

# Working in international teams

**Sit in your groups!**

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# Which top 3 skills do companies say they value the most?

1. Expertise related to field
2. Qualifications related to job
3. Open to new ideas / ways of thinking
4. Work effectively in diverse teams
5. Build trust
6. Demonstrate respect for others

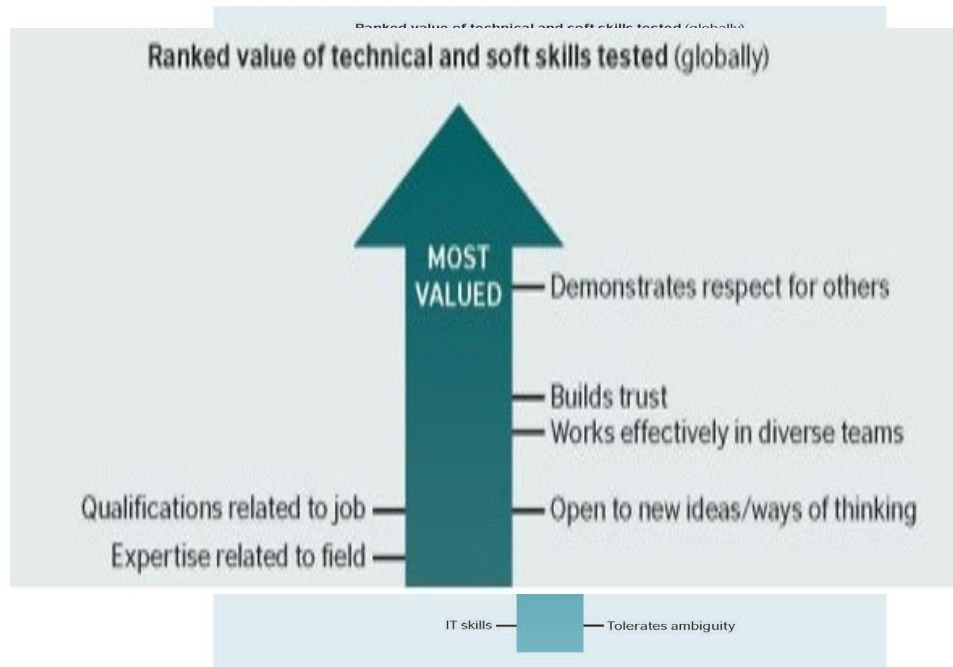
# What's the point of today's session?

- ⚙ International perspective
  - ⚙ In your education
  - ⚙ In the workplace

## Program goals:

- contribute to teamwork and collaboration with various constellations
- analyze how different roles interact with each other in software development processes and understand how the different roles are affected by team members' personal characteristics

