



(Photo: AdobeStock_241579484)

Kreative Agilität

How art-based strategies are transforming digital and analogue communication in organisations.

Curriculum

Partnerorganisationen und Projektförderer



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1. Introduction

Peter Jungmeier

The curriculum set out in the following is the result of an intensive two-year process as part of an international Erasmus + project with partner organisations from four different countries. Over the course of these two years, due to the pandemic we experienced a wide range of framework conditions and possibilities for the configuration and implementation of various event formats. While at the start of the project our focus was more on the question of how “creative agility” processes could take shape in digital space (because there was no other option), gradually the attention and also the requirements of our target groups shifted to the creation of these in face-to-face formats that were once again permitted (to everyone’s relief). For us as a project consortium, this development ultimately meant finding a good balance between online communication possibilities that continue to be relevant in future on the one hand and the in-person work phases that are so valuable for creative agility on the other.

Challenges and requirements

In times that are uncertain and increasingly unpredictable, managers in particular need new and appropriate tools for navigation into the future. The experiences with the Covid pandemic, in particular, made it clear how quickly and unpredictably politics, the economy and society can be faced with overwhelming situations.

On a corporate and organisational level, we have observed in various contexts that the successful execution of complex tasks or projects that are difficult to plan is not only a matter of specialist skills, the available competences or qualified personnel, but more a question of the ability to free oneself (in one’s way of thinking) from previous structures, to adjust creatively to new situations and to communicate respectfully but also effectively with each other - in an analogue and digital form.

We reached the conviction that art-based strategies and artistic interventions bring about a change of perspective in organisations, as an enrichment of knowledge and practices in organisational development and communication that can depart from and reform communication habits and innovation processes and help to make use of the resulting potential that is opened up.

Target groups

The ability to work and cooperate successfully and to communicate effectively in our “VUCA”¹ world is especially relevant for key persons in organisations and companies. Apart from managers, these can also include educators, internal coaches/mentors and employees, as well as honorary persons holding key positions. This curriculum provides valuable support for these target groups.

¹ “VUCA” is an acronym referring to “volatility”, “uncertainty”, “complexity” and “ambiguity”. (Gabler economics dictionary, <https://wirtschaftslexikon.gabler.de/definition/vuca-119684>)

Our approach

Our companies and organisations are in a process of change. Previously developed and established procedures in interpersonal communication and cooperation are being put to the test and are shifting. But how can this change be steered?

We view the ability to react openly, flexibly and collaboratively - with creative agility - as a key competence. We consider creativity as a current key competence that allows us to become (more) agile, in order to keep up with the constant change. Creativity is the ability to break away from previous structures (in one's way of thinking), to discover new paths and also tread them. Luckily there are key players in society who have longstanding expertise in dynamic and heterogeneous contexts and who have actively contributed to the development and realisation of this project: artists.

Due to the wide range of experience as artists, mediators and researchers, we are confident in proactively contributing to shaping change in organisations with forward-looking tools. Our tools include art-based strategies and artistic interventions. With their help, we can contribute to training creative agility in organisational cooperation and communication.

Objectives and purpose of this curriculum

This curriculum is not conceived as theoretical or practical guidelines in the sense of "we know how to do it!". We see it rather as a principle that can be approached openly, whose application can be adapted and developed further as required. This allows the necessary leeway for creative agility, a holistic interpretation and application depending on the situation and requirements. The integration of artistic strategies and interventions, in particular, opens up emotional, creative and flexible possibilities that are not afforded by comparable offers on the market. To be able to react to different situations and requirements, this curriculum has a modular structure, with building blocks. Depending on current requirements and issues, users can select those elements that are best suited to their concerns and solution-finding processes in the respective professional context.

Tested in practice

We have tested the building blocks of this curriculum as part of three pilot training sessions in Austria, Liechtenstein and Germany with international participants. These training sessions combined two digital units (90 and 120 minutes respectively) and a 2-day face-to-face training session. The scientific supervision by ZHAW in Switzerland benefitted the joint gaining of insights regarding the development of and the necessary framework conditions for training and training processes and their possibilities for further development. The feedback by the participants shows the relevance, comprehensibility and significance of the respective tested building blocks and approaches. Subsequently, a very diversely applicable curriculum is available to all interested parties, with completely new approaches to training in adult education.

The project partnership

The project consortium consists of an international team and educational establishments from Liechtenstein, Austria, Germany and Switzerland. We work in areas of adult education, organisation and personnel development, language, communication and media science, fine arts and performing arts, as well as cultural sociology.

Those involved in the project work in adult education, applied practice-based research, teaching, cultural mediation and the practising arts.

Organisations and persons represented in the project partnership:

- **KUBUS Kulturvermittlung Balzers, Liechtenstein (Project Coordinator)**
Dagmar Frick-Islitzer, cultural entrepreneur and fine artist, developer of artistic skills and approaches, course director of Künstlerbrille® in Balzers/LI
- **University of Applied Sciences and Arts (HKS) Ottersberg, Germany**
Michael Uhl, director and developer of Narrative Research®; professor at HKS Ottersberg/Germany
Peer Holthuizen, fine artist and developer of 3x3 – Innovation through Art, professor and project leader of KO Lab at HKS Ottersberg/Germany
Ralf Rummel-Suhrcke, professor of practice-orientated cultural sociology and cultural manager, Academic University Director and Managing Director of HKS Ottersberg/Germany
- **SPES Zukunftsakademie Schlierbach, Austria**
Peter Jungmeier, organisation developer and process supervisor in organisations
Birgit Appelt, supervisor of participation processes
Selina Straubinger, supervisor of participation processes
- **ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Winterthur, Switzerland**
Birgitta Borghoff, lecturer, researcher and advisor in the field of organisation communication and publicity at IAM for Applied Media Science, Department of Applied Linguistics

“Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.” (Rainer Maria Rilke)

We hope you enjoy discovering creative agility!

2. Open-ended processes: game instructions

Michael Uhl and Peer Holthuizen (HKS Ottersberg)

Introduction

Under Creative Agility, we understand the ability to act openly, flexibly, and collaboratively. To share and convey this ability, we take a look, among other things, at the paths and strategies that artists pursue in their work. Our main focus is on open-ended processes, as we experience them in the artistic practice.

Many artists consciously seek playful approaches to continually grasp and understand the world and their own existence within it anew, in order to discover new paths and possibilities. „Man is only fully human where he plays,“ wrote Friedrich Schiller.

The following text introduces the modular toolkit for Creative Agility and serves as an invitation and instruction for (collective) play.

Open-ended processes

To illustrate the structure of open-ended processes as we experience them in our artistic and mediating practice, we have created a creagile magic formula that we will follow:

Material + questions + doing = it will work out

By **Material**, we understand the forms of the world. In what manifestation does the world encounter us? This refers to the physical world, but also the various narratives about it. And it refers to people with their backgrounds and knowledge. Material means the resources available to us in our process.

By **Questions**, we understand our approach to the world. We don't directly mean a specific question, a task that quickly involves the expectation of a certain solution. We mean a basic attitude of approaching the world with questions. Asking opens up. It keeps our curiosity alive and keeps us from quick, conclusive answers. And it opens up spaces for us to explore diversity.

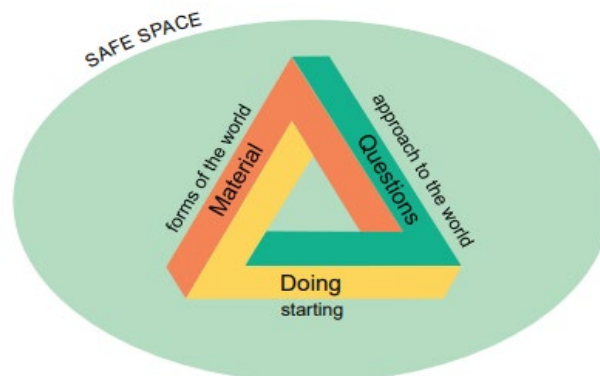
By **Doing**, we mean being active. And starting. Getting started without having a complete plan first. It means and provides the energy that sets a process in motion and is also fed from unconscious sources, such as intuition. It means thinking with your hands and acting with thoughts and words. Doing is giving shape. And it is a shaping through which we communicate with the world and explore it and ourselves.

The „**It'll be fine**“ is a somewhat casual reference to trust. Trust that when we engage with the world openly, questioningly, and creatively, something will emerge. It means trusting that you can set out without a predetermined goal. And you will get somewhere.

“To seek nothing was my sense” (Goethe)

“I don't search, I find.” (Picasso)

Outlined as a model, we envisage our “creagile” magic formula like this:



The processual path

Material, questions, and doing can be mutually dependent. There is no fixed order. Sometimes a question comes first, sometimes material, sometimes doing. What is considered a (intermediate) result and when, is open. As are the phases of becoming aware and reflecting. With this model, we place less focus on results and more on the possibilities of attentively and alertly embarking on open paths.

Basic condition - the safe space

The most important basic condition for an open-ended process – and therefore embedded and encompassed within it – is a safe space. It is not only a matter of location but also avoids categories such as “right” and “wrong“. There are no „mistakes,“ only attempts with different experiences. It is a place of acceptance and experimentation and applies to all modular building blocks and stages in the process.

The collective path

The creagile magic formula can be applied to individual processes as well as team, organizational, or collective processes. Ensemble formation plays a significant role here. In collective processes, the engagement with the collective also focuses on the individual selves within the collective.

The processual and modular toolkit

The modular toolkit presents methods, techniques, and training materials. To create a suitable process structure, warm-ups, reflections, and possible transitions to the other building blocks are outlined. The modular toolkit draws from art-based, method-based, and knowledge-oriented sources, according to which the curriculum is also categorized. Since a significant focus is on collective processes, group-specific aspects are presented and described in all building blocks.

Game and mediation goals

With its open structure, the modular toolkit aims to open up spaces for experience and learning. It pursues two main objectives: first, the principle of the safe space as a basic condition for open work and communication. Second, the initiation and control of open-ended processes. The emphasis of each focus is decided by the individual application and the respective focus.

3. Knowledge-orientated building blocks

Dagmar Frick-Islitzer, Birgitta Borghoff, Birgit Appelt

We understand creative agility as the multiperspectival interplay of art-based and creative strategies, as well as practices in communication and organisational development, which enable professional practitioners to navigate through the VUCA world openly, flexibly and collaboratively in different roles, situations, contexts and public spheres. The unconventional but systemic ways of working of “creagility”, a word coined from “creativity” and “agility”, are shown to be particularly effective in an environment of uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. They are considered as a tried and tested navigation tool for managers, decision-makers and key persons in organisations.



Compiling the narrative plot board (photo: Birgitta Borghoff)

The three impulse texts referred to in the following, developed as part of the Erasmus+ project, have been linked for this curriculum so that they enable a multiperspectival knowledge and implementation transfer to concrete professional contexts and areas of application.

- Impulse text: Art-based strategies and artistic interventions
- Impulse text: Communication, language, storytelling
- Impulse text: Handling ambiguity and contradictions

Based on four case stories from the impulse text on communication, language and storytelling, the handling of ambiguity and contradictions, as well as the incorporation of art-based strategies, artistic interventions and communication practices in an organisational context for transferral to one’s own professional practice, are illuminated.

What are art-based strategies and artistic interventions?

In order to obtain new ideas and innovations, artists make use of certain art-based approaches, ways of thinking and working, as well as artistic interventions. These include curiosity and openness, perceptiveness, willingness to experiment and create, intuition and

improvisation, multiple perspectives, courage, judgement, tolerance of uncertainty, process control, collaboration, communication and work atmosphere, among others. These abilities and attitudes unfold in artistic processes. We can learn from art-based strategies how we can “find” without “searching” and how we can achieve new things, knowledge and unpredictable solutions through process-orientated approaches. Our willingness to engage with the unknown and remain curious is just as necessary as the asking of questions that opens up new possibilities for us if we take a conscious approach.

