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EMERGING MEDIA EXPLORATION

Virtual Production Visioning Course

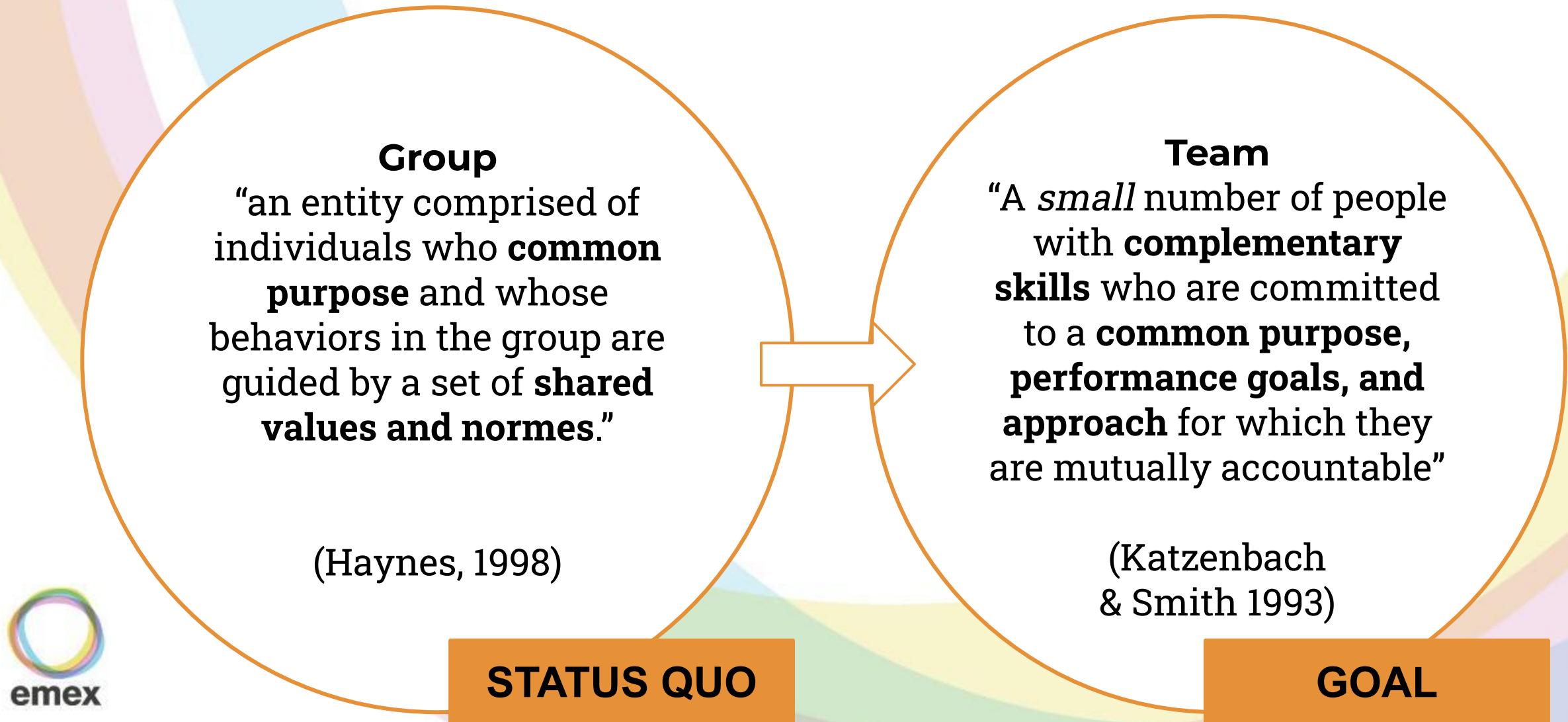
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Team building

Virtual Production Visioning Course

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What is a team?



Teamwork, but why?

Our VUCA World

V

Volatility

Volatility refers to speed, volume, nature, magnitude and inconsistency of a phenomenon

U

Uncertainty

Uncertainty occurs when there are no trends or patterns, which makes it difficult to establish what will happen next,

C

Complexity

Complexity describes the amount of different states a system can get into a certain point in time.

