

# Group Communication and Group AC

... and an introduction to the group log



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# Today

Lecture: Communications and Group AC

(AC = Agreement of Cooperation)

Exercise:

4 students at a time: Circle-Square Exercise

The other students: Start on Group AC



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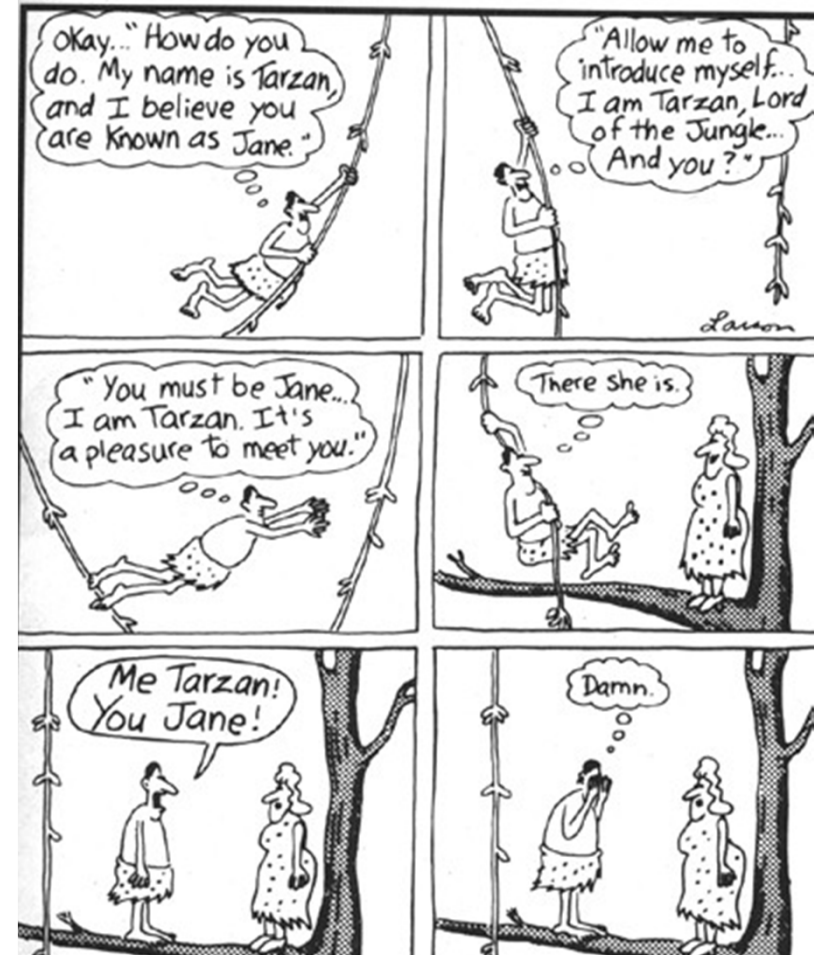
# Communication in the group

What is communication?

Group discussions - strategies

On the initial phases of project work. Using the "AC" to clear the way

Try a cooperation and communication exercise: The circle-square exercise



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# Key team building elements [Hagan(1985)]

**Respect** and consideration for all team members.

**Openness & accountability.** Make it clear who is doing what and to which performance standards.

**Team loyalty** (demonstration and recognition of). Recognition and reward of teamwork and teambuilding efforts.

**Clear goals.** Coordinated and aligned. Individual != team.

Group  
"AC"

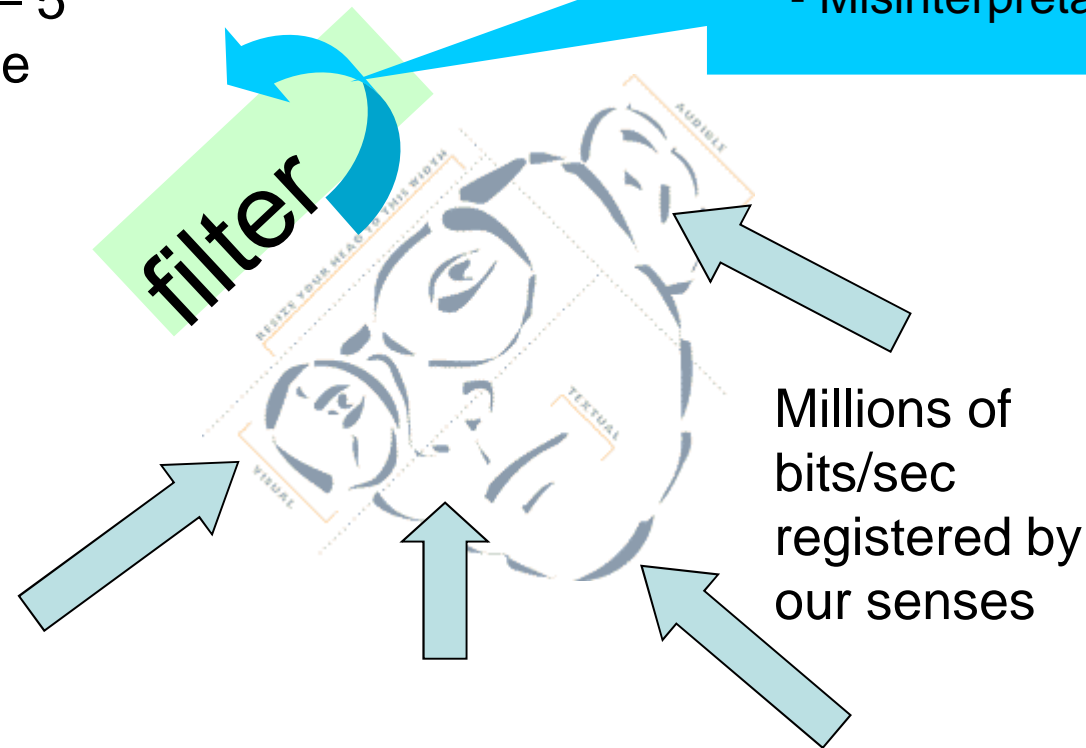
**Effective communications** (individual & team)