What is our understanding of ambiguity and contradiction?

We live in a world that we can scarcely comprehend anymore. It is dynamic, constantly changing and characterised by factors that become visible in the acronym VUCA. The four letters VUCA stand for “volatility”, “uncertainty”, “complexity” and “ambiguity”. “Volatility” means variability, constant upheaval and change. “Uncertainty” means not knowing and insecurity. The constant change results in unpredictable events whose influence factors are increasingly difficult to identify. “Complexity” describes the growing complications in an increasingly globalised and networked world. It is getting more and more difficult to maintain an overview in such a world. Ambiguity is a synonym of equivocation. A flood of information and contradicting statements make interpretation difficult. Interpreting information accurately and ordering it correctly within complex contexts is a fine art. Hardly anybody has a complete perspective on what is currently happening. Even so, we must find our way in this world in order to remain able to act and make decisions. Despite and because of the flood of information. Even if we feel constantly overwhelmed and yearn for clarity and simple formulas. But would that get us any further? What if we deliberately turn away from the yearning for simplicity and dare not to give conclusive answers?

We humans are complex beings. We are capable of handling complex things and of coming to terms with complicated situations. Creativity helps us with this. So that it can flourish, it needs stimulation as a resource for creating something new. A creative source is enriched by variety, ambiguity, contradiction, vagueness and paradoxes. Those who do not seek to simplify complexity but allow it in the spirit of creative necessity set the foundations for handling ambiguity and contradiction. If we remain open to a situation along with its influencing factors, multifacetedness and uncertainties, considering them consciously instead of negating them, looking away or switching to “business as usual”, novel possibilities open up for “creagile” action.

Case story 1: Decision-making and leadership communication

Problem situation:

In a fairly small production company, the managing director is absent for a long time due to illness. His son works at the company. He does not voice an opinion on whether he would take over the management. A longstanding production director is currently tasked with the company management. He does not have official decision-making power so he cannot determine the financial and business policy of the company nor responsibly influence the current situation. The employees feel lost and dissatisfied. The situation is becoming an increasing mental burden for them. A decrease in turnover is becoming apparent.

- Which possible “creagile” responses do we have in view of the problem described above?
- Which steps and approaches help us to solve the problem?

Possible solutions:

Clarify roles by bringing in third parties: An external adviser works out a joint commitment together with the managing director, the son and two further key figures in the company. The aim of the open discussion is firstly a clarification of roles² of persons with management tasks, along with the assignment of decision-making powers, and secondly the prompt communication of changes of roles and decision-making competences through the internal communication channels of the company. The discussion should be set out so that the requirements of all those involved are taken account of and can be openly communicated. It is not about hoping to be understood but about making oneself understood boldly. Because: “Those who understand themselves communicate better.”³.

Making use of a crisis as a productive state: In a crisis things come to a head, anxiety and fear make themselves felt. When it is touch and go, a difficult (decision-making) situation can go one way or the other. This is also conveyed by the Chinese word for crisis: Wei-Ji Wei means danger and ji means opportunity. Every crisis harbours both failure and success. They are two sides of the same coin. The flip side of a crisis is new opportunities that open up. It is about being alert and keeping a look out for new possibilities and opportunities and then also taking them. Max Frisch describes a crisis as a productive state. One only needs to disregard its connotations of disaster.

Withstanding complexity: The situation in the described company is anything other than clear for those involved. Uncertainty is spreading, because underlying communication channels are breaking down and needs are not heard. Dialogue is stagnating. This leads to silence on the one hand and the sparking of rumours on the other. Contact persons are lacking. Decisions are not made. This is coupled with volatile conditions on the market, procurement, competitors etc. All these components are not autonomous but are connected. They are mutually dependent and influence each other. It is important to withstand this complex situation. Contrary to the complicated, the complex may not be simplified, as otherwise there is the danger of what is important remaining hidden from view. The multitude of voices, vagueness and ambivalences would then be lost. Complexity can only be mastered from the inside out. All those involved want to be seen and heard, every influencing factor wants to be taken into consideration. It is known from biology and cybernetics that organisms can only deal with external complexity if they also know and allow internal complexity. This principle can be applied equally to people and organisations.

Changing perspective: A comprehensive perception of a situation requires considering it from different angles and experiencing it from the point of view of the other persons. An interplay of proximity and distance enables us to detach ourselves from the problem, to take on a new perspective and to cast a fresh glance at the situation from this new position. The change of perspective provides the necessary flexibility and a healthy distance in order to gain

² Stücheli-Herlach 2015; Weick 1995

³ Schulz von Thun 2018

a good overview of the situation – with a consciously sought and suitable lack of definition. Then we can take care of the details in a targeted manner.

Case reflection:

Non-action on account of non-communication can threaten the corporate creation of value, commercial success and ultimately the existence of a company. Change can happen when employees from different hierarchy levels talk to each other, communicate about the current problem and describe the current situation. An open discussion about the current situation helps to identify which roles are perhaps not occupied or incorrectly occupied, who can and wants to take on which role now, ad interim and in the future.

Case story 2: Conflict communication

Problem situation:

The situation is a convention of a small and medium-sized company from the metal industry, bringing in an external advisory person. The question to be worked on together is: How can we achieve a communication that promotes a culture of interrelation, cooperation, problem-solving and transformation? The advisor initially works in the morning with the employees from the areas of assembly and production. Conflicts, especially with the management floor, are voiced very emotionally. In the afternoon, managers from the management floor, employees from purchasing and sales, as well as administration, join them. Due to the emotionally charged morning, the adviser fears things may unintentionally escalate in mixed small groups that are not externally moderated, as originally planned. The adviser therefore wonders how to arrange the afternoon so that all voices are heard and contribute to solving the conflicts.

- Let us put ourselves in the situation of the adviser for a moment. How would we plan and steer the discussions so that the conflict does not escalate?

Possible solutions:

Foster mutual understanding in a circle discussion: The adviser adjusts quickly to the new situation after the lunch break by discarding the original strategy regarding the form of cooperation in the meeting. She chooses the new method of a circle discussion in which all persons sit in a circle. Based on a key question, all the participants are invited to express what is important to them. The circle guides the communication so that all the statements can be given equal attention without being discussed. A perfect opportunity to practice listening. Symbolic “speaking items” such as a ball or a pen can support the discussion format. This item is placed in the middle of the circle. A person who feels the impulse to say something important to them now stands up and fetches the speaking item from the middle - only this person may then speak. In the sample case, all personal opinions were thus presented. This forged understanding for the points of view of the others. At the end of the meeting, the next steps were defined together in order to work on the discussed matters of conflict in a solution-orientated manner.

Offering a safe space: A safe space is a setting in which the participants can express themselves freely, where what is said stays within the safe space, where there is no “right and

wrong” but instead a “both this and that”. The criterion of “right or wrong” fuels the flames, encourages “black-and-white thinking” and judgemental or pejorative evaluations in categories. Such a criterion goes against the openness that is now required. In a safe space, all those involved feel secure and in good hands. It fosters mutual trust and reinforces the awareness and acceptance of all those involved. Every voice is heard.

Activating intuition: If something does not feel right, then this feeling should be taken seriously. It can indicate a grievance or a mishap. How can we set things to rights? By slowing down to a state where our own intuition has a chance to unfold. Usually an impulse then occurs that we can follow. This sets us in motion and we can hear our internal voice at the present moment. If we cultivate our intuition and listen to it, we dare to depart from familiar linear approaches and rigid plans and to follow our internal voice – successfully.

Being courageous: The adviser changes her approach and tries something new in the afternoon. Success is uncertain, the experiment is bold. Uncertainty and fear are evident. It takes courage to do things differently. This is the only way for the adviser to find out whether the chosen path leads to success. Clutching onto routine procedures and rigid conventions often fails its purpose in situations such as these.

Open-ended working: Deliberately leaving the outcome open does not mean not having a goal. But having a goal in mind sometimes distorts one’s view of how to achieve success. To explore an unknown path and to move forwards collaboratively, an open-ended approach helps as a “creagile” principle. An open-ended approach enables a creative leeway within given framework conditions. A space in which any idea, however unconventional, may be born and taken seriously, where things are questioned or turned upside down, combined differently or rejected again. A space where mistakes are not censored and failure is welcomed, where coincidences and surprises are allowed and can be taken up. Artistic freedom is an experimental laboratory where the mind is stimulated and the flow is allowed to flow. It enables search activities in open fields. This can produce something new that emerges in the process of feeling one’s way forward and is then consolidated. It promotes openness and engaging with unusual outcomes of a situation.

Case reflection:

Unspoken conflicts can hugely compromise the corporate creation of value and productivity. It is therefore of central importance to address these “invisible” conflicts within a short timeframe, for example at a meeting, and to state the issues without judging what is said. As soon as possible. Underlying conflicts are often based on disappointed expectations. If these are addressed within a safe framework, complying with clearly defined communication rules, it is possible for the projections of mutual expectations that are hidden behind them to finally come to light. For those involved, this can be an arduous but also a beneficial process. It is to be noted that communication in very hierarchically structured companies works differently than, for example, in smaller, self-organised, agile teams. In terms of overcoming conflict, aspects of diversity in particular also play a central role (this means gender and role, sexual orientation, age, national and social origins, mentality, world view/religion, language, skin colour, educational and marital status). In large international companies, one should also

consider intercultural and international communication⁴ to be able to overcome conflicts in the long term.

Case story 3: Innovation communication and design thinking

Problem situation:

The plans for the new meeting centre in a community appeal to all those involved. When the matter of costs comes up, those involved are discouraged and wonder: "How are we supposed to finance it? We can't afford it!"

- What could a change in the way of thinking and the perceptions of those involved bring about?

Solution processes:

Speaking up and arguing boldly: Boldly and pointing the way ahead, the previously silent participant Karl speaks up: "I find the new community centre beneficial for our local community. The costs for the centre are not much higher than those for the houses that we have built for our own families. So together we will also manage to finance the community centre." In terms of feeling, this statement has cast the dice. The others who are involved are persuaded by Karl's argumentation and the group decides to keep the project alive.

Visionary thinking: Would Vasco da Gama and Columbus have been dissuaded from finding Terra Incognita on account of the objection that the ships were too expensive? A look back at history shows us that the spirit of discovery was victorious. Visions are always accompanied by enthusiasm, drive, a spirit of adventure, courage, convincing arguments and enthusiastic allies.

Deciding in uncertain situations: If a situation is new and difficult to grasp and the effects of measures are uncertain, ambiguity and contradictions can teach us to proceed in a "creagile" manner on the path to making a decision. In other words: logical decisions that are based on solid foundations are not difficult decisions. Far reaching decisions are always uncertain. In everyday management life, we must make decisions at times when we do not know what the right decision is. Questions that lead the way are: Is the decision consistent? Is communication effective? If something is consistent and effective, it makes people act. We notice this e.g. by looking at the situation of the community centre described in the sample case. Somebody speaks up, communicates clearly and observes attentively. Then we can see whether the energy is flowing and everything is moving in a purposeful direction with a view to finding a solution.

Allowing not knowing: A whole host of stumbling blocks and uncertainties lie in the way of realising the new community centre. Nobody is moving outside of their comfort zone. It would therefore be fatal to proclaim that one knows the ideal way and to determine how to proceed. Courage, a creative will and trust in one's own ability, as well as not knowing, are characteristics that are essential in this open-ended process.

⁴ cf. Peters 1997; Kumbier & Schulz von Thun 2017; Meckel & Kamps 2003

Case reflection:

In every process intended to produce something new, there are phases of uncertainty when those involved ask themselves: “How is that supposed to work?” One has a goal in mind but how to get there is still in the dark. The aim in this case story is the result of a long agreement process. Many ideas, notions and experiences resulted in the shared picture in the form of a vision and a concrete plan for the development of a community centre. Those involved developed the idea together. Everyone could and was allowed to contribute. What was decisive for the decision to realise the plan was ultimately the bold statement by Karl, which placed the financing costs of the community project in relation to the financing of a single-family house.

