

**DIY<sup>2</sup> Lab – Summary Report**

# **Online group dynamics using the 5 Rhythms**

In March 2021, IJAB launched its new project DIY<sup>2</sup> Lab: Do-it-Yourself in Digital International Youth Work for experts, project managers and team leaders who want to explore the possibilities afforded by digital international youth work. The DIY<sup>2</sup> Labs are an opportunity for experts and team leaders to try out digital tools and methods and discuss practical as well as more fundamental issues associated with digital international youth work in the group. The events were all held on [Zoom](#).

The DIY<sup>2</sup> Lab on 9 December was all about group dynamics in the digital space. This is highly relevant since group dynamics do shift and change even when young people cannot physically be in the same location. Our inspiration was the 5Rhythms movement practice of dancer Gabrielle Roth. Together with our facilitator Alessa Rhode, we explored what is required for the first rhythm, Flowing, and how an atmosphere of trust can be created. The second rhythm, Staccato, teaches how to create clarity and structure. Chaos tells us what is needed to encourage creativity and dialogue. The fourth rhythm, Lyrical, teaches integration, lightness and connection. Finally, Stillness is all about closure and the transition from the virtual space to our offline worlds.

Our facilitator, Alessa Rhode has a background in political science and peace research and is a palliative care volunteer. She is currently training as a grief counsellor. She works in community projects for a school association, assists bereaved families during funerals and is a freelance educator. She spent two years working as an instructor in volunteer exchanges and during this time produced a manual for digital seminars. She specialises in supporting groups and individuals in periods of transition and learning. For more information, visit her homepage at [www.wandelzeiten.org](http://www.wandelzeiten.org).

Alessa Rhode is co-author of the manual "Global? Globales Lernen digital - Ein Leitfaden zur Gestaltung digitaler Seminare im Bereich *Globales Lernen*", published by ICJA Freiwilligenaustausch weltweit e.V., 2021: [https://www.icja.de/fileadmin/Daten/Servicebereich/Downloads/ICJA\\_Leitfaden\\_Global\\_Lernen\\_Digital\\_2021.pdf](https://www.icja.de/fileadmin/Daten/Servicebereich/Downloads/ICJA_Leitfaden_Global_Lernen_Digital_2021.pdf). (available in German)

## DIY<sup>2</sup> Lab

From January 2022, further DIY<sup>2</sup> Labs will take place monthly, one month in English, the next in German.

10 January 2022 (English)  
10 February 2022 (German)  
20 March 2022 (English)  
7 April 2022 (German)

## Preparation

Participants had been requested to bring the following items to the event:

- An item that to them symbolises a way to create a welcoming, warm and safe virtual space
- A candle and a lighter or box of matches

## Programme

### Check-in activity: FLOWING – Arrival in the virtual space

Check-in activity in pairs: Each participant has with them an item that symbolises a way to create a welcoming, warm and safe virtual space. The participants split into pairs and spend 5 minutes talking about the item they have brought.

Finally, everyone posts in the chat what item they brought and why. This time, participants brought:

- A satsuma as a tasty snack
- A coffee cup as a reminder to take regular breaks
- A large coffee mug from Finland for the coffee break and as a souvenir of a great exchange to Finland
- A plant to create a cosy atmosphere in any room
- A warm woolly blanket
- A headset to produce pleasant audio for everyone involved
- Headphones for listening, focusing and occasional zoning out
- A heart to symbolise the positive and open attitude of a team leader
- An hourglass symbolising the need for regular breaks and informal chats
- A smart speaker for music to start the session and during the breaks
- A tiny bell from St Petersburg to symbolise the necessary balance between structured and non-structured sessions
- A notepad for taking physical notes during a virtual event
- A glass of water to satisfy one's physical thirst as well as one's intellectual thirst
- A balloon, symbolising the need to laugh
- Coffee to accompany coffee break chats
- A pen with which to take notes and keep focused
- An hourglass representing moments requiring full concentration in the digital space
- Post It notes for noting down the many ideas raised during the session (and for obscuring one's camera)
- A red scarf to keep warm and to use during dancing
- A monster to stick next to one's camera as a reminder to keep looking into the camera
- A filled water bottle to keep hydrated
- Headphones to ensure that when sensitive issues are discussed, no unauthorised people can eavesdrop
- A fish, because the participant likes to use fish postcards to break the ice before the session begins
- A tiny traditional "smokehouse" because the session took place just before Christmas

### STACCATO – Input: Dancing in a group

5 Rhythms as a model for group dynamics

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**Energy moves in waves. Waves move in patterns. Patterns move in rhythms. A human being is just that, energy, waves, patterns, rhythms. Nothing more. Nothing less. A dance.**

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*Gabrielle Roth (1941-2012), American dancer, musician and creator of the 5 Rhythms*

The 5 Rhythms are a dance. The shifting energies can serve as a model for various situations and may capture an entire group. The video exemplifies the 5 Rhythms. Participants are invited to get up, move to the music and notice what effect the music has on them.

