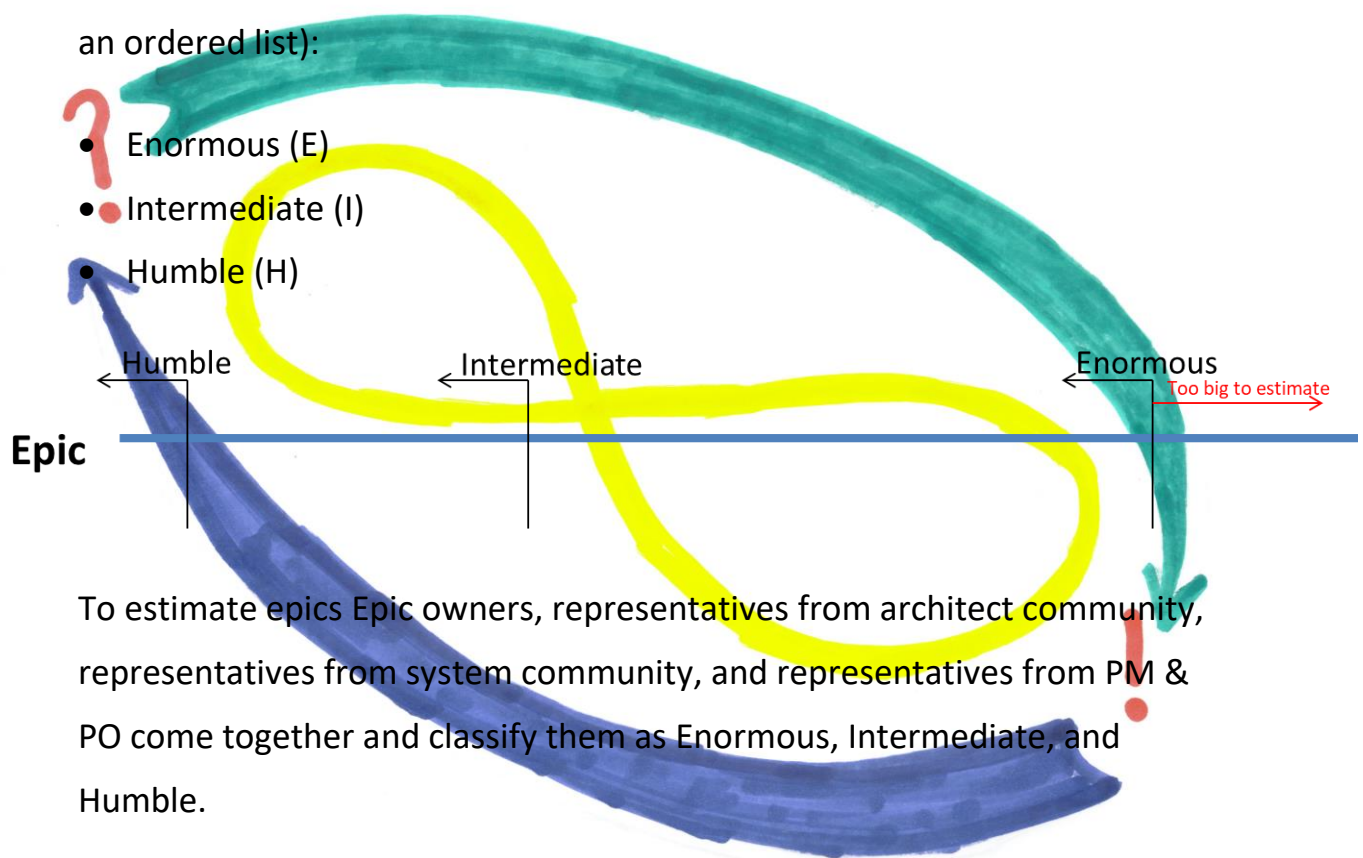# Relative Estimation – Epics & Features and Reference Scale

Estimation in Agile world is relative at each level of requirements. Having an enterprise wide reference scale is a journey. To start in journey lets' start.

First Step

1. To estimate Epics, use ordering protocol method (arranging big to small in an ordered list):

   - Enormous (E)
   - Intermediate (I)
   - Humble (H)

   Humble   Intermediate   Enormous
                                          Too big to estimate

   Epic

   To estimate epics Epic owners, representatives from architect community, representatives from system community, and representatives from PM & PO come together and classify them as Enormous, Intermediate, and Humble.