Case story 4: Digital communication

Problem situation:

Angela has invited the members of the newly assembled project team of an organisation in the service sector to a digital meeting. They are to plan the next work steps together. The quick thinkers talk the most by monopolising the discussion. Some of those involved cannot get a word in. The meeting proceeds in an unstructured manner. The atmosphere in the group gets progressively worse.

- How do we react when we cannot have our say, when colleagues interrupt us or simply talk over us? How do we deal with it? Do we continue to speak or fall silent?
- What other possibilities does digital space offer us here, in order to make ourselves heard?

Solution processes:

Cultivate discussion rules: Angela suggests agreement on clear discussion rules. Those who want to say something raise a virtual hand. Everyone can talk in turn, the others listen. Angela appoints a person who ensures that all virtual hands are seen and that the respective persons have their say. With this simple rule, communication is successful and the next work steps can be determined together. For the next meeting, the project team also agrees to send small groups to breakout sessions to open up the possibility of actively discussing with other participants.

Willingness to experiment: A picture says more than 1000 words. So why not experiment with the digital tools by e.g. posting a photo of one’s own experience at a certain moment (such as a negative or sad emoticon, a clenched fist or an animated gif file) in order to be heard, or posting a solution suggestion for an idea in the form of a screenshot, if one has not been able to have one’s say. “creagile” awareness can also be stimulated, for example, by picturing or writing emotionally or medially charged words on post-its that are held up spontaneously to the camera, so that one’s own face can no longer be seen, only the post-it. It is about the targeted use of non-verbal as well as written communication in digital space, in order to spontaneously contribute one’s opinion and express oneself even without being asked.

Being curious: Curiosity is an innate ability that is inherent to every child. Being interested in something, asking questions, going on a journey of discovery are all things that children are very good at. Those who are interested in a discussion partner or discussion topic keep the counterpart talking and the topic going by asking targeted questions. Questions widen horizons and encourage all those involved to contribute their thoughts. Those who are asking questions steer the discussion. Questions can be written into the chat and taken up by a moderator. In case questions in the chat are ignored or are overlooked on account of a verbal and written flood of information, it is worth posting the question again to make oneself heard.

Practising collaboration: It shows serenity to hold back in a discussion and let one's counterpart have their say, as well as to support someone else verbally and to develop a solution co-creatively. It doesn't matter who contributes the triggering thought, takes up a thought and runs with it. In collaborative action, openness and allowing not knowing are important. Both can get lost through too much talking. Active listening and responding to the contributions of previous speakers reinforce the discursive atmosphere as well as the further course of the discussion. This is called interactive communication. Breakout sessions on Zoom are very well suited, for example, to collaborations and more in-depth discussions on a topic in small groups that can later be shared in the larger group (plenum).

Case reflection:

When working with people who do not yet know each other, the check-in, meaning the conscious arrival and getting to know each other in the circle, is relevant and reliable for a good working situation. It is worth clearly communicating the discussion rules and the meeting procedure. This applies all the more to virtual space. As an informal introduction is often not possible before a meeting and the body language seasons remain invisible, the focus must be even more on the conscious steering and formation of the social process. The more digitisation has progressed in an organisation, the more attention the topic of interpersonal relations needs. This is the most important insight that the organisation adviser and author Sebastian Purps-Pardigol gained when considering the digitisation of companies⁵. The increasing digitisation is changing cooperation. The digital transformation may therefore not be restricted to the mere implementation of digital technologies. The corporate culture must change along with it, as well as the ways in which we communicate and interact in virtual space.

The case stories and possible solutions show that creative agility represents a key competence when dealing with new situations, characterised by changeability, uncertainty, complexity and contradiction. The challenge lies in thinking, as well as communicating, deciding and acting, in a creative and agile manner despite these difficult framework conditions – by both digital and analogue means.

Creative agility is bored on prescribed routes that lead to known solutions and results. With "creagile" principles such as open-endedness or a change in perspective, on the other hand, new avenues and possibilities open up. Being involved in a curious, unprejudiced and

⁵ Cf. Kretschmer 2018

favourable manner in a collaboratively created result is a worthwhile goal and the key to procedural actions and insights.

The future starts now!
The future is “creagile!”
The future is you!
The future is us!

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4. Art-based building blocks

4.1 From the “corridor” to the “foyer” – widening one’s perspective

Michael Uhl, Dagmar Frick-Islitzer, Peer Holthuizen

In the following chapter, we present various methods for experiencing selected *art-based strategies* with the help of *artistic interventions*.

Art-based strategies

What we mean by this are approaches that artists use to obtain new ideas and perspectives. These are independent of artistic discipline and comprise fundamental thinking and work attitudes, such as: curiosity and openness, a willingness to experiment and create, intuition and improvisation, tolerance of uncertainty (cf. Chapter 3). Art-based strategies enable us to navigate our way through open-ended artistic processes.

Artistic intervention

This is understood in principle as an artistic intervention in non-artistic everyday contexts. In our “creagile” context, we understand this as the application of art-based methods and strategies in an organisation environment, e.g. a company or an administration. Artistic interventions draw on a variety of artistic disciplines. Based on our own artistic backgrounds, these are especially theatre direction/performative arts and fine arts.

The central consideration when selecting and developing the following art-based methods and building blocks is the opening up of scopes of experience and learning. A particular focus is the principle of the safe space and the initiation and steering of open-ended processes. We let ourselves be guided in this by our “creagile” magic formula for open-ended processes (cf. Chapter 2):

Material + questions + doing = it will work out

Based on the observation described above of social changes and transformation processes, our initial questioning look is at the organisation. How are we organised in order to master the everyday tasks and challenges?

Tasks and challenges

We are confronted daily, both professionally and personally, with a wide range of tasks and challenges. We have developed agreements and routines for the majority of these tasks. These help us to solve tasks purposefully. Organisations make a lot of effort to make the cooperation between their employees as smooth and efficient as possible through clear tasks and instructions. But how do we react to challenges that we cannot adequately deal with using our previous routines? And how do we find new paths and possibilities for these?

The “corridor-foyer image”

We started by casting an artistic glance at the scope of tasks and challenges and making an imaginary picture of them:

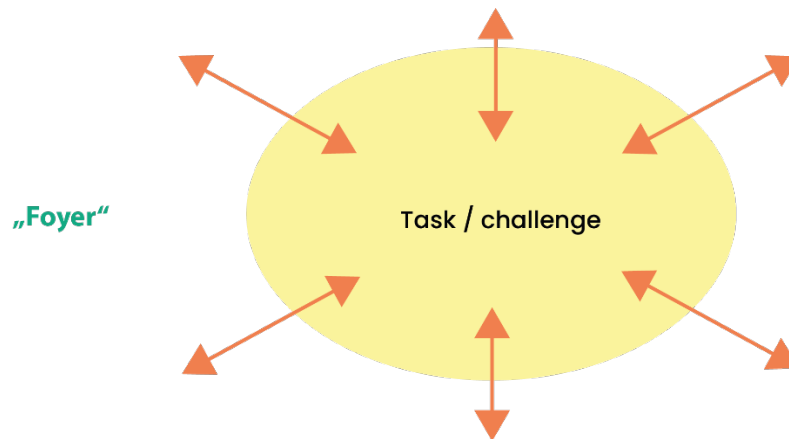
„Corridor“

Task



Completing / solving the task

We imagine tasks with which we are familiar, which we know how to complete and manage, as a corridor. With the task, we enter the corridor through a door and when we complete the task we leave the corridor again through an exit door. We usually already have a view of the exit door when we enter the corridor. We know how we must tackle the task in order to pass through the corridor. We pass through many of these (linear) corridors daily in our routines.



However, we are also faced with tasks and challenges that consist of many different influences. There is not only one exit door, the one familiar route to completion. The number of doors increases and the (linear) corridor becomes a foyer. But how does one move in such a foyer of various overlapping challenges and different exit doors? And how does one do this if this foyer is also determined by other people, colleagues, customers?

The following building set presents some art-based methods that help to explore the “foyer” and with which art-based strategies can be drawn up, in order to find one’s way collaboratively in a wide open-ended field, the foyer.

4.2 The safe space

A central precondition for all the following art-based methods is the *safe space*. Depending on the art, it is called “atelier”, “rehearsal stage”, “studio” and enables secure working and experimenting before a project is shared with the public.

But a safe space is not only a question of the location. We must also try to steer clear of the categories of “right or wrong”. Then there are no “mistakes”, instead just “trying out different experiences”. It happens regularly in artistic processes that a supposed “mistake” leads down a new path. In the theatre we therefore also speak of a rehearsal stage, not a practice stage. We are not training for something but trying something out.

The safe space

A central condition for (artistic) experimentation. If this location is outside of the organisation / of the everyday context, it is easier to establish.

In particular, it is not only a question of the location but also of the atmosphere:

- “Nothing goes out – nothing comes in”
= discretion and abstaining from mobiles
- there are no “mistakes”, instead just “experiments with different experiences”
- It is possible to try something out with the option of failing
- avoid “right” and “wrong” as judgements
- we try something out, rather than practising for something
= REHEARSAL stage, not a PRACTICE stage

The rules for the safe space are discussed at the beginning with the participants. The trainers ensure compliance with the rules and structure and guide the training accordingly. Warm-up exercises have an important function. They not only provide a methodological and playful preparation for further content but also consolidate the group and ensemble (cf. Chapter 4.3, 4.9 and 5).

4.3 Narrative research

The method of narrative research enables the participants to collaboratively consider relevant aspects and perspectives on their everyday organisational life and to make these usable for further processes. In addition, it enables the development of joint narratives, e.g. about the shared organisation. Furthermore, it makes it possible to experience and convey open-ended work as a procedural method.

Narratives about ‘us’

Narrative research comes from the field of theatre and was developed there to explore and present social questions artistically⁶. The central approach and source are the various narratives about and perspectives on society.



Fig.: Aspects of narrative research (own presentation according to Uhl)

⁶ cf. www.narrative-recherche.de

Different perspectives and narratives are collected and merged as an artistic form. The result is a joint narrative but where the different individual narratives continue to visibly exist; similar to a mosaic that makes a whole out of different individual pieces, without changing the individual parts.

Narrative research is always a development process that comprises the compilation of a work from the initial idea to the finished performance ready for the stage. It consists of conceptual, written and stage-setting aspects, as well as of theatre practice and mediation. It is also fuelled especially by the professional fields of direction, authorship and performative arts.

Adaptation for the “creagile” environment

The central idea behind the adaptation of the method for the “creagile” environment is the resulting possible changed role of the participants. They become the authors and directors of their topics and look at aspects of their everyday working lives with a changed – an artistic – perspective. The relevant content for such an approach comes from the participants themselves and is gained through artistic research means. The participants collaboratively put together narratives about the organisational ‘we’. And they get to know strategies and techniques for steering open-ended processes.

Narrative research is basically divided into four phases (according to Uhl):

Research phase: Finding and questioning

Conception phase: *How* does one share what one has found and felt?

Formation phase: The formation is orientated towards the question of *how*

Presentation phase: Sharing with the world

The “creagile” formula is effective in all four phases (cf. Chapter 2). The whole process represents an interplay of material, questions and doing and is based on trust in it.

