Principles that Guide Practice

Knowledge vs. principles

"You often hear people say that software development knowledge has a 3-year half-life: half of what you need to know today will be obsolete within 3 years. In the domain of technology-related knowledge, that's probably about right. But there is another kind of software development knowledge—a kind that I think of as "software engineering principles"— that does not have a three-year half-life. These software engineering principles are likely to serve a professional programmer throughout his or her career. "

- Steve McConnell

What, Who, and Why

- Software practice
  - a broad array of **principles, concepts, methods and tools** that you must consider as software is planned and developed.
  - what you do day in and day out as software evolves from an idea to a reality
- Software process
  - a road map for getting to a successful destination
- Elements
  - principles, concepts and methods
    - tools supports the application of methods.

Principles guiding software process

- **Principle #1.** ***Be agile.***
  - Whether the process model you choose is prescriptive or agile, the basic tenets of agile development should govern your approach.
- **Principle #2.** ***Focus on quality at every step.***
  - The exit condition for every process activity, action, and task should focus on the quality of the work product that has been produced.
- **Principle #3.** ***Be ready to adapt.***
  - Process is not a religious experience and dogma has no place in it. When necessary, adapt your approach to constraints imposed by the problem, the people, and the project itself.
- **Principle #4.** ***Build an effective team.***
  - Software engineering process and practice are important, but the bottom line is people. Build a self-organizing team that has mutual trust and respect.

Principles guiding software process

- **Principle #5.** ***Establish mechanisms for communication and coordination.***
  - Projects fail because important information falls into the cracks and/or stakeholders fail to coordinate their efforts to create a successful end product.
- **Principle #6.** ***Manage change.***
  - The approach may be either formal or informal, but mechanisms must be established to manage the way changes are requested, assessed, approved and implemented.
- **Principle #7.** ***Assess risk.***
  - Lots of things can go wrong as software is being developed. It's essential that you establish contingency plans.
- **Principle #8.** ***Create work products that provide value for others.***
  - Create only those work products that provide value for other process activities, actions or tasks.

Principles guiding practice

- **Principle #1. *Divide and conquer.***
  - Stated in a more technical manner, analysis and design should always emphasize *separation of concerns*(SoC).
- **Principle #2. *Understand the use of abstraction.***
  - At it core, an abstraction is a simplification of some complex element of a system used to communication meaning in a single phrase.
- **Principle #3. Strive for consistency.**
  - A familiar context makes software easier to use.
- **Principle #4. *Focus on the transfer of information.***
  - Pay special attention to the analysis, design, construction, and testing of interfaces.

Principles guiding practice

- **Principle #5.*Build software that exhibits effective modularity.***
  - Separation of concerns (Principle #1) establishes a philosophy for software. *Modularity* provides a mechanism for realizing the philosophy.
- **Principle #6.*Look for patterns.***
  - The goal of patterns within the software community is to create a body of literature to help software developers resolve recurring problems encountered throughout all of software development.
- **Principle #7. *When possible, represent the problem and its solution from a number of different perspectives.***
- **Principle #8. *Remember that someone will maintain the software.***

Communication principles

- **Principle #1. *Listen.***
  - Try to focus on the speaker's words, rather than formulating your response to those words.
- **Principle # 2. *Prepare before you communicate.***
  - Spend the time to understand the problem before you meet with others.
- **Principle # 3. *Someone should facilitate the activity.***
  - Every communication meeting should have a leader (a facilitator) to keep the conversation moving in a productive direction; (2) to mediate any conflict that does occur, and (3) to ensure than other principles are followed.
- **Principle #4. *Face-to-face communication is best.***
  - But it usually works better when some other representation of the relevant information is present.

Communication principles

- **Principle # 5.** ***Take notes and document decisions.***
  - Someone participating in the communication should serve as a "recorder" and write down all important points and decisions.
- **Principle # 6.** ***Strive for collaboration.***
  - Collaboration and consensus occur when the collective knowledge of members of the team is combined …
- **Principle # 7.** ***Stay focused, modularize your discussion.***
  - The more people involved in any communication, the more likely that discussion will bounce from one topic to the next.
- **Principle # 8.** ***If something is unclear, draw a picture.***
- **Principle # 9.** ***(a) Once you agree to something, move on; (b) If you can't agree to something, move on; (c) If a feature or function is unclear and cannot be clarified at the moment, move on.***
- **Principle # 10.** ***Negotiation is not a contest or a game. It works best when both parties win.***

Planning principles

- **Principle #1.** ***Understand the scope of the project.***
  - It's impossible to use a roadmap if you don't know where you're going. Scope provides the software team with a destination.
- **Principle #2.** ***Involve the customer in the planning activity.***
  - The customer defines priorities and establishes project constraints.
- **Principle #3.*****Recognize that planning is iterative.***
  - A project plan is never engraved in stone. As work begins, it very likely that things will change.
- **Principle #4.** ***Estimate based on what you know.***
  - The intent of estimation is to provide an indication of effort, cost, and task duration, based on the team's current understanding of the work to be done.

