Leading creative virtual teams

:: IDBM capstone::

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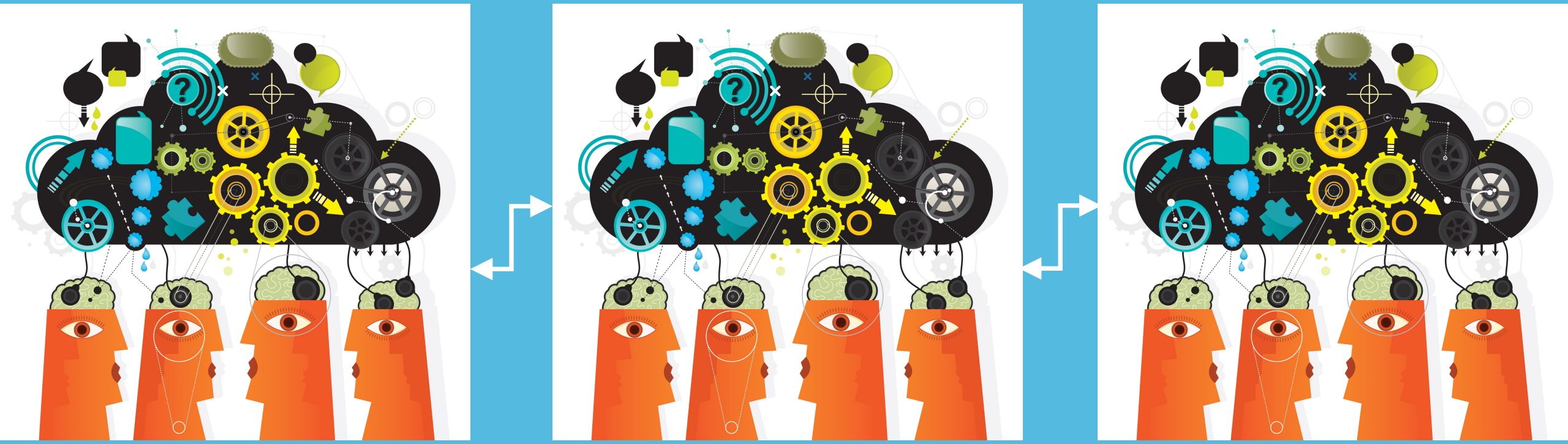
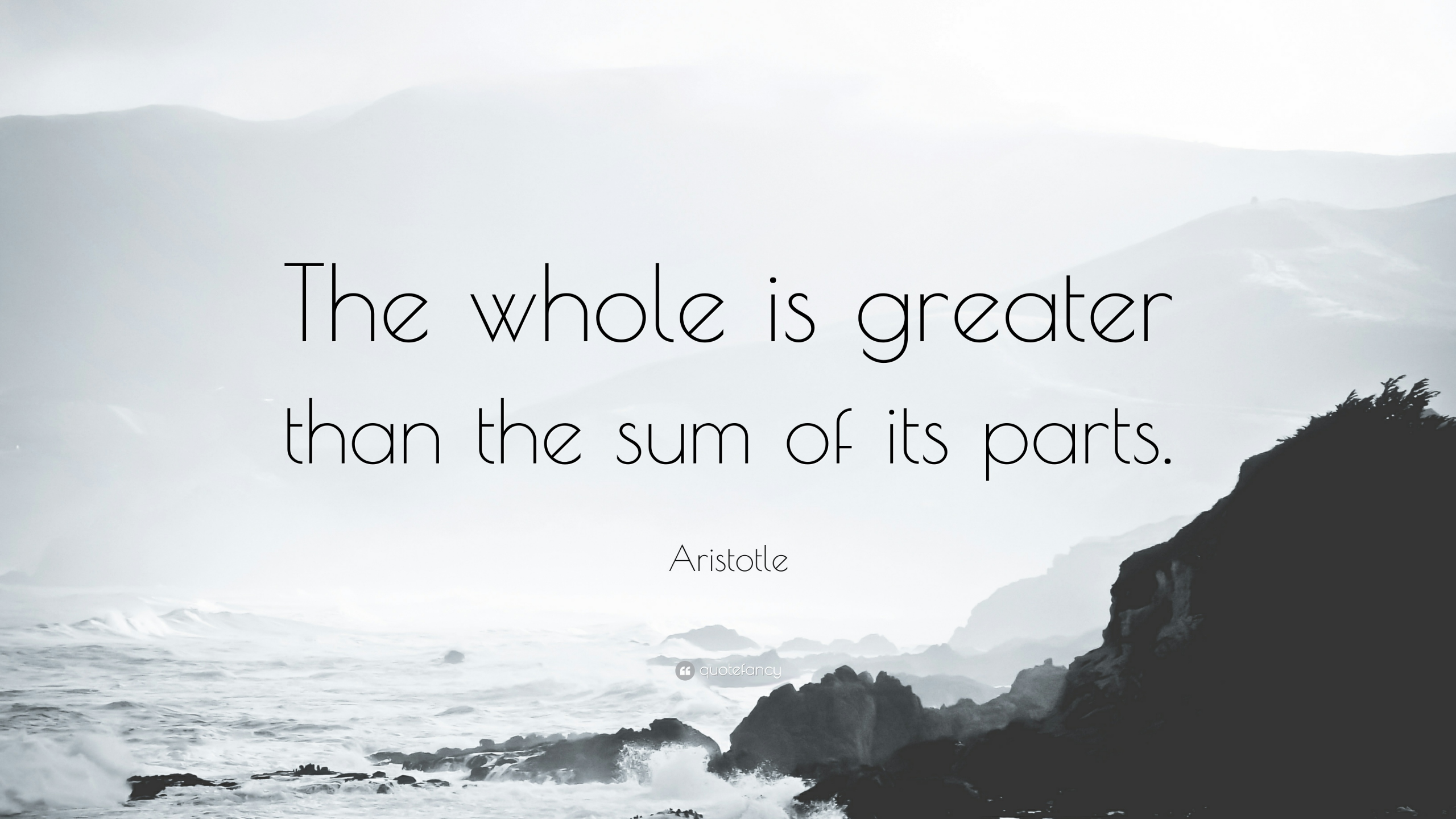


Todays learning objective

- ✓ *Learn how to foster creativity in VTs (as a team member or a leader)*
- ✓ *Think about creativity from a broader perspective in our technology intensive society*

May I have your attention please!