A

Ambiguity

Ambiguity describes a situation where multiple interpretations are permitted and equally valid.

- To tackle the “VUCA”- World, one mind does not seem enough, but collaborative thinking, several minds put together, may solve some problems.

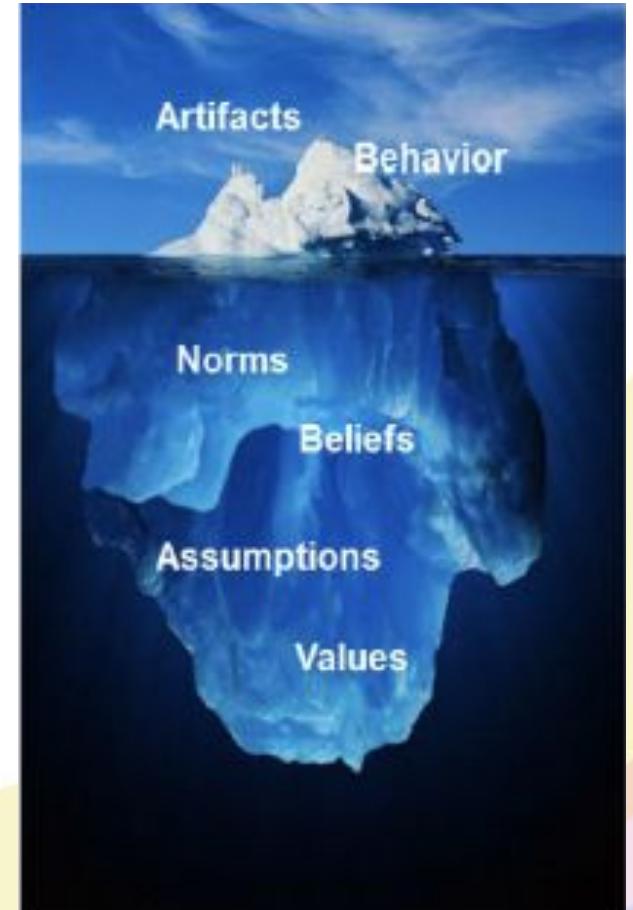
Team building - What's important?

First thing is building *mutual trust*. You've got to have trust in each other's skills, otherwise you won't be able to share tasks with others and sleep well. And you should build confidence in the ability of the team to handle conflicts and yet unknown project-related challenges.

You have to build trust that your team members want to work together with you. Trust has to build up over time, but what helps is talking a lot in the beginning to get to know each other, as well as the readiness to give trust in advance. So consider your project partner trustful until they prove otherwise, not vice versa. Believe in they can do what they say they can do.

Culture and cultural iceberg

- Culture is like an iceberg. Above the surface, in awareness, are the visible aspects of culture such language, food, or dressing styles.
Because we see them we can respond to them.
- The biggest part of culture is, however, hidden below the surface. There are the invisible rules and values that define each culture.