Chart 7: How employers rank different skills in terms of importance



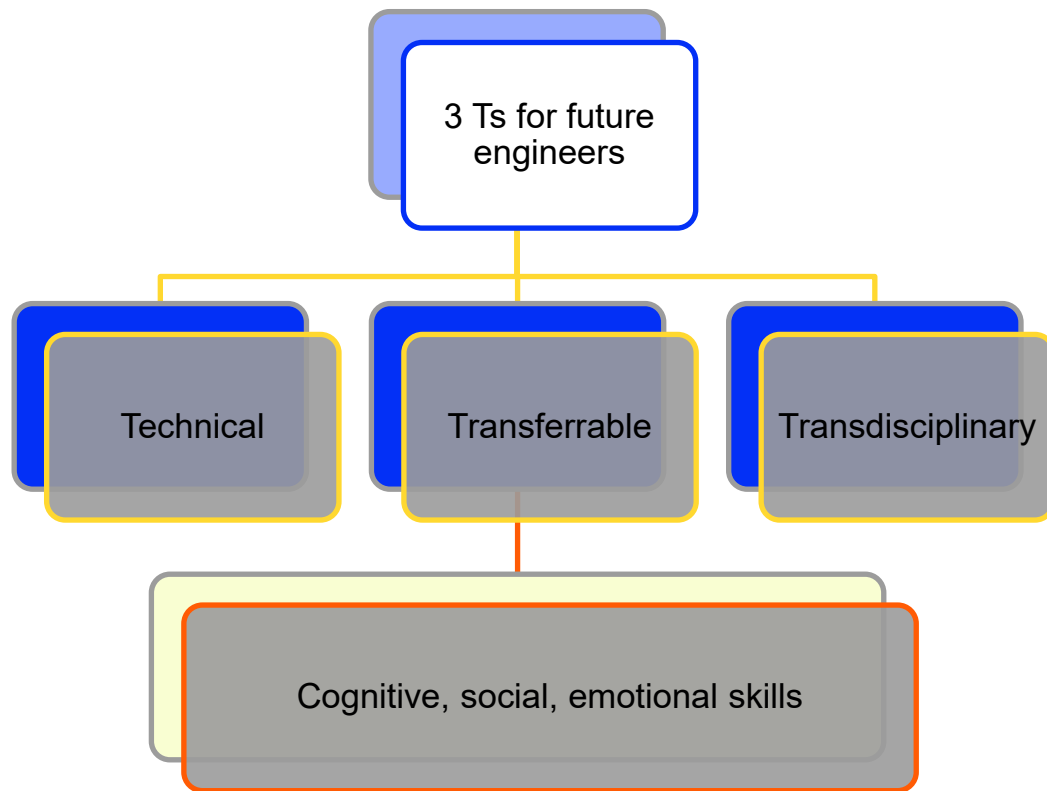
Note: Respondents were given multiple sets of skills and asked to indicate the most and least important skills within each set. Results show the relative ranking of skills after each skill's relative importance was calculated using a MacQD analysis.  
Source: Telephone/face-to-face surveys of public sector, private sector and NGO employers responsible for employment decisions. Base: Ipsos Public Affairs, 2012; Global n=367.

# Future engineers

1. VUCA world

2. Engineering is collaborative and complex

3. 5<sup>th</sup> industrial revolution



SEFI, 2025

# Learning outcomes

This will be achieved through:

- ⚙ Reflecting on practices of successful group work
- ⚙ Formulating and following a team agreement
- ⚙ Critically assessing the individual contribution to the group project

# Great people don't think alike





# INCLUSION & DIVERSITY MAKES US STRONGER.

Join the 50+ leading European companies and sign the pledge to create the right environment and conditions for ALL employees to reach their full potential.

01 ————— 02



# Project groups: ARE

- ✧ 28 project groups : approx 5-6 students per group
- ✧ Teacher assigned
  - ✧ Your request
  - ✧ Preferred time of meeting
  - ✧ No soloing but also optimising diversity



# Session today

## Getting to know you



## Diverse group work



## Strategies for group work



## Team agreement





# Rules of seminar / workshop

1. **Confidentiality:** individual's comments go no further than this room
  2. **Grading:** Comments in sessions **not** used for assessment
  3. **Listen** to each other, ask questions
-