Research phase I

Initially, research is undertaken among the participants themselves. What are the relevant topics? What questions, observations, experiences can each contribute to be dealt with in a “creagile” process? Two art-based methods are suitable for this first step, which can be carried out as an online warm-up a few days before the two-day training:

1. Lecture performance, e.g. on “ambiguity and ambivalence”
A trainer provides an artistic thought impulse as an introduction to the topic (cf. Chapter 4.8)
2. Performance regarding the “corridor-foyer” image
A trainer playfully presents the “corridor-foyer” image (see above): Tasks and influences that we are subject to from different sides – often at the same time – and which can lead to an (occasional) feeling of being overwhelmed.

The participants are now invited to state their personal examples of (latent) excessive demands. This is best carried out with an anonymised method, e.g. through www.menti.com (cf. Chapter 6.5).

Due to the anonymised procedure, an initial safe space is created that enables the honest feedback of the participants. With their subjective examples of “feeling overwhelmed”, they provide valuable input for the “creagile” training.

These examples from the participants can be attributed to various “doors” of an imaginary “foyer” and thereby categorised.



Fig.: “Doors of excessive demands” (photo: Michael Uhl)

Through the input from the participants, the artistic research has created an initial artistic form – a “foyer of excessive demands”.

This can be used in face-to-face training as a walkable installation in order to initiate a more in-depth consideration.

Research phase II / conception phase

The participants get together in small groups according to the “door of excessive demands” that seems the most relevant to them. Each small group agrees on a specific example, a situation, in which aspects of the selected “door” come clearly to the fore. The participants now take on the role of authors. The leading question in this is:

Who says/does **what**? **What** does who **say/do**?

They are helped by a training tool conceived especially for narrative research – the narrative plot board.

Narrative plot board

A plot board is a useful tool for writing stories, e.g. scripts, theatre texts or novels. It allows scenes and situations to be outlined clearly to obtain an overall overview. The narrative plot board helps the participants to outline as scenes the concrete examples they have found of feeling overwhelmed. For this purpose, in the selected example the actors (=“Who?”) and their (speech) actions (=“What?”) are named.

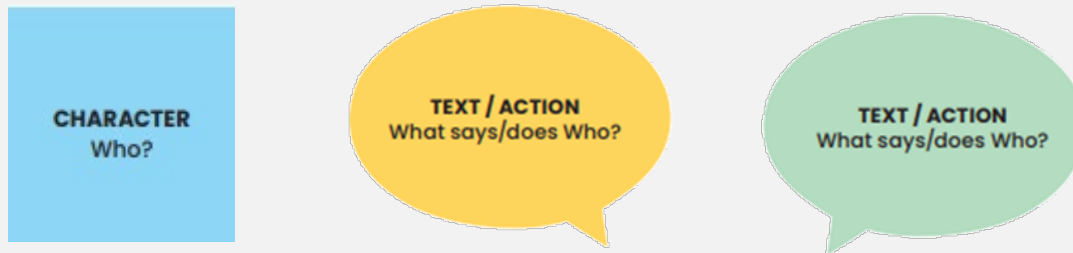


Fig.: Cards of the narrative plot board (for a detailed description cf. Chapter 6.1)

Using the figure cards and the speech/action cards, the participants outline the chosen situation. An important artistic phrase applies here:

Our task is **not the solving** but **the narrating** of the conflict.

So that it is not only one's own convictions that flow into the storyboard and it exclusively result in already known knowledge, a further method from the area of theatre is used – the *individual role study*.

Individual role study

The participants are asked to select the figure on the narrative plot board who seems the furthest from one's own background.

Leading questions for considering the perspective of the individually selected figure can be:

- What would the figure like (for themselves)?
- Who or what is obstructing the figure?
- With which sentences could the figure express both aspects pointedly?

The individual role study has a double effect. On the one hand, it prevents clichés on the narrative plot board. On the other hand, it leads to an individual shift in perspective that opens up a deeper understanding of the conflict situations.

The art-based work in the small group with a narrative plot board and role study has not only gained content (= research phase) but at the same set the foundations for making it shareable with outsiders (= conception phase).

Formation phase

The participants are now requested to find a playful way of presenting their example worked out through the narrative plot board as a little theatre scene. The outlined figures and the found texts serve as a basis for this.

To methodologically prepare the participants for this performative step, practical theatre exercises are recommended that can be incorporated into the various phases of narrative research. Here is a selection of possible practical exercises:

Hurling sentences

An exercise as an introduction to fundamental principles of speaking on stage.

1. The participants walk around in the room (see above) and repeatedly quietly mumble a sentence, e.g. from the individual role study (see above). An acoustic signal is followed by “There!”, as described above. The arm is lowered, but one continues to focus one’s eyes on the point. Upon an acoustic signal, the sentence is “hurled” explosively towards the point.
2. The participants stand opposite each other in two rows. The focus for the sentences is the respective person opposite. Upon a signal, the respective individual sentences are hurled across (= “tennis”) alternately in groups.
3. The sentences are hurled in certain moods, e.g. “happily excited”, “with suppressed rage”, “slightly tipsy”.
4. The sentences are now hurled individually one after the other to the person opposite (= “La Ola”). The mood can be individually chosen.

Walking in the room + “There!”

An exercise that establishes low-threshold movement in the room and introduces the principle of focus.

- The group walks around the room and tries to fill it evenly (= “closing holes and gaps”).
 - They do not look down, their arms swing along naturally.
 - When meeting there is a brief pause, with eye contact and a greeting.
- Everyone chooses a point in the room while walking and concentrates on it without looking at it.
 - Upon an acoustic signal, everyone stands still, points explosively at their point and calls out loudly “There!”
 - Then they lower their arm slowly while they continue to focus their eyes on the point.
 - Upon a further acoustic signal, the group starts to walk around the room again.
 - As a variant, the point can be prescribed, e.g. the nose bridge of a person in the room.

Elvis walk

An exercise with music (e.g. Elvis Presley “A Little Less Conversation”) that trains physical presence and gives performance on the stage a direction (= “spectator space”).

What is decisive in this is the energy and for the whole group to get into a flow.

1. Markings are set up with four chairs or the like (see outline below)
The participants stand opposite each other outside in two rows (= “off”) The rear pair approach each other at the same time (= “performance”), turn off at the same time at the rear marking and go together as far as the front marking (= “ramp”) after pausing briefly, each goes off to the respective side (= “off”)
2. The participants walk as the figure they have worked on in the role study (see above) and do a respective pose at the front at the ramp

3. The participants cast a phrase of the figure into the spectator space while posing

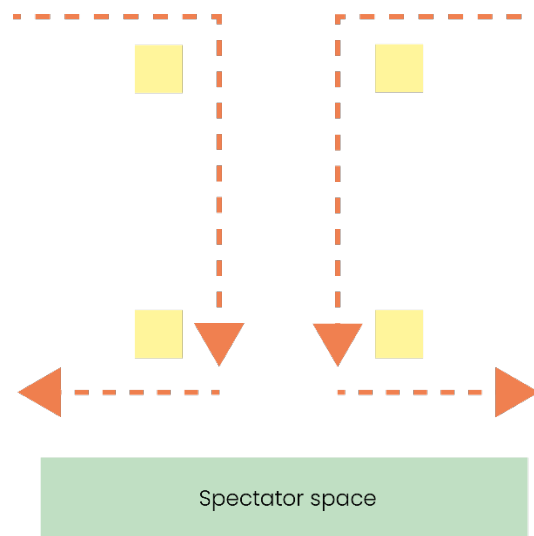


Fig.: Structure and paths during the “Elvis walk”: from the “off” in pairs towards each other and forwards together to the “ramp”

The presented practical theatre exercises are examples to guide the participants methodologically to the performative acting of the scene that they developed themselves, that they developed collaboratively as authors and directors.

Presentation phase

The small groups present their created scenes to the other participants. The safe space is important. The public is attentive and appreciative. Concluding feedback is obliged to take a positive stance (“What did I observe?”, “What did I like?”). Feedback is characterised more by description than by evaluation. Depending on the experience background of the presenting person, brief and open further work on the scene can ensue, based on the feedback of the public.

Résumé

By presenting the scenes, the participants have opened up to each other in various ways. They have trustingly shared within the small group personal and structural aspects of feeling overwhelmed. Through the work with scenes, a focus is placed on the acting figures of the selected example, not on the participants themselves.

The narrative plot board has created a structure that can be used as a template for further consideration of content. While creating the scene, the participants went through many changes in perspective – on each other’s aspects as well as on the different figures. And through the presentation as a theatre scene, they shared factors personally important to them – cognitively, energetically and emotionally. All these aspects can continue to be used for the further work in training or applied according to individual requirements.

Apart from theatre-based models, methods from the fine arts enrich the scope of possibilities for the participants through the experience of creative work. In the following, some methods and practices from the fine arts are presented for “creagile” use.

4.4 Workpiece

Method

One of the centrepieces of the training is the workpiece. This leads the participants from the performative to the fine arts. Apart from creative activity with their own hands, an important aim is break away from traditional and static attributes of objects, as well as of opinions and attitudes. This happens by means of selected materials from our everyday lives such as chairs, items of clothing, books etc. A chair is normally there for sitting, trousers for wearing. But what can one do with a chair, with trousers, beyond this? What can they be used for?



“Ceci n'est pas une chaise.” ('This is not a chair') (Photo: Birgitta Borghoff)

Aim

With the help of creative and artistic means, a conventional procedure with an aim and according to a plan is whittled away. This creates a new mindset for collaborative approaches.

Procedure

In small groups, the participants are instructed in how to make something with a cultural artefact, such as a chair or a book, which afterwards is no longer recognisable as a chair or a book. Just a few aids and tools are provided for this: saw and adhesive tape (chair) or ribbon, laces and scissors (clothing items). The aim is to break down a fixed image in the mind and to engage – with few materials – with the process of creating and changing, so that a new image takes over from the old. Previous artistic ability is not necessary for this exercise, as it is not about a work of art per se but about a workpiece.

Limited aids

The selection of aids and tools is deliberately kept limited and conventional or expected materials are not provided. This avoids accomplishing the task mentally in advance. Autopilot is halted. Limitations can cause blockades and resistance. In the case of children, we can observe: the fewer toys they find, the more inventively they compensate for the lack. The saying “Necessity is the mother of invention” is to be put into practice by the participants.

Open and practical doing and the experiences gathered along the way are followed by reflection about it. How did it begin? Were there many ideas in advance or perhaps just a single idea one went along with gratefully? Or was it simply started, without a plan, without

any ideas? Did someone in the group take the lead? Was the focus on performance and the result? Were there surprises, obstacles, blockages, resistance? How were these dealt with? Did someone reach their limits? What have these triggered? How was the creative process experienced? Were there flow moments? Moments of frustration? Eureka moments? In the reflection round, what was experienced is put into words, raising awareness of it. This prepares the ground for deriving one's own art-based strategies later.



A jacket becomes a doll (photo: Dagmar Frick-Islitzer)

The personal experience of the approach and the creation of the workpiece prepares the ground for a very individual continuation. Is it not the case that in life there is usually something that is missing, that someone does not provide, that is forgotten? With a successful change of perspective, the lack can lead to a wide range of possibilities. How much freedom lies in the thought of not having to have a solution, in not being given the conventional framework conditions and/or materials and therefore in not getting stuck in one's comfort zone? It is about letting go of predefined opinions on how something ought to be. About accepting what is available – also in the figurative sense: abilities, skills – in order to make the best of a situation with it. This reflects everyday life in our “creagile” VUCA world.

4.5 Collage

Method

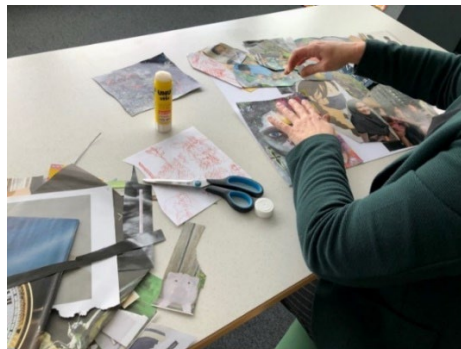
The collage is an artistic technique for the creation – in this context – of a situation or a mood board. It is individual work and a technique that promotes multiplicity, the condense expression of multilayeredness, and is therefore well suited to representing what is multidimensional, ambiguous, ambivalent and paradox.