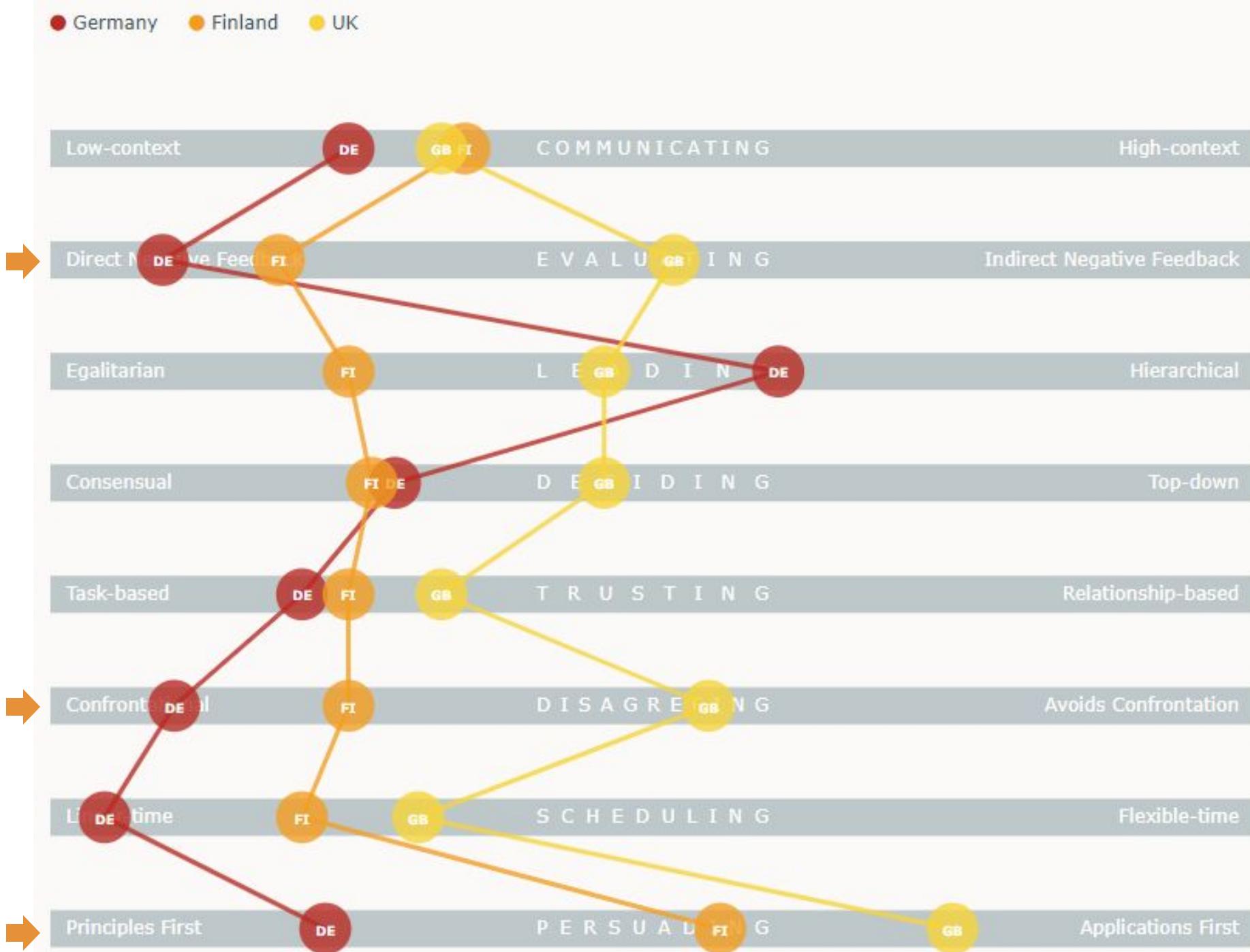


How culture affects teamwork

- Interpretations of these “hidden” core values are reflected in peoples’ behavior and in how they work together.
- Difficulties arise when the rules of one culture are used to interpret the behavior of another culture with a different set of cultural rules.
- In order to avoid that, it is good to be aware how our own culture affects our behavior.

Culture Map (Erin Meyer)

for
Germany
Finland
UK



Team Communication

Personal touch and empathy: If we believe the stereotypes, both Germans, and Finns like direct to blunt Feedback without taking offense. People from the UK prefer to get negative Feedback indirectly. There certainly is some truth to it, but it's best to agree whether it is e.g. okay to do direct edits of other people's and how you will give Feedback to each other.



Team Communication

Communication needs depend on a lot of individual and contextual factors, among the just mentioned personal preferences on Feedback. Here are some more of them to think about and express your communication needs to the team:

- ***Time available for the project:*** The more time you are ready to spend on a project, the more you'll be ready to respond quickly, be involved in longer asynchronous discussion threads and follow all updates. If your time is restricted or limited to a certain day, you'd rather want clearly separated and explained tasks, with no need to discuss a lot about work-in-progress.
- ***Number of concurrent teams you are in:*** The more projects you do in parallel, the more you'll want to limit the number of different tools and platforms you work with.
- ***Personal communication style:*** Some like to elaborate their thoughts in longer posts. Some prefer quick exchanges of rather short messages. Some prefer the personal touch of a phone call, some like real-time chats. No perfect way here - learn about it and find the best compromise.