Planning principles

- **Principle #5.** ***Consider risk as you define the plan.***
  - If you have identified risks that have high impact and high probability, contingency planning is necessary.
- **Principle #6.** ***Be realistic.***
  - People don't work 100 percent of every day.
- **Principle #7.** ***Adjust granularity as you define the plan.***
  - *Granularity* refers to the level of detail that is introduced as a project plan is developed.
- **Principle #8.** ***Define how you intend to ensure quality.***
  - The plan should identify how the software team intends to ensure quality.
- **Principle #9.** ***Describe how you intend to accommodate change.***
  - Even the best planning can be obviated by uncontrolled change.
- **Principle #10.** ***Track the plan frequently and make adjustments as required.***
  - Software projects fall behind schedule one day at a time.

Modeling principles

- Requirement modeling principles
  - **Principle #1.** ***The information domain of a problem must be represented and understood.***
  - **Principle #2.** ***The functions that the software performs must be defined.***
  - **Principle #3.** ***The behavior of the software (as a consequence of external events) must be represented.***
  - **Principle #4.** ***The models that depict information, function, and behavior must be partitioned in a manner that uncovers detail in a layered (or hierarchical) fashion.***
  - **Principle #5.** ***The analysis task should move from essential information toward implementation detail.***

In software engineering work, two classes of models can be created:

Requirements models(also called *analysis models*) represent the customer requirements by depicting the software in three different domains: the information domain, the functional domain, and the behavioral domain.

*Design models*represent characteristics of the software that help practitioners to construct it effectively: the architecture, the user interface, and component-level detail.

Modeling principles

- Design modeling principles
  - **Principle #1. *Design should be traceable to the requirements model.***
  - **Principle #2. *Always consider the architecture of the system to be built.***
  - **Principle #3. *Design of data is as important as design of processing functions.***
  - **Principle #5. User interface design should be tuned to the needs of the end-user. However, in every case, it should stress ease of use.**
  - **Principle #6. Component-level design should be functionally independent.**
  - **Principle #7. Components should be loosely coupled to one another and to the external environment.**
  - **Principle #8. Design representations (models) should be easily understandable.**
  - **Principle #9. The design should be developed iteratively. With each iteration, the designer should strive for greater simplicity.**

Modeling principles

- Agile modeling principles
  - Principle #1. ***The primary goal of the software team is to build software, not create models.***
  - Principle #2. ***Travel light—don't create more models than you need.***
  - Principle #3. ***Strive to produce the simplest model that will describe the problem or the software.***
  - Principle #4. ***Build models in a way that makes them amenable to change.***
  - Principle #5. ***Be able to state an explicit purpose for each model that is created.***
  - Principle #6. ***Adapt the models you develop to the system at hand.***
  - Principle #7. ***Try to build useful models, but forget about building perfect models.***
  - Principle #8. ***Don't become dogmatic about the syntax of the model. If it communicates content successfully, representation is secondary.***
  - Principle #9. ***If your instincts tell you a model isn't right even though it seems okay on paper, you probably have reason to be concerned.***
  - Principle #10. ***Get feedback as soon as you can.***

Construction principles

- Preparation principles
  - Understand of the problem you're trying to solve.
  - Understand basic design principles and concepts.
  - Pick a programming language that meets the needs of the software to be built and the environment in which it will operate.
  - Select a programming environment that provides tools that will make your work easier.
  - Create a set of unit tests that will be applied once the component you code is completed.

The construction activity encompasses a set of coding and testing tasks that lead to operational software that is ready for delivery to the customer or end-user.

Construction principles

- Coding principles - as you start
  - Constrain your algorithms by following structured programming [Boh00] practice.
  - Consider the use of pair programming
  - Select data structures that will meet the needs of the design.
  - Understand the software architecture and create interfaces that are consistent with it.
  - Keep conditional logic as simple as possible.
  - Create nested loops in a way that makes them easily testable.
  - Select meaningful variable names and follow other local coding standards.
  - Write code that is self-documenting.
  - Create a visual layout (e.g., indentation and blank lines) that aids understanding.

Coding principles and concepts are closely aligned programming style, programming languages, and programming methods.

Construction principles

- Coding principles – after finishing first pass (validation principles)
  - Conduct a code walkthrough when appropriate.
  - Perform unit tests and correct errors you've uncovered.
  - Refactor the code.

Construction principles

- Testing principles
  - **Principle #1.** ***All tests should be traceable to customer requirements.***
  - **Principle #2.** ***Tests should be planned long before testing begins.***
  - **Principle #3.** ***The Pareto principle applies to software testing.***
  - **Principle #4.** ***Testing should begin "in the small" and progress toward testing "in the large."***
  - **Principle #5.** ***Exhaustive testing is not possible.***

Deployment principles

- **Principle #1.** ***Customer expectations for the software must be managed.***
  - Too often, the customer expects more than the team has promised to deliver, and disappointment occurs immediately.
- **Principle #2.** ***A complete delivery package should be assembled and tested.***
- **Principle #3.** ***A support regime must be established before the software is delivered.***
  - An end-user expects responsiveness and accurate information when a question or problem arises.
- **Principle #4.** ***Appropriate instructional materials must be provided to end-users.***
- **Principle #5.** ***Buggy software should be fixed first, delivered later.***

Summary

- Software process vs. software practice
- Principles
  - that guide software process
  - That guide software practice
  - That guide each of the framework activities
    - Communication
    - Planning
    - Modeling
    - Construction
    - Deployement