# Who are you?





# Which university are you studying at?

Chalmers University of Technology



47%

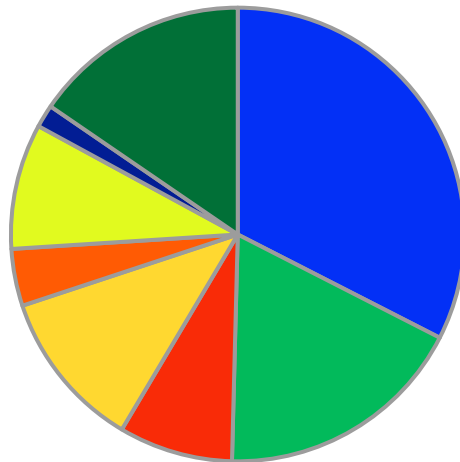
University of Gothenburg



52%

# Poll: where are you from?

Nationality



■ Swedish

■ Other European

■ Indian

■ Chinese

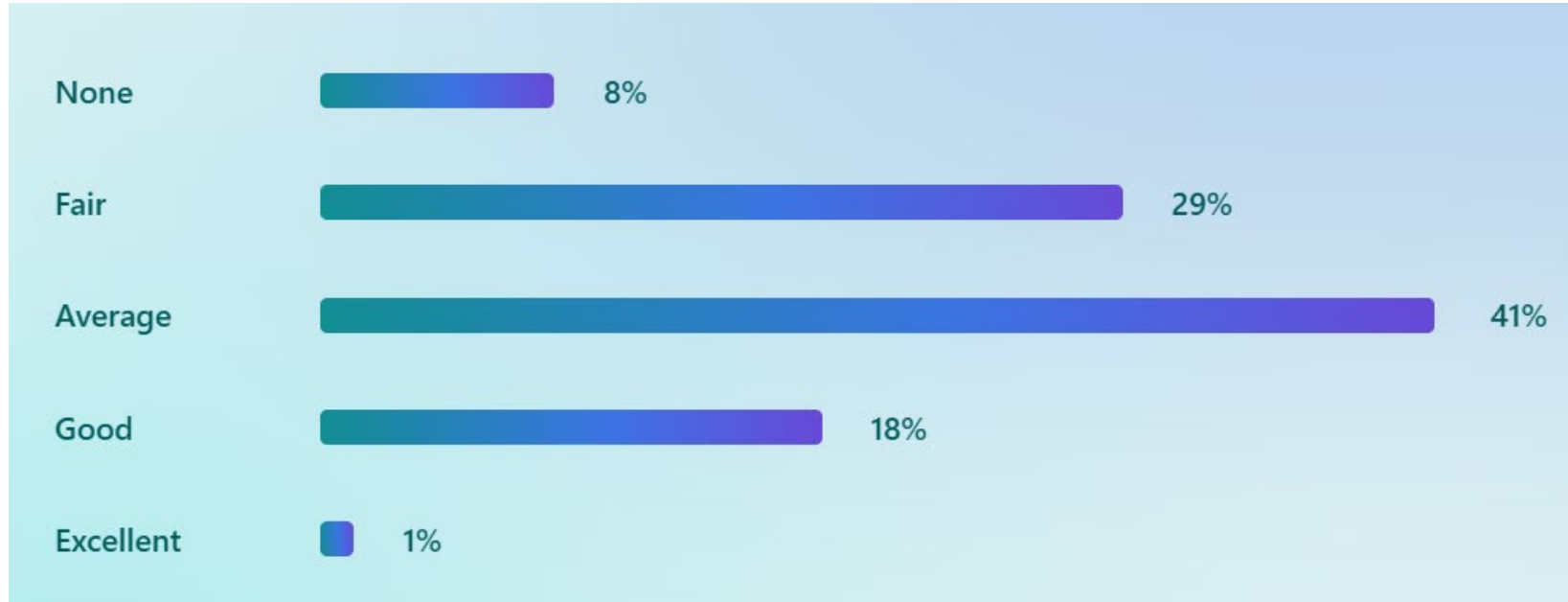
■ Pakistan

■ Outside Europe

■ 2 nationalities

■ Unknown

# Your knowledge in Requirements Engineering?

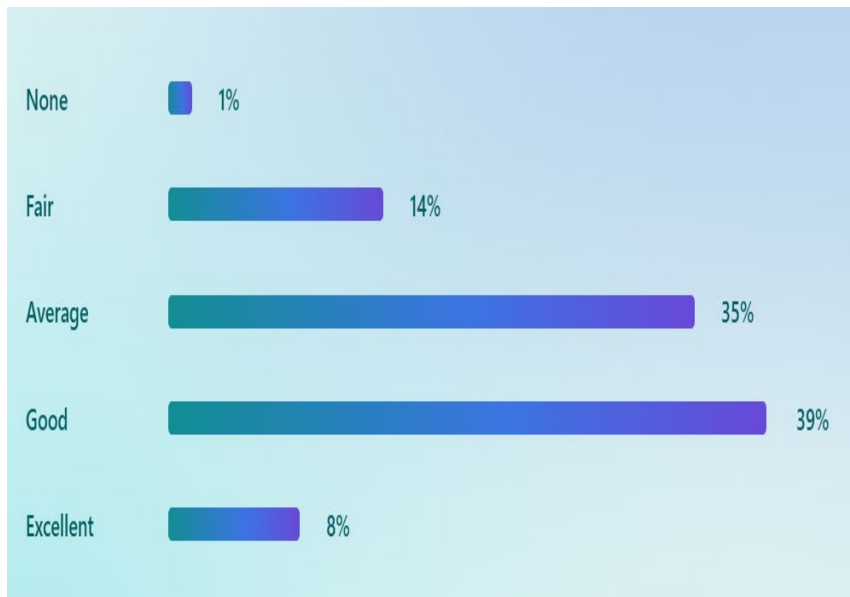




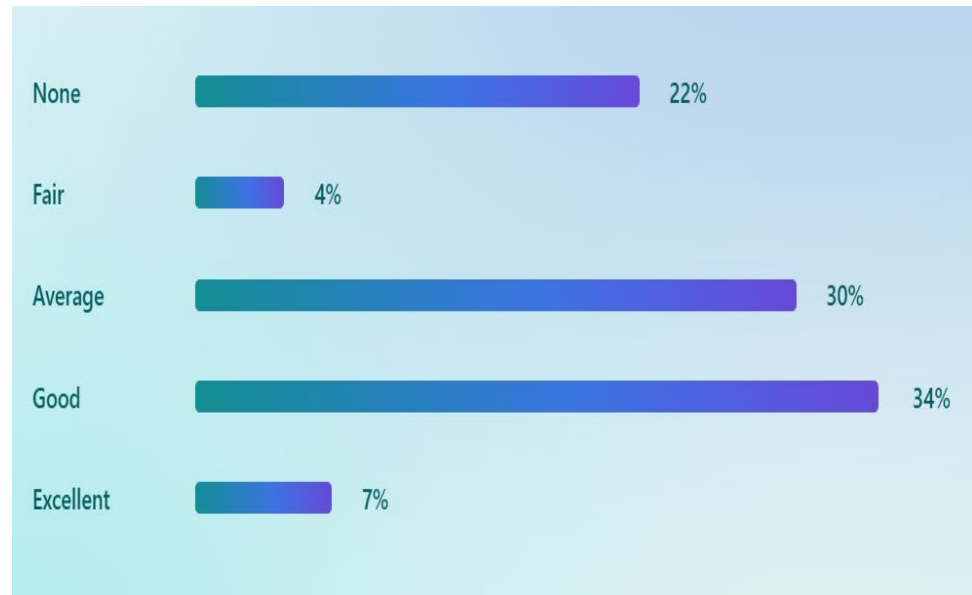
# Your knowledge with teamwork using....



