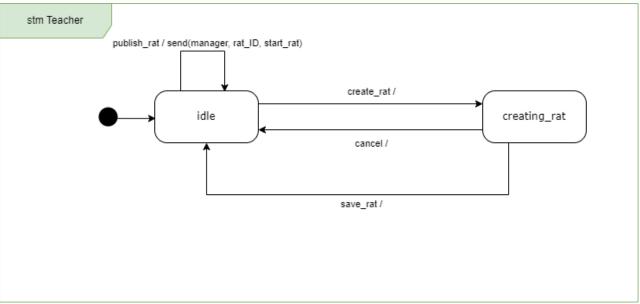


Figure 10. The teacher state machine (creates, saves and publishes a RAT)

The Teacher state machine in Figure 10 represents the process through which a teacher goes in order to create, save and publish a RAT.

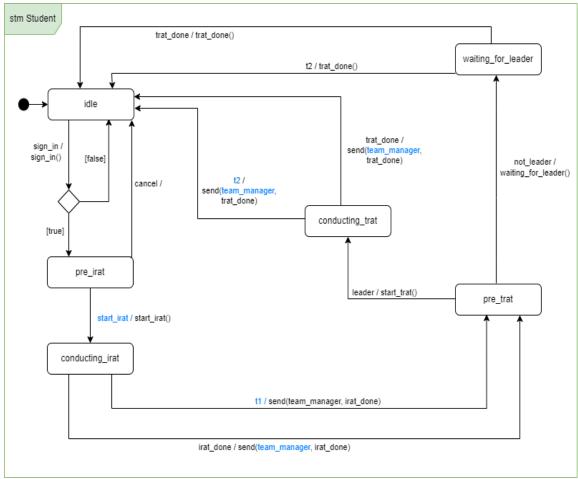


Figure 11. Student conducting an iRAT and a tRAT

The Student state machine in Figure 11 handles the entire process of conducting an iRAT followed by a tRAT. When a student enters the "waiting_for_leader" state, it checks whether the team leader is already in the room. If the leader is not present, nothing happens. When the leader enters the waiting room, either via the timer t2 or if they finish the team rat before the timer runs out, the student enters back into the idle state. Although the implementation section does not address the decision tree, we chose to treat the necessity of having a real and secure authentication method in a real system only in the state machine.

9 Implementation

The implementation of the DRS system can be viewed as a minimum viable product (MVP). The demonstrated system works in accordance with our use cases, the current version contains just enough features to conduct a RAT session for a group of students. Below are some comments about the implementation:

- Implementation of the system features the functionality described in the use cases and structure given in the deployment diagram.
- The state machines are only partially implemented, mostly because of complexity and time constraints.
 - Implementation of the state machines for team_manager, manager, teacher and student are
 only partially or not implemented. Their state machines still describe the functionality for
 each software application and give a picture of how the different applications interact with
 the rest of the system and user input.
 - The decision to not implement certain state machines was based on considerations of time

constraints and complexity. In the case of the Teacher application, we determined that adding a state machine would unnecessarily complicate the code without providing significant value to the application's current functionality. However, if additional features were to be added in the future, state machines could prove useful in addressing potential complexity issues and enhancing overall functionality. Moving forward, it's important to carefully assess where state machines may be relevant and beneficial for the continued development of the application.

- Message topics and actual message data are slightly modified in the actual implementation, for easier implementation.
 - E.g., the topics are not divided as structured as described in the sequence diagram. This is because it was easier for the server to only subscribe to a general channel for all communication, and rather filter out data based on the commands sent and with the messages. We chose to base our actions in the code on data that is contained in the messages, rather than watching topics.
 - An overview of the MQTT-messages is provided as an appendix (see *Appendix A MQTT-overview*).
- Exception handling is not implemented, e.g., when a user leaves a RAT session. The same goes for edge cases, which we chose not to prioritize and rather focus on making a system that shows the general functionality of the system.
- For further development, the code should be altered to be more dynamic and able to adapt to the system needs of the future.
- Data storing is done locally in a JSON-database. For future development, a more scalable and
 robust database solution should be implemented. This will ensure that the system can handle
 larger data volumes and handle concurrent user requests more efficiently. Therefore, it is
 recommended to explore other database options that are better suited to the specific needs of the
 application.

Appendix A - MQTT-overview

Message overview

- 1. create_RAT
- 2. fetch RATs
- 3. available_RATs
- 4. start_RAT
- 5. start_iRAT
- 6. student_iRAT_done
- 7. iRAT_done
- 8. start_tRAT
- 9. tRAT_answers
- 10. tRAT_done
- 11. timer_expired

1. create RAT

Command: "create RAT"

Sender: Teacher Receiver: Server

Channel: "ttm4115/team_5/teacher"

