Individual Assignment #1

Due Date: Friday, July 07, before 10:00pm

Tasks:
This is an *individual* assignment – all questions should be answered by you, according to your thinking.
1.) Familiarize yourself with the purpose of doing reflective essays (attached).
2.) Answer the following 4 questions:

Q1. *What do you believe is the weakest aspect of the project idea you proposed at the LCO stage? Is this a fundamental limitation of the idea and/or the environment in which your proposed product would run? If not, how may that aspect be improved or its consequences mitigated?*

Q2. *Select two of the many best practices listed in Part III of "Rapid Development" (with the exception of those that concern various lifecycle models) that you think will be most valuable to adopt for the project you are now part of. Explain your choice.*
Tip: Quickly go through the practices first, to get a sense of the possibilities and how they might apply to your project's situation.

Q3. *Which of the team structures described in Chapter 13 of "Rapid Development" do you suggest that your project team adopts? Why? How different is your choice from the team structures preferred by your project teammates?*
Note: For the last part of the question it would be necessary to find out what your teammates chose; naturally, this will not be considered cheating.

Q4. *Consider the "20 Questions for Startup Success", shown in one of the recent lectures.*
   a) *Which questions do you not have answers to with respect to the current project you're involved in?*
   b) *State one or two potential barriers to the success of your current project. Be specific.*
       Tip: In the terminology of questions 17-19 (of the 20), these barriers may be broadly related to product, technology, operations, marketing, sales, or legal aspects.
       Note: In your answers we are not expecting a deep understanding of these non-technical areas.

Format:
- Use at most 2 pages of text *total* for all of your answers. Non-textual artifacts (e.g., images), if any, are limited to 1 additional page (embedded inside the same document).
- Format your document to be single-spaced, using font size 11 or larger.
- Save your work preferably in rich text format (RTF or DOC). We cannot edit (and add comments to) PDF without copying the contents over.

Things to remember:
- Name the file that contains your essay using the following convention:
    o *LastName*-cse403-assn1.rtf, where *LastName* is replaced with your last name.
- Put your name also in the header field of your document, not only in the filename.

Submission: via UW Catalyst's eSubmit tool:
   https://catalyst.washington.edu/webtools/secure/esubmit/turnin.cgi?owner=vrazmov&id=4670

Follow-up: As part of our feedback, we will pose a follow-up question or two, based on what you wrote. You will be expected to answer that in writing too, though we anticipate that the answer will take you less time to produce than the original writing did.

Reflective Essays

The goal of reflective essays is to:
- (a) get you to think more deeply about certain aspects of the course;
- (b) give you an opportunity to practice articulating your reflections.

Reflecting upon your experience deepens your understanding of the particular domain, shows it in a different light, and helps you to generate new ideas and possibilities in this and other domains. Practicing reflection is important, since this skill is critical for becoming an expert in *any* field – only by reflecting upon what happened can you learn from previous successes and mistakes.

Here are some general techniques that will help you to get the most out of your reflections:
- Write in the first person about what happened to *you*, not to some abstract person.
- Write about things that are meaningful to *you* or happened to *you*. You will have more energy to dig into those topics.

Consider the following aspects as you reflect upon your experience:
- What stood out for you?
- What insights did it give you?
- What is *one* thing you will do differently as a result of what you learned?
- Use facts to ground your assertions.
- Do not confuse opinions with facts.

We are looking for stories about issues meaningful to you, communicated in a way that makes them meaningful to the reader (i.e., us).

Good essays have solid content, clear style, are grounded in factual assertions, and communicate well. Incidentally, good code has the same characteristics, so excellent software developers tend to also be excellent writers. In the end, writing code and writing a good reflective piece are both about communicating effectively with your audiences – an indispensable skill regardless of your domain of expertise.

In our experience, good reflective essays often include one or more of the following aspects:
- Demonstrate how lessons from this course have enabled you to do things that you were not able to do before – things not necessarily related to the course. This may include noticing aspects of the world around you that you had not previously noticed.
- Discuss how you have used lessons from other areas of your life to benefit your (or your team's) performance in this course.
- Illustrate how this course is (or is not) changing your beliefs and ideas about what is (or is not) possible for you to achieve.
- Analyze situations using tools / techniques learned in this course, and discuss how well those tools / techniques worked for you.
- Discuss a situation from multiple perspectives.