# Your knowledge with writing group reports



In general



In LaTeX



# Definition of culture?

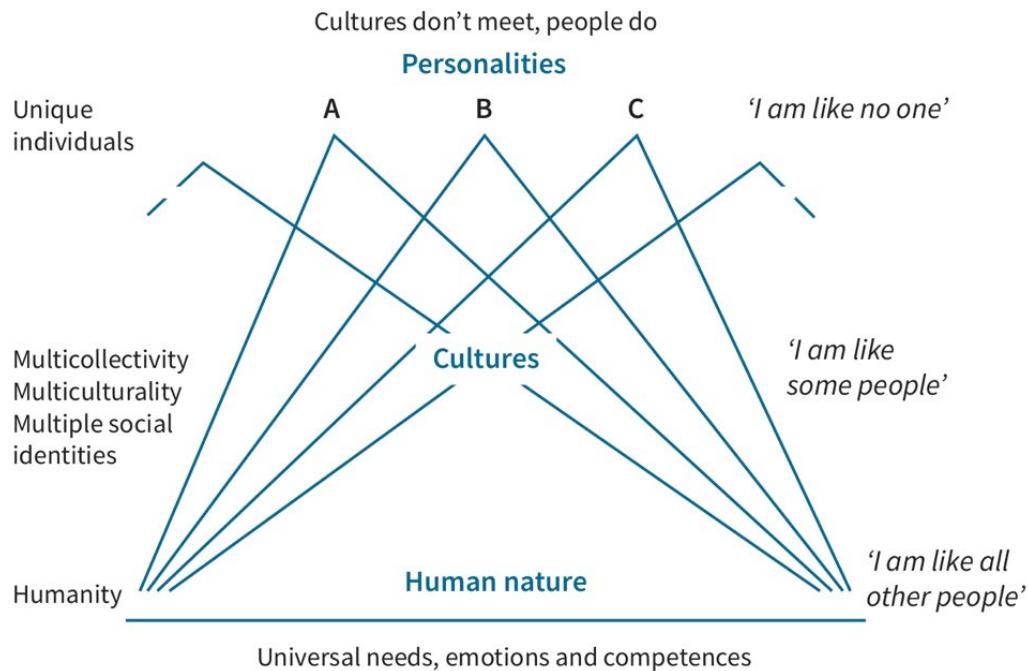
”the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category from others”

Hofstede, 2010 "Cultures and organizations" p.6

**Large culture:** countries

**Small culture:** small social grouping or activities where there is cohesive behaviour

# Cultures don't meet, people do





# Software Engineer

*Nerdious Geekius*

The elusive Software Engineer is a nocturnal creature, rarely found at their desks before 10 or 11 in the morning, but often staying late into the night. They dislike being interrupted while at work, and it theorized that their penchant for twilight hours is an evolutionary adaptation to reduce breaks in their trance-like state of coding.

Not surprisingly, Software Engineers are solitary creatures, except for occasional gatherings called “code reviews.” In these gatherings, engineers gently pace around a clearing, sizing up each other’s work. Although occasional battles will erupt, they mostly end without injury and the engineer will retreat to their desk and continue to hibernate.

## Native Range



**Diet:** Pizza, caffeinated Beverages, Potato chips

**Conservation Status:** Endangered due to poaching and head hunting.

**Fun Fact:** Software Engineers have been known to kill each other in brutal fights over identification styles



# Cultural star (20 mins)

- ✧ Create your cultural star (5 mins)
- ✧ Moderator who keeps time: person whose FIRST name comes first in the alphabet!
- ✧ Take it in turns to share your cultural star with your group (approx 2 minutes per person).
- ✧ In the remaining time (if you have any), discuss the results from the survey compared to your own cultural stars. Similarities? Differences?

# Example Culture star: Becky Bergman

Researcher in  
intercultural  
communication in  
engineering education

British /  
Swedish

Senior lecturer at  
Department for  
Communication and  
Learning in Science



Lived on 5  
continents  
(worked on 4)



# Culture star: Name

## Previous studies

(we know what you're doing now but what about past study experiences?)

## Work experience?

If you have any..or make up your own category here

## Nationality (ies)

(or languages spoken?)



## Interests

(significant interest / hobby? Or pick another category)

## Significant travel experience

(by "significant" in some way i.e. places you've spent some time in or affected you in some way?)

Note:

You can change any of the categories here to something that feels more relevant e.g. hobbies? Interests? Favourite food? Something else? You can even add points to the star!

