Sprint Retrospective Meeting

(Meetings Section of CollabNet Scrum Web-Based Training)

by

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We see the title page.

We see the same six-module table of contents page as before, this time emphasizing the Sprint Retrospective Meeting.

>   NARRATOR
>   Welcome to part six of CollabNet's
>   Scrum Training Series: The Sprint
>   Retrospective Meeting. I'm Michael
>   James.

We see the Scrum Flow diagram.

>   NARRATOR
>   The Retrospective is the very last step
>   of the Scrum cycle, after the Sprint
>   Review Meeting. The empirical feedback
>   from the Sprint Review Meeting should
>   influence the retrospective
>   discussions.

Checkmarks appear on the Backlog Refinement Meeting, Sprint Planning Meeting, Daily Scrum Meeting, and Sprint Review Meeting (of the Scrum Flow diagram).

Visual emphasis on the Sprint Retrospective Meeting box (of the Scrum Flow diagram).

We see the circuit diagram animation from the intro. The words "product" and "process" synchronize with the narration.

>   NARRATOR
>   The Sprint Review Meeting was our
>   chance to inspect and adapt the
>   PRODUCT. Now the Sprint Retrospective
>   Meeting is the Team's chance to inspect
>   and adapt its PROCESS.

We see the Team, Product Owner, and ScrumMaster on a green background (the color of the "Chaotic" zone of the Stacey Diagram from the intro module). The ScrumMaster is holding a big golden key, which opens the framework image from the intro module.

>   The Retrospective is the key to using
>   Scrum as a framework for learning,
>   rather than the stale defined processes
>   we usually see.

Zoom out, to see that all along we have been standing on the Chaotic zone of the Stacey Diagram.

> In a complex world, only learning teams
> and learning organizations will thrive.
> The ScrumMaster's goal is to create the
> conditions for a learning team, and
> eventually a learning organization.

We see the quote below written out with the full title credit below.

> According to *The Skilled Facilitator* by
> Roger Schwarz, "The facilitator does
> not intervene directly in the content
> of a group's discussions; to do so
> would be to abandon neutrality and
> reduce the group's responsibility for
> solving its problems."

We see emphasis on the ScrumMaster's ears (see "listening" below). Maybe they get bigger or something.

> The ScrumMaster's listening and
> facilitation skills in this meeting
> make a big difference.

We see a team of five or seven people around a round table. They are all the same height.

> Even in a team that's declared as self
> organizing, status affects all
> transactions.

We see some members of the team grow taller while others get shorter.

> Also, some people have a greater
> tendency to form opinions and vocalize
> them before others have figured out how
> they feel.

We see the loudmouth illustration. Two people (same height now) are having a conversation. One person with a large mouth talks loudly about an apple (which we see in his word bubble). The second person starts to form a thought bubble showing an orange, but the apple word bubble pushes it out of the frame.

An effective facilitator sometimes uses
status leveling techniques to reveal a
greater cross-section of viewpoints
from the team.

We see the narrator (MJ) with a pointer and the module agenda:
Safety Check, Focused Conversation Principles, Basic
Retrospective, Silent Writing, Timeline retrospective

In this module I'll show you my own
interpretation of techniques I've found
useful. Since I may do things
differently than the inventors of these
techniques may have intended, at the
end I'll refer you to original sources.
As usual, I'll quiz you along the way.

QUIZ -- MULTIPLE CHOICE

Question: "Henry Ford discovered the more *adapted* you become to
an unchanging situation, the less *adaptable* you are. In an
uncertain world, which is a better area for a ScrumMaster to
focus?"

Wrong answer: "An efficient team. More! Better! Faster!"

Right answer: "A learning team. A learning team can become
efficient when necessary."

END QUIZ

BEGIN Chapter 1: Safety Check

NARRATOR
Most people understand that a team will
only have candid dialogue in an
environment of psychological safety.

We see a team of five. Two people look secure and confident,
one person looks neutral, and two people look insecure but try
to hide it.

But when someone feels safe in an
interaction, they often make the
mistake of assuming everyone else is
equally safe. A good facilitator knows
this is rarely the case.

      Rather than make assumptions, I suggest
      ScrumMasters start with an anonymous
      safety check.

      [ACTION] We see the door of the team
      room.

      We'll watch our ScrumMaster follow a
      safety check procedure recommended by a
      facilitator named Steven Smith.

[@DESIGNERS: Insert our usual "Continue" button.]

