

Collaboration and Cooperation on Agile Teams

This is a workshop, and will include an exercise and table work.

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The plan

- An experiment
- Discussion of different ways to work together
- A closer look at collaboration
- Mini assessment
- Possible improvements to increase the likelihood of collaboration on teams

An Experiment in Ways of Working

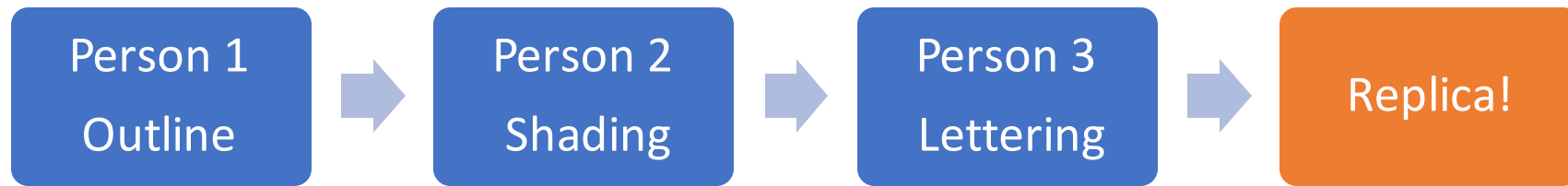
- At your table, divide into two roughly equal groups
- Choose who will be elms and who will be birches

An Experiment in Ways of Working

- Birches own the pencils
- Elms own the index cards
- You may only use the materials provided

The Work

- Each table is responsible for producing 4 replicas of the picture card provided.
- Each person at the table must contribute to at least 3 of the replicas.
- You may only use the materials provided.
- You have 10 minutes.



Person1

- Replica!