Step 1. IDEATION
Step 2. MAKE IT HAPPEN!
THINKER
ThinKing Cap
IDEAOMETER


The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.
Aristotle
quotefancy

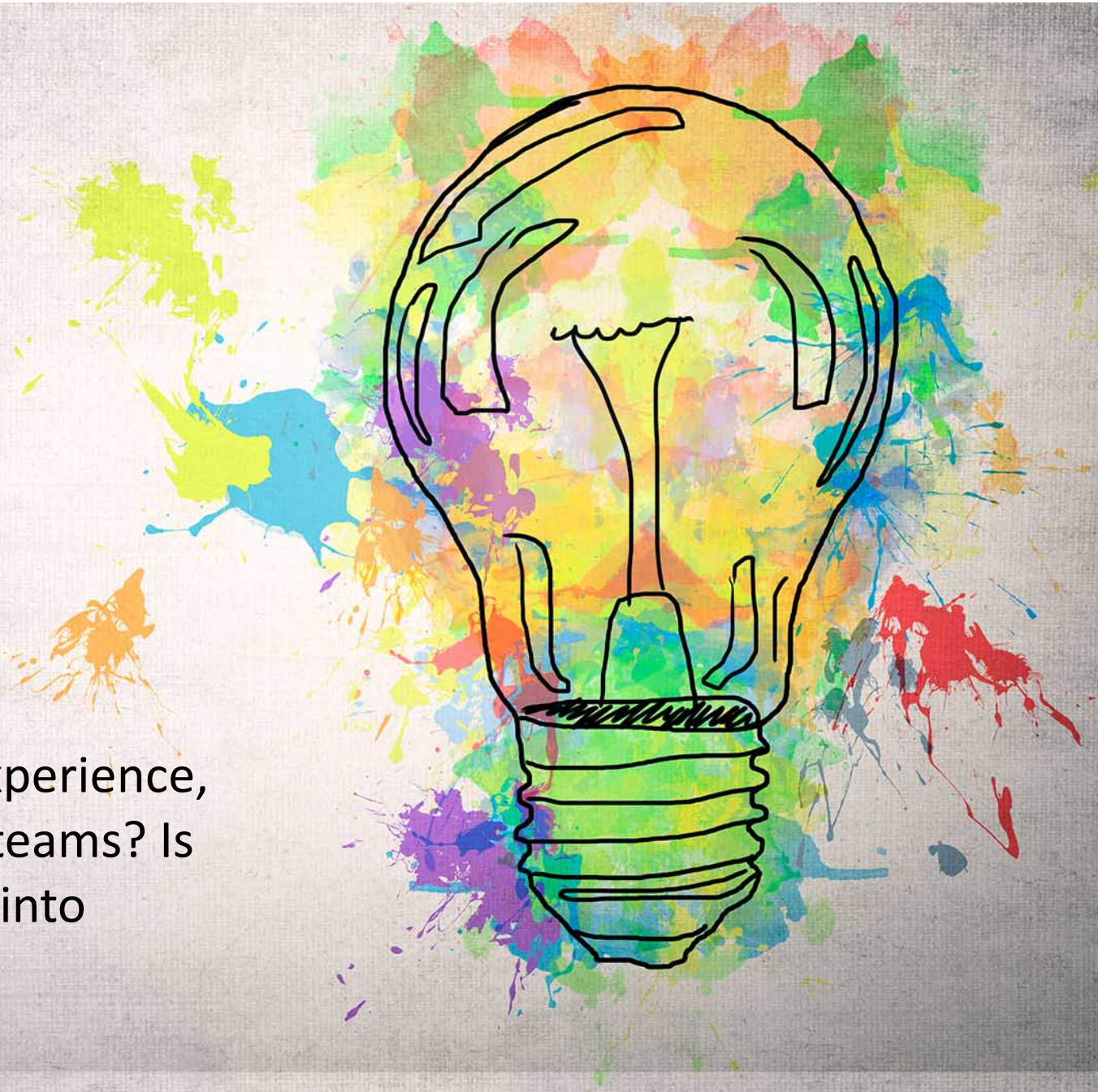
The act of influencing attitudes and behaviors of individuals towards achieving organizational goals (Bass 1990)

Leadership is a messy subject much debated!

Steve Jobs – a role model or not?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f60dheI4ARg

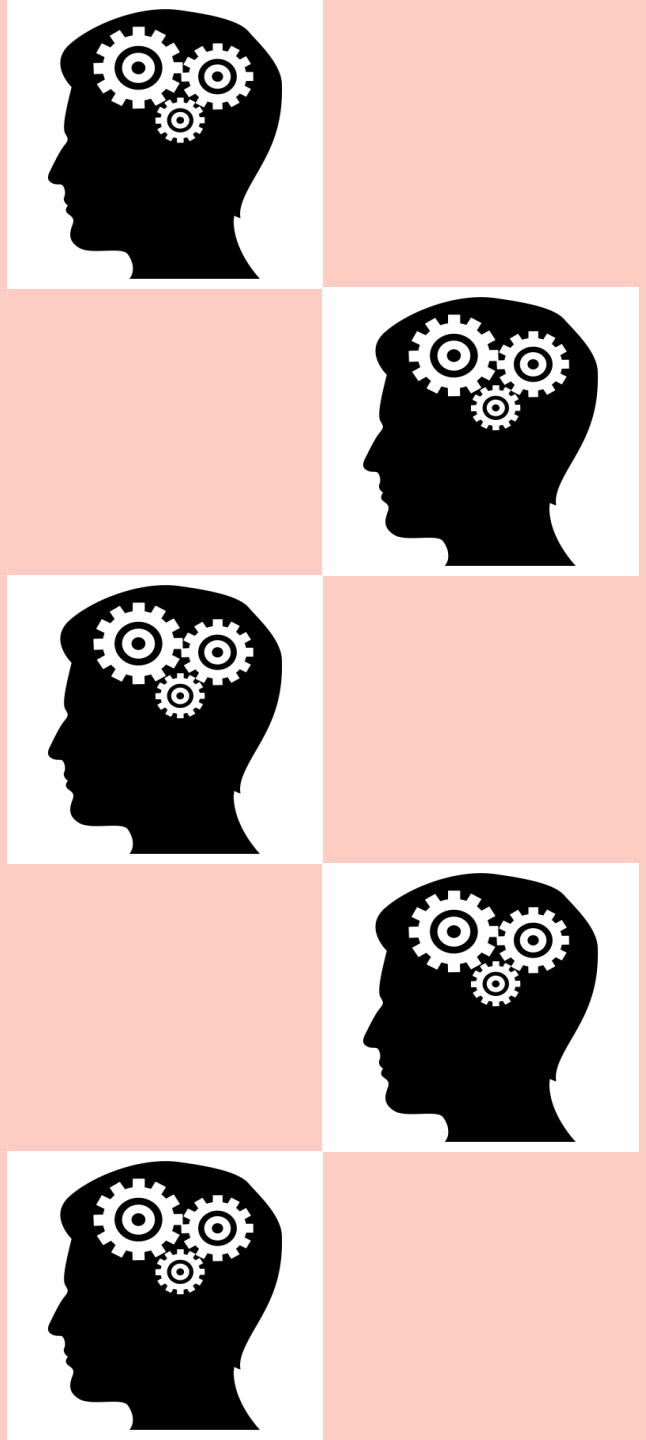
Leading creative teams



Disucssion in small groups:

Based on your readings and experience, how should you lead creative teams? Is there particular things to take into account if the team is virtual?