BEGIN SCENE

We hear the door sound effect (same sound as Sprint Review
Meeting).

Now we see the team and the ScrumMaster in the team room. The
room is empty except for them and the safety check gradient (see
below).

We see the ScrumMaster doing the actions described in the
narration below.

                SCRUMMASTER
      We're going to do a safety check before
      the main part of the retrospective.
      I'm giving each of you a blank ballot.
      Hang on to them for a minute.

We see the ScrumMaster handing out blank ballots.

      Think about a situation in your life
      where you felt unsafe, uncomfortable,
      or awkward.

We see all team members looking very uncomfortable. Some team
members look scared. One looks angry.

      Now bring yourself back to the most
      comfortable and relaxed situation you
      can remember.

We see all team members looking very relaxed, almost falling
asleep.

> Now I'm going to ask you how you feel
> right now in this room doing this
> retrospective. Please write a number
> from the safety gradient and fold it so
> others cannot read it. Even the
> participants who feel safe should not
> reveal their choice, to protect the
> anonymity of those who don't.

We see a close up of the safety gradient diagram with a footnote
"© 2000-2012 Steven M. Smith. Used with permission." The
action stops with a button that says "Click to
continue." [@DESIGNERS: For this diagram please reproduce Table
1 from http://stevenmsmith.com/ar-safety-check/ . Keep the
words exactly the same, but improve the graphics if you like.]

We see an extreme close up of a participant's hand cupping the
card while writing the number 3. Then the participant folds the
card in half so the number is hidden.

>   SCRUMMASTER
> Now I'll collect and tally your votes.
> Please put them in the hat.

The ScrumMaster uses a hat (maybe MJ's cowboy hat) to collect
the votes from participants. She unfolds them away from the
other participants and we see a close up of the six cards with
handwritten numbers on them. The numbers are 3, 4, 2, 3, 2, 1.

[@DESIGNERS: Please examine Table 2 from the Steven Smith Safety
Check article.] The ScrumMaster completes the Safety Check
Gradient chart by putting one X mark on line 1, two X marks on
line 2, two X marks on line 3, and one X mark on line 4.

[@DESIGNERS: Insert our usual Continue button.]

QUIZ -- MULTIPLE CHOICE

Question: "According to Roger Schwarz, facilitators should
remain neutral about content and attempt to decrease the group's
dependence on the facilitator. Therefore, what should the
ScrumMaster do next?"

Wrong answer: "Announce her own opinion about the safety check
histogram results."

Right answer: "Ask the group to interpret the safety check histogram results."

END QUIZ

                  SCRUMMASTER
      So Team, before we begin the main part
      of the retrospective, what is your
      interpretation of the histogram?

END SCENE

BEGIN LECTURE

We see the classroom environment.

                  NARRATOR
      The safety check wasn't in the original
      Scrum books, but more teams are seeing
      the value of doing it from time to
      time, especially in the beginning. A
      safety check by itself is not a
      complete retrospective.

      If safety is very low, breaking into
      groups of three or four can be helpful.

We see an illustration of nine people breaking into three groups of three.

      A couple weeks ago I dropped in on a
      retrospective for a group that said
      they were "doing Scrum" even though
      they had about 15 people in the room,
      no clear idea who was on the team, and
      accountability to people other than the
      Product Owner.

During the next narration we see an animation of several people talking to each other, then going quiet when a boss walks into the room. [@DESIGNERS: The boss should look friendly.] The boss is not aware people were talking and stopped because of him.

> One last point on safety: you've
> probably heard a productive
> conversation at work stop as soon as
> the boss walks in the room, even when
> the boss is a nice, helpful guy who
> used to be one of them and never asked
> to be a boss.

The boss turns around and we now see that he's wearing a gun on
his other hip (previously hidden from view)! The boss himself
is oblivious to the gun.

> I think of this as the "invisible gun
> effect."

We see the words "Invisible Gun Effect" timed to match the
narration.

> The gun might be invisible to the boss
> because he has no intention of harming
> anyone, he's just there to help. But
> subordinates sometimes do see it,
> because they realize the company has
> given the boss power over who gets
> promotions, who's retained in the event
> of a layoff, etc.

[@DESIGNERS: See if you can come up with an illustration of this
principle.]

> Concern about looking good for the boss
> can color subordinate interactions with
> each other in ways that might be not
> align with optimal team self
> organization.

[@DESIGNERS: See if you can come up with an illustration of
individual team members "looking good for the boss" instead of
self organizing.]

