Mob Programming Cheat Sheet

humane workplaces – systems thinking – lean thinking – agility – craftsmanship – value – sustainability

Tips for Effective Mob Programming   NeoPragma

	Collocated	Remote
Monitors	Use one or two large monitors. Don't try to view shared screens on individual machines.	Participants must view a shared screen on their respective machines.
Timer	Start with a timer app on your phone, as it is easy for people to use. Move to an online timer later if the team finds it useful.	Use an online mob programming timer such as Mobster. Everyone can see it. It keeps track of time and suggests the next driver.
Driver	The Driver doesn't think. The Driver types what the Navigator says, even if he/she disagrees with it. The Navigator (or whole group) do the thinking. It's natural for the Driver to start thinking and to take over the session. The facilitator or the rest of the team must be alert to this.	Consider muting the Driver so that he/she can't be heard by the rest of the team. This mitigates the tendency for the Driver to think and take over the session.
Navigator	Position the Navigator far from the Driver, so that everyone can hear what the Navigator says.	Videoconferencing tool solves this for remote sessions.
Room setup	Set up the room without tables, so that people will not be tempted to use phones or laptops while in the session.	Can't control individuals' physical spaces, so this issue is out of scope for remote sessions.
Rotation time	Use the shortest possible rotation time. As a starting point, rotate Drivers every 3 minutes. Industry experience is that the number of iterations is more important than the total session time, so switching Drivers frequently is advised.	Same considerations for remote sessions.
Rotation efficiency	Teams must learn to change positions smoothly and without wasting time. Everyone can move at once, rather than politely waiting for each person to arrive at their new position. Teams can learn a kind of "choreography" for changing positions, with a few minutes' practice.	Rotation efficiency depends on how the collaboration tools work. With realtime collaborative coding, e.g. VSCode or VisualStudio, rotation is nearly instantaneous; people need not change positions. With a screen-sharing scheme, the current Driver must commit to version control and stop sharing, and the new Driver must pull from version control and start sharing. This means it may take several seconds to switch Drivers.
Team interaction	Verbal.	Verbal using the audio feature of the videoconferencing software. If network audio is bad, use phones. Also use the chat feature of the videoconferencing software, or separate software such as Slack, to support text messaging.

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