Speaking about software requirements using physical artifacts: A study from a situated cognition perspective

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Abstract: In this paper, we report our ethnographically-informed study of a software development team using Agile software development methods in an industry. An Agile team relies on the use of simple artifacts, such as the story cards and the wall to communicate software requirements with one another. However little is known how the simple artifacts support this communication practice. Hence, we wanted to study how the physical artifacts are used among team members to communicate their software requirements. We used situated cognition to provide us with an analytic view of speaking (i.e., story recollection). We found that in every one of the recollection processes, the team members were occupied with reconstructing specific details from the events in developing the story card. The team members were engaged together in this reconstruction to make their situated context coherent.