> Also, the presence of someone who has
> traditionally been responsible for
> their work has sometimes kept teams
> from taking as much responsibility as
> they might otherwise.
>
> It can be hard to see these effects
> because people don't admit to

themselves they're happening. One
group I worked with was so concerned
with this problem they put their
managers on different teams than their
subordinates.

We see MJ holding the globe.

The same challenges can also arise with
contractors, especially when they're on
the other side of the world.

QUIZ -- MULTIPLE CHOICE

Question: "Is retrospective safety enhanced by inviting outside
spectators who weren't working on the team?"

Wrong answer: "Yes. It's just like watching a hockey game."

Right answer: "No. If the team needs to discuss issues with
outsiders it's usually better to do this after the
retrospective."

END QUIZ

QUIZ -- MULTIPLE CHOICE

Question: "Is a safety check by itself a complete Sprint
retrospective?"

Wrong answer: "Yes."

Right answer: "No."

END QUIZ

END CHAPTER

CHAPTER 2: CLASSIC SCRUM RETROSPECTIVE

                NARRATOR
        Scrum does not define particular
        retrospective practices other than

suggesting a discussion of what went
well and what could be improved.

We see the Classic Retrospective Notes diagram on a marker-board
with headers "What went well?" and "What could be
improved?" [@DESIGNERS: See emailed sketch classic Scrum
Retrospective diagram 1.]

>   NARRATOR
>   It's common to refer to these as
>   plusses and deltas for short.

The words in the headers change to a plus sign and a triangle
(delta). [@DESIGNERS: See emailed sketch.]

>   NARRATOR
>   Other topics could be "What did we
>   learn?" and "What still puzzles us?"

The headers change to "What did we learn?" and "What still
puzzles us?"

>   The idea is for the people on the team
>   to have a conversation leading to
>   agreements about actions. We do this
>   every Sprint instead of waiting until
>   the end like a waterfall project post-
>   mortem. Let's watch one now.

BEGIN SCENE

We see the door of the team room and a Continue button.

We hear the door opening sound effect.

We see the team talking to each other. The plusses and deltas
diagram is on a marker-board in the back with illegible writing
in both columns. We hear the group conversation sound effect
[@MJ: We need the sound of a small group talking, or reuse one
of the opening sounds.] Occasionally team members add to the
illegible writing in both columns.

We see another marker-board appear, with the header "Actions."
We hear the pen squeaking sound effect as team members take
turns writing out a numbered list of actions:

Move daily Scrum time from 9AM to 10AM.

Clarify definition of *done*: help menus revised for UI changes.

Take on less work next Sprint Planning Meeting.

Slice PBIs smaller during Backlog Refinement.

Amend team agreements regarding coding conventions.

Get pens that don't squeak.

END SCENE

> NARRATOR
> So that was example classic
> retrospective.

BEGIN QUIZ -- MULTIPLE CHOICE

Question: "In Scrum, how often is the Sprint Retrospective Meeting conducted?"

Wrong answer: "Every day."

Right answer: "Every Sprint."

Wrong answer: "Every project."

END QUIZ

END CHAPTER

CHAPTER 3: Focused Conversation Principles

> NARRATOR
> According to Roger Schwarz: "Members
> often begin solving problems by
> suggesting solutions before agreeing on
> the problem or its causes."

We see the Roger Schwarz quote with footnote for *Skilled Facilitator.*

Click to continue.

> NARRATOR
> A ScrumMaster can help with this
> problem by keeping the group on the
> same step.

We see the ORID chart. Under the ORID chart in smaller print we see "a.k.a. The Focused Conversation Model by Brian Stanfield.*"

The footnote reads "* Brian Stanfield, *The Art of Focused Conversation* (1999)"

> For example, some facilitators like to
> keep the group in distinct steps for
> Objective questions such as "What
> happened?", Reflective questions such
> as "How do we feel about it?",
> Interpretive Questions such as "What
> does it mean?", and Decision Questions
> such as "What are we going to do about
> it?"

> Professional negotiator William Ury
> gets people to focus on their interests
> rather than bargaining in from
> particular positions.

> And marriage researcher John Gottman
> finds couples are more likely to stay
> married if they learn to start
> negotiating from their core interests
> rather than pushing for particular
> outcomes.

> The common element to remember from all
> the experts is to make sure decisions
> about actions come last. In the next
> chapter we'll see an example technique
> to help with this.

END CHAPTER

BEGIN CHAPTER 4: Silent Writing

BEGIN SCENE

We see the door of the team room.