Communication Pressure

One particular thing that people are often not aware of is that your communication behavior can put pressure on others. Person **A** might want to answer all posts on the team platform as they come to be a good and pro-active team member. Knowing about different team availabilities, he does not expect anybody else to answer quickly. But Person **B**, who just compiled a longer answer to **A** and now wants to switch to another project, sees the immediate reply and feels immediately pushed to reply again.

This cannot be avoided totally, but it makes sense to talk about such feelings should they arise.

Links and literature

- VUCA: <https://www.vuca-world.org/>
- VUCA: Source, see also: Johansen, 2012; Mack, O./ Khare, A. et al, 2016
- Educational Technology Research in a VUCA World:
https://www.jstor.org/stable/44430353?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents
- Cultural Iceberg: <https://www.languageandculture.com/cultural-iceberg>
- Erin Meyer on Feedback and Communication: <https://www.erinmeyer.com/speaking/>
- Tuckman's Team Development Model:
https://sst7.org/media/BruceTuckman_Team_Development_Model.pdf

Project work in a team

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Schedules and Availability

	Mo 4.4.	Di 5.4.	Mi 6.4.	Do 7.4.	Fr 8.4.	Sa 9.4.	So 10.4.
GMT+01		14					
06:00							
07:00							
08:00			08:00 – 12:00 Social Media Course		08:00 – 16:30 Social Media Course		
09:00			Kirsi				
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21:00	Björn	Björn		Björn		Björn	
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Schedules and Availability

Different weekly schedules are one of the primary causes for communication issues and delay of decisions. The group in the course is mixed from different study programmes and different modes of study. The challenge is to find a common rhythm.

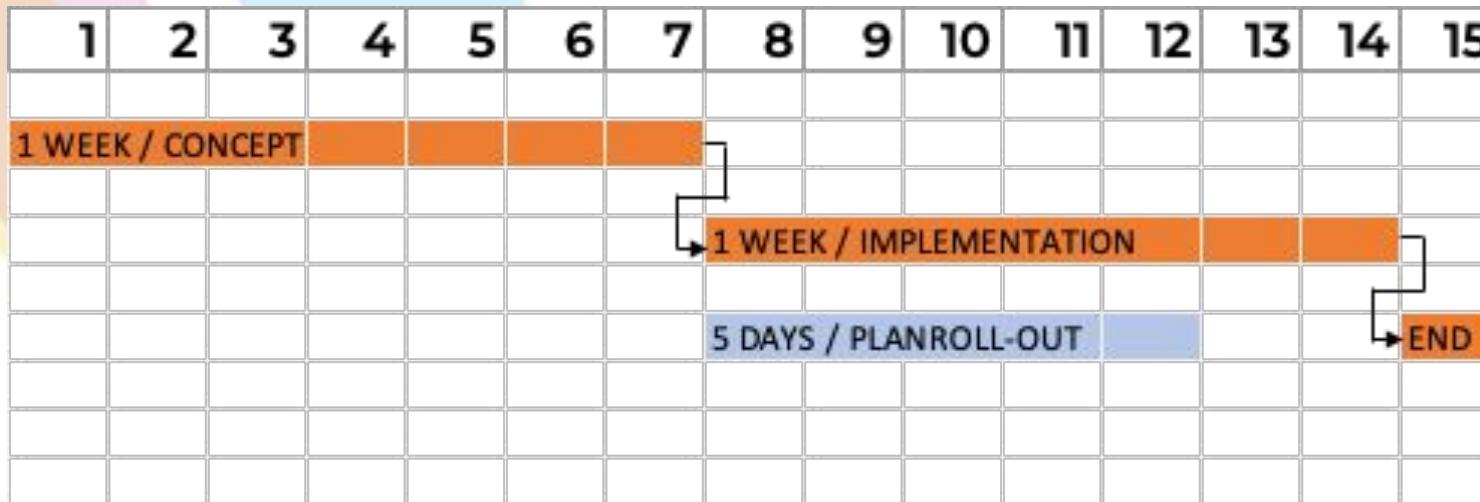
- Clarify your availability at different times of day and during the week
- Agree on fixed meeting times if possible or plan multiple meetings ahead
- Agree on when you expect responses, as not everybody might be able to answer to the team 24/7
- Plan ahead till the end of the course: Do team members have phases of reduced availability during this time? Plan accordingly.

