(SOME) ROLES IN PAIR-COACHING

Trainer / Observer

In this pair-coaching scenario, one coach may lead the training while the second may:

- observe to offer feedback later
- tag-in and lead other slides of same training
- be called upon as an expert (SME) or for her experience/validation
- scan the audience for outliers / those needing attention

Prescriptive / Progressive

As a coach, you may find there are times when the team (or one member) pushes back strongly on what is being suggested. In this extreme pattern, having ***one coach prescribe*** "what must be done" is necessary. To lessen the impact of the harsh message (and prevent a backlash), the ***second coach can provide much needed empathy***, a voice advocating to try the experiment to find learning.

Co-learners

When the subject matter is new to both participants, or the terrain is dangerous, each coach helps the other understand in very short feedback loops. This type of dynamic may happen when we pair up to do exercises at a conference or other training session. Much like saying "***two heads are better than one***", each of us has our own perspective on things, but by listening to and learning from each other, we help increase our own knowledge bit by bit.

Driver / Navigator

This pairing resembles the Trainer/Observer, but it can happen ***outside of the full team environment***. Two coaches can make light work of otherwise daunting tasks, saving time, catching errors and preventing rework. A Product Owner / Scrum Master relationship may make use of this dynamic during a story writing exercise or preparing for a complex backlog grooming session.

Senpai / Kohai

The Japanese culture gave us the *senpai/kohai* relationship. Similar to a mentor / protégé (or a senior / junior) pairing, this role can be thought of as a more formalized "***buddy system***" to be used when newer members join an organization. This can be a very beneficial role to play as an agile coach. Thinking back to your first days on the job, did someone help you with onboarding, telling you how to navigate the HR paperwork, where to submit the expense reports and what time is best for booking the meeting rooms?