Enablers of VT creativity



- Freedom & challenges
- Goal clarity
- Motivation, commitment, & dedication
- Support and encouragement
- Sufficient resources and time
- Information sharing
- Diversity and task! conflict
- Trust, and establishment of a personal bond

Chang, 2011, Nemiro 2000, Sosik, Kahai, & Avolio, 1998

Trust

A person is willing to rely on actions of another person

Lack of trust commonly leads to lower creativity!

Lack of communication and willingness to discuss and share ideas openly

"People in Atlanta don't know us well enough to trust that our ideas can be good" (Global team member in Finland)

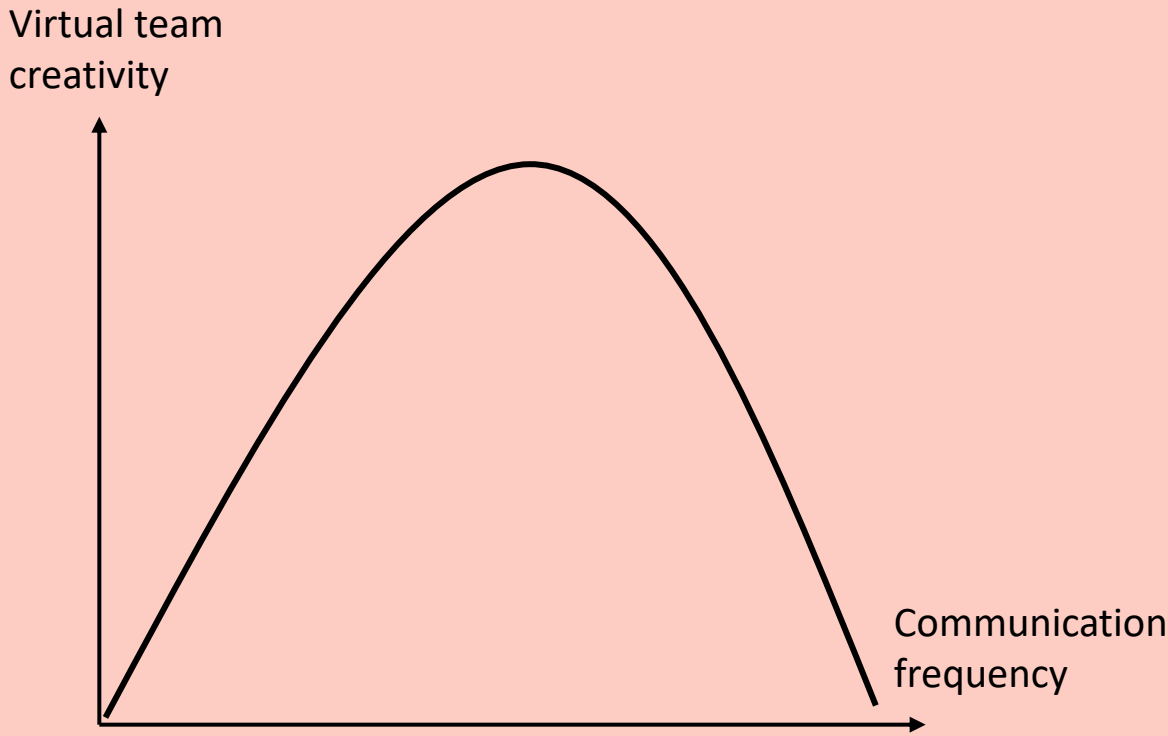
"If you don't know the other on the global site, you don't communicate."

Trust in virtual teams

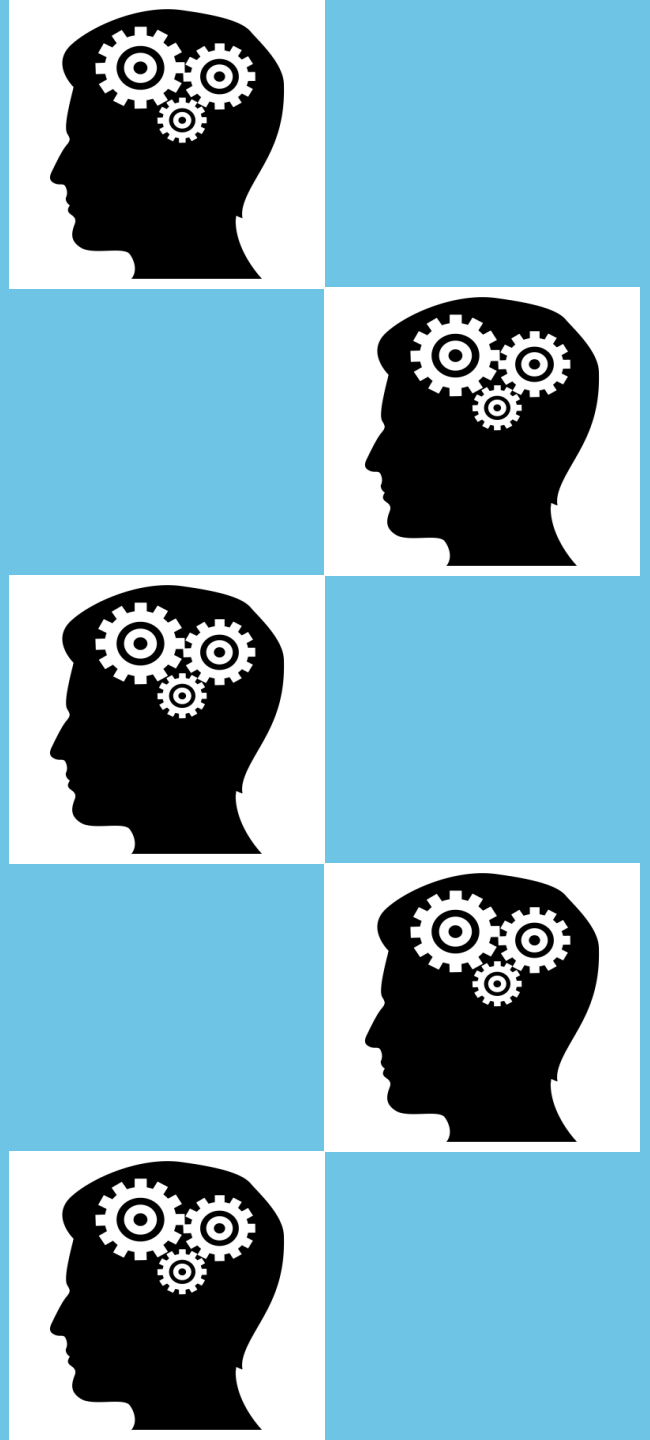
- SWIFT TRUST
  - Cognitive
    (based on characteristics)
  - Normative
    (active, proactive, enthusiastic style of interaction)
- ABILITY-BASED TRUST
  Demonstrate competence
- Relational trust
  Cultivate through behaviors over time