Click to continue.

We hear the door open.

In the team room we see the ScrumMaster, six team members --
each with a stack of Post-It Notes and a pen, and the timebox.

> SCRUMMASTER
> I've given each of you a stack of Post-
> It notes. I'd like you to spend ten

> minutes writing one observation per
> Post-It note about the previous Sprint.
> Write them down whether they're good,
> bad, or neutral, and don't worry about
> categorizing them yet. Hold off on
> discussing them until everyone's done
> writing.

We hear the intro_outro theme, or some other music. We see the
team members filling out Post-It Notes. After a minute, two
team members get stuck and stop writing.

                    SCRUMMASTER
          When you get stuck, consider writing
          down the things you weren't sure
          whether to write.

More music. We see the two stuck team members start writing
again.

As the whole team continues to write, we see the timebox tick
down from 10 minutes to zero.

                    SCRUMMASTER
          When you're ready, stick your notes on
          the board here and have a conversation
          about them. Make sure none of them are
          ignored. If you like, you can group
          the related ones.

More music. We see the team stick lots of Post-It notes on a
large marker-board. Then we see/hear a lot of talking. The
team moves the Post-It Notes around until they form five groups.

                    SCRUMMASTER
          Has everyone had a chance to talk about
          the things they wrote?

Brief pause while the ScrumMaster listens.

                    SCRUMMASTER
          Now work out some agreed actions to
          take for future Sprints, based on your
          shared understanding.

                    TEAM MEMBER
          Should we write down the actions?

BEGIN QUIZ -- MULTIPLE CHOICE

Question: "What should the ScrumMaster say next?"

Wrong answer: "Yes, I need to put them in a tracking system so we can make sure everyone else in the company approves of the way you work with each other."

Right answer: "Yes, writing down agreements is a way to confirm you understand each other. However, since you own your internal agreements they don't have to leave this room."

END QUIZ

END SCENE

END CHAPTER

BEGIN CHAPTER 5: Timeline Retrospective

We return to MJ's classroom.

> NARRATOR
> I first experienced a timeline
> retrospective when my friend ran one
> for my team. ScrumMasters can throw
> this one in occasionally to surface
> things that might not have been
> discussed otherwise. Here's just one
> way to do this.

BEGIN SCENE

Once again we see the team room door and a Continue button. As usual, after clicking Continue we hear the door opening sound.

In the teamroom we watch the ScrumMaster draw the timeline diagram (see Timeline_Diagram.pdf).

> SCRUMMASTER
> Team, write down your recollection of
> the previous Sprint's events and stick
> them up on the timeline roughly
> corresponding to when they occurred.

We see the team write about 20 Post-It notes and stick them along the timeline. There are three main clumps: the beginning, the halfway point, and the end. A few Post-It notes are between the clumps.

                    SCRUMMASTER
          Now read each other's notes and have a
          discussion about what they mean.

                    PETER PILOT
          For example?

The ScrumMaster points to a clump of Post-It Notes toward the
center of the timeline diagram.

                    SCRUMMASTER
          For example, this clump here in the
          middle of the Sprint. What was that
          about?

Peter pilot points to the same clump of Post-It Notes.

                    PETER PILOT
          Halfway through the Sprint there was a
          disagreement whether to keep using
          custom client side libraries or switch
          to kQuery. Most of us wrote something
          Objective about that here.

                    SCRUMMASTER
          This meeting could be a time to collect
          Reflections and Interpretations about
          how you handled that, leading to
          Decisions on how to handle design
          disagreements in the future.

                    PETER PILOT
          But our team never seems to decide
          anything!

                    SCRUMMASTER
          We'll get to that soon.

END SCENE

We see MJ in front of the chalkboard again. The chalkboard
shows the Timeline Retrospective Scope diagram (see
Timeline_Retrospective_Scope_Diagram.pdf).

                    NARRATOR
          In this example the timeline focused
          only on the Sprint, which would be the
          normal scope of a Sprint Retrospective
          Meeting.

MJ uses the chalk to check off the word "Sprint" on the Timeline Retrospective Scope diagram.

> NARRATOR
> In special cases it may also be useful
> to expand the scope to an entire
> release cycle, or even a team's entire
> history.

As MJ speaks he checks off the two corresponding lines of the diagram.

MJ holds up two books: *Agile Retrospectives: Making Good Teams Great* and *Project Retrospectives: A Handbook for Team Reviews*.

