



Frankfurt School

# Academic Skills II - CBA

## COURSE STRUCTURE I

### **Session 1: Collaboration and Group Work**

Session 2: Group Work, Visuals and Presentations Practice

Session 3: Presentations and Assessment: Conveying Information



## **COURSE STRUCTURE II**

### **At the end of each session:**

You will have a group task (posted in Canvas)

### **In the last course:**

You will make a presentation in small groups during the class.

### **After the course:**

You will be asked to provide a detailed reflection on group work, the presentation process, and the presentation itself: Maximum two pages (around 400 words) that provides individual, specific, and detailed reflection on what you and your group did and learned; take notes and reflect regarding all in-class and private meetings.

## **SESSION I: TEAMWORK AS A MODE OF ACADEMIC COLLABORATION**

1. Basics about the psychology of learning
2. Key collaboration competencies – personal and intercultural



**Whatever you tell me, I will forget.**

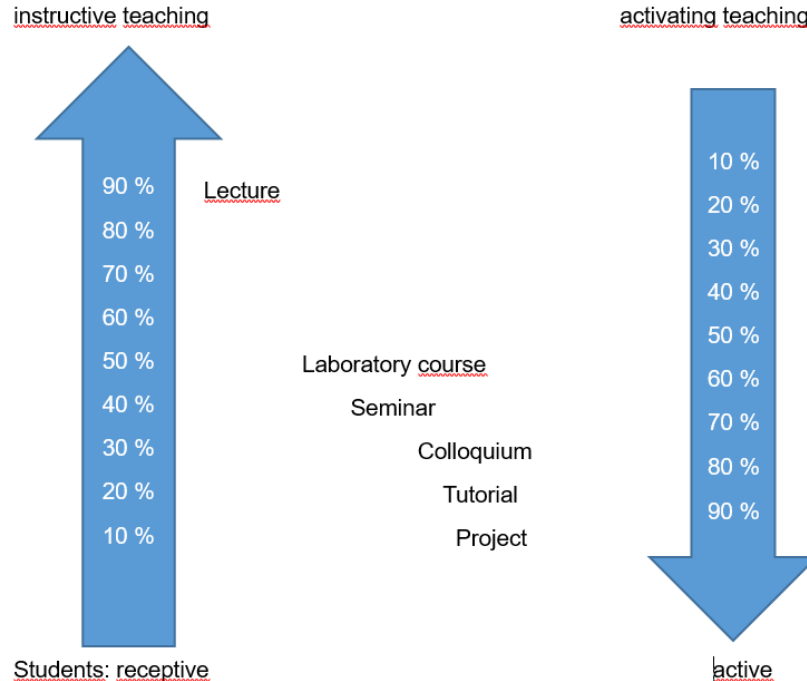
**Whatever you show me I will remember.**

**Whatever you let me do, I will  
understand.**

Confucius, Chinese philosopher  
(551 to 479 B.C.)



# TYPES OF ACADEMIC COURSES AND TEACHING METHODS



## SITUATIONS CONDUCTIVE TO LEARNING\* (\*AND PRESENTING)

- Learning only happens when there is student activity (thinking, speaking or acting)
- Individual learning requirements and learning strategies differ depending on previous knowledge and learning type (auditory, visual, text-related, etc...)

### **Thus: The learning process may...**

... address various senses (seeing, listening, etc.)

... contain a mix of methods and

... a variation between instructive and interactive elements and phases.

# COGNITIVISM OR CONSTRUCTIVISM?

## COGNITIVISM

- Teaching in the sense of presenting, instructing, explaining
- Active role for lecturers; a more passive role for students
- Learning as a receptive process, in which knowledge is to be transferred from the teacher to the minds of the learners.



