

Communication and Collaboration
Between Objects

Communication and collaboration among objects is a fundamental concept for object-orientation.

We want to decide which objects are responsible for what (within or without the system).

In addition, we want to know how external users and external systems ("actors") interact with each other and the system.

As well, it is often convenient to model interactions between actors; for example, the interactions between actors carrying out a business process.

Cocca

Object Interaction and Collaboration

Objects "own" information and behaviour, defined by operations; system objects contain data and methods which are relevant to their own responsibilities. They don't "know" about other objects' information, but can ask for it.

To carry out business processes, objects (system or otherwise) have to work together, I.e., collaborate.

Objects collaborate by sending messages to one another thereby calling operations of the other object.

Objects can only send messages to one another if they "know" each other, I.e., there is an association between them.

A responsibility is high level description of something instances of a class can do. A responsibility reflects the knowledge or information that is available to that class, either stored within its own attribute or requested via collaboration with other classes.

VIN -- Very Important Note

During requirements, the system is modelled in terms of a small number of coarse-grain classes and objects which describe how the system interacts with its environment.

During design, the system is modelled in greater detail in terms of many fine-grain classes and objects.

To keep things clear, we will use icons to represent external objects and actors, and boxes to represent system objects.

Responsibilities

It makes sense to distribute responsibility evenly among classes.
For external classes, this means simpler, more robust classes to define and understand
For system classes, this means:
No class is unduly complex;
Easier to develop, to test and maintain classes;
Resilient to change in the requirements of a class;
A class that it relatively small and self-contained has much greater potential for reuse.
A nice way to capture class (object) responsibilities is in terms of Class-Responsibility-Collaboration (CRC) cards.
CRC cards can be used in several different phases of software development.
For now, we use them to capture interactions between objects and actors.

Role Play with CRC Cards

Role Play with CRC Cards

During requirements analysis we can spend time role playing with CRC cards to try to sort out the responsibilities of objects and actors and to determine which are the other objects they need to collaborate with in order to carry out those responsibilities.

Often the responsibilities start out being vague and not as precise as the operations which may only become clear as we move into design.

Sometimes we need to role play the objects in the system and test out the interactions between them.

I'm a Campaign

"I'm a Campaign

"I'm a Campaign

"I'm a Campaign

"I'm a Campaign

"When I've been completed, I know how much I actually cost and when I was completed. I can calculate the difference between my actual and estimated costs."

"When I've been paid for, I know when the payment was made."

"I can calculate the contribution made to me by each member of staff who worked on me."

This could be an external object

(call it "campaign project")

or a system object!

I'm a CreativeStaff ...

"I'm a CreativeStaff ...

"I'm a CreativeStaff. I know my staff no, name, start date and qualification."

"I can calculate how much bonus I am entitled to at the end of the year."

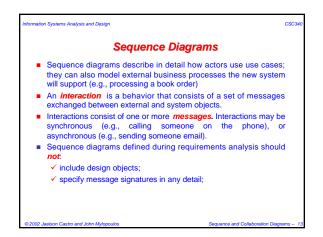
Does it make sense to include

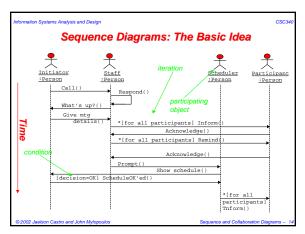
"I can calculate the contribution made to each campaign I have worked on by each member of staff who worked on it."

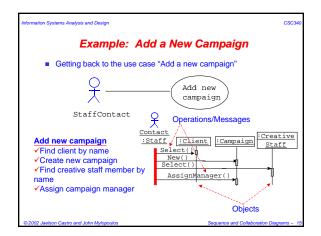
,or does that belong in Campaign?

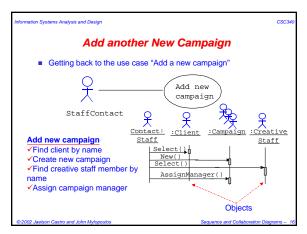
Class: Campaign	
Responsibilities:	Collaborating Class
Title	
StartDate	
FinishDate	
EstimatedCost	
ActualCost	
CompletionDate	
DatePaid	
AssignManager	CreativeStaff
RecordPayment	
Completed	
GetCampaignContribution	
CostDifference	

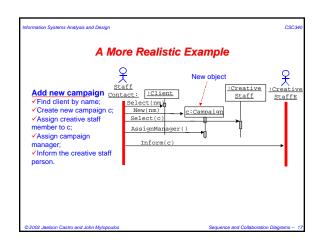
Class: CreativeStaff	
Responsibilities:	Collaborating Classes
StaffNo	
StaffName	
StaffStartDate	
Qualification	
CalculateBonus	Campaign
ChangeGrade	StaffGrade
	Grade