Aim

The participants focus on their very personal theme and immerse themselves in a wealth of picture material that serves as inspiration.

Procedure

A large pool of excerpts from magazines is provided, sorted according to the topics of “Man”, “Animal”, “Nature”, “Architecture/city”, along with “Art and culture” and “Curiosities”. The participants are asked to lay pictures and/or texts on a paper base, also overlapping, on the topic of “Me in my organisation”. This often results in surprising combinations and altered realities. The layers below are partly covered by those above, but the richness of the non-visible can be seen and sensed. Collage work and its laying arrangement need time and peace and quiet. Thoughts form through the process of finding, cutting out, placing, integrating and changing. This exercise leads the participants into the depths of their experiences and perceptions. The open-ended process should therefore be maintained for as long as possible. It is only at the end that all the paper cuttings are adhered.



Inspiring multiplicity and possibilities of expression that can reflect the depth of one's own experience
(photo: Dagmar Frick-Isitzer)

4.6 Card set

The card set contains 15 “creagile” principles such as “Willingness to experiment”, “Activating intuition”, “Practising collaboration”, “Cultivating unlearning” or “Using diversity” and “Relinquishing control”.

Method

With the descriptions on the cards, the statements by the artists and the artists' quotes, the “creagile” principles become understandable and clear. They can use them to engage with the questions below and immerse themselves in their professional contexts.

Creagile principle: GIVING UP CONTROL

Trust. Keep a clear head. Pick up the unexpected.

Artists know about the power of losing control.

The South Tyrolean artist Cornelia Lochmann (* 1985) describes:

„In every picture, there's a moment when I totally give up control. There has to be. That moment which overturns everything I had done before and steers the picture in a new, unforeseen direction.“

Quote from: Artist talk with Dagmar Frick-Isplitzer. Berlin, 12.02.2020.

The Austrian musician Clemens Salesny (* 1980) describes when he retains control and when he gives it up:

„If I want the musicians to fulfil a certain function, I can determine that. For example, if I want to have a certain mood while other elements should remain static. I give up control when I rely on the moment and the intuition of the whole band. Actually it's not about control at all but about developing and finding together. But sometimes I want to examine things more closely and determine them in the rehearsals. But too much control and defined things do not suit me. In this respect, I am quite happy to give up control and with the others observe what happens in the next moment.“

Quote from: Artist talk with Dagmar Frick-Isplitzer. Vienna, 14.12.2019.

- In which situations do you give up control, in which rather not, and why?
- What effect does your letting go have in certain situations, tasks and people?
- How does your trust in life benefit when you let go?

**Kreative
Agilität**

Example of a card from the card set “creagile principles” (Photo: Dagmar Frick-Isplitzer)

Aim

The participants are able to take on the perspective of artists and to apply it to their professional contexts.

Procedure

The cards are printed on both sides. On one side there is the “creagile” principle and the relevant descriptions. On the rear side, there is an additional statement that the artists associate with the “creagile” principle, followed by one or more quotes by artists that clarify the “creagile” principle. At the end of each card there are questions that invite the participants to discuss and exchange opinions.

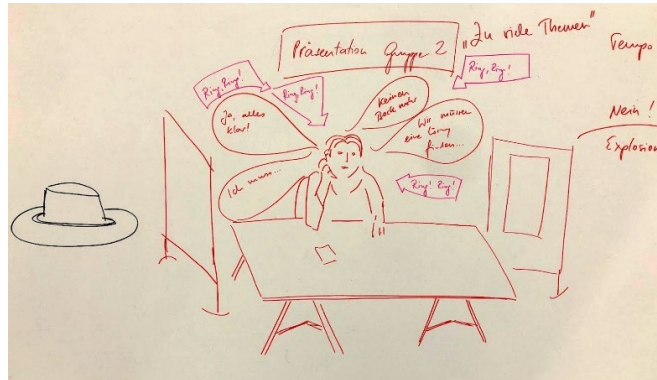
The use of the “creagile” principles is wide-ranging. Positive experiences have been made in group work towards the end of the two-day training, because then the participants have experienced the majority of the “creagile” processes and developed a feeling for artistic approaches.

4.7 “Creagile” recording

Method

The “creagile” recording is a live recording that is put together on an ongoing basis during the two-day training. Contrary to a conventional written record, it is less the results and more the processes that are recorded. Literally recorded by hand in the form of drawings, words,

statements by the participants on their performance etc. Colours, shapes, arrows etc. forge connections.



Representation of the process of scenic work in its multiperspectival dimension
(Photo: Dagmar Frick-Isplitzer)

Aim

The “creagile” recording opens up possibilities for the participants as to how processes can be recorded. They are given a blueprint that they can integrate into their everyday working lives.

Procedure

The trainer, who is not leading or otherwise involved at the moment, observes what is happening and the participants in their action or interaction and notes these moments as an outline. It is important to record the moment quickly on paper. The artistic skill and aesthetics are not criteria. It is about recording a mood, an attitude, one or more perspectives, the overall picture.

As a process meanders from one aspect to another, from one task to the next, it is not recorded on individual pages but artistically appropriately in a new format: on a roll of paper. The blank paper is rolled out; it is drawn on and then rolled up again on the other side. This results in a single recording of an entire course day – without interruption. At the end of the day, the “creagile” recording is spread out and presented. It might well fill the entire diagonal length of the room. The participants can thus reflect on the day while walking past and lingering. It makes them recall their state of mind, their experience(s), their insights. Without any words, at their own pace and with a high level of concentration. There is usually silence.

On the next day of the course, a new “creagile” recording is created. For the participants, these personal observations of the trainers supplement their own experiences during the training. The “creagile” recording is handed to the participants as a gift at the end of the training. Organisational groups receive the whole roll. Individual persons can cut out the aspects important to them with scissors and take them as souvenirs.

The added value of the “creagile” recording lies in the moment of surprise at the end of a day. Everyone recognises the processes and themselves again and it is a kind of reflection that is very personal and unique. This special type of recording corresponds to our shared vision of creative agility.



The participants think back over the training day based on the “creagile” recording. (Photo: Dagmar Frick-Isplitzer)

4.8 Lecture performance

A lecture performance is a knowledge or thought impulse where science and art overlap, presented using performative means. The aim is less an “instructive” conveying of knowledge and more an open discussion of the subject. The public is explicitly invited to this open discussion. This format is suitable for use in a “creagile” training context.

Lecture performances in creative agility

This format enables the trainers to set artistic (thought) impulses for the participants. Through the conscious use of performative and artistic means, not only is a content impulse given but at the same time a “creagile” atmosphere is established. A subjective approach to the topic is consciously chosen. The trainers therefore do not present themselves as omniscient but as open people in motion. A “creagile” equal footing is established and the safe space is introduced (cf. Chapter 4.2).

For the creative agility training, some aspects are suitable as topics for a lecture performance:

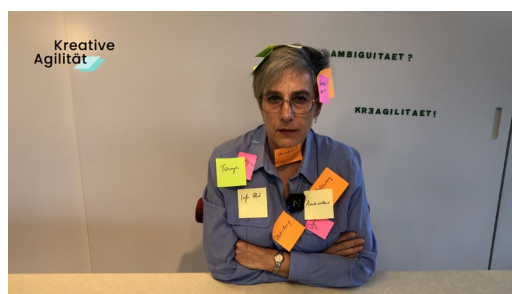


Fig.: Trainer at the lecture performance on “Ambiguity”

<https://vimeo.com/812580721>

(Dagmar Frick-Isplitzer, photo: Michael Uhl)

Ambiguity – creativity – ambiguity tolerance

From a subjective point of view, examples are given of ambiguous situations and complex challenges. The trainer pictures themselves in overwhelming situations and at the same time brings in creativity. Every person has this. We people are principally capable of finding ways and solutions even in complex and challenging situations. This impulse can be used to prompt an initial exchange of opinion on this subject by the participants.



Fig.: Trainer at lecture performance on “Corridor-foyer image”
(Hands: Michael Uhl, photo: Birgitta Borghoff)

“Corridor-foyer picture”

A trainer presents the corridor-foyer image described above through a performative insight into their own (artistic) practice. The focus is on the particular challenges of the “foyer”. Tasks and influences that we are subject to from different sides – often at the same time – and which can lead to an (occasional) feeling of being overwhelmed. At the same, what is overwhelming can also be an important source of creativity. We understand this as an invitation to deal with what is overwhelming playfully.

This impulse can be used to obtain examples of perceived excessive demands from the participants.



Fig.: Lecture performance on communication, language, storytelling
<https://vimeo.com/812584584>
(Peter Jungmeier, photo: Michael Uhl)

Communication, language, storytelling

A subjective look at language and communication in (organisational) groups. Is non-communication with other people possible at all? What does it mean to understand? Can one also communicate too much? Does talking help? What does listening mean?

This impulse can be used to stimulate communication among the participants on this topic.



Fig.: Lecture performance on art-based strategies
<https://vimeo.com/812583528>
(Dagmar Frick-Isplitzer, photo: Michael Uhl)

Art-based strategies

Some art-based strategies are selected and questioned from a subjective point of view. How are these related to the aspects that are an obstruction, that one would like to “unlearn”? A positive outlook on obstructions and barriers. This impulse can be used after participants have already gathered their own experiences with art-based strategies over the course of training, in order to open up transfer possibilities.

4.9 Creative strategies

Art-based methods and creative tools in the context of the magic formula

In order to promote and establish the creative agility capability in the organisational context, a safe environment (Safe space, see Chapter 4.2) is necessary, where the ‘I’, the ‘I’ within the ‘we’ and the ‘we’ are explored and continuously developed further. The condition for this is an open-minded fundamental attitude. It requires openness and trust in being able to immerse oneself deeply, without specifications and performance pressure.

Various helpful art-based methods and creative tools can be used in support. Many established creative processes and strategies, however, are primarily targeted towards bringing about solutions, (re)defining problems, changing observational perspectives, exploring blind spots, generating ideas etc. The use of such methods is only helpful if they can be brought in to support or deepen the process.

Established creative processes are often divided into sequential phases, with feedback planned. These processes differ, however, from the “creagile” magic formula, because they mostly aim for a result or a solution and ideally for use as a new development. What is central in this is finding ideas and a reorientation through a change in perspective.

The “creagile” magic formula “Material + questions + doing = it will work out” (see Chapter 2), on the other hand, is open-ended and is based on mutually process-driving archetypes. This magic formula is always tested in the process of mediation. Art-based methods and creative strategies are used in this but are always subordinate to it. Established creative techniques and processes (thinking tools for solving problems) with their feedback-orientated phases are generally divided into two process steps:

- understanding the task (understanding, observing, orientating and defining the perspective) and

- solving problems (generating ideas, developing, presenting and testing a prototype).

Even if the aforementioned magic formula goes through constant development and adjustment in the process as a procedural spiral, through “material, questions and doing”, it would be potentially comparable with the aforementioned phases of the results-orientated and established creative processes. However, it differs fundamentally, as the aforementioned open-ended process in safe space represents the aim of the mediation.

In order to enrich the “creagile” magic formula with the richness of the art-based methods and creative tools and therefore to make it more accessible to a specialist public, its profile contours are likewise reinforced.

