Learning about Organizational Patterns from Drama Patterns

PLoP 2023 Focus Group Proposal

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Motivation

Good drama is composed of patterns. Some two dozen of drama patterns have been documented [9, 10, 6] and actively applied with diverse participants ranging from small children [9] to university students and staff [8]. Applying drama patterns is a very involving and fun activity. The participants become a part of a drama pattern and virtually feel the conflict of contradicting forces the pattern resolves. At the same time, they become a part of the dramatic element that resolves that conflict.

Organizational patterns of software development have been mined in highly successful software organizations built unaware of patterns [4]. There are dozens of organizational patterns of software development described [4, 1, 7, 5, 2, 3]. Yet, no case of their application in a production setting has been reported. While this doesn't prove that organizational patterns are not used in practice, it throws a shadow of doubt to what extent is this outstanding body of organizational knowledge really used. Our fear is that this is so because practitioners are expected to apply organizational patterns out of their descriptions.

Activity

In this focus group, we will build a short play with drama patterns. Since drama patterns are a special kind of organizational patterns, there is a lot

the participants can take from this focus group that will make them approach organizational patterns of software development (or any other patterns intended to build organizations of people at work) in a more relaxed and natural way. In particular, we will reflect on where to start, how to actually apply a pattern, how to improve a pattern, how to modify a pattern, how to incept a higher level pattern, how to retract a pattern, and pattern composition.

Organizational Aspects

This focus group can accommodate up to 15 participants. It can be repeated in case of a greater interest. No acting experience is required. No knowledge of software patterns is assumed. Everything will be explained on the spot.

A room with at least 4 x 8 m^2 of free space is needed. In case of good weather, the focus group can also be organized outdoors. In both cases, a white board or flip chart would be of help. We assume that a time slot of 75 to 100 minutes would be sufficient.

Outreach

The results of the focus group could be easily extrapolated beyond its time and space delimitation. Interested participants could make small performances for other participants within gatherings, during the conference banquet, in the bar, etc. There are drama patterns instantly applicable with a large number of people without any kind of preparation required, which may be used as games throughout the conference [8].

About the Organizers

The organizers discovered the concept of a drama pattern and published several papers on this topic [8, 9, 10, 6]. They organized two successful focus groups around drama patterns at EuroPLoP (in 2019 and this year), both of which ended in a banquet performance. They also organized a workshop entitled *Understanding Humane in Patterns Through Drama* as a PLoP 2022 PLoPourri event (remotely).[1] They have experience in applying drama patterns with hundreds of children of all ages and dozens of students within a regular univeristy cours.[2]

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[1] http://fiit.sk/~vranic/pub/plop22/
[2] https://is.stuba.sk/katalog/syllabus.pl?predmet=393400

References

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