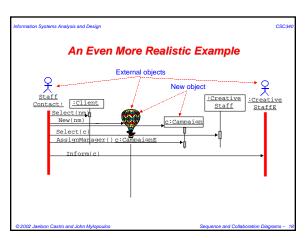


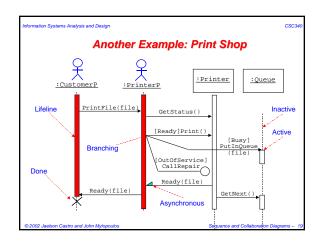


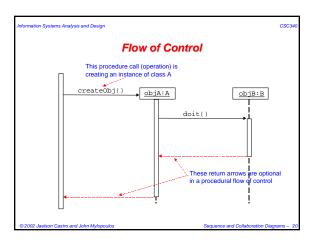


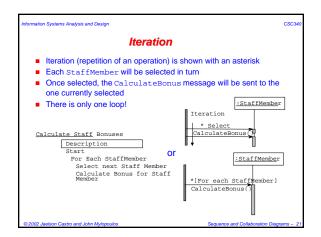


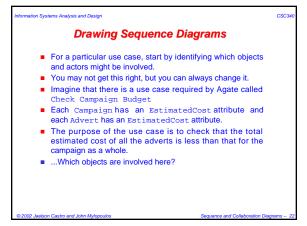


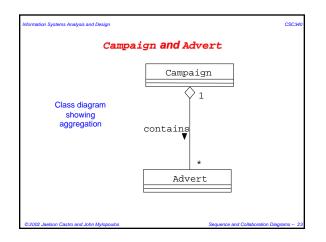


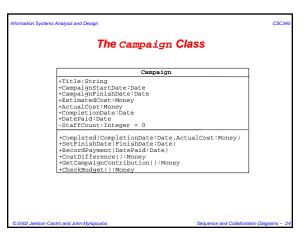


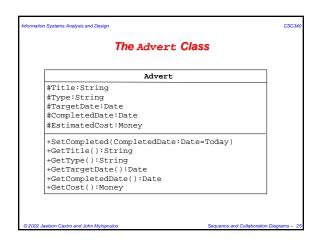


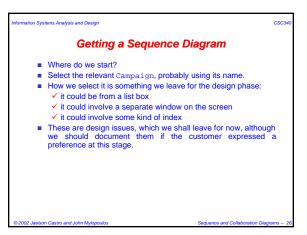


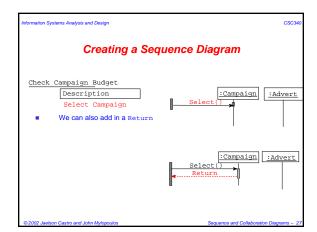


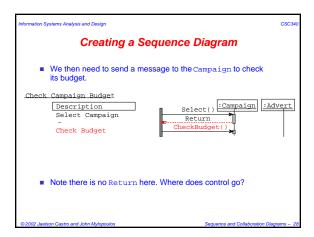


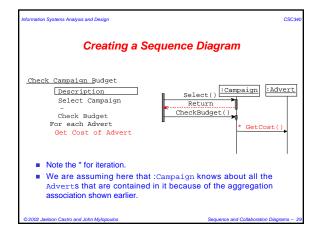


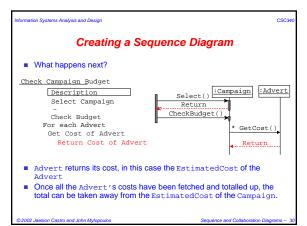


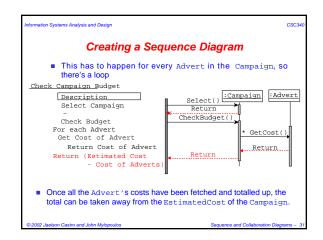


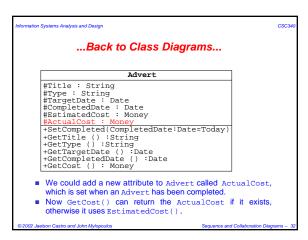


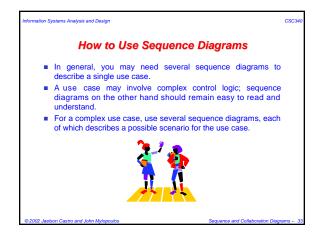


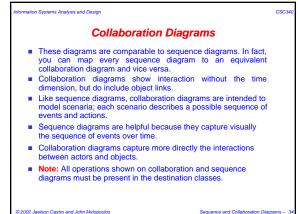


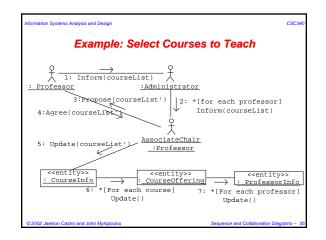


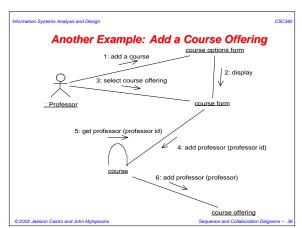












Additional Readings

Illianguage User Guide. Chapters 15, 18, 27. Addison-Wesley.

Igacobson92] Jacobson, I. et al. Object-Oriented Software Engineering: A Use-Case Driven Approach Addison-Wesley.

Ifowler(0)] Fowler, M. UML Distilled: A Brief Guide to the Standard Object Modelling Language. Chapter 5. Addison-Wesley.