In the following supporting overview, some established art-based methods and creative tools are ordered according to their properties pertaining to the “creagile” magic formula and its process steps:

MATERIAL - “Forms of the world” (awareness of perceived facts)

- Research and orientation (means explaining the setting and situation / analysis)
- Generating, finding and considering shared theme pools
- Relevance of these themes when considering (professional) practice
- Condensing, intensifying and creating overlaps of the aforementioned themes
- Creating reflexive moments together

QUESTIONS - “An approach to the world”

(Comparable to the process steps “Incubation and generation” in conventional creative techniques/processes)

- Questioning, condensing, intensifying and creating overlaps of the aforementioned themes
- Deepening the elaborated themes
- Narrative plot board (see Chapter 4 and Chapter 6)
 - Who says or does what?
 - What does who say or do? (Figure)
 - (Spoken) action = what is said? What is done? What happens?
- Questions for questioning the aforementioned topics, i.e. also how the “creagile” principle can be integrated into everyday working life?
- Generate reflexive moments together and develop concepts / plans

DOING - “Presenting, communicating and shaping”

(Team building / ensemble formation / initiating co-creation / partner and small group work)

Warm-ups:

- Exercises that raise awareness (in the mind and body)
- Allowing human tendencies that are not or cannot be realised in an organisation context due to the hierarchy or culture, but which are always there subliminally and during the process (i.e. in the safe space) keep sparking enthusiasm as a “valve” on many levels.
- Exercises for body presence and body flow

- d) Exercises for trust, respect, introduction and (controlled) closeness

Context warm-ups:

- e) Exercises that express the shared and individual themes and detail them by means of image, material, language, design and action
- f) Exercises regarding 'I', the 'I' in the 'we' and the 'we'

Attached (Chapter 8) there are many creative techniques that can be used for the “creagile” magic formula.

Invitation to own doing

With the presented art-based building blocks, we show how we can move and cooperate jointly in open fields. The specially developed methods for this, derived from the arts, serve the purpose of shaping a space for learning and experience, in order to get to know art-based strategies, adapt them and develop them further individually. They are supplemented by a selection of established art-based methods and techniques that benefit this open-ended work. The navigation in open fields, in the “foyer”, requires constantly new perceptions and understanding – *doing*. The effectiveness lies in the individual appropriation. This applies to the trainers as well as the participants. And it is to be understood as an explicit invitation to contribute one’s own individual background and knowledge and thereby to enrich the building set. It is this diversity – the different influences, perspectives and approaches – that serves us as a shared source for discovering new paths.

5. Presentation building blocks

Peter Jungmeier

As part of the development of the training design and of this curriculum, a wide variety of presentation methods, exercises and games were explored and used. This chapter provides an overview of this array of activities through the phases of the training process and briefly describes the methodological approach, the implementation and the applicability of the individual formats.

In general, these exercises make a valuable contribution to consolidating the safe space and help to think out of the box. They therefore play an important role in the overall process of creative agility.

5.1 “Check-in” (arrival)

- a) in digital space

Key story

The participants are asked to fish out a key (ring) that they are carrying - or to imagine a “favourite key” if no key is physically available. Then they are invited to choose a key (e.g. bicycle key, key to parents’ home, office key) and to tell a personal story about it and/or to introduce themselves to the group with it. Is also suitable for in-person training.

b) in in-person training

“Line-ups”

Before the training, tasks are considered that would be interesting for an introductory round. The participants in the group are then asked to line up in the room along a line or in a circular order, depending on the task. Examples:

- to form an alphabetic order of first names
- in order of the distance from their home to work
- according to how long they have been at the company/the organisation etc.

Aim, area of application:

The check-in firstly has the aim of making the participants “cast off” what was experienced directly before the training and become ready to adjust to what is new and awaiting them. In a group in which the participants don’t know each other, it enables the initial introduction and conscious perception of the others. In a group whose participants already know each other (e.g. staff within a department), the check-in can convey impressions of the colleagues that were previously unknown. In both cases, an atmosphere of trust gradually grows, which is an important condition for the safe space.

5.2 Warming up (“getting going”)

a) in digital space

“Quick mood round”:

The participants are to be informed in advance to have post-its to hand. At the start of the game, the notebook or web camera is covered with it, so that in the beginning one can see a colourful mosaic of colourful squares in the gallery view of the respective programme.

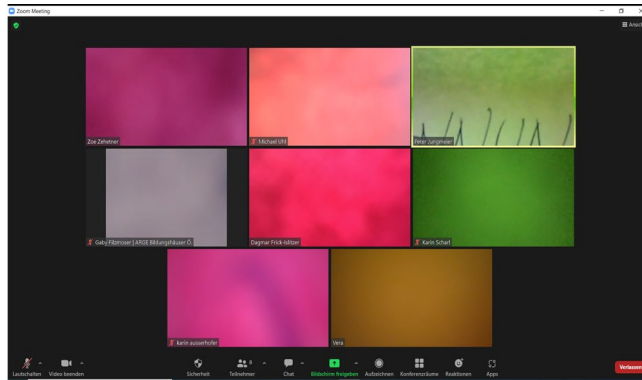
Now various statements are formulated by the presenter, which all start with “All those who...”. Examples:

- “All those who have already had breakfast today...”
- “All those who like listening to opera music...”
- “All those who did not drive to work by car today...”

The participants that a statement applies to remove their post-it from the camera and thereby show their face.

Aim, area of application:

“Quick mood round” is a traditional introductory game in which one finds something out about the others without becoming personal. An aesthetic side effect of this game is that the covering of the webcams creates a shared, colourful mosaic on the screen. Suitable for opening a video meeting or online seminars.



Screenshot from the online warm-up of the 1st pilot training (photo: Peter Jungmeier)

“Colour search game”

The presenter poses the following task at the beginning: Find an item with the colour [“state colour”] and hold it up to the camera!

The person who is last to be able to present a suitable item takes over and continues with a new colour.

Aim, area of application:

This game contributes to the participants moving and being activated, despite the digital situation and being bound to a notebook/PC or other devices, stepping outside their comfort zone a little and being ready for something new. Suitable for starting an introductory round.

b) in in-person training

Changing places

This game works in principle like the previously described “Quick mood round”. In the circle of chairs there is one stool less than the number of participants present. The person without a chair must try to get one by setting a task for the others that is formulated again with “All those who...”. All the participants to whom the statement applies must stand up and swap chairs. In the end one person remains without a chair again who must now formulate the next task.

Aim, area of application:

This dynamic game is an icebreaker when it comes to stepping outside of one’s own comfort zone and breaking through the traditional “seat hogging” at many seminars. We get to know some snippets of private news which contributes to team building and developing trust. The participants also experience different changes in perspective concretely and practically.

5.3 Exploring the starting question, the starting situation

a. Narrative plot board

(see Chapter 4.3 and chapter 6.1)

5.4 In-depth work with the starting question/situation

a. Pro Action Café

Procedure:

Depending on the number of participants - or in our case the number of the narrative plot boards - table groups with ideally 4 persons are formed. A host is nominated for each table. This host remains at the table in the ensuing discussion rounds.

Round 1

After a brief description of the situation presented on the plot board, the table groups discuss as the first question: "What is the concern behind the concern?" The focus of the discussion is therefore initially on what this situation is "actually" about - the group therefore tries to get to the heart of the matter.

Round 2

After around 20 minutes, the table discussions are concluded, all participants (apart from the hosts) look for another table with new discussion partners. After a brief introduction by the hosts of the contents of the first round, the following further question is discussed: "What is still missing here?" The group therefore tries to bring in new perspectives. This round also ends after around 20 minutes, the participants look for a new table.

Round 3

Once again after a brief summary by the host, the focus of the discussion is on the question "What additional or alternative courses of action are possible here for the involved figures?" After the end of the 3rd round, the enriched plot boards are presented in the plenum.

Note: If time is running out, the 2nd round can also be left out.

Aim, area of application:

Pro Action Café is a further development of the World Café - to be precise, this option incorporates a collective, structured consultation between equals, in which the participants themselves determine the themes.

The Pro Action Café is suitable for all processes in which many participants endeavour to take action without everyone having to discuss the same.

As part of this training, a variant of the method is used to enrich and elaborate the narrative plot board.

b. Collage and workpiece

(see Chapters 4.4 and 4.5)

5.5 Transfer and implementation

a. Tricky questions game

Procedure

To start off, each and every participant looks for a question that deeply concerns them. This question can be brought into a round of 5 persons - three take a seat, two stand observing in an outer circle, listening and hosting the discussion. In the inner circle, someone starts with their question, all the other discussion partners may also only answer with questions.

This means that the discussion is structured only through questions. All the participants can also bring in their questions at any time. No answer is given, only further questions asked. Impulses after answers are stopped. The question is intended to result in a more incisive, deeper question.

The two persons in the outer circle are concerned with the question: What does it take for me to be a good host? How can I support the formulation of good questions in my role? Or the impulse emerges: I also want to join in and give a tentative sign to swap places with a person in the inner circle.

After a brief introduction and the question phase of around 20-30 minutes, the harvest follows: What does this mean for me and my organisation?

The process leads on many levels to astounding solutions that would otherwise take a lot of time.

Aim, area of application:

The tricky question game serves the purpose of finding the question behind the question, in other words to deepen one's own question. Like hermeneutics in social sciences, in this game it is about understanding and discussing meanings and the purpose of a question. This creates a new social context that enables one to adopt a different perspective. This quickly results in new possibilities for seemingly unsolvable problems. The method was used in our training to initiate a transfer of what was previously experienced to future everyday working life.

b. Circle

The circle discussion is an old form of getting together to discuss with each other respectfully. The circle served as a basis for many cultures, such as the circle of wise men around a camp fire or the passing on of traditional knowledge through stories. The attitude of the participants in this method is characterised by openness, mindful speaking and profound listening. To initiate an intensive dialogue and communication, it is necessary to formulate a goal, an intention for this gathering in advance. Building on this, the framework conditions such as place, duration, persons, question and necessary resources can be determined. In every circle discussion there is a leader and a so-called guardian to ensure the intention and phases during the process, whereby great importance is attached to the self-responsibility of the participants.

At the start: Making agreements

Agreements serve the purpose of enabling open and in-depth communication, of ensuring that different views are respected and that everyone shares the responsibility for the well-being and the orientation of the group.

The following agreements are often made:

- What individuals share in the circle is treated confidentially and is not revealed outwardly.
- We listen to each other with empathy and interest.
- We ask for what we need and give what we can.
- We agree on a “guardian”. The task of the “guardian” is to pay attention to the needs, time and energy of the group.
- We agree to take a break when making a signal and to ask for the signal if we feel the need for a break.

Principles

- Responsibility for the quality of the circle discussion is shared by everyone.
- We rely on inspiration (“spirit”), not on our personal intentions.
- Attentive listening: Respectful behaviour towards the learning process of all group members.
- Contributing to the well-being of the circle: We remain aware of the effect of our contributions.
- One person acts as the guardian of the circle and ensures that the agreements and principles are adhered to.

Aim, area of application:

The circle is a tool for exchanging opinions on certain matters on an equal footing, for forging trust and strengthening the community spirit. In addition, it is a wonderful listening exercise that can result in a lot that is new and powerful. In our training sessions, a variant of the circle was usually used as a concluding presentation.

5.6 Feedback and conclusion

a. The aftertaste

In advance, the presentation team organises various foods with different types of taste that can be associated with them, such as: salt, water, red wine, curry, coffee, herbal tea, lemon, chocolate. These foods are placed in the middle of the circle.

At the end of the seminar, the group sits in a circle and is asked for feedback with the question: “What aftertaste does this training leave for you?”

The participants can use the presented products in their answers as associations or they can introduce new tastes.

Last but not least, the bottle of red wine can be enjoyed together...

Aim, area of application:

The aftertaste provides the opportunity to celebrate an enjoyable conclusion to two intensive days together. Due to the sensory enrichment, this method makes a pleasant change to purely verbally expressed feedback.