## CONSTRUCTIVISM

- Teaching in the sense of co-constructing: Subjective perceptions and previous knowledge determine the individual learning process
- Active role for students – lecturer as consultant and support



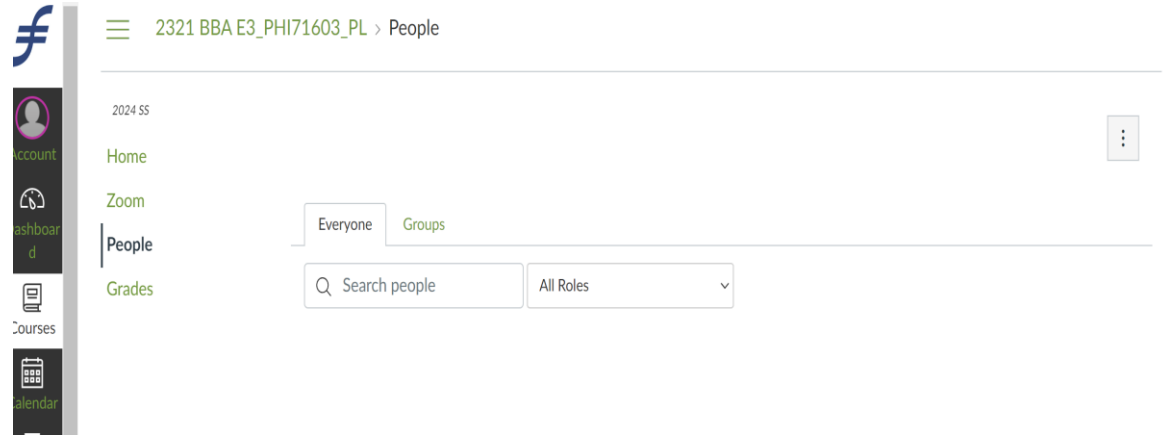


## THIS COURSE: A COMPROMISE

### **MODERATE CONSTRUCTIVISM = Mix of Instruction and construction**

- Lecturers take care of structuring the course
- Lecturers arrange cooperative learning situations and modes of working
- Lecturers provide input and choose adequate working material
- Students participate actively in the development of learning content
- Students communicate with each other
- Students connect new information with existing ideas

## Your Groups



- Your group members (see Canvas, “People” - “Groups”)
- Discuss (approximately 20 minutes): ***Which one of the two options would your group choose for a presentation? Why? (options – see next slide)***
- Everyone should take notes.

## Which perspective is more interesting for a short presentation?

(\*You can use local, national or global examples for any topic.)

- Group 1:** The most urgent ethical consideration(s) in predictive analytics, or ...?
- Group 2:** The most innovative future trend(s) in business applications of machine learning, or ...?
- Group 3:** The top three privacy and ethical considerations in user analytics, or ...?
- Group 4:** An outstanding example(s) of how data analytics has improved business outcomes, or ...?
- Group 5:** The biggest challenge(s) in implementing machine learning solutions in business environments, or ...?
- Group 6:** Dynamic ticket pricing (e.g. Oasis, Taylor Swift): opportunities or challenges, or ...?
- Group 7:** Algorithmic stock market trading: operational challenges and risks, or ...?

**\*An “or” option should be related to the first topic and must be approved by the lecturer.\***

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# GROUP DISCUSSION (20)



## Initial Observations: Your Group Dynamic ?

**What is your perspective of yourself in the group?  
What is your perspective of others in the group?**

**The goal = a successful group**

# KEY SKILLS FOR COLLABORATION: I

## Personal skills

- *Academic Habitus* (diligence, willingness to learn, curiosity, intellectual honesty)
- Planning and organizational skills, time management
- Motivation, creativity
- Tolerance for ambiguity
- Self-consciousness logical reasoning
- Ability to synthesize and integrate new information

## Social skills

- Teamwork ability
- Ability to deal with conflicts and compromise
- Leadership ability
- Intercultural understanding
- Empathy
- Ability to modify or change perspective



## KEY SKILLS FOR COLLABORATION: II

### Methodological skills

- Techniques of scientific work (subject-related, interdisciplinary)
- Reading and writing skills (scientific)
- Media and presentation skills
- Project management skills

### Professional skills

- Ability to acquire new knowledge
- Knowing and assessing concepts and theories for the subject matter
- Mastery of technical terms
- Dealing with materials, objects and/or technologies for the subject
- Critical handling of theories, methods and materials for the subject

## ABILITY TO WORK IN A TEAM

“Team competence is the disposition to be able to shape social interactions in groups and teams in a targeted manner. Your own actions are guided by a cooperative attitude and knowledge of processes and dynamics in groups. In particular, one's own role in the group is consciously reflected upon, reflecting on the situational conditions and one's own personal prerequisites, and filled out within the group. Social and communicative skills are used in a targeted manner.”