2. Features are estimated on a relative scale of T-shirt sizing:

   - Extra Large (XL)
   - Large (L)
   - Medium (M)
   - Small (S)

- Extra Small (XS)

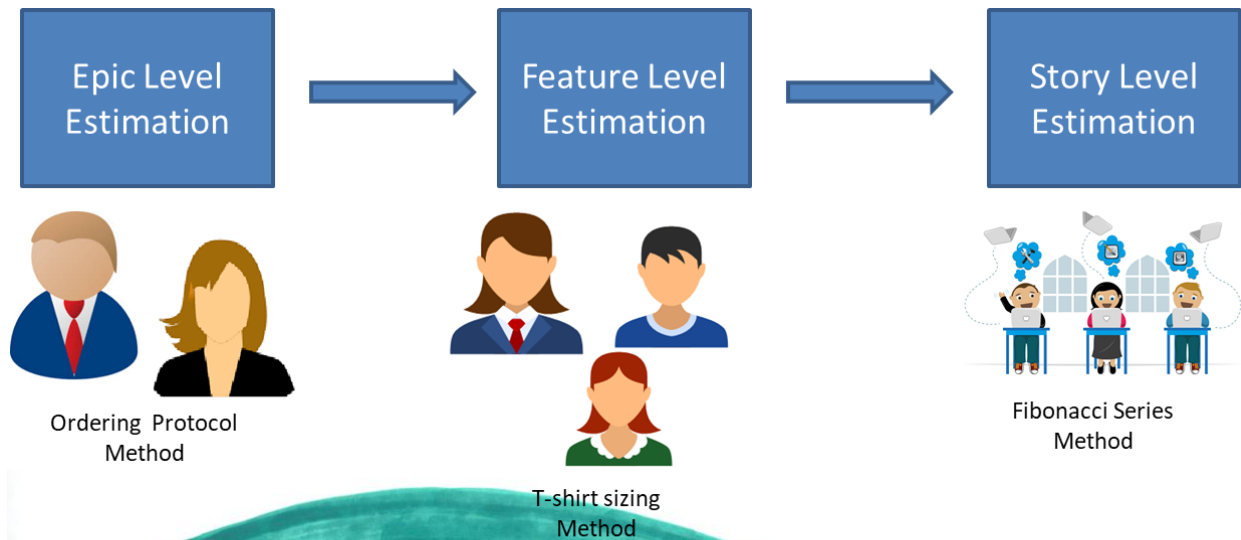| Extra Small	Small		Medium		Large		Extra Large	Too big to estimate
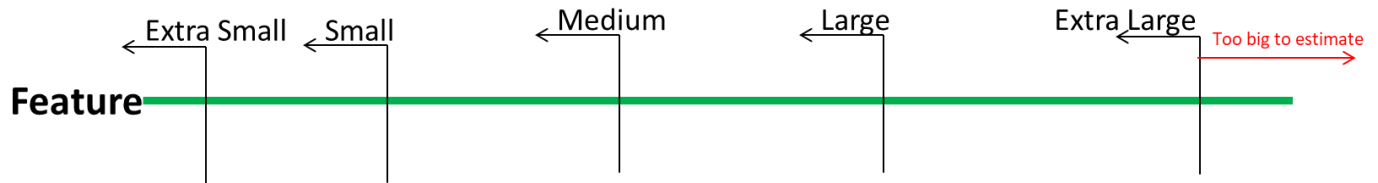
Feature

To estimate features PMs, POs, representatives from Architect community, representatives from System community, and representatives from Development community come together and classify them as XL, L, M, S, and XS.

3. Stories are estimated using Fibonacci series on relative scale by Development teams.

1	2		3		5		8	Too big to estimate
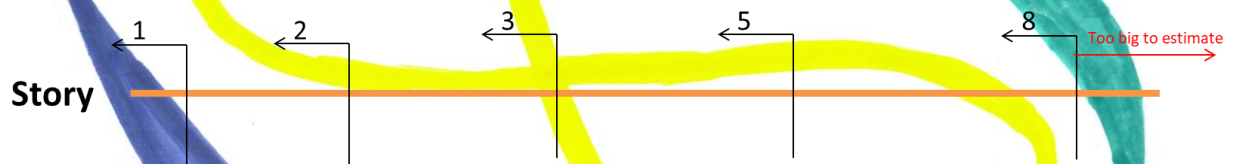
Story

In mean time Story Mapping and Refinement efforts are underway to gain better understanding around functionality and dependencies.