5.7 Exercises from theatre practice

The following briefly described exercises and games from theatre practice can be used at various points during the seminar process. They serve the purpose of illuminating training content, trying out the unfamiliar or new, breaking down inhibitions, forging trust, strengthening the safe space - or simply the pure enjoyment of cordial laughter and fun!

a. Passing on the impulse

The participants stand in a circle. A trainer gives a clap impulse towards the left. Eye contact with the person is important. This person then turns to the left to pass on the impulse etc. The speed should increase. If this impulse is more or less implemented, the leading person introduces in addition a clap impulse towards the right. This provokes a bit of stress for the person who receives both impulses at the same time. As a third build-up stage, an impulse with the leg (the right steps over the left) can be introduced.

b. Swapping places with name

The participants stand in a circle. A makes eye contact with a person B from the circle and states their name. B answers with "Yes!". At that moment, A may approach B to take their place. B must make contact with another person C as quickly as possible, state their name and wait for their "Yes!". Only then may B move and approach C etc. This exercise can illustrate and practice the notion of "focus" (in the sense of doing one thing after another).

c. Ball and word relay

The participants stand in a circle.

Step 1:

The order for the word circle is set by throwing a ball from one to the other. Those who have already received the ball put their hands behind their back so that the remaining participants can be clearly seen. In the end, the ball ends up again at the first thrower. The participants remember the order – as an individual I must therefore know who I got the ball from and who I threw it to.

Step 2:

The participants form a tight circle – shoulder to shoulder. Now everyone thinks of a type of fruit or vegetable (salad, apple, Brussels sprouts etc.). These words now stand for the ball: in the previously set order, the words are now spoken towards the person

to be addressed: 1 “Salad”, then person 2 “apple” etc. After a trial run, the participants close their eyes and concentrate on the spoken word...

Step 3:

The participants think of a make of car (VW, Toyota, Nissan...) – and say them one after the other, as described in step 2. With their eyes closed, the two words (“balls”) are brought into the game after each other by the exercise leader (also participating themselves). If a word gets lost (e.g. the types of vegetable are forgotten because everyone is concentrating on the cars), the exercise leader brings it back into the circle.

Step 4:

The exercise is circulating 3 or more words, adding e.g. towns, animals or such like.

The participants learn to focus their awareness and to be attentive towards their “contact persons” – even when many people are talking all around them. Well suited to a warm-up!

d. Flash!

The participants stand in a circle, one person stands in the middle – at the beginning the trainer.

The person in the middle must now try to get out of the middle. This is possible through mistakes (“Oops-a-daisies”) by the participants in the circle. These are caused by hesitating too long, a lack of synchronicity or incorrect movements.

There are four “basic disciplines”:

- a) Simple “Flash!”: The person in the middle makes eye contact with a person from the circle, points towards them with an outstretched arm, saying at the same time the word “Flash!”. The “flashed” person must repeat the impulse as quickly as possible, with their own outstretched arm and simultaneously saying “Flash!”.
- b) Circle “Flash!”: The person in the middle makes a circular movement over their head and says “Flash!” Then all the participants in the circle must “flash” at the person in the middle as quickly and as synchronously as possible with an outstretched arm and also saying “Flash!”.
- c) “Bipili-bipili-bop!”: The person in the middle makes eye contact with a person from the circle and says quickly “bipili-bipili-bop!”. The targeted person must say “bop!” on their part before the person in the middle has said “bop!”
- d) “Bop!”: The person in the middle makes eye contact with a person from the circle and says “Bop!”. The addressed person may not react.

These basic disciplines can be extended as required. Here are some examples:

- Toaster: The person in the middle makes eye contact with a person from the circle and says the word “Toaster”. The addressed person starts to hop gently. The persons to the right and left of the addressed person form a toaster with their arms by turning towards the addressed person and stretching out their left and right forearms.

- Broken toaster: The addressed person stands still, the two neighbours start to hop gently.
- “James Bond”: The person addressed with “James Bond” assumes a “James Bond position” by holding out their left forearm diagonally in front of their body and placing their right forearm on top vertically. The right hand forms a pistol. The two neighbours turn as synchronously as possible upon hearing “James Bond”, bow and say “Oh James!”.

This exercise sharpens the concentration, awareness and ability to react and is good training for “enjoyable failure”. The big benefit is that the group bonds well and shares a lot of laughter. It is therefore a suitable team building exercise. In addition, it can be used effectively as an activating warm-up after breaks.

e. Oiling the joints

The participants sit in a circle. A person (trainer) guides the exercise. The participants imagine there is warm oil in their wrists. They spread this now with circular movements of the wrist - small movements in the beginning that can be increased. The participants experience the functioning of the joint in the process. After some time, the oil is sent to the elbow and later the shoulder joint. The movements are also carried out there.

This exercise is suitable for a gentle start to the day or to a training session. The participants thereby train the perception of their own body and are mindfully in the space and in the group (“become present”).

f. Mirror

a) as an exercise in pairs

Two persons stand opposite each other and look at each other. A starts to carry out slow movements. B tries to mirror these. The aim is to succeed in this mirroring. It is not about A stressing person B or provoking errors. After some time they can switch - B leads, A mirrors.

b) in the group

The group lines up in a semicircle, a person A stands in front of them and starts to do slow movements, while the group mirrors these movements synchronously. It is interesting to make use of the three-dimensionality of the space (so to also approach the semicircle and retreat again, to carry out movements at different heights etc.). Here, too, someone can take over from A after a while.

The mirroring exercises serve the purpose on the one hand of awareness, on the other they forge connections between the participants and they try engaging with each other. They slow down and are good for a gentle introduction or a “meditative break” in between times.

6. Materials for creative agility

Dagmar Frick-Islitzer, Michael Uhl

The newly developed creative agility training is based on an interplay of actions and exercises, art-based instructions and artistic workpieces. What all the actions have in common is that they are open-ended and remain open, so that creative agility can unfold and be experienced by both heterogeneous and closed groups. The innovative approach lies in the combination of art-based strategies, artistic interventions and language and communication practices. It is about creative thinking and acting, finding new paths, as well as reliable and successful communication in a constantly changing world. New training materials have been developed and widely tested for this purpose. The centrepieces of the training are three building sets with two to three materials, which are used for digital and analogue applications as required:

Art-based building set

- Narrative plot board
- Three lecture performance video clips

Knowledge-orientated building set

- Impulse text “Art-based strategies and artistic interventions”
- Impulse text “Communication, language, storytelling”
- Impulse text “Handling ambiguity and contradiction”

Moderation building set

- Card set with 15 “creagile” principles
- Guideline for the digital use of the materials

On the following pages, these training materials and their usage possibilities are described in detail.

Apart from the stated training materials, a variety of exercises and methods are used - online and face-to-face - such as getting started, introductory, loosening up, concentration and concluding exercises that foster trust and a team spirit. And they all serve the purpose of driving the “creagile” process of training forwards and allowing the flow to be experienced. A wide range of these exercises and methods was already presented in the chapters 4 and 5.

The training materials of the three building sets are prepared for the respective digital and analogue uses. The materials can be downloaded free of charge from the results platform of Erasmus+ and printed on DIN A4 paper.

6.1 Narratives Plotboard

Michael Uhl (HKS Ottersberg)

The Narrative Plotboard is a training material specifically developed for Narrative Recherche. It enables efficient sketching and clarification of situations, and can be used in individual work and small group work. In the context of the „Creative Agility“ training, the Narrative Plotboard supports the central approach of making participants authors, directors, and performers of their own organizational questions. (cf. Chapter 4.3.)

The Narrative Plotboard uses the artistic-narrative approach to describe situations based on the emerging characters and their actions (Who says/does What? What says/does Who?). This allows participants to share personally burdensome situations and to describe them objectively together. By focusing on the acting characters, the participants are protected as private individuals.

In further steps, the effects of actions can also be depicted, as well as possible courses of action. The Narrative Plotboard can thus be used not only to describe an existing situation, but also to outline and explore possibilities for change.

In the following, the individual parts of the Narrative Plotboard are briefly introduced, combined with a possible accompanying task for the participants.

1. „Which actors play a role in the situation? And what do they say or do?“

WHO says / does WHAT? WHAT is WHO saying/doing?



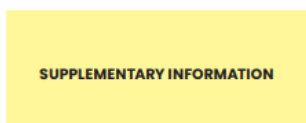
Each character (=WHO) is written on a separate character card.



Each (speaking) action (=WHAT) is written on a separate speech bubble card.



Two colour variants are available for any desired distinctions (e.g. dialogues or separation of text and actions).



Additional information cards are available for any supplementary information. This allows for the optional addition of data or context information.

2. “What effects (emotions) do the individual actions of the figures trigger?”



The effects and emotions caused by the sketched actions of the characters are written on separate effect cards.

3. “What options and possible actions do the individual figures have?”



Options are not meant to be solutions, but possibilities. The courses of action are written on separate option cards.

Material for own production

The templates for making one’s own narrative plot board are provided as free downloads on the Erasmus+ results platform. Printing is on DIN A4 paper. For use in training practice, a paper thickness of around 200g/m² is recommended.

Use in a digital environment is also possible, e.g. by using an online whiteboard (such as Miro, Padlet). Further information is available in the guidelines on digital use of the creative agility curriculum (cf. Chapter 6.5).

6.2 Lecture performance video clips

For the creative agility training, so-called lecture performances have been created on key topics. This added an artistic-performative medium to the conveying of knowledge-orientated building blocks (see description in Chapter 4.8.)



Ambiguity – creativity – ambiguity tolerance

Download: <https://vimeo.com/812580721>



Communication – Language – Storytelling

Download: <https://vimeo.com/812584584>



Art-based strategies

Download: <https://vimeo.com/812583528>

6.3 Impulse texts

Impulse texts are handouts for personal study and at the same time a research diary. They are instructive texts with didactic instructions in the form of questions, tasks, important notes, excursions, links for further reading and learning and supplementary literature.

The wide field of creative agility leads to three focal points that are relevant for the managerial target group and persons in key functions:

- a) The impulse text “Art-based strategies and artistic innovations” widens horizons and the understanding of approaches and scopes of action that are based in the arts. Artists in all sectors are used to thinking, working and communicating interculturally in projects, repeatedly encountering new contexts, teams and partner structures. Yes, they even seek out these constantly changing framework conditions. These are not only a challenge but at the same time a necessary condition for new ideas. Because well-trodden paths hold few surprises. The participants are familiarised with art-based strategies and receive input on how these may be applied to everyday working life.
- b) In the impulse text “Communication, language, storytelling”, we learn and understand how language forms our communication. We find out how to explore our own linguistic habits and what “creagile” communication means in different situations. Based on exemplary cases, e.g. regarding conflict or leadership communication, we practice gaining a better understanding of our communicative actions. This enables us to consciously break through dysfunctional language and communication patterns. Proven communication practices help us in this, such as “active listening”, “storytelling” or the “joint creation of visions”.
- c) The impulse text “Handling ambiguity and contradiction” provides useful information about dealing with the volatile, complex and fast-paced world of today. It also helps to understand why ambiguity tolerance is among the future skills of the 21st century and why it is recommended to resist the yearning for simplification and ready formulas and to open up to diversity and therefore the large pool of creative possibilities. Ambiguity tolerance is hugely important for an organisation or a company. In organisations with flat structures and especially in a democracy, one must tolerate different interests and often arduously work out compromises. Gaining an understanding of each other through discussion and not imposing one’s own will requires a multitude of perspectives so that opinions can mature and evolve.

Structure

The impulse texts are set up so that they appeal broadly to participants and engage them. On the one hand, they are intended to inspire and motivate. Examples of situations not only foster understanding but also spark empathy or reflect one’s own concerns. In addition, the text should promote one’s own ability to reflect. The mind is stimulated, thinking is set in motion. The text passages are repeatedly interrupted by questions. These are intended to get the participants thinking, in the sense of Beuys’s maxim “think yourself”, and to deepen their understanding of their own experiences in order to tap their inherent potential. The knowledge elements are reinforced with references to specialist literature and source lists, as well as links to podcasts with artist discussions about various artistic skills and approaches. Thirdly, the texts should raise awareness of one’s own scope for action, through the participants becoming

active themselves and doing something, trying something out, exchanging views with someone. Ultimately it is about identifying strategies and practices that show new paths.