Sebastian Walzik: Gruppenarbeit sinnvoll gestalten – Teil 1: Gelingensbedingungen und Zielbezüge für Gruppenarbeiten an Hochschulen, in: Brigitte Berendt/Hans-Peter Voss/Johannes Wildt [Hrsgg.]: Neues Handbuch Hochschullehre: Lehren und Lernen effizient gestalten, Berlin 2011, S. 8.

# ABOUT THE PRACTICE OF (ACADEMIC) TEAMWORK

**1. General Conditions**

**2. Phases**

**3. Roles**



# GENERAL CONDITIONS

## Prerequisites:

- Those involved are ***motivated*** and ***experienced***: There is knowledge of rules and procedures, and **there is communicative competency**
- Work can be linked to prior knowledge and is appropriate in terms of requirements
- Teamwork should offer added value compared to individual work alone: This is a work-sharing approach, intensive learning process, exchange at peer level

## Rules:

- ***All participants have the same rights and obligations***
- ***All participants commit to a common goal and contribute*** to its achievement
- Treating people with respect is a must
- There is a ***concrete schedule*** and a transparent distribution of tasks
- ***Conflicts are discussed openly and actively***

## CONFLICTS WITHIN GROUPS (1):

### Frequent situations:

- “Free rider effect” (real or perceived uneven workload of participants)
- Parasite effect (individual participants “shine” with the work results of others)
- Generally low motivation leads to minimal work effort and diffusion of responsibility
- Premature consensus to avoid conflicts



## CONFLICTS WITHIN GROUPS (2)

### Coping Strategies (from negative to positive):

1. **Avoiding** (superficial social relationships, avoidance of conflict)
2. **Elimination** (pushing out or retreating of the opposing voices)
3. **Oppression** (minority protection non-existent, submission to majority)
5. **Consent** (minority accepts majority opinion)
6. **Alliance** (fragile alliance without giving up individual positions, awareness about the conflict exists)
7. **Compromise** (concessions to preserve group existence)
8. **Integration** (open discussion, development of new solutions)



## 5 BASIC ELEMENTS OF COOPERATIVE TEAMWORK

1. **Positive dependency:** All group members feel connected to the common goal. All individuals must work successfully for the group to be successful.
2. **Individual responsibility:** Each group member is responsible and held accountable within the group for the entire process.
3. **Group evaluation:** The group members themselves provide information about their work in the group and identify opportunities for improvement.
4. **Social learning:** Group members learn communication and interaction skills such as communication, decision-making/leadership structures, and conflict resolution strategies in order to be able to work effectively.
5. **Direct Interaction:** Group members are in close proximity; direct dialogue is always possible and understood as necessary for effective and successful group work.

# Group and Groupwork Goals: Tonality and Word Choice



## 1. *Articulate a Group Goal*

**A) What is your group's purpose(s)?** (mission statement – pick up to three verbs)

Our group's purpose(s) is/are to...

*argue..., persuade, convince, inform, reveal, consider, outline, articulate, inspire, convey, impact, engage...*

**B) Add concrete description to each action (verb), e.g.**

Ex.: Our group's purposes is to

*persuade our audience of FS peers and our finance professor of the long-term (10+ year) significance of digital currencies in the EU, and specifically in Germany.*

*Group: What is/was your purpose? You should be able to concretely define it as soon as possible*

**Example:** Our group's purposes are to clarify *the significance of digital currencies*,  
*outline the regulatory challenges in this domain*, and persuade our audience of their urgent need to participate in these markets.

# Conveying Information: Tonality and Word Choice

1. Providing Information/Feedback

## Three Questions for Any Group (Presentation):

1. What is your purpose?
2. Who is your audience?
3. How can you reach the audience in a productive and appropriate manner?

*Group: How will you reach these goals?  
These questions should be on the agenda of your first out-of-class meeting.*

## Conveying Information: Tonality and Word Choice

Considerations (as in writing):

*Purpose and Audience*  *Content, Tone and Structure*

Purpose and Audience *should determine* content, tone and structure

AND

Content, tone, and structure *should achieve* a rhetorical purpose *that productively reaches* a precise audience.