# Time for a break!



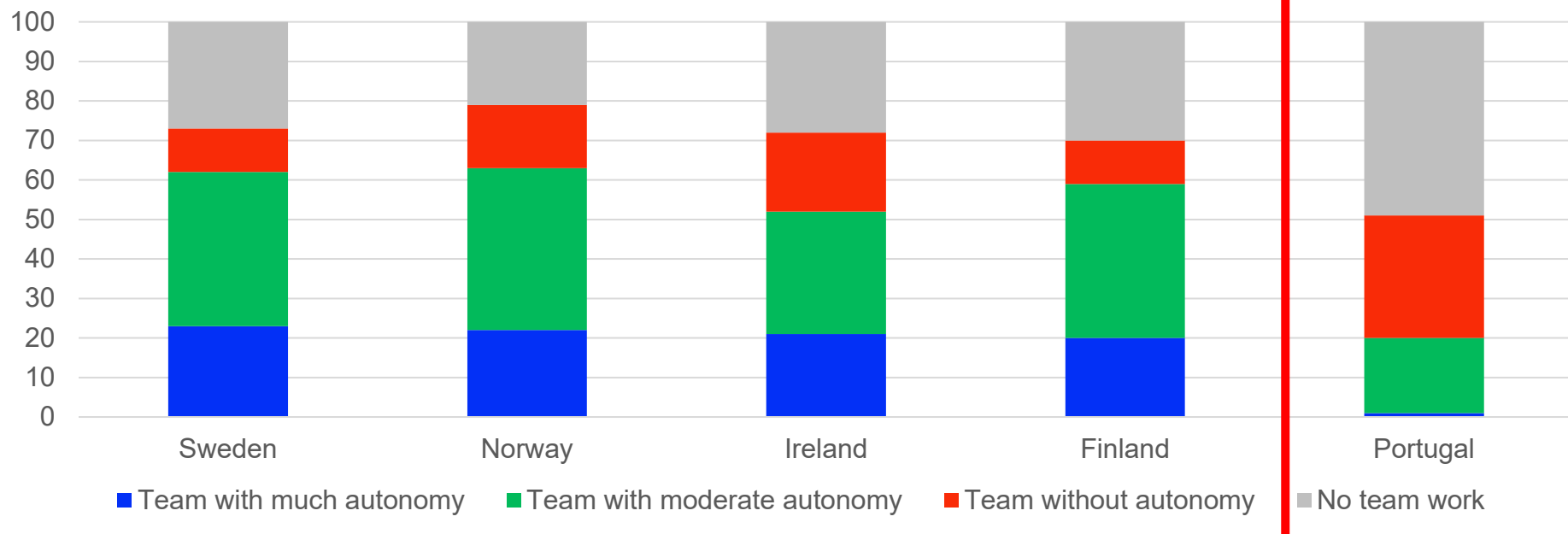


# Teamwork





## Percentage of employees in teamwork in Europe (by degree of autonomy of the teams)



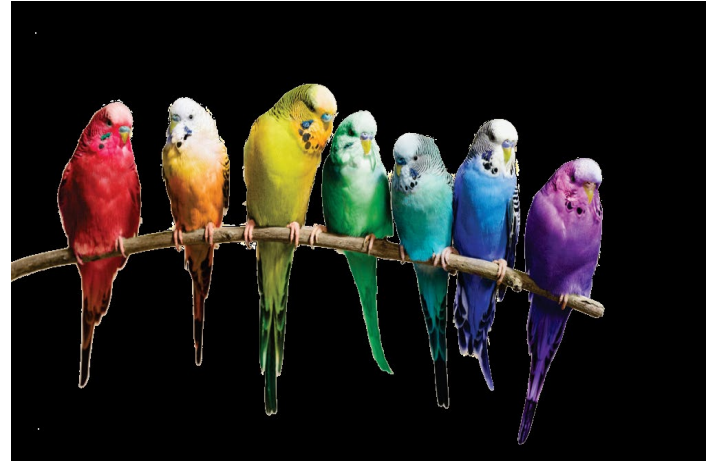


# Discuss in your groups! (10 mins)

- How much have you worked in groups before?
  - How were the groups selected?
  - How diverse were the groups?
  - What did the course (or you beyond the course structure) do to help you get started? What worked well?