Video on the 5 Rhythms: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edilPmM\\_yiM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edilPmM_yiM)

Phase	Quality	Influence on group dynamics
<b>Flowing</b>	fear, being	arrival, trust, knowing, body
<b>Staccato</b>	anger, loving	structure, clarity, passion
<b>Chaos</b>	sadness, knowing	creativity, expression, freedom
<b>Lyrical</b>	joy, seeing	reflection, harvest, celebration
<b>Stillness</b>	compassion, healing	closure, farewell, transition



Source: Alessa Rhode

On the subject of emotions (fear, anger, sadness, joy, compassion), Gabrielle Roth says:

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Feelings are neither positive nor negative; they simply are elemental forces in our life energy with their own vibrations and functions. They are essential to our health and well-being. Essentially, fear protects, anger defends, sadness releases, joy uplifts, compassion unites. Fear is close to the surface of our self, anger is rather deeper, sadness and joy are progressively more interior, and compassion emanates from our profound center. Each is a level and a vibration of energy that needs to flow freely for us to be really engaged in the present.

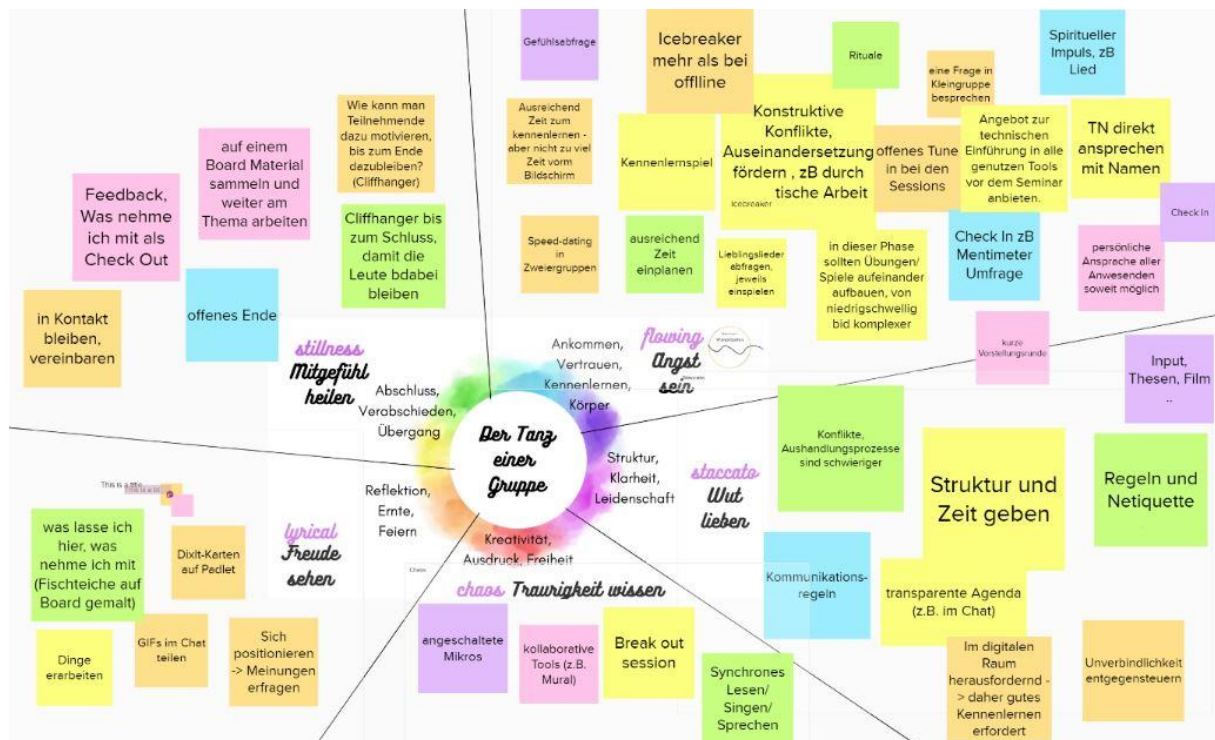
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In other words, each of these emotions carries value. How can participants be invited to release them in the virtual space?