Tip: You can share this info visually. The overview on the page before was quickly sketched using an empty week in google calendar. If team members have very varying schedules over the course duration, it might make sense to start a common group calendar, where you mark your availability in more detail. This can apply for students that do a lot of freelance work in their profession.

A simple gantt chart for planning

Critical path

- Allows you to focus on tasks that are paramount to completing the project on time.
- Gives you an overview of which task's schedule times are, essentially, most important to getting the Project done.
- There are tasks (work packages) that are interdependent. If one task is not finished, the next one cannot be started. Keep this in consideration while doing your planning



Document Sharing & Common Knowledge base

As a team, you need to work towards a common view on the problem you work on and develop a common language. We have students with different backgrounds, so interdisciplinary challenges play a role here too. Here is what might help a bit:

- Agree on process how everybody can access all relevant project documents in the latest version and work on them. Can be something like dropbox, but there are a lot of more alternatives.
- You can choose one team member to write up a short weekly summary, comprising the essential decisions and ideas during the week. This helps to check whether there is still consensus and also team members that were ill or could not follow closely that week get quickly back into the project.
- If you meet online, keep meeting minutes.

Leadership

The group in the course is mixed from different study programmes and different modes of study. While some students might be stressed, dealing with others are fully committed and focus on this course. The challenge is to find a common rhythm.

- Clarify your availability at different times of day and during the week
- Agree on fixed meeting times if possible or plan multiple meetings ahead
- Agree on when you expect responses, as not everybody might be able to answer to the team 24/7
- Plan ahead till the end of the course: Do team members have phases of reduced availability during this time? Plan accordingly.

Decision Making

Decision making is one of the most crucial parts of creative collaboration. First it is important, that you agree the criteria to make your decision upon. In design, such a criterion might in some cases also be "your gut feeling" or "personal taste", but even then you have to agree on that explicitly. Other criteria can be "good match with target persona description", "implementation effort", "novelty", "fitting the team's skills" - depending on the actual decision at hand. Second, you should agree on a mode for your decision making and which kind of decisions you want to handle how. For example, decisions on the team challenge or core story of your campaign are better made in consent to maximize team motivation.

