

Groups and Teams

15.301 Managerial Psychology

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More and More Teams

- Last year, how many teams were you on?
- Business is increasingly team-based as departments and hierarchies yield to projects and networks. Flexibility requires expertise where the work is done.
- We live our lives in groups: family, MIT living group, class, club, sports team, committee, project team,...
- Teams leverage varied expertise, motivate performance, offer learning opportunities, give emotional support...

Kinds of Teams

- Your project team is a temporary formal work group
- Groups can be temporary or permanent, formal (created by an organization) or informal (created by individuals to fulfill their needs), focused on work, socializing, personal growth, etc.

Team Effectiveness

- How many of you were on a team that did really well? Do you know why?
- Any teams that messed up? In terms of:
 - Performance goals (quality, quantity, timeliness, efficiency, innovation)
 - Member satisfaction (meet individual needs, maintain trust)
 - Team learning (skills, perspectives, behaviors)
 - Customer satisfaction (external stakeholders)

Teams Develop Over Time

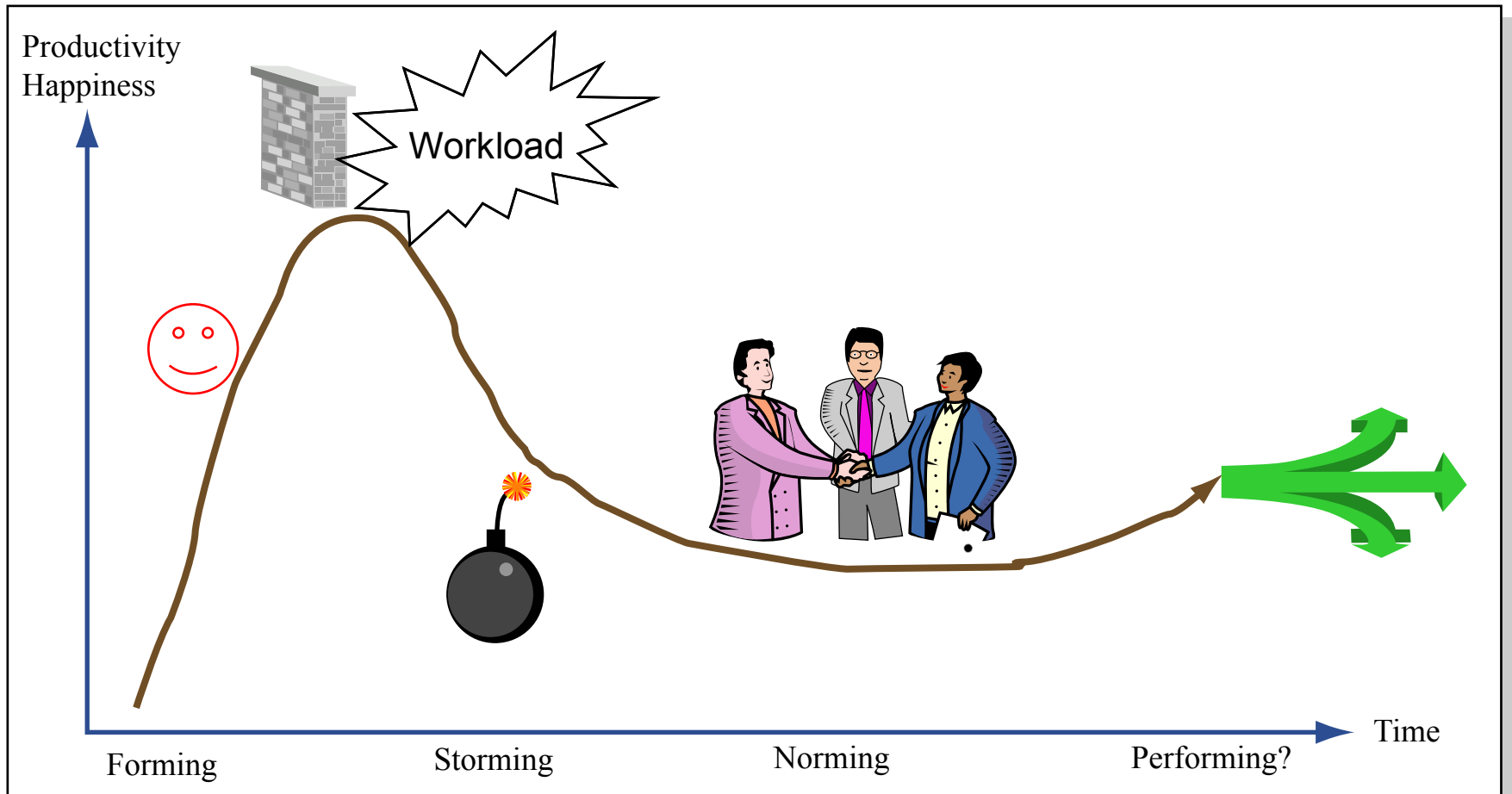
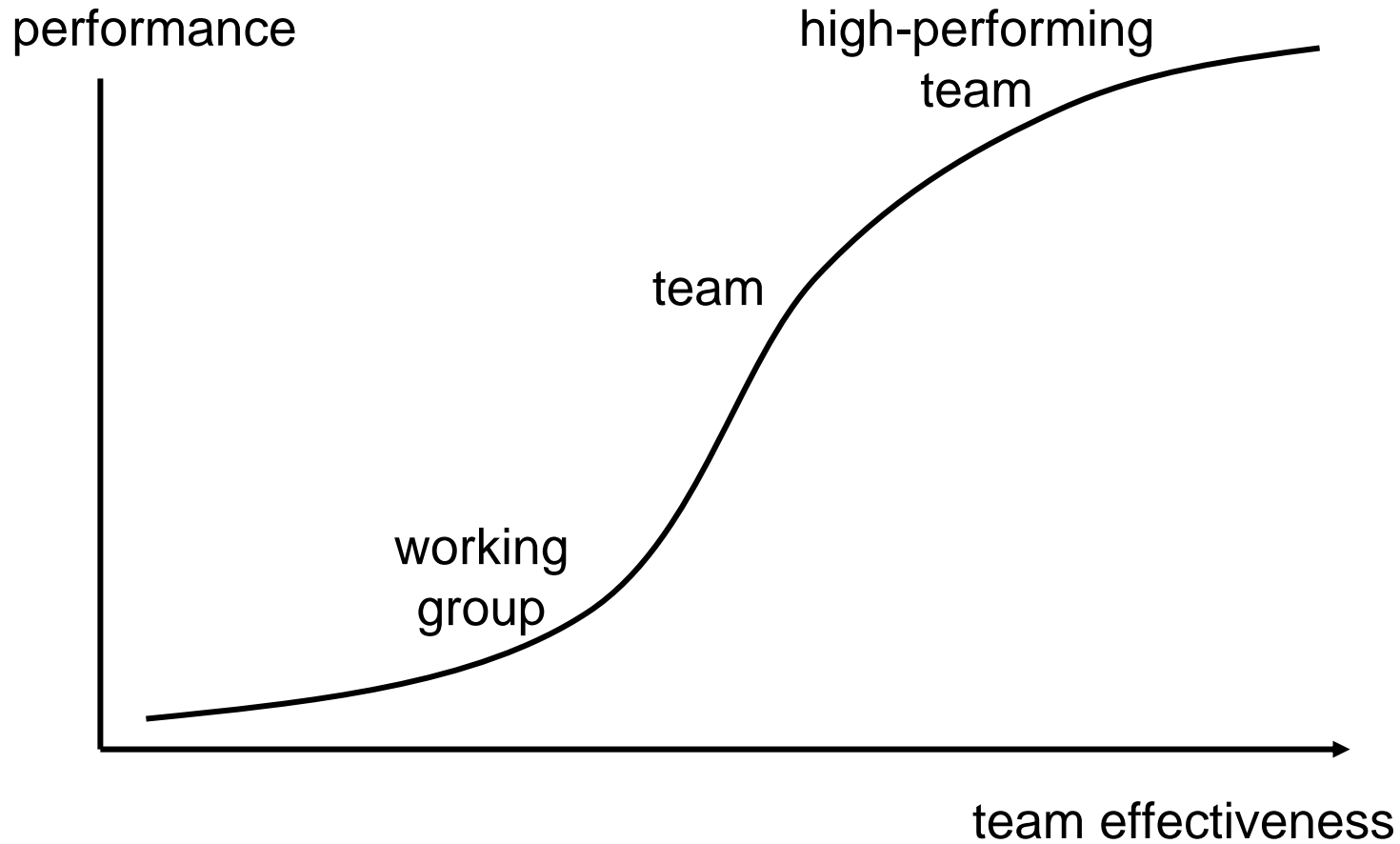


Figure by MIT OCW.

