Testers as Test Consultants

How to learn the skills?

Liverpool Tester Gathering

Lisa Crispin

With material from Janet Gregory

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Let’s pair (sorta)!

I normally pair present.

Will you all be my pair / mob?

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Picture from Mob Programming Guidebook, Maaret Pyhäjärvi and Llewellyn Falco
Today’s quality challenges

Which ones do your teams struggle with?
Quality Challenges

- Complicated Code
- Automation Skills
- Knowledge Sharing
- Testing Windows (Time)
- Quality Ownership
- Product Knowledge
- Customer Focus
The power is in collaboration

- Feature Idea
- Production Use
- Delivery

Feedback
As a test consultant, you can help ....

• the team learn how to build quality in
• transfer testing skills to others
• design experiments to improve quality
• bring in new techniques, tools, frameworks
• What else?

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What to transfer to the team?

- What would you help teammates who are not testing specialists learn?
What to transfer to team

• Why not test
• Mob testing
• Knowing when to stop
• Everyone's problem
• Experiment and have fun
• Strategy
• Risk
• Understanding whole picture

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What can a test consultant share?

Let’s look at more examples of skills, techniques, frameworks you can encourage teams to experiment with.
Testing skills

- Exploratory testing
- Test planning
- Creating scenarios
- Automation
- Test data
- Test design
- What else?
Ways to build quality in

• Impact mapping to identify valuable features
• Feature planning - slicing into testable stories
• Analyze use, elicit feedback to improve
• Analyze risk, identify where to focus testing
Effective ways of working

• Guide development with concrete examples
• Use “3 amigos” to build shared understanding
How can you learn the skills that help you be an effective test consultant?
Core skills

• Your expertise
• Facilitation skills
• Ability to articulate your message (communication and expertise combined)
• Demonstration skills
• Giving and receiving feedback
• Setting up an environment to learn
• Others?
Self-education

Where and how can you learn?
Where/how to learn?

• BROWN BKG SESSIONS
• ONLINE COURSES
• PODCASTS/WEBINARS ETC.
• TWITTER
• SLACK

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Partner with team members

• Know the expertise within your team
• Pair with technical specialists
• Pair with product owner to experiment with new techniques
• Start a book club to learn new skills together
Step back ... and observe
Let’s do an exercise

• Find a pair, or trio. One of you volunteer to be the “consultant”.

• Consultants: choose a leisure time activity you’re good at (or like)
  1. Take 1 minute to explain one skill needed
  2. Does the learner(s) now know how to do that skill?
  3. Take 1 minute to explain an additional detail

• Did the extra detail help?

• What else might have helped the learners learn?
How can you transfer your skills?

What are your ideas?

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How to transfer skills?

- Demonstrate
- Draw
- Document
- Ask questions
- Team activities
- Homework
- Switch roles
- Blogging
- Shadowing

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Here are my ideas – we’ll skip any already covered!

*Image:*

www.squirrelnicnic.com

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It’s the conversations that matter ..... … not the tools

Our super powers are:

• Getting the right people together
• Asking good questions!

Learn good facilitation techniques

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Foster a whole team approach

• ‘Show me’ can be a small first step
• ‘Group hugs’ or ‘bug bashes’
• Strong-style pairing
  • Driver & navigator
• Mobbing
Find ways to make quality visible

- Share and tell sessions
- Test results on a **BIG** monitor
- Use production usage data to show pain points
- Big visible charts

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Help the team experiment, learn

Try proven techniques - together

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Facilitate workshops for your team

Examples:
• Collaboration frameworks
  • mind mapping
  • example mapping
  • impact mapping
• Hands-on exploratory testing practice
• Pair facilitate!

Training from the Back of the Room is a great place to start
Build community

- Brown bag lunch talks
- Form a community of practice
- Lean Coffee

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Share ideas, information

• Write a blog post for internal use
• Share useful links on internal chat channels
• Put “cheat sheets” around work areas
• Stick articles up on a team whiteboard
The question is ....

How do we adapt our current skills to our new reality?
Resources for further learning

Lisi Hocke, “Our team’s first mobbing session”,
https://www.lisihocke.com/2017/04/our-teams-first-mobbing-session.html has links to excellent mobbing books & resources

Sharon Bowman, Training from the Back of the Room

Emily Webber, Building Successful Communities of Practice

Jean Tabaka, Collaboration Explained: Facilitation Skills for Software Project Leaders

Samantha Laing and Karen Greaves, A Coach’s Guide to Facilitation: Techniques to improve your meetings
https://leanpub.com/AgileTesting


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