Role of communication for VT creativity

- Communication aids in the creation and dissemination of ideas through information sharing
- Communication may also lead to lower creativity through team member distraction (attentional overload -> lower cognitive performance) and creativity blocking (rushing into conclusions instead of divergent thinking)

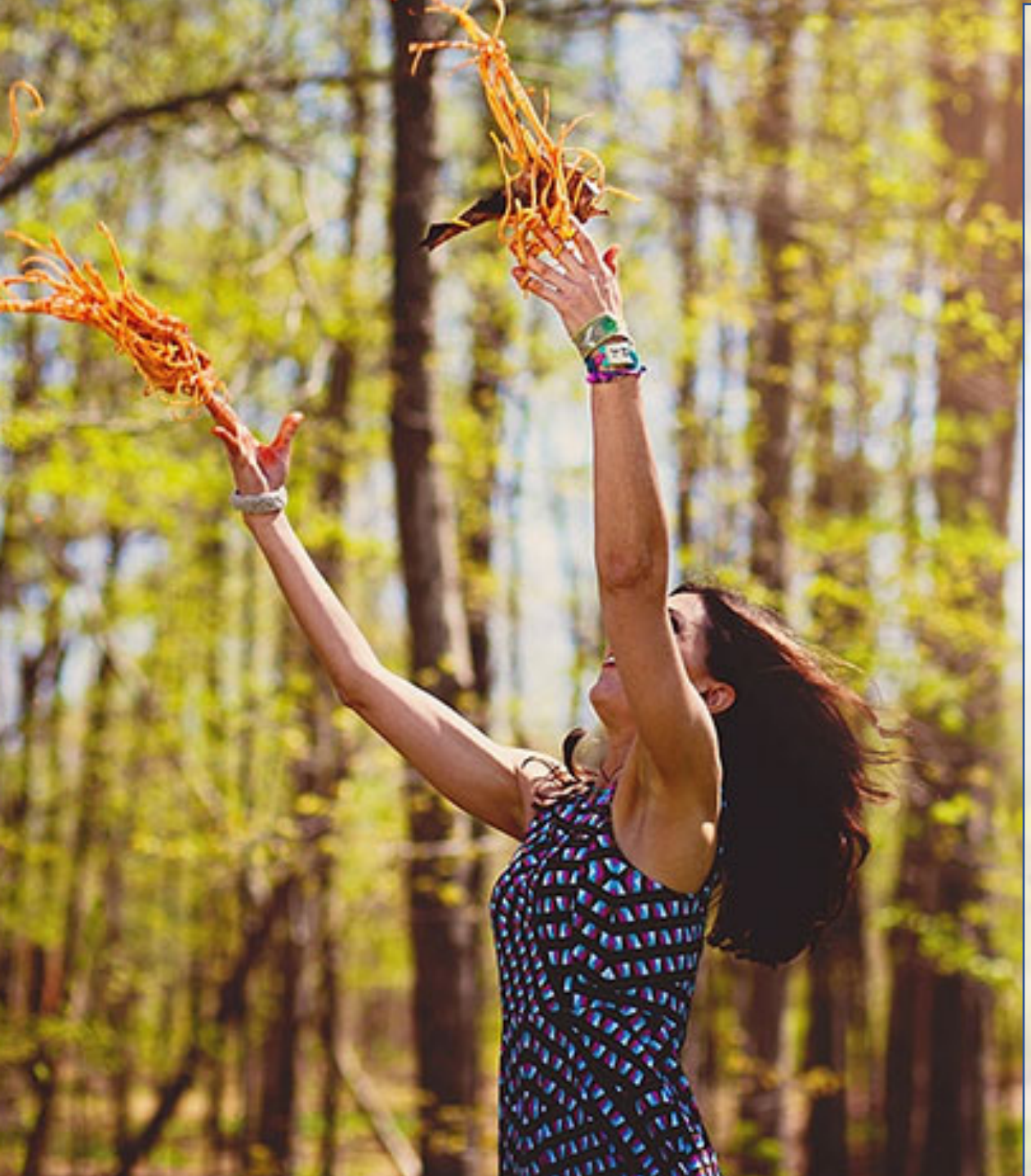


Leenders, 2003



Pre-lecture reading lesson:

” Avoid getting hemmed in by process”



Pre-lecture reading lesson:

Facilitate spaghetti throwing

"A team climate characterized by interpersonal trust and mutual respect in which people have a sense of confidence that people will not embarrass, reject, or punish others for speaking up." Harvard Professor Amy Edmondson

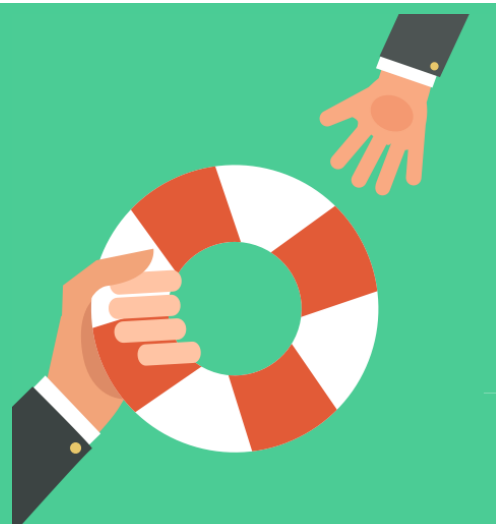
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

INCREASES:

- **Learning**
- **Creativity**
- **Experimentation**
- **Quality of reflection**
- **Productive handling of conflict**

This is what saves it!