Format

On the first page respectively there are instructions for using the impulse text. In the text flow, the following five symbols are used in order to either pause or take action:



Take time to think.



Note initial associations.



Communicate respectfully.



Listen attentively.



Read carefully.

Furthermore, each page features a margin column and an area at the bottom. Both are marked in colour. The margin columns provide space for one's own key words, references, questions and ideas. At the bottom there is space for a personal summary and important points in one's own words.

Use

As the impulse texts are rather extensive and very dense, during training it makes sense to only use excerpts. Towards the end of the two-day (analogue) pilot training, the participants may select an impulse text that is sent to them by e-mail. They are asked to consider the content at leisure at home. The consideration of the content forms the basis for the online afterthought session, where it is discussed in small groups.

Languages

The impulse texts are translated into English, French and Italian.

6.4 Card set

The card set contains 15 “creagile” principles. This means approaches, abilities and attitudes that artists use in their work in order to obtain novelty.

Content

“Creagile” principles are described, such as “Open-ended working”, “Allowing not knowing”, “Changing perspective” or “Experiencing a safe space”. Each of these principles is explained by means of three key descriptions and focussed on in a statement about the respective

approach by artists. For a better understanding, it is followed by one or two quotes by artists with statements about the respective “creagile” principle. A bundle of questions makes the participants think, reflect and exchange views with others.

Format

The “creagile” principles are presented on a DIN A5 double page. On the front side there are only the “creagile” principles and the respective key terms. On the rear side there is the complete content as described above.

Use

The card set is ideally used towards the end of the analogue training when the participants have already engaged widely with creative agility and have developed a sense of the artistic ways of thinking and working. The card set is a very good tool and communication media for small groups in order to consider these principles in depth and to benefit from the experiences of others.

Languages

The card set is translated into English, French and Italian.

6.5 Guidelines for the digital use of materials

The restrictions on account of the pandemic (2020 to 2022) necessarily led to an increase in digital forms of cooperation. The consequence was a more widespread use of digital applications and usages that also extended the methodological possibilities in the field of training and further education. But also with a view to future restrictions, e.g. due to pandemics, it would appear to be advantageous to develop digital usage possibilities and to combine them with in-person formats.

All the “creagile” training materials described above were therefore also developed and tested in terms of their digital applicability. The following guidelines seek to provide instructions for the respective digital use of the training material.

Video conference

Knowledge and experience of using a video conference programme (e.g. Zoom or MS Teams) are presumed. As a trainer, one should be familiar with the fundamental functions. Apart from setting a meeting and inviting the participants, one should be familiar with the functions of chat, screen share and creating parallel workspaces for the work in small groups (e.g. breakout sessions on Zoom).

The following digital applications can be carried out as part of a video conference.

Narrative plot board

The systematics of the narrative plot board – figure, (spoken) action, effects, options – are upheld. By means of an online whiteboard (e.g. www.miro.com), the already described steps can be carried out jointly in (small) group work (see Narrative plot board in Chapters 4.3 and 6.1). The forms of analogue use refer to forms that are available as standard elements on online whiteboards.

Preparations:

- Trainers:
 - set up new online whiteboard, e.g. at miro.com
 - manually set up different forms, on miro.com via toolbar on the left, press [Shape] or key; with the selection of the form, the respective surface colour of the narrative plot board map can also be selected.
 - make an adequate number of copies of the different forms and keep a pile to hand
 - share the whiteboard link with the participants = button [share] top right
- Participants:
 - register for the online whiteboard via e-mail address; this is possible free of charge as a rule

Lecture performance

Lecture performances are very suitable for art-based thematic impulses, especially also for digital use. Every trainer is free to perform thematic impulses live themselves in a digital training unit via video conference.

Alternatively, use can be made of already produced video clips on the topics of “Ambiguity” and “Communication”, as well as “Art-based strategies” (see Lecture performance in Chapters 4.8 and 6.2). The video clips can also be used for individual remote impulses or combined with the use of the impulse texts (see below).

Impulse texts

The impulse texts are available digitally and especially for self-study and more in-depth information on topics. Due to their interactive structure, they can also be used for remote learning, should e.g. an in-person training session not be possible. Individual elements can be selected and used as a basis for digital (small) group work.

Combination with individual lecture performances is also possible, which are orientated towards the respective themes of the impulse texts.

“Creagile” card set

The “creagile” card set is available digitally as a PDF. It can be used for self-study and especially for more in-depth small group work. Separate spaces should be set up in the video conference for the small group work (e.g. breakout sessions on Zoom). Individual cards – the front and rear side respectively – are shared digitally, either via e-mail or via online whiteboard (e.g. www.miro.com).

The described digital applications have been developed and tested by us. They make no claim to general validity or exclusivity. Instead it is in line with the principle of the “creagile” building set that different contexts of participants and trainers keep leading to new experiences, adjustments and further developments.

7. Glossar

Dagmar Frick-Islitzer

With Creative Agility, we are not only entering new territory in terms of content, but also in terms of language.

New approaches, methods and exercises therefore also require new vocabulary. We work with partly unknown or unusual terms, such as "art-based strategies", "ambiguity", "unlearning", etc. as well as with entirely new creations or combinations of words such as "Creative Agility", "Creagility", etc. In this glossary, new or unknown terms and explanations are labelled, paraphrased, and thus made understandable.

unintentional

Not planned or intended

ambiguity (adjective: ambiguous)

To have more than one possible meaning. Inconsistency. Paradox

ambiguity tolerance

Ability to accept or withstand ambiguity

basic narratives

Fundamental elements of a narration

bottom-up

A topic is explained based on details, in order to form an essence /a definition (inductive approach)

deep diving. To take/do a deep dive into...

Immersing into a topic in order to understand it thoroughly

deep Listening

Truly listening in order to understand a topic

to design

Creative problem solving and designing

design thinking

Established term - Design thinking is a non-linear, iterative process that is used to understand people, challenge assumptions, redefine problems and create innovative solutions to prototype and test

working in an open-ended way

Not constantly having the goal in mind, but embracing the unplanned and including it in the process if necessary (The opposite of working in a goal-oriented way.)

flow (frequently used: creative flow)

A feeling of effortless productive flow, of unity, connectedness and consistency; detached from physical conditions such as hunger or tiredness

future skills

Crucial skills required in the future. Skills that enable people to tackle complex issues regarding the future according to the specific situation.

safe space

An environment in which you are allowed to think freely, express feelings and try something new, with no fear of mistakes or shame

to co-create

Working on a topic together in a creagile process to create something new

creagility („adjective: creagile“)

Neologism by combining the words "creative" and "agility"

creagile principle

Option for action. Art-based guide on how to act and behave in professional contexts

creative agility

A multi-perspective interplay of artistic and creative strategies with communication practices, enabling professional practitioners in a variety of roles, situations

creative strategy

Using materials and tools in order to find new perspectives and multiply new ideas

artistic intervention

Action in order to stimulate an artistic process (in an organization) with the help of art-based strategies and perhaps support this process in such a way

The artists' glasses

A metaphor for taking the artists' view (to put on / take off the artists' glasses)

arts-based strategy

A means of navigating open-ended artistic processes

multi-perspective approach (adj.: multi-perspective)

To take multiple perspectives with regard to a situation, a problem or an object

narrative plot board

A (training) tool that helps to sketch a narration from different narrative parts

„Narrative Recherche“

An artistic technique that helps to create a "we story" from a variety of perspectives and narrations without changing the individual narrations

non-linear approach

To approach a project with new content in an open-ended way and in doing so make detours and take other paths in search of something new

to accept non-knowledge

To learn that there is not an immediate answer to every question and to trust that the "fog" will clear as the process continues

rule-breaking

To consciously break a rule or an agreement instead of following it

sensemaking

As a future skill, sense development and sense creation include the ability to understand rapidly changing sense structures, to further develop existing sense structures or to promote the creation of new ones where they have been lost.

setting of a conversation

The setting of a conversation (e.g. context, atmosphere)

top-down

Starting from a statement / definition, a topic is examined by using examples ("deductive approach", often used in hierarchical contexts)

VUCA-world

A world of high volatility (=V), uncertainty (=U), complexity (=C), ambiguity (=A)

8. APPENDIX

Established creative techniques (selection) that can be incorporated in the “creagile magic formula”:

The following list refers to the aforementioned art-based methods and creative tools in the context of the process steps of the “magic formula”. Under “Material” and “Questions”, duplications may occur in the area of “Condensing, escalating and creating overlaps”.

Material

Process step a): “Key words...”

Sample links:

<http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Affinitäts-Diagramm>

<http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/TKJ>

Process step a) and b): “Fantasy journey and mind mapping...”

Sample links:

http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Try_to_become_the_problem

<http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Mindmapping>

Process step a) to e): “Progressive abstraction and score grid...”

Sample links:

http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Progressive_Abstraktion

<http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/SCORE-Raster>

Process step b) to e): “Thinking out loud...”

Sample link:

<http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Lautdenken>

Process step d) and e): “Do nothing / criteria generator...”

Sample links:

http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Do_Nothing

<http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Problemqualität>

<http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Kriteriengenerator>

Process step e): “Card set” (Chapter 4.6)

“Circle” (Chapter 5.5) and “Aftertaste” (Chapter 5.6)

Questions

Process step a): Chapter 5.3

Sample links: “Progressive abstraction / score grid...”

http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Progressive_Abstraktion

<http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/SCORE-Raster>

Process step a), b) and d): “Pro Action Café” (Chapter 5.4)

Process step a), b), d) and e): “Headstand...”

Sample link:

<http://creapedia.com/w/index.php/Kopfstand>

Process step b) and c): “W questions...”

Sample link:

<http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/W-Raster>

Process step d) "What if", "Cloud carpet, fool's wisdom" ...

Sample links:

http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Was_wäre_wenn

http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Escape_Thinking

http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Epistemologische_Analyse

Process step d) and e): "Tricky questions game" (*Chapter 5.6*)

Sample links: "Problem quality" / "Attribute listing / Presuppositions / Walt Disney strategy..."

<http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Problemqualität>

http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Attribute_Listing

http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Verborgene_Vorannahmen

http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Short_Cut

http://www.creapedia.com/w/index.php/Walt_Disney-Strategie

Process step e) : "Card set" Chapter 4.6

Doing

Process step a): "Pass on the impulse", "Name place swap", "*Ball and word relay*", "Flash" (*all Chapter 5.7*)

Process step a) and c): "Walking around the room",

"Walking around the room: cluster exercise", "Elvis Walk" (*all Chapter 4.3*), "Oiling the joints" (*Chapter 5.7*)

Process step a) to d): from the field improvisation theatre

Sample links:

<https://improwiki.com/de/uebungen>

<https://improwiki.com/de/aufwaermspiele>

Process step a) and d): "Changing places" (*Chapter 5.2*)

Process step d): "Mirror" (*Chapter 5.7*), "Line-ups" (*Chapter 5.1*)

Process step e): "Chair workpiece and clothing workpiece" (*Chapter 4.4*)

Process step e) and f): "Collage" (*Chapter 4.5*)

Process step e): "Images associations or image associations..."

Sample links:

<https://mychange.solutions/toolbox/moderation/image-associations/>

Online activities

Process step a) :

Sample link:

<https://www.workshop-spiele.de/online-warm-up-finder/>

Process step d): "Key story" (*Chapter 5.1*), "Quick mood round" (*Chapter 5.2*), "Colour search game" (*Chapter 5.2*)