# Diverse group work:

- ⚙ More creativity
- ⚙ Better results
- ⚙ Develop intercultural skills
- ⚙ Important skill to companies



# Challenges of working in a diverse group?



**Individual:** Language and communication / Psychological / Different backgrounds

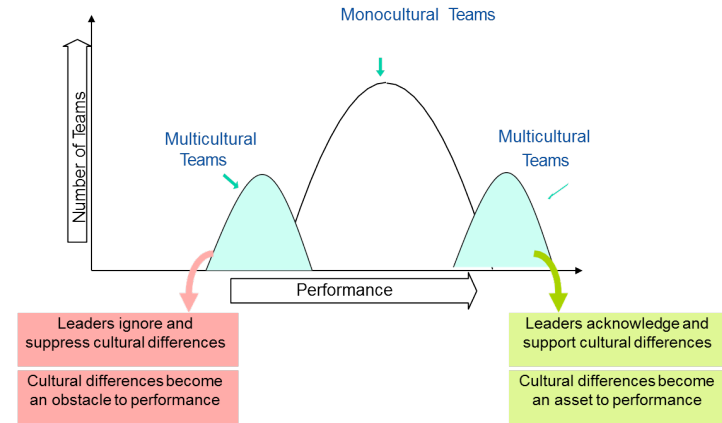
**Relational:** Interactional / team building

**Contextual:** meeting needs in local context

# 3 models for diverse groups.....

1. **The destroyers:** cannot overcome their differences
2. **The equalizers:** don't notice / acknowledge their differences
3. **The creators:** use their differences / make mistakes / best results

(DiStefano and Maznevski 2000)



## Task vs relationship focus

Start slowly and end fast; start fast and maybe not end at all

(Canney Davison in Berger 1996)

“It’s rarely the technology that’s a problem. It’s nearly always the communication.”

Project leader, Volvo trucks

# Student comment

*“Big diversity means a great variation in experience and knowledge, which has resulted in a fruitful project with very positive results. However, the road has not been straight and issues that I usually take for granted, has in the project been re-defined from my perspective”. (Swedish student)*

# Looking ahead!



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# Deliverables connected to project / group dynamics

Event	Learning outcome
Team agreement	<i>Formulating and following a team agreement</i>
Individual team assessment	<i>Critically assessing the individual contribution to the group project Showing awareness of one's own strengths and weaknesses</i>
Experience report	<i>A description of your requirements engineering work, including experiences and reflections in relation to learning objectives as well as team work.</i>

# Team agreement (Sept 12)

- ⚙ Template on Canvas
- ⚙ Fill in as a group and upload on Canvas ( one per group)



# Team agreement

## Interaction

- Inclusion
- Team decisions
- Feedback

## Cohesiveness

- Contact
- Trust
- Support

## Goals

- Shared goals
- Ambitions

## Interdependence

- Work distribution

## Structure

- Meetings
- Roles
- Documentation
- Communication platforms

# Individual contribution assessment

- ⚙ At same time as R1, R2, R3
- ⚙ Each group will get a link to Microsoft forms
- ⚙ Purpose: health check! To identify potential issues in the group
- ⚙ **NOTE:**
- ⚙ Results not part of assessment of course in R1, R2 but can play a part in R3

# Individual contribution assessment



- React to some statements for you and your group members
- Add a comment on work so far for each person

# On giving feedback

- ✧ For the feedback to be *constructive*, you should...
- **Start with the positive** and words of encouragement. Don't overlook the good things!
- **Own your feedback as an opinion**. Use expressions like "I think that", "I feel that", etc.
- **Be specific**. Describe what you have observed using concrete examples and real events.
- **Be descriptive**, not evaluative. Focus on how you feel and perceive events.
- **Be realistic**. Refer to what can be controlled and changed.
- **Be solution-oriented**. Offer alternatives without imposing your way as the only way!
- **Finish with a future-oriented statement**. What do you hope will happen?