Team Challenges

- Changes such as starting up, adding a new person, or beginning a project challenge a team to grow
- We can simplify team development into stages or challenges that may be experienced many times
- **Forming:** Who are we? Who leads? Who cares?
- **Storming:** We are different. We disagree.
- **Norming:** We set goals, assign tasks, develop routines, manage conflict, hold each other accountable
- **Performing:** We coordinate, trust each other, care
- **Renewing/Disbanding:** We learn, revisit our goals, thank each other, say goodbye

Team Performance Curve

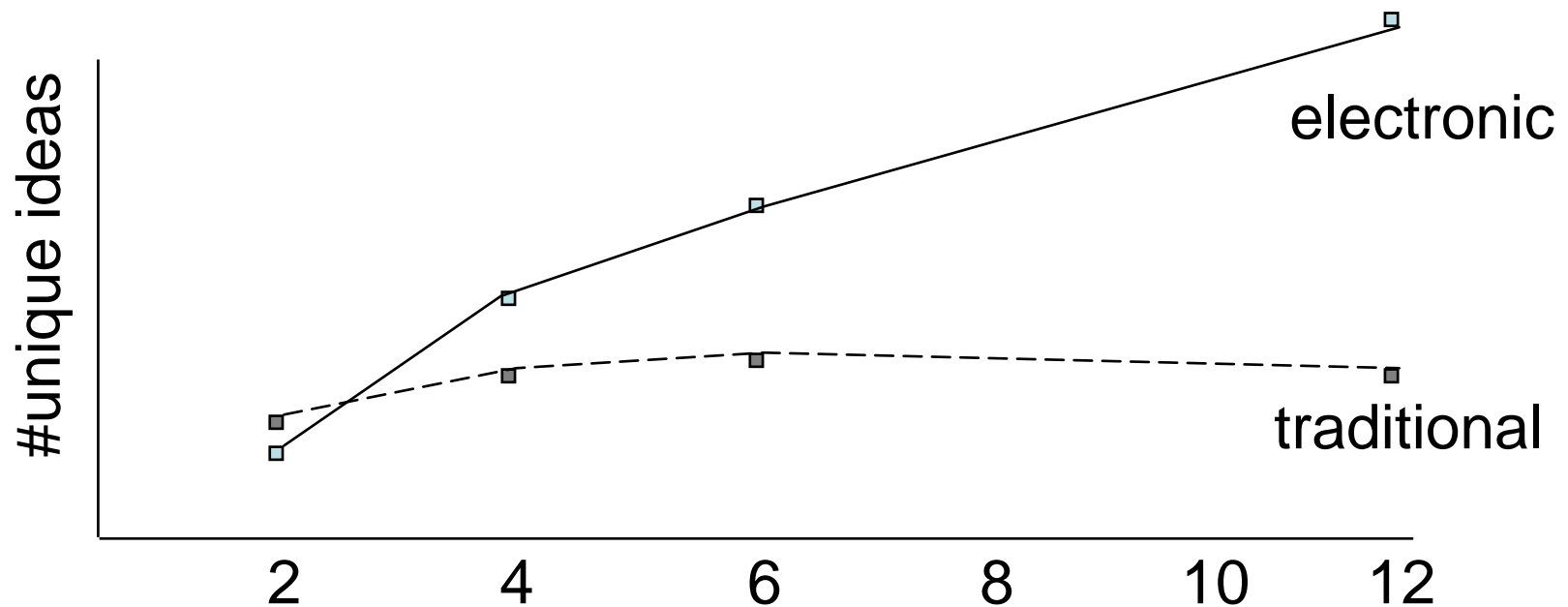


Team Performance Video

- Working Group
 - Only common purpose is to complete a task
 - Focus on individual performance
 - Incremental results
- Team
 - Complementary skills, division of labor
 - Commitment to team purpose & performance
 - Mutual accountability
 - Able to overcome barriers
 - Higher performance
- High Performance Team
 - And members committed to each other's personal growth

Everything In Groups?