Psychologically safe communication climate
(open, supportive communication, speaking up, and risk taking)



VIRTUALITY

geographic dispersion
electronic dependence
national diversity

−

TEAM INNOVATION

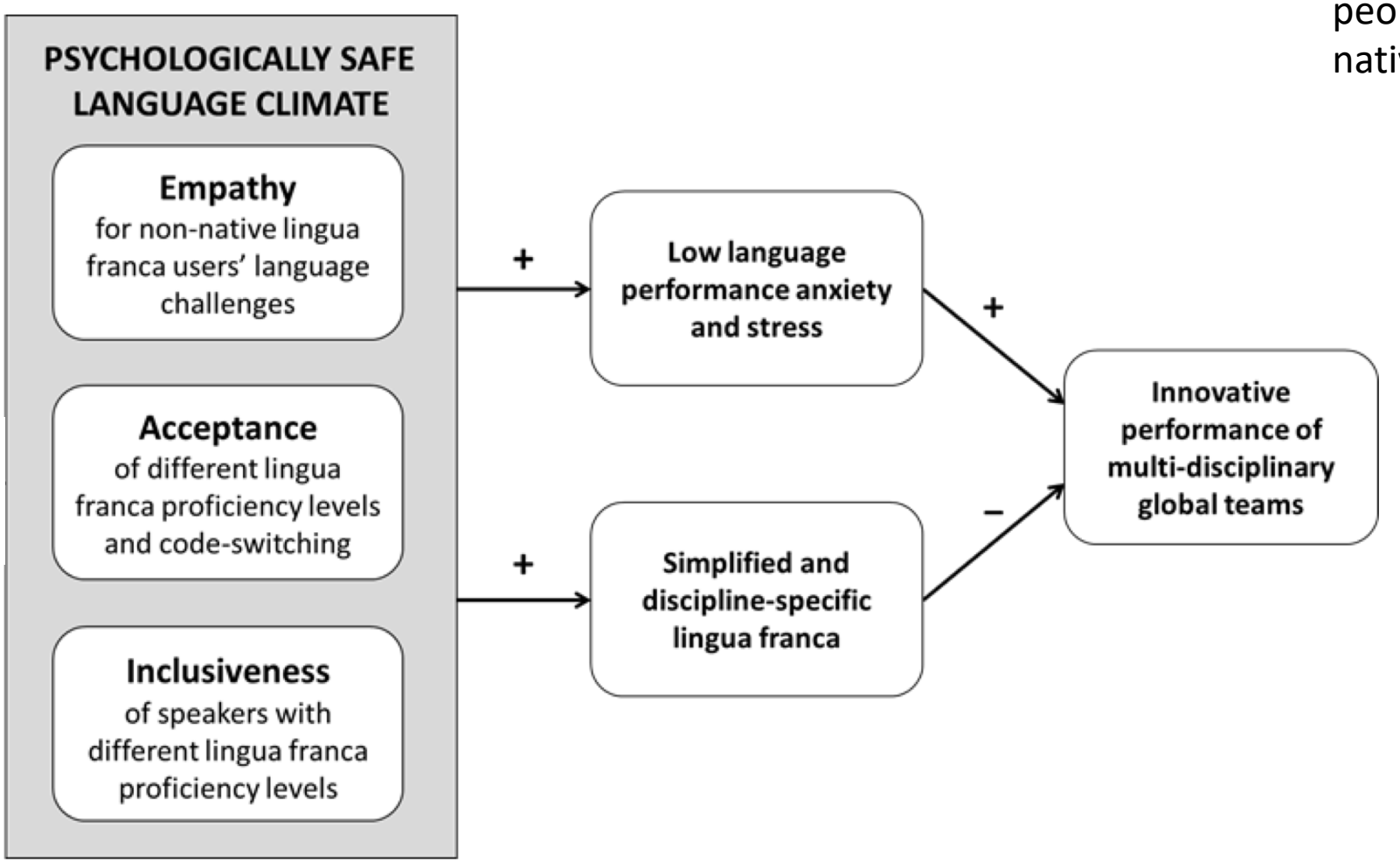
Gibson & Gibbs, 2006

How to build a psychological safe climate?

1. Ensure mutual understanding of goals, tasks, roles and responsibilities
2. Make everyone feel included and important
3. Show supportiveness, openness and offer help, rather than blaming

Nonnative language use

Lingua franca = common language, usually English used as bridge between people with different native languages



Nurmi & Koroma, forthcoming

Pre-lecture reading lesson:

Reveal “sticky floors”

Encourage a growth mindset

Traditionally...
• Formal arrangement of titles
• Vertical reporting relationships
• Legitimate power due to formal position
Need rethinking in virtual context? Creative context?

Increasingly diverse expertise needed – Does one leader have it all?

Shared leadership

Shared leadership is the ultimate level of empowerment signaling a high level of trust.

The team leader is setting the scene!

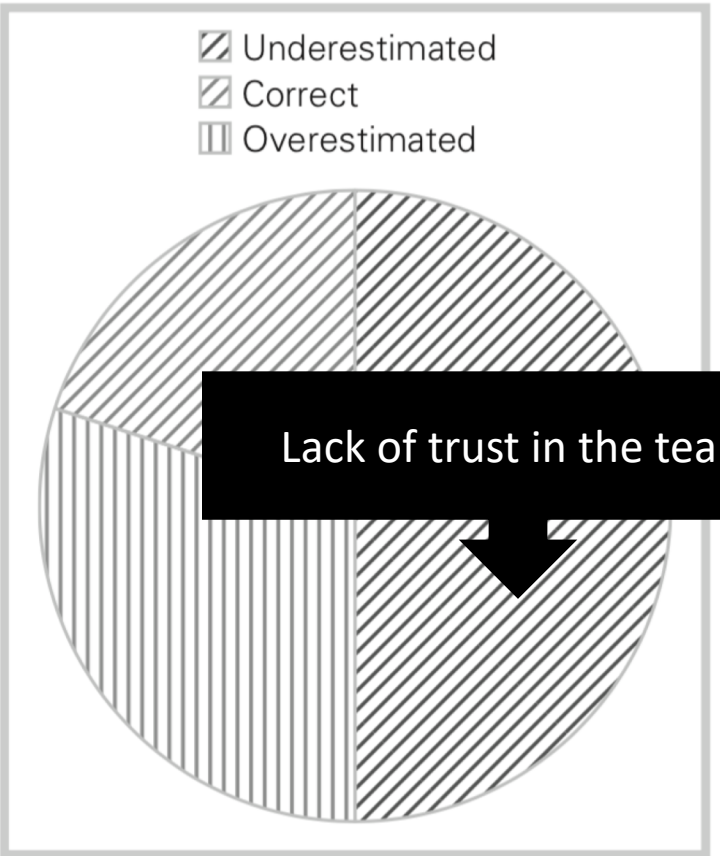


Figure 1: The leaders' perspective on shared leadership in their teams.