Epic Level Estimation	→	Feature Level Estimation	→	Story Level Estimation

Ordering Protocol Method

T-shirt sizing Method

Fibonacci Series Method

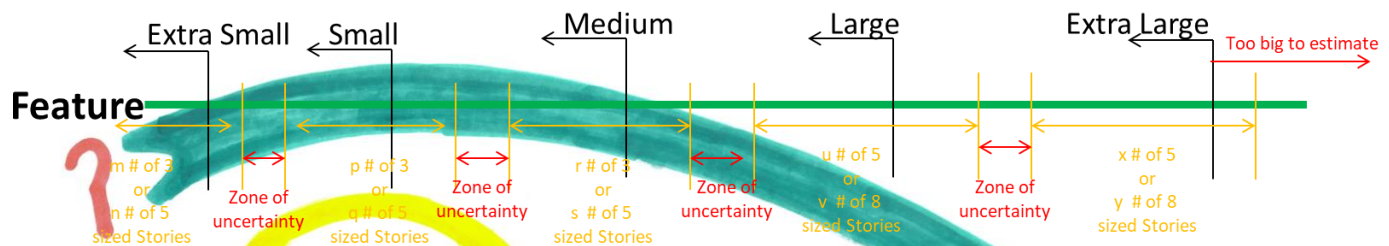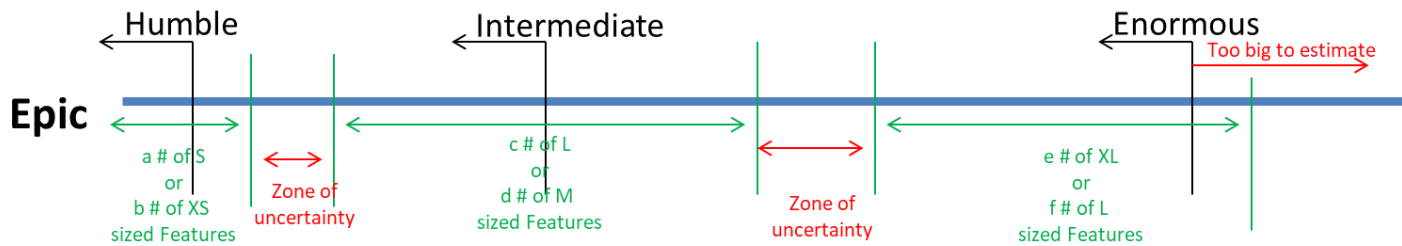**On going Story Mapping and Refinement**

Next Step

Over the time, the organization builds a reference map to have a range based correlation of all three levels of requirements.

To build these reference maps representative epics, features, and stories are contributed to reference scale by Epic owners, PMs/POs, and DevTeams. To keep the reference scale up to date:

- Epics older than 6 months (or may be one year);
- Features older than 3 months (or may be 6 months); and
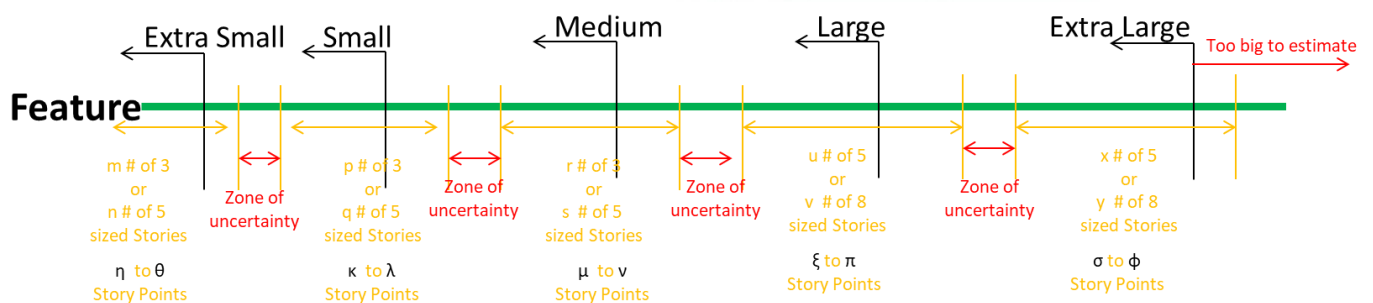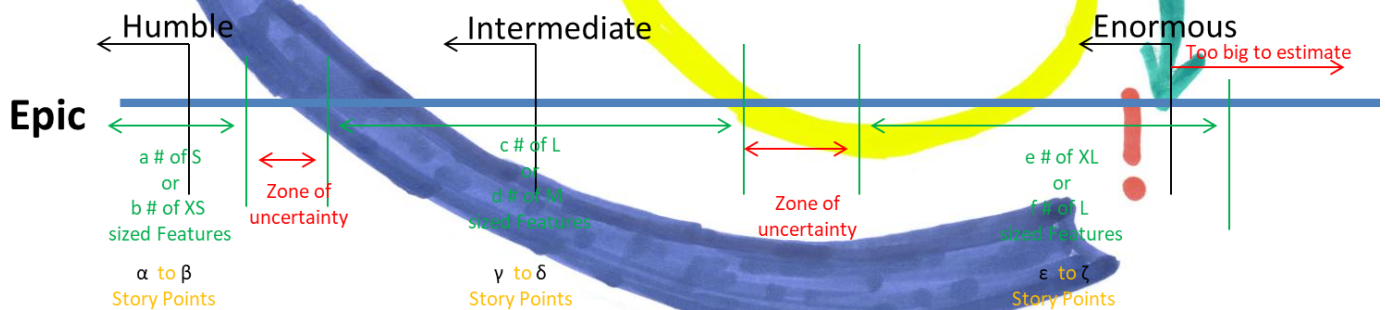- Stories older than one PI (may be two PI)

should be dropped out from the reference scale.

This range based maps may look something like:

Epic (top scale)

Humble   Intermediate   Enormous

Too big to estimate

Epic

a # of S
or
b # of XS
sized Features

Zone of uncertainty

c # of L
or
d # of M
sized Features

Zone of uncertainty

e # of XL
or
f # of L
sized Features

Feature (top scale)

Extra Small   Small   Medium   Large   Extra Large

Too big to estimate

Feature

m # of 3
or
n # of 5
sized Stories

Zone of uncertainty

p # of 3
or
q # of 5
sized Stories

Zone of uncertainty

r # of 3
or
s # of 5
sized Stories

Zone of uncertainty

u # of 5
or
v # of 8
sized Stories

Zone of uncertainty

x # of 5
or
y # of 8
sized Stories

In this scale, the range of uncertainty keeps on narrow down from Epic to Story but increases as size increases.

You can also view the reference scale on a common denominator of Story Points.

Epic (second scale)

Humble   Intermediate   Enormous

Too big to estimate

Epic

a # of S
or
b # of XS
sized Features

Zone of uncertainty

c # of L
or
d # of M
sized Features

Zone of uncertainty

e # of XL
or
f # of L
sized Features

α to β
Story Points

γ to δ
Story Points

ϵ to ζ
Story Points

Feature (second scale)

Extra Small   Small   Medium   Large   Extra Large

Too big to estimate

Feature

m # of 3
or
n # of 5
sized Stories

Zone of uncertainty

p # of 3
or
q # of 5
sized Stories

Zone of uncertainty

r # of 3
or
s # of 5
sized Stories

Zone of uncertainty

u # of 5
or
v # of 8
sized Stories

Zone of uncertainty

x # of 5
or
y # of 8
sized Stories

η to θ
Story Points

κ to λ
Story Points

μ to ν
Story Points

ξ to π
Story Points

σ to ϕ
Story Points

Ref: http://agileanswer.blogspot.com

Few important points to be taken into consideration:

- Purposefully, different scales are used for each level in requirement hierarchy.
- To avoid HiPPO (Highest Paid Person's Opinion) effect, people with high sounding titles must speak in last or not at all.

In this estimation process, the emphasis is on estimation not on team capacity and cost of realization of a specific Epic/Feature/Epic.