## Conveying Information: Tonality and Word Choice

1. Providing Information/Feedback

Considerations (as in writing):

*Purpose and Audience*  $\longleftrightarrow$  *Content, Tone and Structure*

Does your content (word choice, images, general information) respect the audience's potential variations in culture, nationality, linguistic levels, gender, any physical matters (e.g. vision), and sexual orientation (as it could be relevant to the ideas/content presented)?

*Group: Your audience may not be homogenous, even if it is within one country/community/language/setting. What considerations should you make about the audience you will presented to in your class? About your own group members*

# Conveying Information: Tonality and Word Choice

Considerations (as in writing):

*Purpose and Audience*  $\longleftrightarrow$  *Content, Tone and Structure*

**Denotation** = *what a word means*

**Connotation** = *the tone or suggestion in the word (negative, neutral, positive)*

*Examples:*

***“deals with” versus “regards”:***

*Positive, neutral, negative in general? Does the meaning change, e.g. with US English?*

***“economical” versus “cheap”:***

*How might these terms be understood by different speakers of English, e.g. UK versus US?*

***Group: Which word(s) or phrase(s) in your presentation, visuals and even discussions should***

***checked for connotation? (Note: AI is notoriously bad at this; use a good old dictionary.)***



# Conveying Information: Tonality and Word Choice



1. Providing Information/Feedback

**2) Who is your group's audience?**

**3) How do you reach them in a productive and appropriate manner?**

Questions 2 and 3 are entirely related.

-Some answers to question 3 are universal:

- \*to be respected

- \*valued

- \*given entirely useful, appropriate and valuable information

- \*make the audience (want to) act

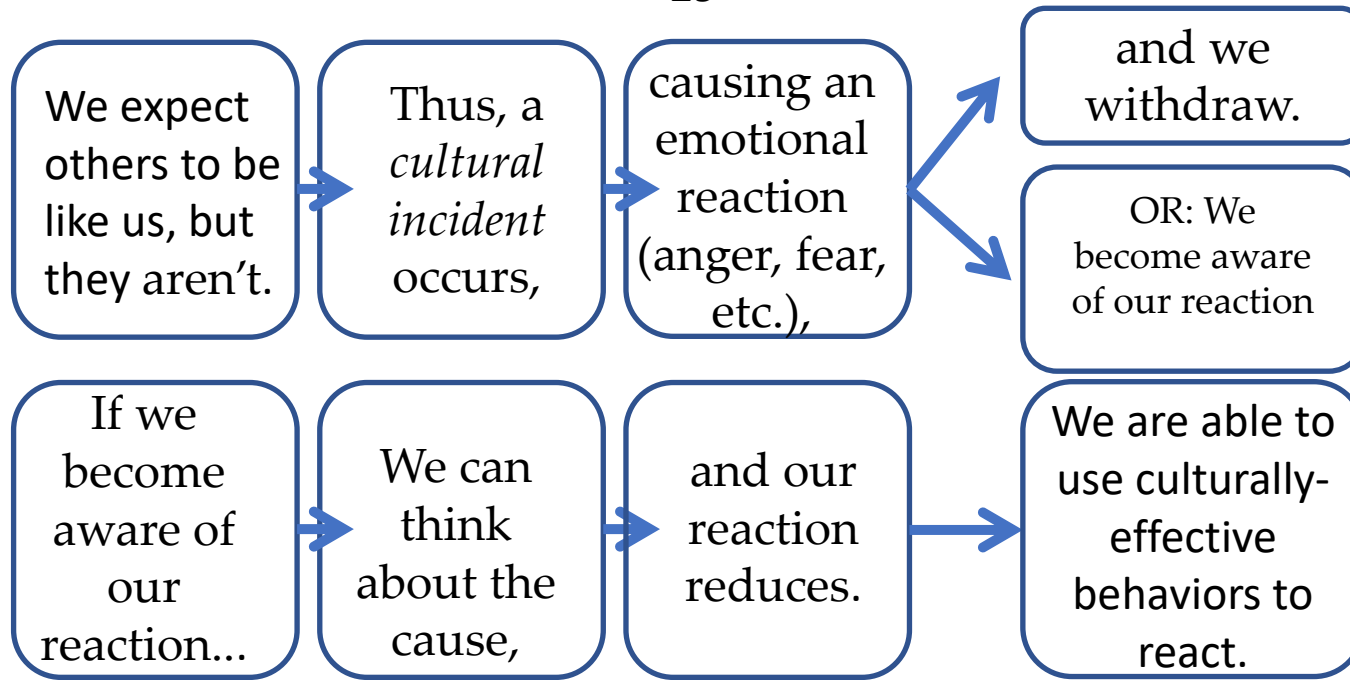
# Conveying Information: Tonality and Word Choice