Function: Sends a message to the server with a RAT that is to be stored in the database.

```
ISON format:
  "command": "create_RAT",
  "RAT": {
    "id": "5397c02f-3572-42c4-b861-4f6cfb891186",
    "name": "TestRAT",
    "size": 2.0,
    "subject": "TTM4115",
    "questions": {
      "1": {
         "question": "TestQ1",
         "correct": "correct",
         "a": "fail1",
        "b": "fail2",
        "c": "fail1"
      },
"2": {
         "question": "TestQ2",
         "correct": "correct",
        "a": "fail1",
"b": "fail2",
         "c": "fail3"
      }
    }
  }
}
 2. fetch_RATs
Command: "fetch RATs"
Sender: Teacher
Receiver: Server
Channel: "ttm4115/team_5/teacher"
Function: Requests an overview of the RATs in the database.
ISON format:
{
  "command": "fetch_RATs"
 3. available_RATs
Command: "available RATs"
Sender: Server
Receiver: Teacher
Channel: "ttm4115/team 5/teacher"
Function: Sends an overview of the RATs in the database
ISON format:
{
  "command": "available_RATs",
  "rat_info": {
    "75e60adc-e830-11ed-a05b-0242ac120003": "RAT 1",
    "8b07615d-fa1c-4e39-95f5-caddde20b113": "RAT 2"
    "3c087784-ca0c-4922-8642-a78b4fe06666": "RAT 3"
    "ca654113-c46c-4b94-98ed-b2af060d24c8": "RAT 4",
```

```
"f0c0794d-0eaf-4937-b85b-7f46495e9040": "RAT 5"
  }
}
4. start_RAT
Command: "start RAT"
Sender: Teacher
Receiver: Server
Channel: "ttm4115/team_5/teacher"
Function: Tells the server to start a RAT session.
ISON format:
{
  "command": "start_RAT",
  "RAT ID": "75e60adc-e830-11ed-a05b-0242ac120003"
}
 5. start_iRAT
Command: "start_iRAT"
Sender: Server
Receiver: Student
Channel: "ttm4115/team_5/student"
Function: Sends the chosen RAT to the students.
ISON format:
{
  "command": "start_iRAT",
  "RAT": {
    "name": "Demo RAT",
    "id": "d9b3a6c1-2eba-4767-be41-315bab3c5110",
    "size": 3,
    "subject": "TTM4115",
    "questions": {
      "1": {
        "question": "test1",
        "correct": "correct",
        "a": "fail1",
        "b": "fail2",
        "c": "fail3"
      },
"2": {
        "question": "test2",
        "correct": "correct",
        "a": "fail1",
        "b": "fail2",
        "c": "fail3"
      "3": {
        "question": "test3",
        "correct": "correct",
        "a": "fail1",
        "b": "fail2",
        "c": "fail3"
      }
```

```
}
 }
 6. student_iRAT_done
Command: "student iRAT done"
Sender: Student
Receiver: Server
Channel: "ttm4115/team 5/student"
Function: Tells the server that a student in team x, is done with their iRAT, and the questions
they got correct.
ISON format:
   "command":"student_iRAT_done",
   "student_ID": "1"
   "team_ID": "1"
   "RAT_ID": "75e60adc-e830-11ed-a05b-0242ac120003"
   "answers": "[correct, a, correct]"
}
 7. iRAT_done
Command: "iRAT done"
Sender: Server
Receiver: Server*
Channel: "ttm4115/team 5/server"
Function: Tells the server that an entire team of students are done with their iRAT
ISON format:
   "command":"iRAT_done",
   "team ID": "1"
}
 8. start tRAT
Command: "start tRAT"
Sender: Server
Receiver: Student
Channel: "ttm4115/team 5/student"
Function: Starts the tRAT and chooses a team leader after the entire team is done with the
iRAT
ISON format:
  "command": "start tRAT",
  "team_ID": "1",
  "leader_ID": "1"
}
 9. tRAT_answers
Command: "start tRAT"
```

Sender: Student Receiver: Server

```
Channel: "ttm4115/team_5/student"
Function: Sends the tRAT answers to the server.
ISON format:
{
  "command": "tRAT_answers",
  "RAT_id": "1",
  "team id": "1",
  "answers": "[correct, correct]"
 10. tRAT done
Command: "tRAT done"
Sender: Server
Receiver: Server*
Channel: "ttm4115/team_5/teacher"
Function: Tells the server that a team is done with the tRAT.
ISON format:
  "command": "tRAT_done"
 11. timer_expired
Command: "x expired"**
Sender: Server
Receiver: Student
Channel: "ttm4115/team_5/student"
Function: Tells a student during the iRAT or the student leader during a tRAT that the RAT
timer has expired, forcing the student to submit their answers
ISON format:
{
  "command": "x_expired"
```

Footnotes

- * The team manager sends an MQTT message to the manager. We did this to allow for there to be different servers operating at the same time, but we implemented everything on the
- ** The "x" is the name of the timer. If we start the timer "t1" at the iRAT, the command will be:
- "t1_expired". If we want to address the timer for team 1, the command will be

"timer team1 expired".

Appendix B - GitHub Repository

https://github.com/mkarder/ttm4115 project

Appendix C – *Video Demo*

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1X2UtMWoZ0T2XcrY-7LKMN34grmVToaE/view?usp=sharing