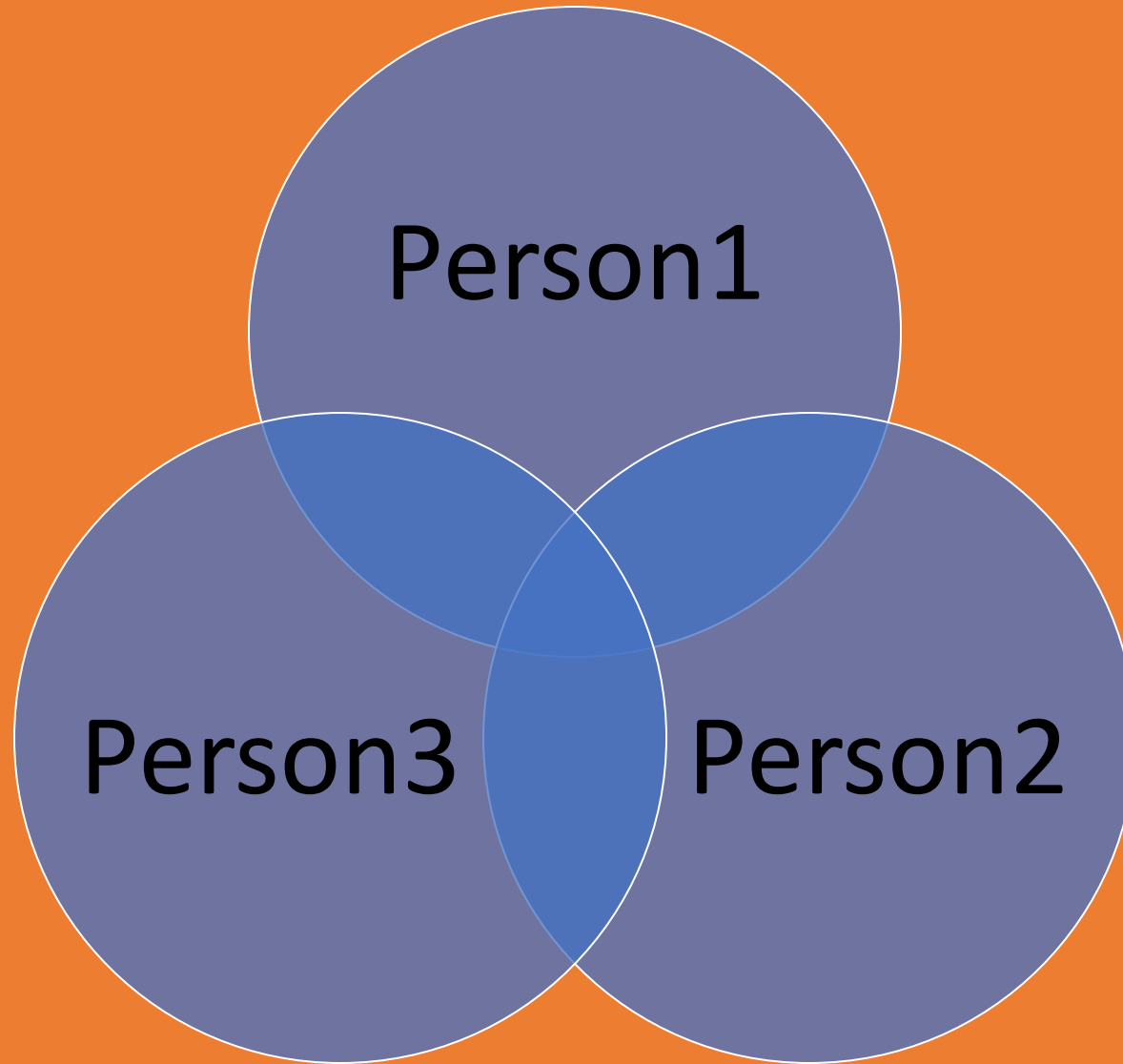
Person2

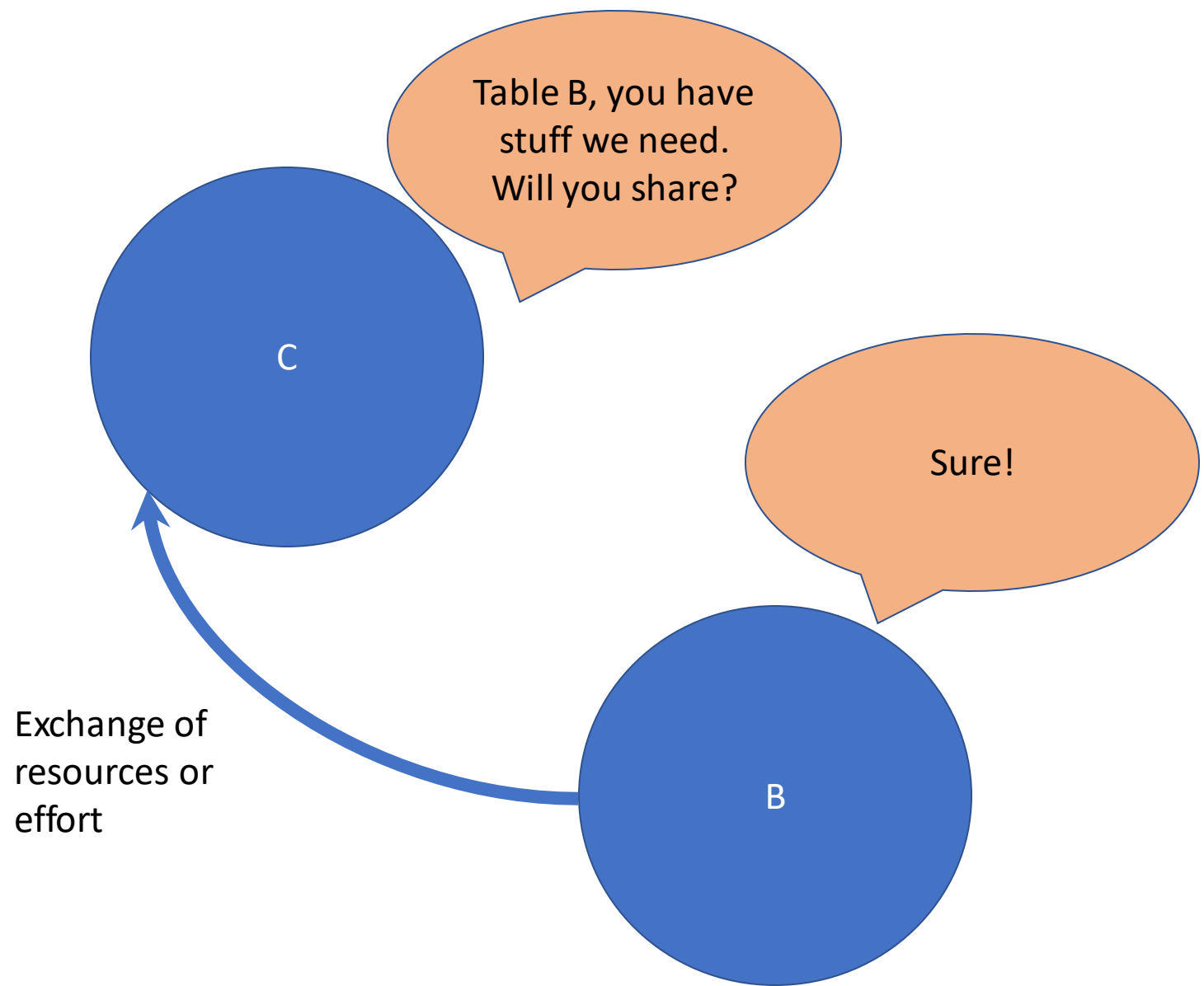
- Replica!