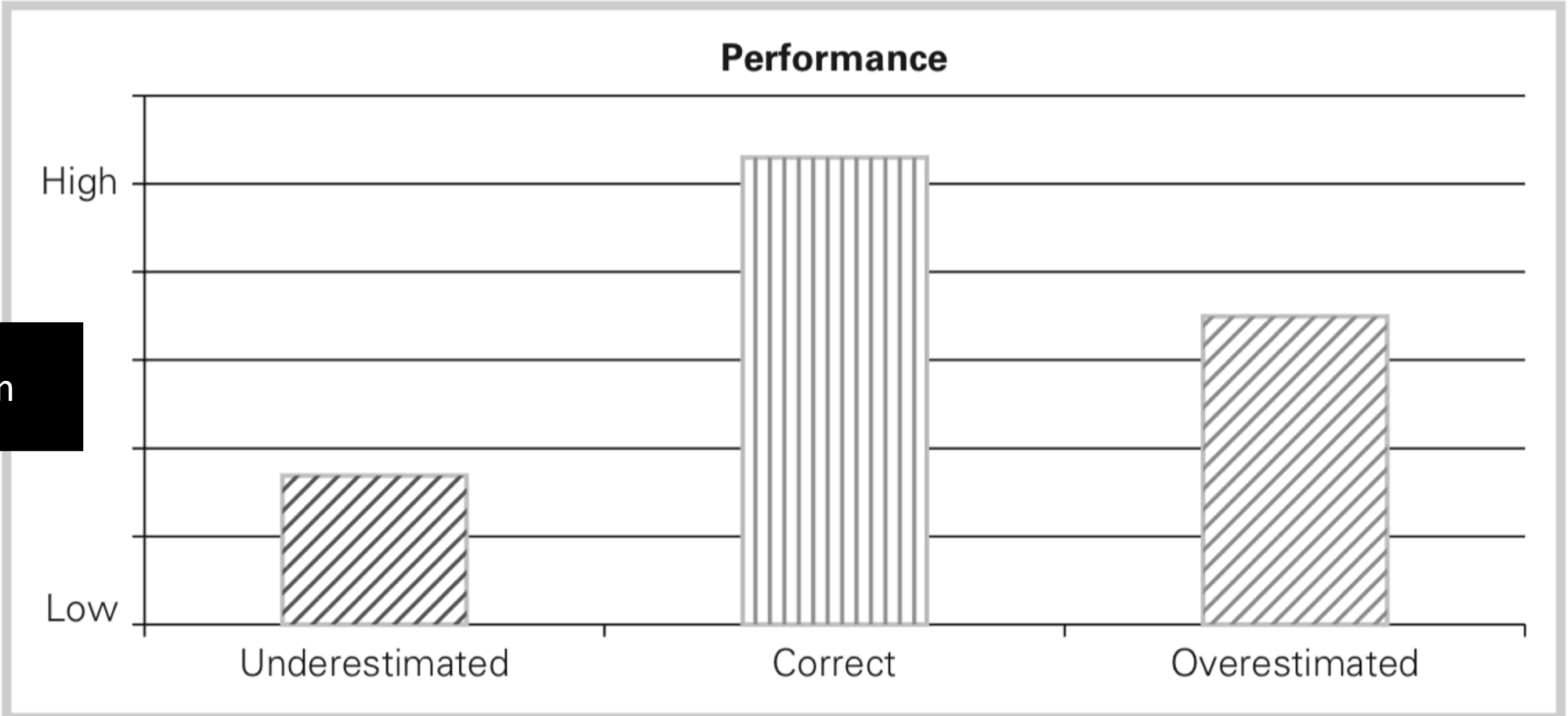


Figure 2: Performance suffers when team leaders underestimate their teams' shared leadership.

Hoegl & Muethel, 2016

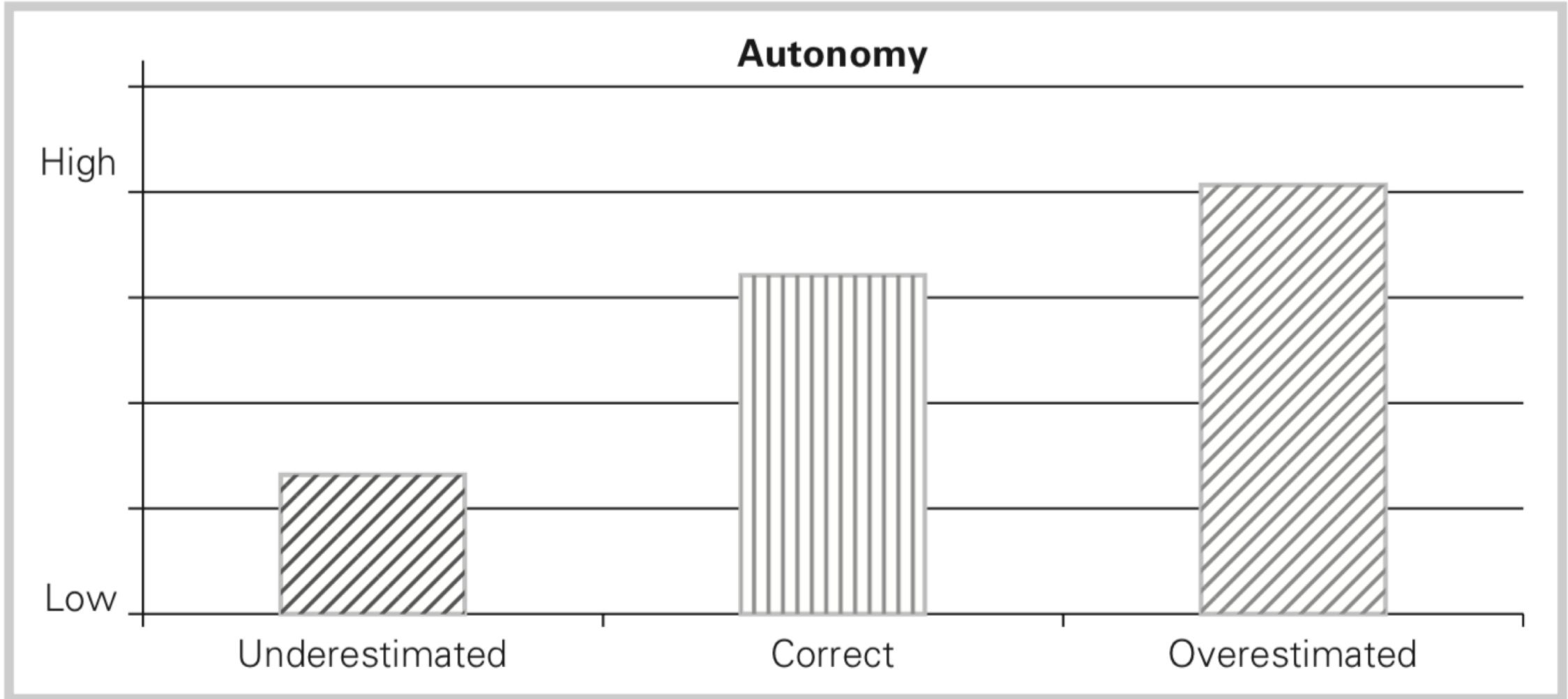


Figure 3: Team leaders fail to provide necessary autonomy when they underestimate their teams' shared leadership.