## *The Importance of **Multicultural, Diverse** Communication*

- Market Globalization
- Technological advancements
- Multicultural, diverse university communities and workforces
- \*ELF (English as a lingua franca)

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### *stereotypes versus prototypes*

(from Dignen & Chamberlain 2009: 33-34)

# Selected Dimensions: Context (cf. Hall)

## High-context cultures

- Relational
- Collectivist
- Intuitive (use context, feeling)
- Contemplative
- Use nonverbal cues

## Low-context cultures

- Task-oriented
- Individualistic
- Sensing (use evidence, facts)
- Action-oriented
- Rather use verbal cues

Japanese

Arabic

Spanish

English

Italian

French

North  
American

Scandinavian

Germanic

Swiss

High



Low



# Conveying Information: Tonality and Word Choice

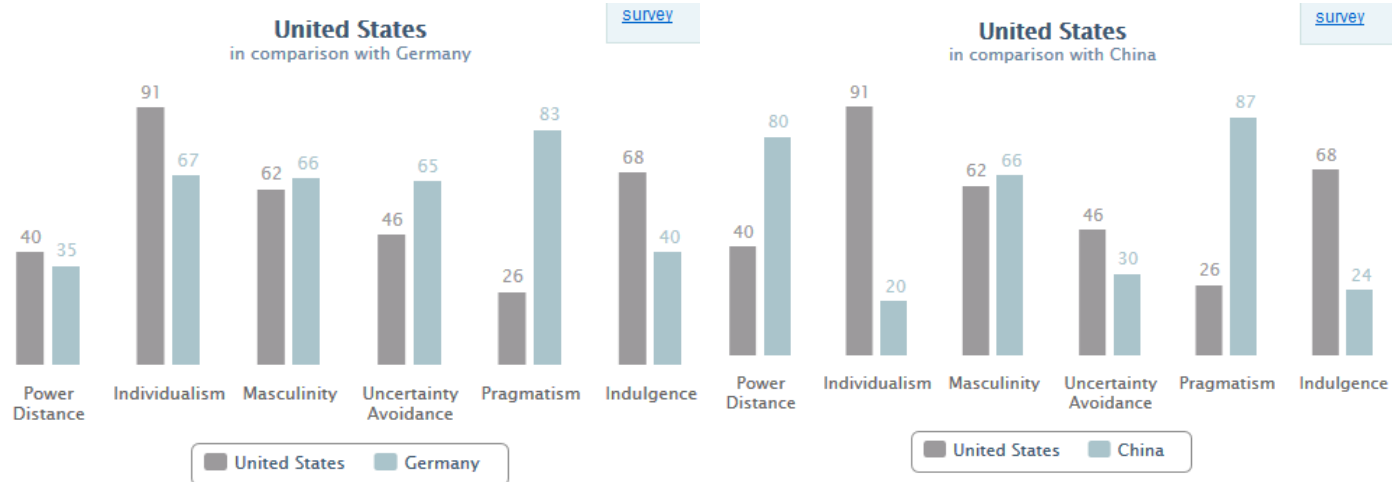
## 1. Providing Information/Feedback

*“[Both in presentations and normal communication] [n]onverbal cues can have between 65 and 93 percent more impact than the spoken word. And we are more likely to believe the nonverbal signals over spoken words if the two are in disagreement.”*

*(Smith qtd. in Emerson, 2013)*

- Power distance
- Individualism versus collectivism
- Masculinity versus femininity
- Uncertainty avoidance

## Part 2: Hofstede's cultural dimension



## Time Orientation

- Time is unlimited and never-ending in some cultures, e.g. a relaxed attitude toward time (example: some South American countries)
- Time is precious to North America/UK/Germany (and more).  
Time correlates with productivity, efficiency, and money.