- Research shows group brainstorming produces fewer ideas than nominal group (individual) brainstorming
- Yet people persist in believing in group benefits



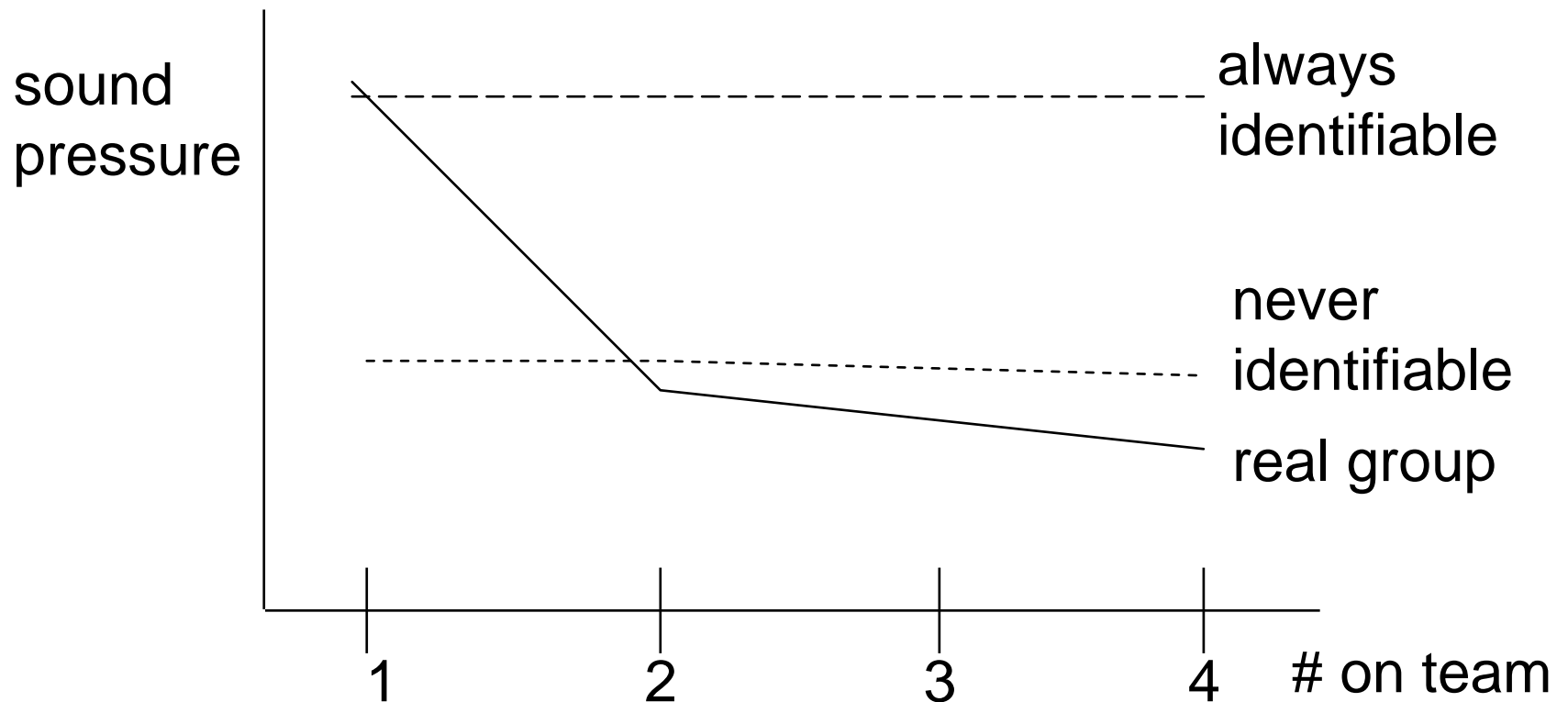
(Gallupe & Cooper, Sloan Mgmt Rev, 1993)

Process Losses

- Cost in time for meetings
- Coordination losses depend on task
baseball: success is 90% member skill
basketball: success is 35% skill
- Motivation losses
diffusion of responsibility/social loafing
- Political struggles, influence processes
who gets air time, power, rewards?
hierarchy, majority vs. minority influence