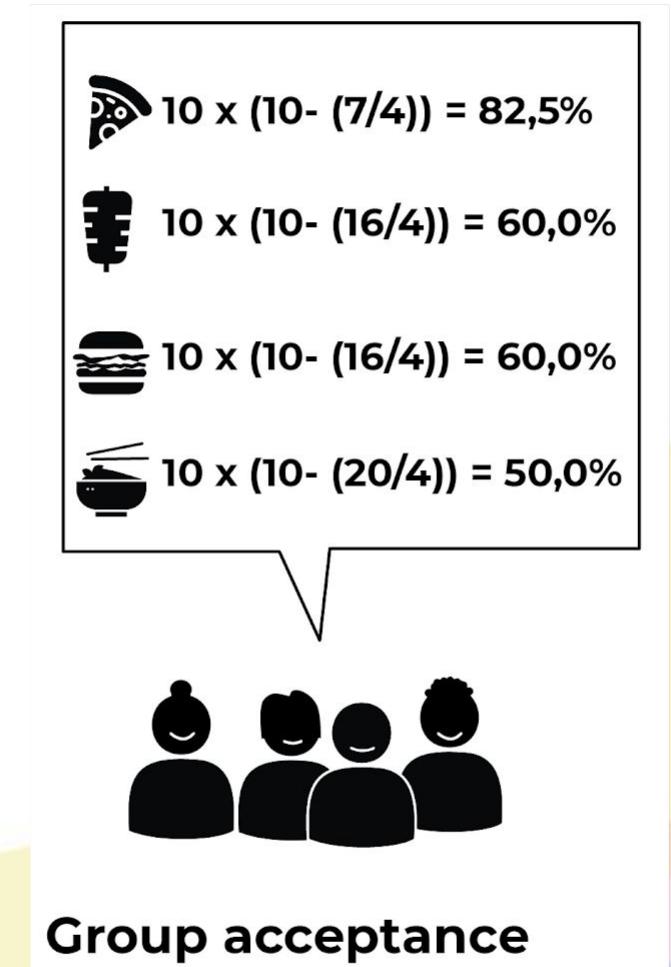
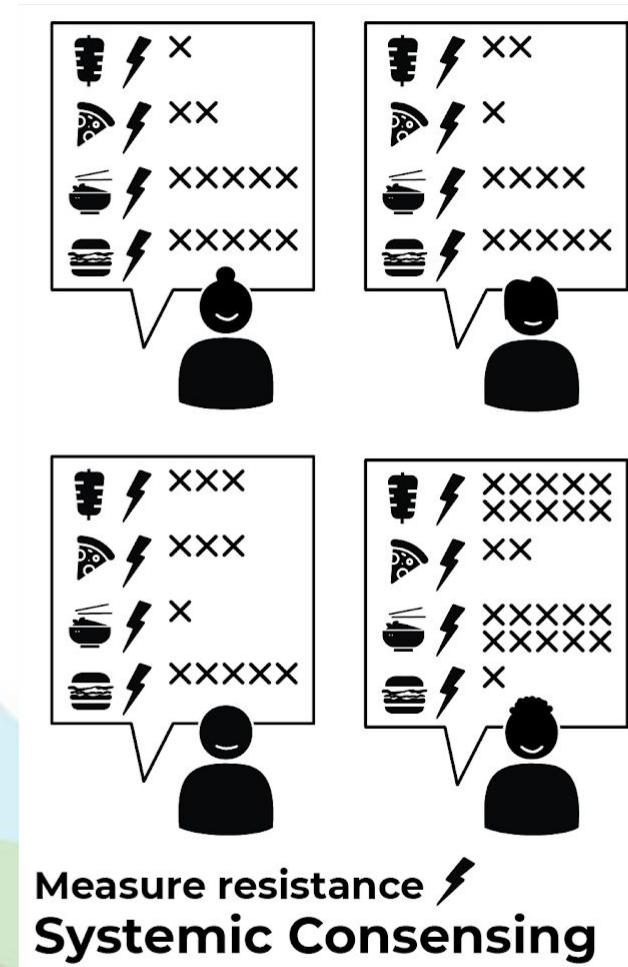
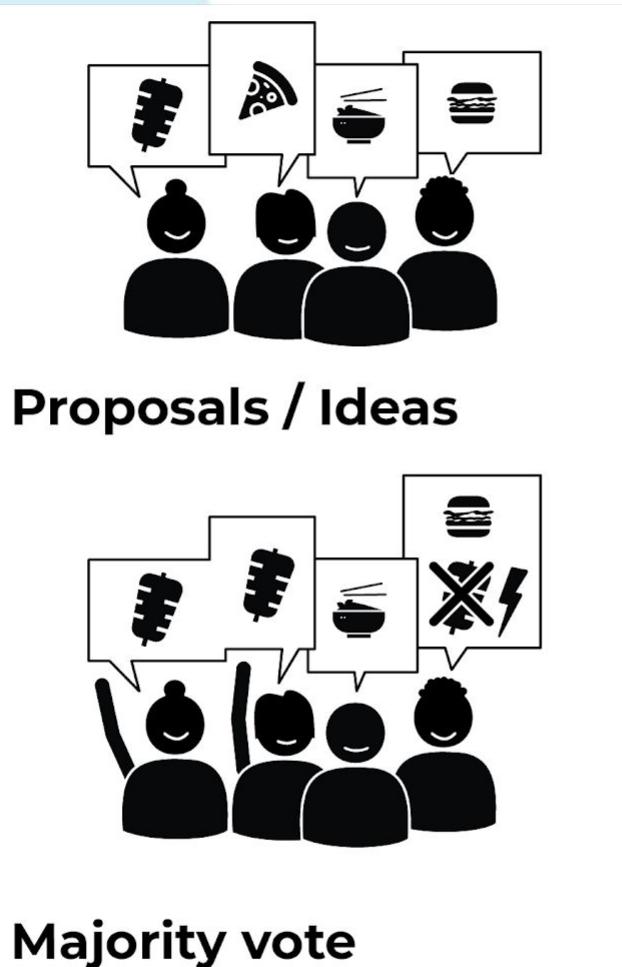
Some Modes of Decision Making