# Human information management:

Conscious: 2 – 5 things at a time

Your filters are culturally biased.  
+ Focus and attention  
- Misinterpretation !



How much communication is in the words?



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# Filters – be aware of them!

## **How to (try to) manage them:**

Be aware of your filters (*self-awareness*)

Challenge the filters – ask questions to clarify the message:

- *"Have I understood you correctly when I say that"...*
- *"Why/how would you like to....."*
- *"What do you mean when you say....."*



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# Behaviour in the team

The retreating / resigning members

*"Let the boss decide – I'll just do as I'm told"*



**Advantage:** Quick decision process. No conflicts

**Disadvantage:** The group misses the insight of this member, and the leader is not necessarily the smartest person.



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# Behavior in the team



The debater / discussion warrior

*"I am going to impose my point of view on you"*

*"You are wrong if you do not share my point of view"*

**Advantage:** The arguments are (possibly) being tested

**Disadvantage:** The debater does not test his *own* arguments. The best debater is not necessarily right.



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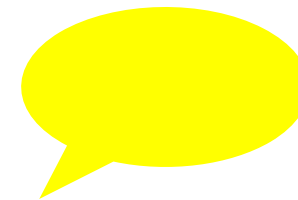
# Behavior in the team

The compromise-seeking member

*"You say **red** I say **yellow** – lets go for **orange**"*

**Advantage:** Several interests are accommodated

**Disadvantage:** A compromise can be worse than any of the alternatives. Slow decision process



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# Behavior in the team

## The team-player

Seeks *dialog* – “let’s consider all contributions as inspiration and find the best solution through discussion”

Asks *Why? How?* rather than counter-suggestions

**Advantage:** The group takes a common responsibility in the evaluation of ideas.

**Disadvantage:** Slow decision process if applied to issues of less importance.



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# Promoting/demoting the *discussion*

- What behaviour promotes discussion in the group?
- What behaviour demotes discussion in the group?



# Promoting the *communicative environment*

- Cherish and encourage each other to contribute
- Support others so that their message is heard.
- Show that you change your point of view.
- Be open and honest
- Take responsibility for you opinion
- Listen actively –respect other models of the world (empathy)
- Refer to facts – not assumptions



# The Agreement of Cooperation (AC)

Objective:

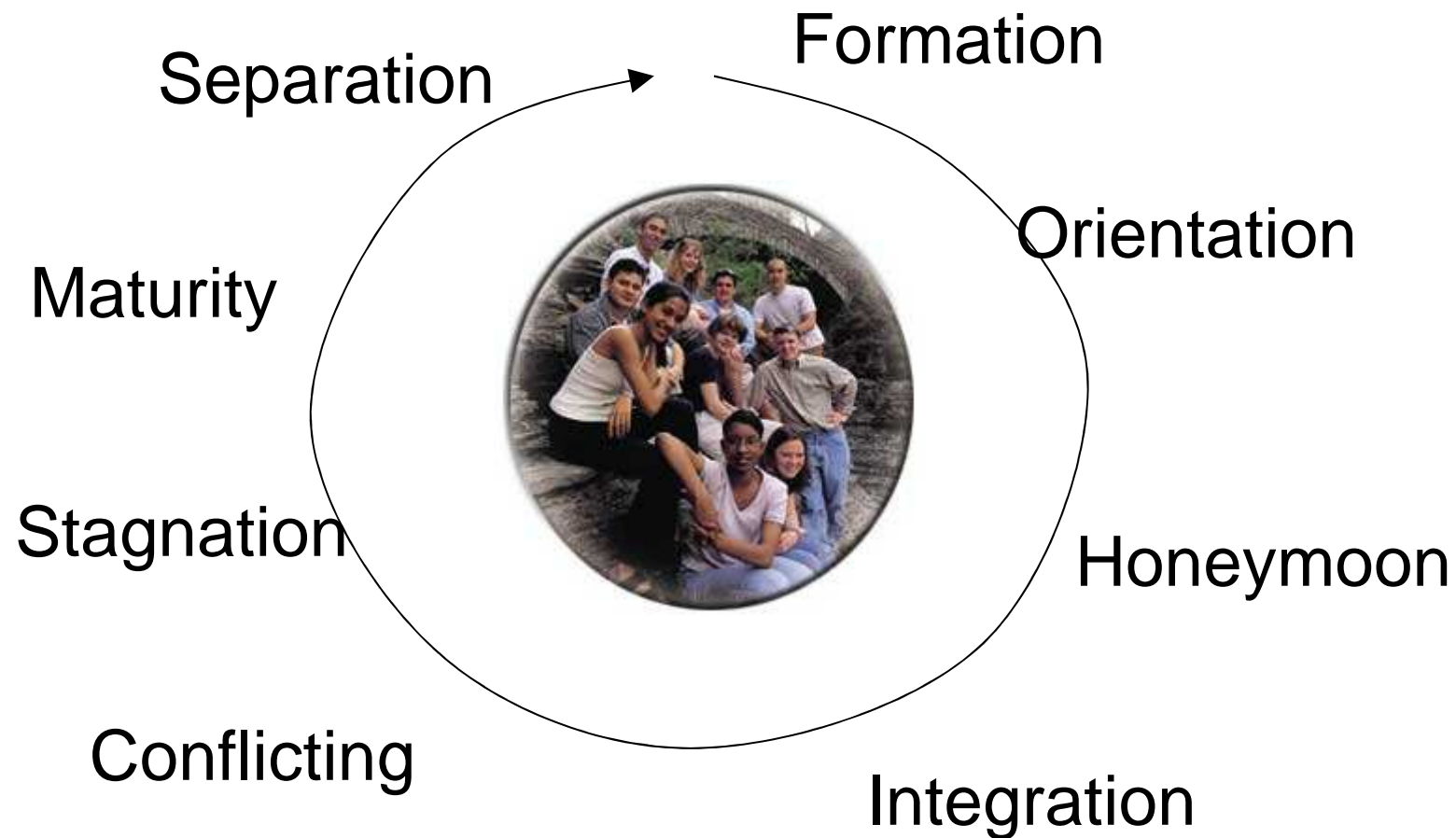
To motivate the making of an AC. Exercise in preparing for a group talk on AC.

(Making an AC is a ETCCCP-course “must do”)



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# Phases in the life of a project group



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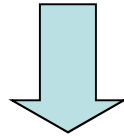
# Some cooperation challenges

- You have different cultural norms
  - values, adaptation will, leadership style, “good behaviour”,...
- You have language problems
  - fluency, communication styles, “direct” translations
- You have different expectations and ambitions
- You have different abilities
  - professional + team roles
- Teamwork requires commitment, will, (hard) work and tools
- Tool: *The Agreement of Cooperation* (the AC)



# Purpose of the AC

- State the common purpose of the group's work
- State the group norms – or at least some basics for the cooperation.



1. Goal / vision for the groups work
2. Rules for behaviour
3. Rules for cooperation





# The group log

Organising your common material - keeping transparency in your work and decisions.

1. Vision, goal, objectives (official + groups focus)
2. *Agreement of Cooperation*
3. Meeting (agendas + minutes)
4. Project plans (activities, resources, time)
5. Analyses, experiments, visits
6. Report (parts)
7. Status reports
8. Communication (important e-mails etc.)
9. ...



# The Circle-Square Game

**Purpose:** Teambuilding, planning, communication, cooperation, leadership,...fun

**Items:**

- 1 long rope
- 1 short rope
- 1 hat

**Time:**

- 10 minutes planning
- 20 minutes execution



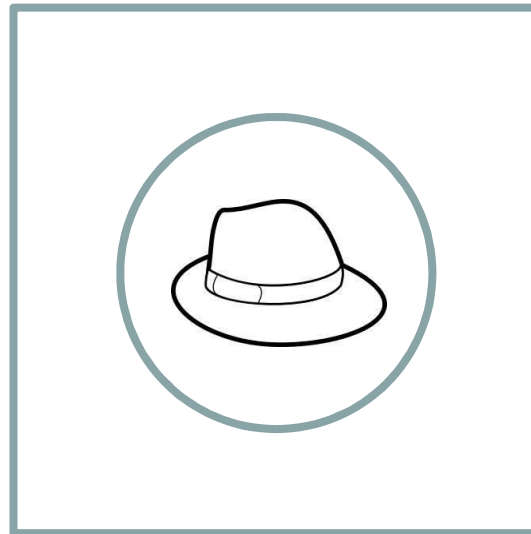
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# The Circle-Square Game

## Objective:

1. Find the items
  2. Make a square of the *long* rope
  3. Make a circle in the center of the square of the *short* rope
  4. Place the person that found the *hat* in the center of the circle
- ...blindfolded!



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# The Circle-Square Game

## Rules:

- The person that finds the hat can take off the blindfold, but becomes "inanimate": Can not talk, can not move (unless moved)

## Remember:

- Make sure everybody is aware of the *goal* before you start
- Make sure everybody is aware of the *plan* before you start
- Communicate clearly during the exercise



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