Some reasons why actual cross-fertilization in cross-functional teams is difficult

CHASE 2018
27th of May
Gothenburg
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Research question

What is motivating or demotivating team members to work in a cross-functional manner?
Data Collection

5 Scrum Teams from diverse companies

**Open Interviews**
9 team members, face to face, approx 1h

**Observations**
3 teams, ≥2 successive sprint changes

**Feedback**
6 reciprocal feedback meetings

**Group Discussion**
>1h long: What is the value of cross-functionality …?

**Expert Interviews**
5 expert interviews: agile Coaches, Consultants, and Scrum Masters outside the context of any particular team
Method

Charmaz: Constructing Grounded Theory
Preliminary Results

Context
Cross-Functionality

Phenomenon
Cross-Fertilization

Intervening Condition
Inclination to Interact

2nd-order Intervening Conditions
- Perception of Inefficiency
- Desire to Learn
- Sense of Domain Responsibility
- Issues with Career Progression
- Domain Distance
- Level of Detail
- Focus
“[…] for somebody who wants to write software around the clock it felt unsatisfying if they would not write software on, say, three days a week […]”
Desire to Learn

e.g. a tester wants to become a developer
Sense of Domain Responsibility

to keep the work and your personal knowledge in your own Domain in proper shape
Issues with Career Progression

“[..]He is a good and committed guy, but he [...] wants to get a leadership position and more money. We tried to explain that it does not work that way in an agile company with cross-functional teams. Now he is leaving.”
A negative example: A developer participated in the creation of a newsletter by the marketing specialists [..]. He saw this as inefficient and demotivating.
Wrong Level of Detail

“So very small parts! This made the process lengthy and made it impossible for me to contribute.”
“[A danger is] defocusing, because you just do a thousand things, talking to each other, but nothing gets completed.”
Thank you!

CHASE’18: Some reasons why actual cross-fertilization in cross-functional teams is difficult, Helena Barke and Lutz Prechelt