- **Majority vote:** This is what most people think about when it comes to decision making in team. It gives you a fairly quick result, but might leave behind a disappointed or even opposing minority, which can be a liability for the rest of the project.
- **Consensus vote:** All team members have to agree to the decision. This kind of decision making takes longer, but boosts team spirit, as nobody is forced to work on an objective he/she does not want to. In theory, one opposing person could block project process infinitely. But in practice, if somebody tries to sabotage the project in this way, your problem is not on the decision making level, but you have to work on basic mutual trust in your team (or, in the extreme case, kick that individual off the team).

Some Modes of Decision Making

- **Systemic consensing:** Like a consensus vote, but instead of looking at what each team does NOT want to do. The aim is to find a decision that can expect the lowest opposition from the team members. This makes sense when no topic finds positive consensus and there is no way to look for further alternatives.
- **Expert vote:** If a team member has a specific expertise that is recognized by the team members, they may delegate a related decision fully to this member, trusting her/his expertise.
- **Leader decision:** The team leader decides - the quickest way to make a decision, but also that with the most conflict potential. The basic requirement is that the leader is accepted by the team. And a good leader knows for which decisions he has to rely on one of the other modes mentioned above.

Systemic consensing



Project Charter

A *project charter* is a good way to document and agree on any soft criteria for collaboration. You can create it like this:

- Everybody in the project writes down the 5 things he/she finds most important for a successful collaboration, explaining them with 1-2 sentences each.
- Everybody introduces his/her contributions to the others.
- The group discusses and tries to merge them to come out with a common list of 5-10 items.

Team Feedback

Often team feedback sessions are only planned when things go wrong. This gives those meetings a bad air right from the start.

It is much better to plan those meetings in advance, no matter whether collaboration works good or bad. It will create a much more open atmosphere and the chance to talk about issues before they become a real problem and start upsetting people.

The *project playbook* is a good help in feedback sessions, as it gives everybody a clear reference to compare to the status quo.

Examples for Project Charter Entries

Be Committed

Define clear objectives and responsibilities. Keep your deadlines and give feedback immediately when you learn you can't meet a deadline. Tell both when you have free capacity and if you have overload. The earlier we can react on problems, the better.

Clarify

We are an interdisciplinary and intercultural team. It is totally natural if it takes time to get to a common understanding in objectives and tasks. Ask for clarification and ask often. In a conversation, try phrasing your own understanding of a task to help reaching common ground.

...

Project Playbook

It is good if you agree on how to collaborate. It's even better if you write it down. A *playbook* is used in American Football to document all tactical moves the team should be capable to execute. In a similar way, you should create your playbook, covering all your aforementioned aspects. It does not have to be a very long document, but it should be present to all team members throughout the project.

Playbook Sample

Team Members:

- Jane Doe / Contact details
- John Doe / Contact details
- ...

Project Charter

(Agreements on any soft criteria for collaboration)

e.g.

- Keep deadlines and notify if they can't be met
- Start every meeting with a short feedback
- Ask questions if something is not clear
- ...

Meeting times:

e.g. weekly by arrangement,
every Thursday

Communication channels:

e.g. E-Mail, WhatsApp

Platforms:

e.g. Google Drive, Mural

Team roles:

e.g. Projectmanagement:
Jane Doe

Responsibilities:

Who does what?
e.g. Visuals, Research,
Presentations,...

Availabilities:

Clarify your availability at
different times of day and
during the week
or use a shared calendar.

Gantt chart:

Optional, but helps to make
sure all deadlines are met on
time.

Work packages:

Optional, but they can help you
figure out all the key elements
of your project. Work packages
are the smallest unit of work
that a project can be broken
down to.

Links and literature

- Critical path:
<https://2020projectmanagement.com/resources/project-planning/what-is-the-critical-path>
- Critical Path:
<https://www.projectmanager.com/blog/understanding-critical-path-project-management>
- Process Tools and methods: <http://www.mspguide.org/tools-and-methods>