The organization is setting the scene!

futurice

Reaktor

Killing creativity
through strict vertical leadership!

Leadership for creativity:

1) Leader that enable equal participation possibilities

2) Inspirational leadership

3) Decentralized leadership approaches

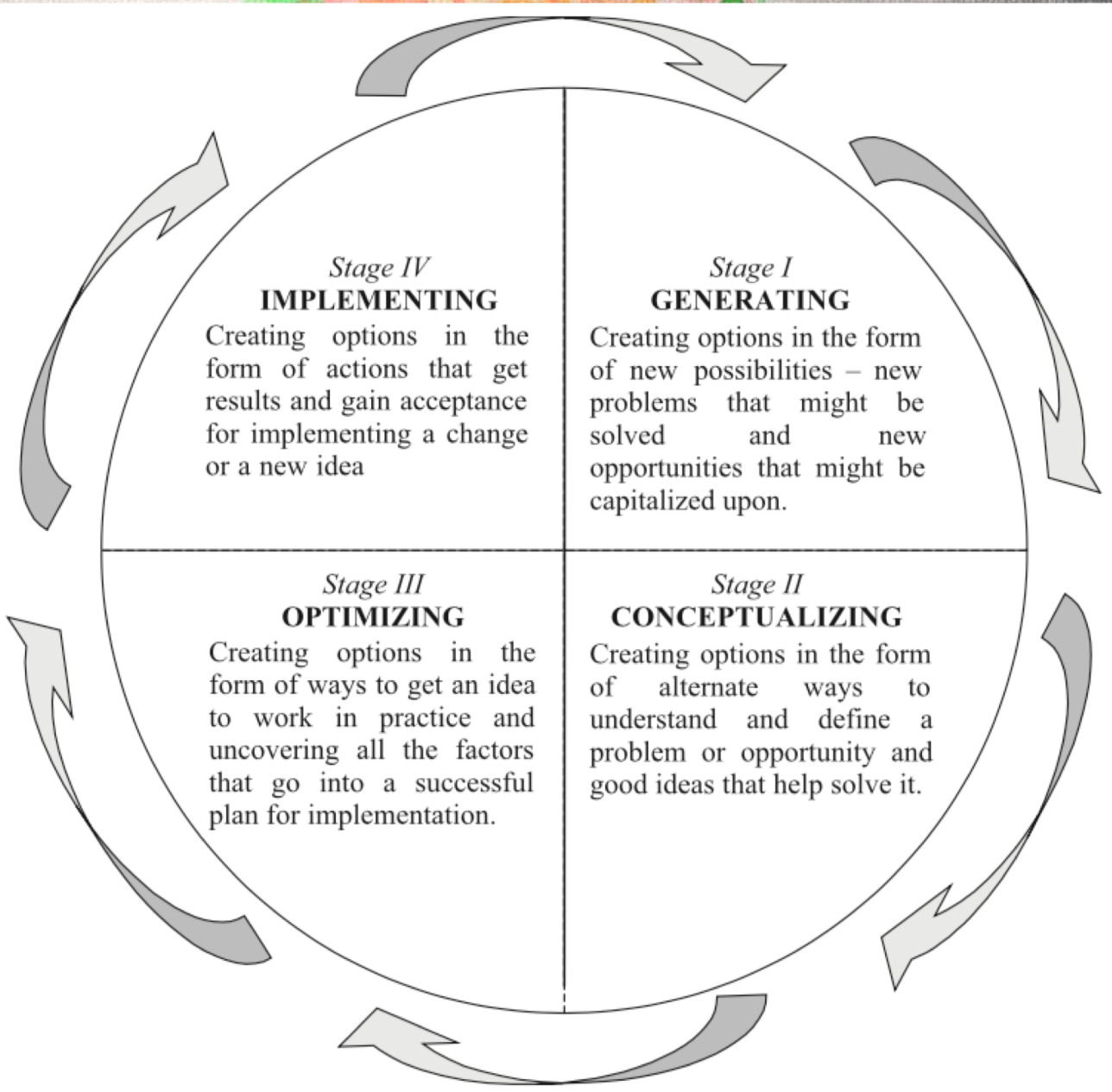
Inspirational leadership

Communicating a compelling vision for the team, expressing confidence in team members, and energizing the team (Joshi, Lazarova, Liao, 2009)

Additional reading

Four stages of the creative process

A leaders job is to synthesize the strenght of each member *(people leadership)* and steer the group into the right type of actions for each stage *(process leadership),* while allowing the team to take ownership.