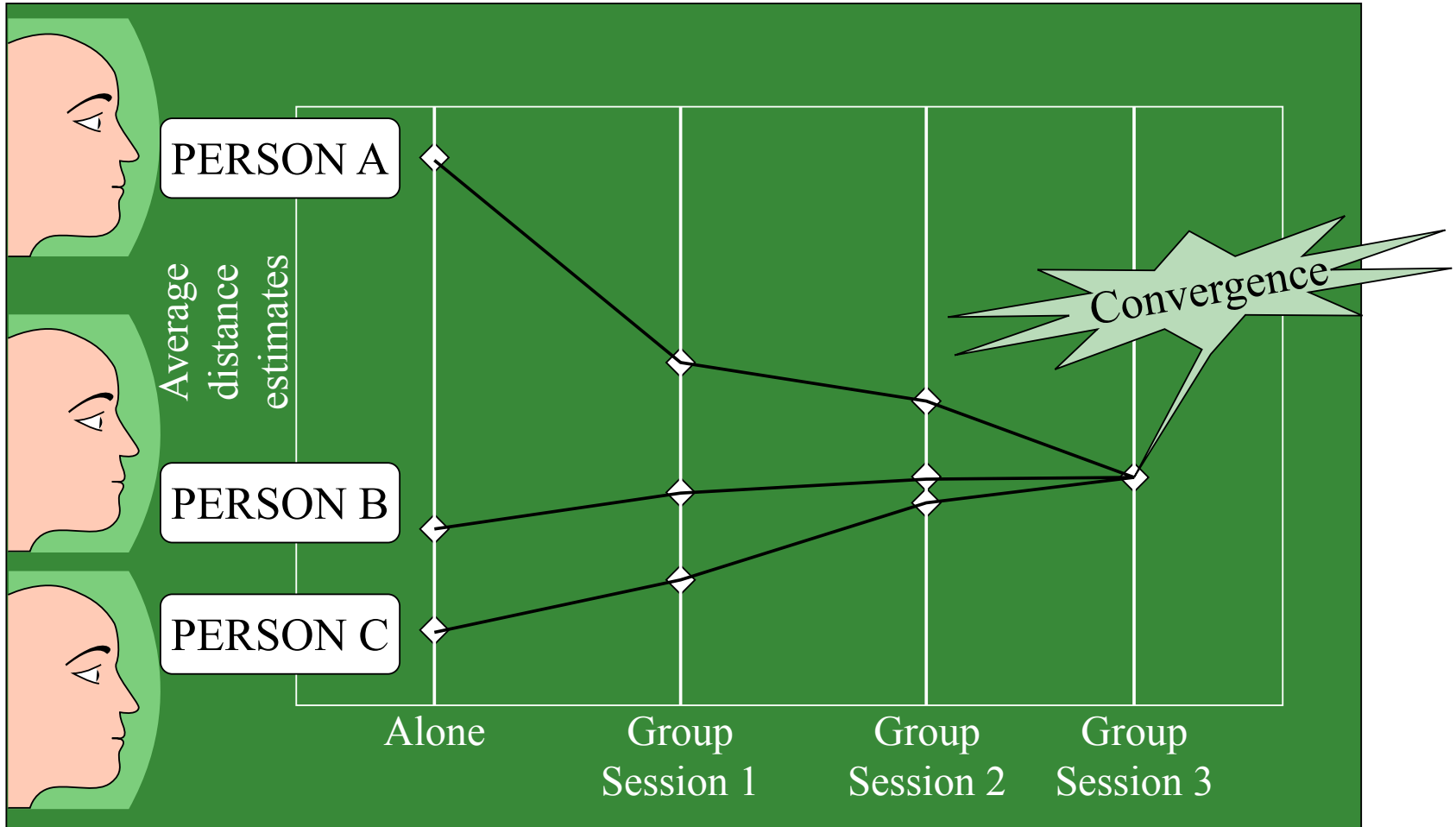
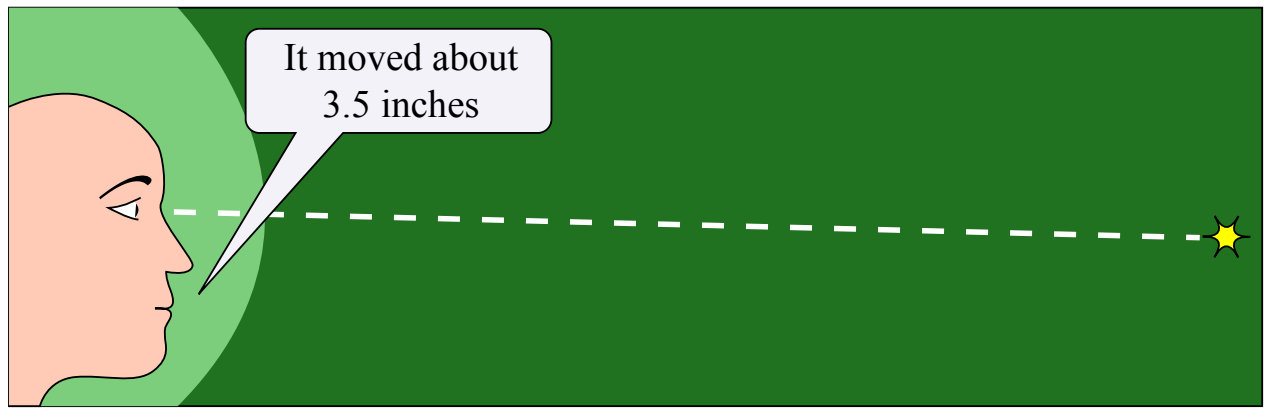
Social Loafing