> NARRATOR
> For other ideas, see *Agile
> Retrospectives* by Derby and Larson, or
> for an earlier description see *Project
> Retrospectives* by Norman Kerth.

END CHAPTER

BEGIN CHAPTER 6: Decisions

BEGIN SCENE

Usual scene beginning: door of team room, continue button, door opening sound.

We see the ScrumMaster addressing the team. There are Post-It Notes scattered all over the floor.

> SCRUMMASTER
> It sounds like your conversation has
> wound down. Do you feel you've reached
> an understanding of each other's
> perspectives? Any new reflections and
> insights?

> PETER PILOT
> (joking)
>
> Yes, I finally realized that not all
> emacs users are stubborn people with
> left hand carpal tunnel syndrome from

                typing control-alt-shift-Z. Only Andy
                is.

                    ANDY ARCHITECT
                (joking)

                What was that Mr. Vee Eye Guy? I
                didn't get that because I wasn't in
                text insert mode.

Peter and Andy high five. Team looks a little confused.

                    ANDY ARCHITECT
                (now serious)

                Maybe I should get this hand looked at
                though.

We see that the pinky and ring finger of Andy's left hand are
twisted up from years of using an ergonomically unfriendly text
editor.

                    SCRUMMASTER
                OK, that was interesting. Is there any
                other unfinished business before we
                move on to decision making?

Team is silent.

END SCENE

We're back in the classroom.

                    NARRATOR
                In this case the ScrumMaster moved for
                closure, though in later Sprints we'd
                expect the team to rely on her less (as
                her focus shifts to impediments caused
                by the outer organization). In either
                case, the team should write out a few
                actions to take. For the Team to own
                their commitment to action, the
                ScrumMaster should ask the Team to do
                the writing. In fact, Amway
                Corporation discovered customers are
                more likely to keep purchase agreements
                when the customers write up the sales
                order instead of the salesman.*

Footnote reads "* Robert Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* (2006)"

                    NARRATOR
          Not all differences can be resolved and
          not all teams have enough reason to
          stay together. Nearly all situations
          can be substantially improved when the
          group is committed to this. Small
          teams do have a greater probability of
          reaching consensus than large groups,
          especially when they have some control
          over who joins them.

BEGIN QUIZ -- MULTIPLE CORRECT -- "Choose three."

Groups often fool themselves with "pseudo-solutions" that don't really change anything. Which of the following are more likely to result in action (i.e. NOT pseudo-solutions*)?

Wrong answer: "Make an agreement that will be vetoed by someone who is not present."

Wrong answer: "Agree to 'try harder' from now on."

Right answer: "A volunteer agrees to a specific action by a specific date."

Right answer: "Team writes concrete adjustments to its working agreements."

Right answer: "Team agrees to try a different approach as an experiment for one Sprint."

Wrong answer: "Delegate a job to someone who won't have time to do it."

* Example pseudo-solutions from Sam Kaner, *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making* (1996)

END QUIZ

open space

[ACTIONS SECTION]

example of coming from positions rather than core interests

actions have deadlines, point people

Organizational impediments form.

Agile Manifesto.

[ENDING CALL TO ACTION]

                    NARRATOR
     While this module is intended to open
     your eyes a little

Show covers of these books, maybe held up by cartoon images of their authors?

     I would expect a serious ScrumMaster
     mix up techniques from books such as
     Agile Retrospectives by Esther Derby/
     Diane Larsen, *Faciliator's Guide to*
     Participatory Decision Making by Sam
     Kaner, and *The Skilled Facilitator* by
     Roger Schwarz. I've learned even more
     from classes on facilitation, Scrum
     Gatherings, and conferences such as
     Amplifying Your Effectiveness (AYE).
     These are different skills and a
     different way of being than
     conventional management. Once you've
     adopted the different way of being, the
     particular techniques don't matter as
     much.

We see the conclusion slide

                    NARRATOR
     Congratulations, you've completed the
     last module in this series. If you did
     all the quizzes, studied the six-page
     Scrum Reference Card, and are prepared
     to answer questions about the four
     values and twelve principles of the
     Agile Manifesto, you're probably in
     good shape for my class, or anyone
     else's. Feel free to repeat these
     modules and quizzes as many times as
     you need to. Most of the trouble

people have in class or on the tests
are due to language differences. If
you had any trouble understanding me,
go through this again or contact your
instructor for help.

If you enjoyed these modules, or if you
hated them, please drop me a line with
your feedback. Thank you for
listening.

END LESSON

END SERIES