Person3

- Replica!

Replicas!





Connection

Josh and Julie work in a tech support area. The primary responsibility of the unit is to configure, tune, and support servers.

The workflow is controlled by a ticket system, in which the requestor submits an order with basic requirements and most of the work is handled first in, first out.

They share professional skills, hold each other in high regard, and share funny (or maddening) stories about their work.

Josh, Julie, have a connection.

Cooperation

Deb and Doug report to the same manager and run test labs for two different products.

Because their respective products are on different release schedules, there are times when the equipment in each lab isn't fully booked.

They cooperate with each other by loaning resources when it's possible and makes sense to do so.

Coordination

Frank and Franny work in a product development group. Each has responsibility for a distinct product aimed at a different consumer group.

They meet on a regular basis to keep each other abreast of release schedules.

Frank and Franny need to coordinate around schedules.

Collaboration

Abby, Alec, and their four teammates work on a software development team. They have overlapping skills, all of which are necessary to build the product.

They jointly commit to a goal and work very closely to deliver working software in two-week iterations.

They share mutual accountability. Their work is interdependent on a day-to-day basis. If all the team members don't work together, they won't succeed.

They collaborate.

Table Conversation

- What do you see on your teams?
 - Connection
 - Cooperation
 - Coordination
 - Collaboration
 - Something else?

What is the work?

- Some work doesn't require collaboration.
- Some work would benefit from collaboration, but is designed as individual tasks.
- Some work that would benefit from collaboration masquerades behinds excessive task decomposition—breaking the work down into single skill tasks rather than multi-skilled work towards a meaningful whole.

Work that Benefits from Collaboration...

- ✓ A compelling goal or a challenging problem to solve brings people together.
- ✓ Team members must interact to accomplish their work, not out of social nicety, but because the work requires it. Their tasks are interdependent.
- ✓ The efforts of all team members are necessary to create a meaningful outcome. It is not possible for one team member to succeed while others fail.
- ✓ The work requires the skills of all the team members. While there are almost always areas of overlap, each member has unique skills and knowledge.

Table Conversation

How does the way the work is designed related to the sort of working-together behavior you see on your teams?

Could the work be designed to foster greater collaboration?

Successful Collaboration Requires...

- **Awareness** of personal and team needs and capabilities
- **Motivation** to work towards the group goal and with other team members
- **Mediation** to resolve differences in priorities or approaches
- **Reciprocity** sharing of information, support, idea, help
- **Reflection** on group work and individual ways of working
- **Engagement** proactively contributing to the work, the process, the social unit, rather than sanding back to wait and see (recognizing that in some situations, doing nothing is the perfect contribution).

Stellar Teamwork Looks Like...

MUTUAL ASSISTANCE

- Awareness of personal and team needs and capabilities
- Motivation to work towards the group goal and with other group members

CAMERADERIE

- Mediation to resolve differences in priorities or approaches
- Reciprocity sharing of information, support, ideas, and resources
- Reflection on group work and individual ways of working

FUN

- Engagement proactively contributing to the work, the process, the social unit, rather than sandbagging back or wait and see (recognizing that sometimes doing nothing is the perfect contribution).

Mini-assessment

Goal Emphasis

Component Parts-----Meaningful Whole
Infrequent Integration-----Frequent Integration
Individual-----Team

Assignments

Individual-----Team
Push-----Pull

Responsibility

Individual-----Team

Professional Development Emphasis

Narrow-----Broad

Career Progression

Narrow-----Broad

Job Descriptions

Narrow-----Broad

What is the smallest change you could make to move toward the right?

Goals

Assignments

Responsibility

Professional Development Emphasis

Career Progression

Job Descriptions

Available on Amazon
and at the conference
bookstore (unless it is sold
out).