In other words:  
**Treat others as  
you would like  
to be treated**

# Criteria for individual assessment

Criterion	Grade					
	Excellent (5)	Good (4)	Fair/OK (3)	Needs to improve (2)	Unacceptable (1)	Missing (0)
<b>1. Physical and psychological presence.</b>	Is always present and engaged. In the rare occasion being away, always catches up afterwards. Always lets team members know if there is a problem.	Is usually present and when so always engaged. If being away, usually catches up afterwards. Almost always lets team members know if there is a problem.	Is usually present and engaged. If being away, most times catches up afterwards. Usually lets team members know if there is a problem.	Is too often away. Quite often zones out or is too tired to contribute. Quite often forgets to let team members know if there is a problem.	Is very often away from meetings and is almost always unengaged when present. Very often zones out a lot or is too tired to contribute.	Never shows up nor contributes
<b>2. Contributing in meetings</b>	Always contributes to the issues at hand. Facts and results but also opinions, hopes, feelings. Thoughtful selection of what is the right contribution at the time	Usually contributes to the issues at hand. Often but not always with all of facts and results, opinions hopes and feelings.	Usually contributes to the issues at hand. Often but not always with all of facts and results, opinions hopes and feelings. Sometimes too much or too little.	Either contributes too little or too much.	Either contributes almost nothing or way too much, dominating meetings entirely.	Never shows up nor contributes.
<b>3 Listening &amp; including in meetings</b>	Always listens attentively when others speak. Often actively encourages others to contribute.	Usually listens attentively when others speak. Sometimes encourages others to contribute.	Mostly listens attentively when others speak. Now and then encourages others to contribute.	Sometimes listens attentively. Not very active in encouraging others to contribute.	Is mostly inattentive when others speak. Never encourages other to contribute.	Never shows up nor contributes.
<b>4. Connecting</b>	Often asks clarifying	Sometimes asks	Now and then asks	Rarely asks clarifying	Never asks clarifying	Never shows



# Individual team meetings 30 Sept, 2, 3 Oct

**Tue, Sep-30 (15-17) Groups 0-6 Jupiter 321**  
**Thu, Oct-2 (13-15) Groups 7-13 Svea 118**  
**Thu, Oct-2 (15-17) Groups 14-20 Svea 118**  
**Fri, Oct-3 (13-15) Groups 21-27 Jupiter 321**

- ⚙ Discuss results from individual team assessment (in Microsoft forms – link to be posted in Canvas and mailed to you)
- ⚙ Follow up on team agreement / SWOT analysis
- ⚙ Discuss way forward with group



# Summary: diversity competence

- ✧ Diversity is positive: sharing of wider range of skills / knowledge
  - ✧ Diversity needs work and can be challenging
  - ✧ Be aware of making assumptions but be aware of possibilities
  - ✧ Be open, flexible and adaptable
-



# Support at Chalmers /GU for language / writing

Check out the ICC page for the course!

# Useful links / references from today

- ✧ Downey, Gary Lee, et al. (2006) "The globally competent engineer: Working effectively with people who define problems differently." *Journal of Engineering Education* 95.2 107-122.
- ✧ Freeman, R. B., & Huang, W. (2014). Strength in diversity: *Nature*, 513(7518), 305-306
- ✧ Hoffman, E. & Verdooren, A. (2018) *Diversity competence*. Uitgeverij Coutinho
- ✧ Holliday, A., Hyde, M., & Kullman, J. (2010). *Intercultural communication: An advanced resource book for students*. Routledge.
- ✧ Molinsky, A. (2013). *Global dexterity: How to adapt your behavior across cultures without losing yourself in the process*. Harvard Business Review Press.



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