- depends on identifiability of contributions



Norm Formation

- Groups form norms (expected and typical behaviors), e.g., who will sit where, who talks a lot, how do we divide up work, how is conflict handled, who leads, how are emotions expressed
- Sherif found that groups converged on a group norm for the autokinetic effect
- Group norms could be influenced by an extreme confederate
- Individuals could be replaced over generations but the norm remained



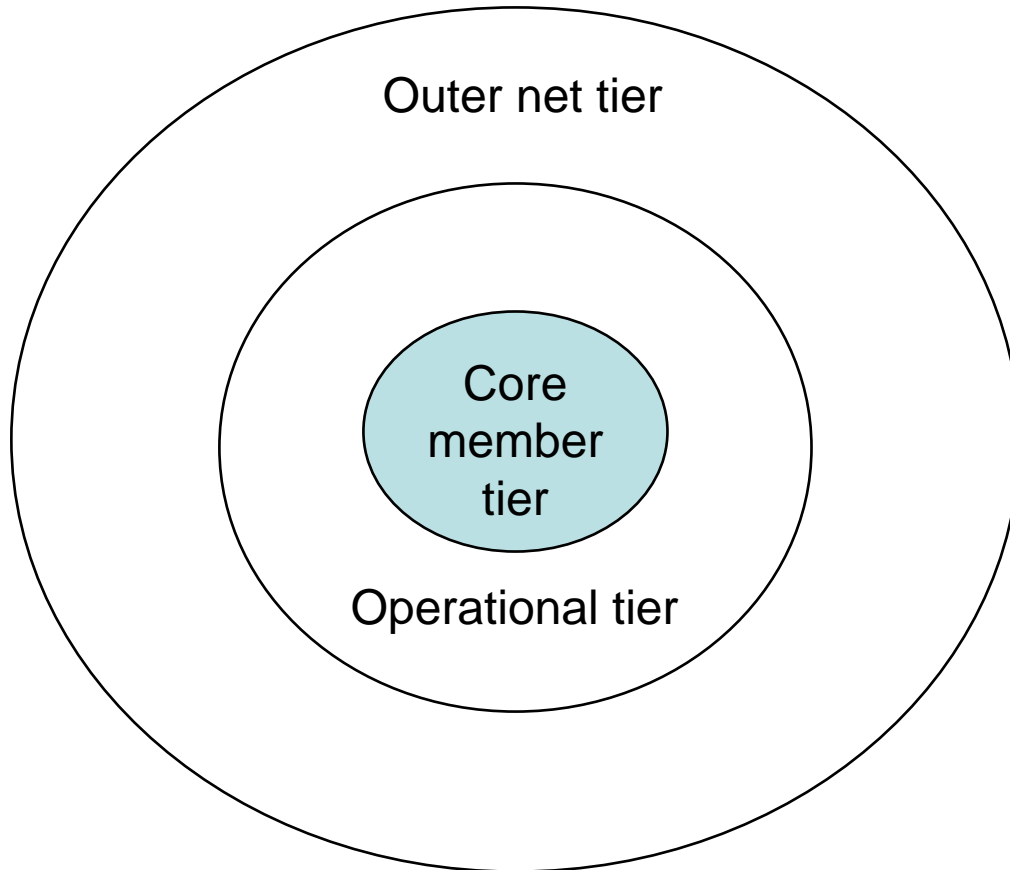
Group Cohesiveness

- Cohesiveness is attraction to the group
- Similarity/identity, proximity, success, few alternative sources of reward, shared threat lead to more cohesiveness
- Cohesiveness can be good, but it can lead to conflict avoidance, poor results, defensiveness toward outsiders, GroupThink (more next time)

Roles In Groups

- Newcomer, task coordinator, facilitator, emotion manager, scout, ambassador
- Leadership can be distributed
- Fuzzy boundaries: Mortensen (2004) found groups think they know who is in the group but disagree
- Ancona et al find more X-Teams where people are differentially “core” to the team

X-Teams' Expandable Tiers



Core: carry team identity, create strategy and make key decisions

Operational: do ongoing work, focus on specific tasks and decisions

Outer-net: specialized expertise for separable tasks, join and leave

Bacon & eggs breakfast: pig is committed; chicken is involved; the cow is a provider