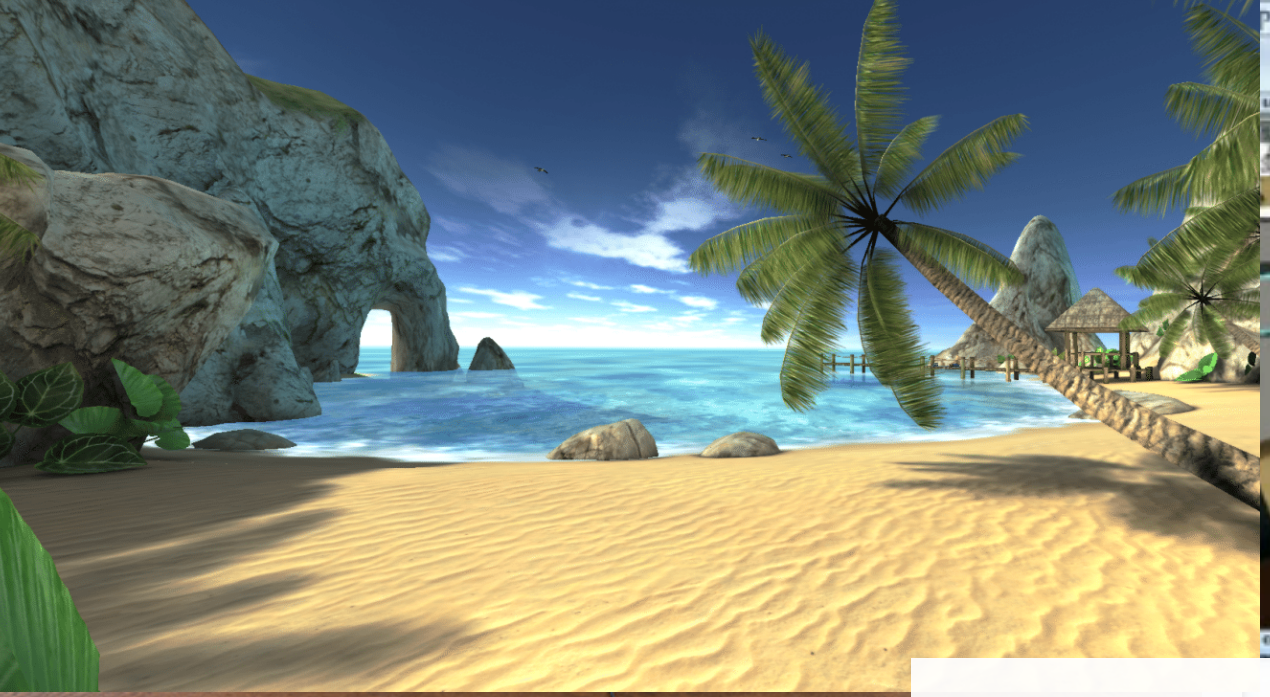


Basadur, 2004, Leading others to think innovatively together: Creative leadership

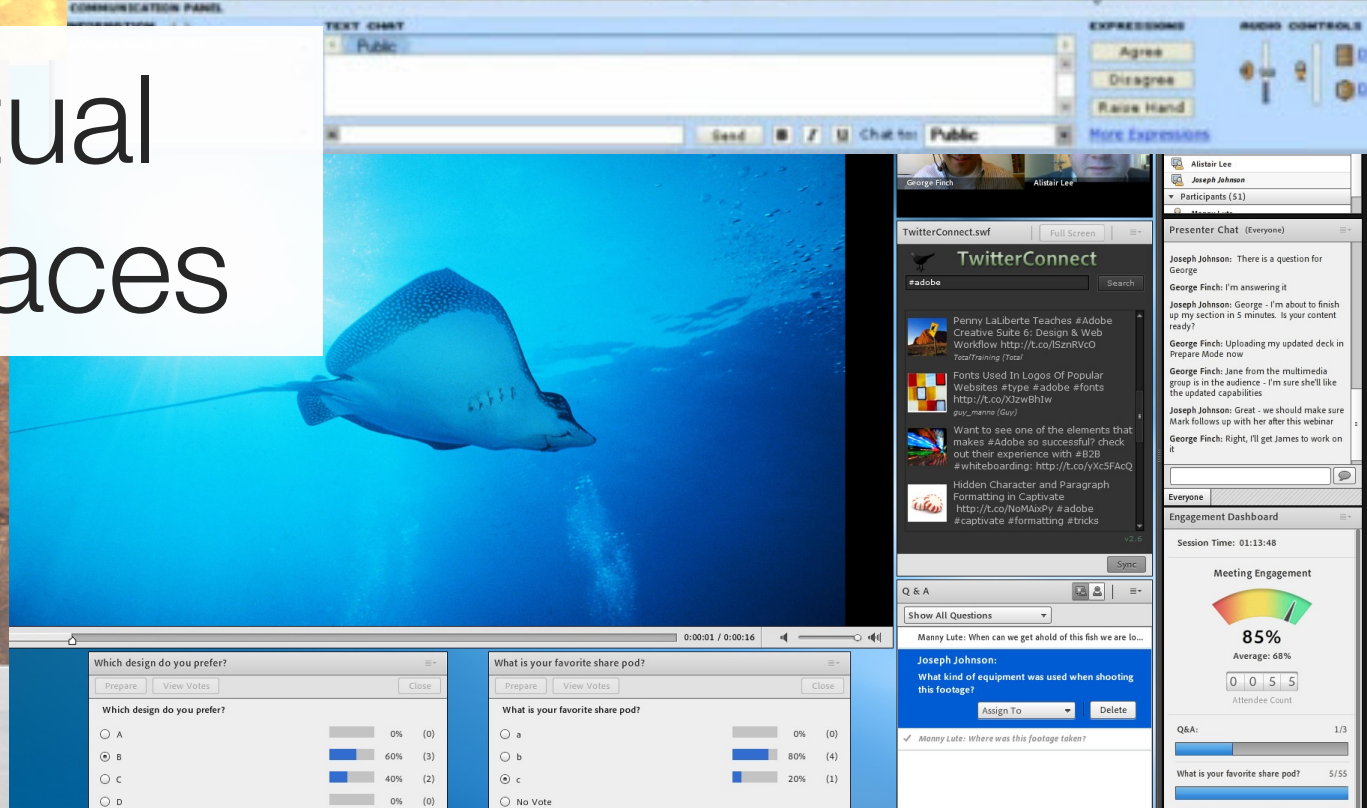
Does spaces have an impact on team creativity?

Lets watch the following pictures for one minute each – think about pros and cons for team creativity (you may draw from your own experiences or just ideate)

Physical Spaces



Virtual Spaces



Technology affordances for VT creativity

General

- Archive capability (may record, and store text to be accessed or reworked later)

Rich technology

- The virtual environment can be tailored and designed to set the scene
- Immersion into the virtual environment to foster team members attention (get rid of other outside world distractions)
- Multimodality – various communication modes (may foster more equal participation)
- Rich visual objects may increase mutual understanding and spark ideas
- Simulation possibilities of objects that may be more difficult to create in the physical space

Food for thought: "Technology interrupts our own story, interrupts our ability to have a thought or a daydream, to imagine something wonderful, because we're too busy bridging the walk from the cafeteria back to the office on our cell phone"

– Steven Spielberg

The dark side of technology:

Technology is our most dangerous source of distraction!

Attention is key to cognitive performance which is key to creativity!

SIMON SINEK ON MILLENNIALS IN THE WORKPLACE

https://youtu.be/hER0Qp6QJNU

0:02 / 15:00

Lets share feelings anonymously and ideas about how to fight this potential trend! **(Disclosure: We dont argue that we agree with everything in the video. It is meant to prime thoughts)**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1C5yQdKJW53kQo-EqFJT-Hc1ZRdQ7UJMFnK6fHu-UEW0/edit

Thank you!
Questions?

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