*BUT: Professional cultures matter, too (e.g. accountants versus writers)*

*Group: In your presentation, you and your colleagues will have to use – and convey – a uniform sense of time (talking speed, use of silence, pauses) and tone. Consider in your first meetings where each of you may need to adjust to reach a balance sense of time and tone.*



# Selected Dimensions of Culture

## Formality

- Example: North Americans may place less emphasis on tradition, ceremony, and social rules (e.g. dress, sharing personal information, behavior).

Formality is often preferred because the rules of etiquette provide a guideline to proper behavior.

*Group: Based on your perception of your international student audience, what will be appropriate in regard to formality or (some aspects of) informality in your presentation? With each other in group work?*

# Selected Dimensions of Culture



## Communication Style

- **High-context cultures** rely on nonverbal cues and the total picture to communicate. Meanings are embedded at many social levels.
- **Low-context cultures** emphasize words, straightforwardness, openness. People tend to be informal, impatient, literal.

Other factors: tolerance for silence, long negotiations

*Group: How would you describe the context culture of your student presentation audience? How will it directly or indirectly affect the content, visuals, verbal and non-verbal qualities?*

# Example:

## Contrasting German and American Communication Styles

### German (Hofstede: low-context communication)

- Complicated
- Thoughtful
- Detailed
- Analytical
- Formal
- Serious
- Excellent listeners
- Factual
- Reserved
- Direct and serious

### American (Hofstede: high-context communication)

- Simple
- Fast
- Concise
- Sloganistic
- Informal
- Humorous
- Easily bored
- Exaggerated
- Personal
- Direct and (seemingly) friendly

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**BREAK (5-10)**



# **FIVE PHASES OF TEAMWORK: FORMING, STORMING, NORMING, PERFORMING, CLOSING**

Our Course Sessions:

Meeting 1: Forming and Storming

Meeting 2: Norming and Performing

Meeting 3: Performing and Closing



# FIVE PHASES OF TEAMWORK

## 1. Phase: FORMING

- Participants arrive, have to put aside everyday life/environment
- Participants provide a variety of individual experiences
- Uncertainty about team partners, work assignment, teacher
- Usually there is a wait-and-see attitude
- Getting to know each other beyond the working level

# FIVE PHASES OF TEAMWORK

## 2. Phase: STORMING

- One's own position becomes clearer
- Confrontational or skeptical questions about the work assignment
- Individual differences become clear
- Claims for leadership and rivalries may arise



# FIVE PHASES OF TEAMWORK

## 3. Phase: NORMING

- Search for rules and norms
- Decision mechanisms are negotiated
- First role agreements are made
- Group organizes itself





## FIVE PHASES OF TEAMWORK

### 4. Phase: PERFORMING

- Productive, goal-oriented speaking
- Degree of self-organization increases (individual and group dynamic)
- Consent about distribution of roles and tasks
- Decreasing individual profiling efforts
- Conflicts are dealt with in order not to jeopardize the ability to work

# FIVE PHASES OF TEAMWORK

## 5. Phase: CLOSING

- Content, organizational and emotional conclusion
- Perspective on content transfer of the work result
- Mutual feedback on the work process
- Saying goodbye to the group work phase

# ROLES IN GROUPS

## Psycho-Social roles

- Listeners\*
- Talkers\*
- Alpha dogs\*
- Quitters
- Clowns
- Helpers\*
- Scholars
- Mediators\*

## Functional roles with regard to

- time management
  - observing group rules
  - the moderation of discussions
  - securing results,
- ...and more as required.

\*There is nothing wrong with assigning these (\*) roles on a rotating basis.

## ROLES IN GROUPS: SOME COMMENTS FROM SPRING 2024 STUDENTS

-“My group was successful in the presentation, and in meetings, because the majority of us saw this work as benefitting the whole group, not just as a matter of individual success.”

