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Llewellyn Falco and Maaret Pyhajarvi - Strong-Style Pairing

Pair programming is one of the most controversial of 12 core extreme programming practices. One of the reasons for this is that many of the styles of pair programming have troublesome traps for people. This is especially true when a pair has significant differences in skill or knowledge. Strong-style pair programming is a method of pairing designed to avoid these traps. In strong-style, “for an idea to go from your head to the computer, it must go through someone else’s hands”. We will do a lot of exercises to demonstrate both the techniques of strong-style pairing, why it works and why it succeeds when other pairing styles fail.

Summary

- Content rating (0-no new ideas, 5 - a new ideas/approach, 9-new ideas): 8
- Style rating (0-average presentation, 5 - my level, 9-I learned something about presenting): 7

Really like the idea of using this as a learning approach.

New ideas about how to teach pairing with iPhone. To teach the concepts did simple exercises where:

- Divide room into “people with iPhones” and “people with other phones”. Have each person pair up with a person from the “other” camp.
- Start with normal pairing - play a game on the phone. Then swap and do with strong-style - play game on the phone using style - discuss difference in the what you see.
- Talk about communication pattern (intent, location, details) and do again using strong style. Discuss what has changed.
- Learning exercise - split room based on languages spoken and pair language with non-language. Examine retention by first simple pairing, then strong style with where the driver takes instruction from the foreign language speaker. Even though pretty passive (voice activated keyboard) higher retention when strong style is used.
- Then do with dictation and / or coding.

Action / Learning

- Definition of Strong Style pairing - “For an idea to go from your head to the computer it must go through someone else’s hands”
- How you speak to the driver - Use language with an “Intent, Location, Details” pattern
- Idea: When do you pair? Basic answer is “always” but they produce a different result. When you pair on a hard problem you end up with a solution. When you pair on an easy problem you end up with innovation.

- Try it myself
- Follow blog

Presentation

strong_style_pairing.pptx

Additional references:

- Video with base ideas: Maaret Pyhäjärvi & Llewellyn Falco Bring Strong-Style Pairing to Agile2016 and the World
- Blog with definition: http://llewellynfalco.blogspot.com/2014/06/llewellyns-strong-style-pairing.html

Notes

Not as many notes this time as I was volunteer to this session.

1. Concept of person with idea must not use keyboard. Must go through other person
2. Describe intent
3. Swap iPhone and android and direct someone to play game
4. “You cannot convince someone to trust you with logic” so ask for a small amount trust. Try it for 7 mins.
5. Driver / navigator in Word
6. Adjust based on the pair. No doubt when communication didn't work - unlike the of communication
7. Do mini retro at the end
8. You stick better as not just watching expert. You learn more. Foreign language exercise
9. Definitely need to try this in coaching engagements
10. Rules of Pairing - Try It (stop religious), yes and …., do first explain later, look for wins
11. If two good way, do both. Actually end up doing one as people won't care any more.
12. Fizz buzz exercise - div 3 fizz, div 5 buzz
13. None coders feel better about code - not as scary
14. Pair hard problems → solution; easy problem → innovation
15. Switch on time, task, idea
16. Follow blog

PairProgramming, XP, Learning, Conference, Agile2016

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