*-Balance of roles; balance of taking the work personally but not personal*

-“X X was really difficult to reach, whether on WhatsApp, Signal, even email. We finally ended up calling him when he did not arrive for the 2nd meeting. He said he was skiing and had to call us back... He didn't... Is 'hate' the wrong word to use about a group member?”

*-Quitter/free-rider taking energy away from group goal.*

“I never want to work with X X again. She knows exactly what she did.”

*-Well, this was an interesting reflection. Possibly also a Netflix series.*

“My group had some problems at the beginning setting up meetings. We discussed it directly with the two group members who seemed indifferent. What we did really well was be direct when something was not working in our group. For example, I got frustrated when X did not do their share of the PowerPoint, but I did not go directly to X. I checked with my group to see if they had the same impression. Then when I/we talked to X, I knew my point was valid, and I knew I had the group's support.”

# CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL TEAMWORK

Video sequence from the feature film  
"Witness" with Harrison Ford

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t1xKto5TPZw>



## EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

1. Evaluation of work in groups
2. Roles in groups
3. Student concerns in groups





## EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION: I

What do you believe are the top five factors that lead to

1. functioning group work?
2. ineffective/difficult group work?

*What rules should your group have in order to succeed?*  
*What happens if a rule is violated?*



## **EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION: II**

What has been/is the most successful group you have been part of?

1. What role(s) did you take in the group?
2. How was communication managed?
3. How were differences, and problems, managed?



## TOP EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT SKILLS NEEDED TO SUCCEED IN THE C-SUITE

### *1. Senior Leadership Skills*

Organizations seek leaders who can learn from past experiences, take on new challenges, and make decisions under uncertainty. Think about your past leadership roles. What did you do well? What could you have improved?

### *2. C-Suite Communication & Presentation Skills*

Effective senior managers need to be able to converse with people at every level of an organization. This includes presentation skills beyond a slide deck. Persuasion and influence are powerful skills for any executives and should be reflected in all aspects of communication.

### *3. Change Management Skills*

### *4. Subject Matter Expertise*

### *5. Strategic Thinking & Foresight*

### *6. Decision Making*

### *7. Emotional Intelligence*

### *8. Employee Development*

### *9. Delegation*

Source: Wharton School of Business, U-Penn

# WHAT FACTORS ARE IMPORTANT TO SENIOR MANAGERS?

	<b>“Important”</b>	<b>“very important”</b>
1. clear division of roles	45,1 %	32,0 %
2. trust and loyalty	42,5 %	54,5 %
3. exciting idea	54,1 %	21,2 %
4. meaningful task	53,4 %	38,8 %
5. support from above	42,6 %	21,9 %
6. constant flow of information	35,7 %	59,9 %
7. cooperation	37,3 %	60,5 %
8. clear team leadership	42,0 %	49,9 %
9. open strike culture	57,3 %	23,6 %
10. coordination of tasks	39,1 %	57,3 %

n = 376 senior managers

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## WHAT FACTORS MAY LEAD TO FAILURE?

1.	communication difficulties	97.0 %
2.	unclear aim	94.3 %
3.	no collaborative culture	91.0 %
4.	unspoken conflicts	90.2 %
5.	lack of trust	90.2 %
6.	power struggles, rivalries	87.8 %
7.	ineffective team meetings	84.8 %
8.	lack of a team leader	79.6 %
9.	dominance of own interests	69.2 %
10.	unclear hierarchy	56.9 %
11.	open conflicts	52.9 %
12.	too little time	47.8 %

## ROLES IN GROUPS – WHO WERE/ARE YOU?

*\*Reflect on your group work in today's sessions:*

Which role did you personally assume during most of the work process?

1. **Person of action:** highly focused, dynamic, provocative, result-oriented, does not tolerate inertia or self-deception
2. **Executor:** conservative, careful, organized with common sense, a "workhorse"
3. **Observer:** sober, level-headed, pays attention to concrete decisions
4. **Team worker:** socially oriented, promotes team spirit, improves the climate
5. **Trailblazer:** extroverted, inquisitive, communicative, forms the internal and external network of relationships
6. **Chairman:** calm, confident, purposeful and achievement oriented, defines group goals, sets deadlines, treats input from the group with an open mind
7. **Innovator:** individual, creative, more introverted or even lonely, his wealth of ideas fertilized
8. **Perfectionist:** meticulous, conscientious, diligent, makes sure work gets done and perfect

## THE SELF-ASSESSMENT OF EXECUTIVES

1. Person of action: 18.7 %
2. Executor: 14.6 %
3. Observer: 9.4 %
4. Team worker: 11.7 %
5. Trailblazer: 14.6 %
6. *Chairman:* 22.2 %
7. Innovator: 2.0 %
8. Perfectionist: 6.7 %

## STUDENT FEEDBACK (1)

"[It's] easier to say nothing than to seek conflict and then say something negative. Then you might say it wrong... Doesn't lead to giving real feedback; instead, people blame each other like, 'You always do it!'"

Source: Bernd Gössling: Nur die „Illusion guter Zusammenarbeit“? Zur Initiierung und Begleitung studentischer Gruppenarbeiten, in *Die Hochschullehre* 6 (2020), p. 194-196.

## STUDENT FEEDBACK (2)

"In our group there were first signs of a free rider. We [in the group, i.e. Author] together reflected on our working methods[,] and it turned out that this person did not see himself that way at all."

Source: Bernd Gössling: Nur die „Illusion guter Zusammenarbeit“? Zur Initiierung und Begleitung studentischer Gruppenarbeiten, in *Die Hochschullehre* 6 (2020), p. 194-196.

## STUDENT FEEDBACK (3)

“When problems in the group occur, there is a responsibility for the individual and a responsibility for the whole group; a solution for problems that are caused by individuals can only be found at the level of the whole group.”

Source: Bernd Gössling: Nur die „Illusion guter Zusammenarbeit“? Zur Initiierung und Begleitung studentischer Gruppenarbeiten, in *Die Hochschullehre* 6 (2020), p. 194-196.



## STUDENT FEEDBACK (4)

"We didn't talk about it within the group so as not to endanger the 'apparent harmony'. In retrospect, it would have made sense to have communicated openly about our expectations of the group work."

Source: Bernd Gössling: Nur die „Illusion guter Zusammenarbeit“? Zur Initiierung und Begleitung studentischer Gruppenarbeiten, in *Die Hochschullehre* 6 (2020), p. 194-196.

## STUDENT FEEDBACK (5)

"One group member made it clear at an earlier point in time that he found the distribution of work unfair and he asked for more effort from the other group members. After this constructive criticism, I think the overall morale has improved."

Source: Bernd Gössling: Nur die „Illusion guter Zusammenarbeit“? Zur Initiierung und Begleitung studentischer Gruppenarbeiten, in *Die Hochschullehre* 6 (2020), p. 194-196.

## GROUP WORK: FORMING/STORMING

**Between before our next session your group from today should plan to meet in order to create a brief presentation (rough draft) on the topic you selected in your group today (or your group will select) – the topic can only be one of the two topics that was proposed for your group.**

- Exchange contact details and decide on major/secondary communication method(s)
- Create “group rules”: response time for communication, dates, deadlines, and organization
- Everyone has to hold equal responsibility for the presentation.

-Keep notes about every meeting: Notice the process – what do you think about it? Feel about it? Strengths and challenges?

**Your goal: Create a 7-10 minute oral presentation\* about your topic:**

At this point, use PowerPoint minimally if at all: your focus should be on *forming* and *storming* (watch which roles are being played by whom, and decide how to make the entire process productive and efficient).

- Everyone in the group should speak in the meeting(s), and in the presentation, in equal amounts of time.
- This presentation should be considered a first draft (a good start, but not finished).

**In the next session, you should be prepared to present to at least one other class group; a rubric will appear in Canvas for guidance.**

Akademie für Führungskräfte der Wirtschaft (Ed.) (2002) : Mythos Team auf dem Prüfstand: Teamarbeit in deutschen Unternehmen. Befragung von 376 Führungskräften durch die Akademie für Führungskräfte der Wirtschaft GmbH, Akademie-Studie, No. 2002 (2), Akademie für Führungskräfte der Wirtschaft, Bad Harzburg.

<https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/100017>

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Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania, 2024.

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