## CHAOS – creative dialogue

The group splits into smaller groups of 3-4 persons to collect ideas about what is relevant in an online space during each phase. These are posted to a mural.



Source: Alessa Rhode

## LYRICAL – Harvesting Wisdom

Together, the group looks at the collection of ideas, with Alessa Rhode adding some thoughts of her own.

### Flowing

Fear, being - Arrival, trust, knowing, body

- Preparation letters
- If possible, package sent by post with treats to maintain physical wellbeing
- Create trust = familiarisation
- Active listening - one on one
- Listen to everyone in the room once
- Safer spaces
  - > Common rules
  - > Safer spaces for sensitive issues
- Group leader goes offline last
- Reachability via various channels

### Questions and discussion

- Welcome people on arrival by name; create a sense of commitment
- How can one get the measure of a group online? How can trust be created, how to get everyone involved in an ice-breaker, what methods may have to be adapted?

1. Soft opening without people having to expose themselves too much (participants remain seated, hold up items to the camera), and move along from there
2. Make one's intentions clear: why is X important to me right now?
3. Switch camera off (an option when movement is involved; however, the camera should remain on so a group dynamic can unfold)
4. Provide clear instructions and guidance
5. Obtain feedback: are there alternative ways to achieve the same goal?

## Staccato

Anger, loving - Structure, clarity, passion

- Clarify session leader's intention
- Structural clarity (order of events, cloud or pad for materials, break times, etc.)
- When should the camera be on, when can it be off? "*Resistance*" represented by black screen / a camera which is turned off.
- Flexibility
- Response to displeasure and resistance – active invitation: What would make it easier for you to be here? E.g., walking around, lying down, alternative timing, etc.
- Interim feedback
- Passion for the subject matter - Many kinds of input
- Get participants on board as sources of creative input

## Questions and discussion

- How to sense the mood within the group:
    - > Where possible, limit group size to 20 so as to sense everyone's mood
    - > Incorporate brief methods so as to be able to obtain rapid feedback on people's energy levels, etc.
- Agree on rules, e.g., smartphone use only during breaks

## Chaos

Sadness, knowing - Creativity, expression, freedom

- Reflection groups
- Games, energisers
- Taking walks in pairs on the phone
- Music
- Creative activities followed by an exhibition on a Padlet
- Variety of expressions - written, verbally, through art, physical...
- Evening and sideline activities
- Day-long breaks, offline work with instructions given beforehand
- Team care!

There is commonly a period during a seminar when everything seems to be going wrong!

## Questions and discussion

- How does sadness as a baseline emotion impact on this specific rhythm? These kinds of emotions should be invited. Remain sensitive to them and adapt the programme if necessary. Offer to provide support to anyone affected, e.g., over the phone outside of the seminar.
- In the seminar context, the focus is rather on expression and creativity.

## Lyrical

Joy, seeing - Reflection, harvest, celebration

- Recap of the seminar
- Dream journeys, meditation
- Time to reflect: What have I learned?
- Tie up loose ends
- Harvest
- Don't forget to celebrate!

## Stillness

Compassion, healing - Closure, farewell, transition

- Create space for farewell and thanks
- Outlook: Where do we go from here?
- How do we (not) stay in touch?
- Prepare participants for the transition
- Maybe write a follow-up e-mail
- Feedback and documentation
- Invite participants to follow rituals

## Questions and discussion

Sometimes it's a good idea to keep the seminar open for a little while to enable people to leave slowly. But it can also be good to close the meeting on time after a proper farewell that however should not be too abrupt (offering thanks, talking about the future, discussing whether to stay in touch or not...).

## Example of a weekly programme

<div> <h1>Beispiel-Seminar-Woche</h1>  </div>								
Vorher	Tag 1	Tag 2	Tag 3	Tag 4	Tag 5	Tag 6	Tag 7	Nachher
<i>Flowing</i>	<i>Flowing</i>	<i>Staccato</i>	<i>Staccato</i>	<i>Chaos</i>	<i>Chaos</i>	<i>Lyrical</i>	<i>Stillness</i>	<i>Stillness</i>
	Begrüßung	Begrüßung	Begrüßung	Ausschlafen	Begrüßung	Begrüßung	Begrüßung	
Vorbereitungsbrief	Active Listening	Active Listening	Active Listening	Indiv. Aufgabe	Active Listening	Active Listening	Active Listening	Nachbereitungsbrief
Erste Impulse	Kennenlernen	Input/Thema	Input/Thema	Spaziergang	Gruppenarbeiten	Präsentation der Ergebnisse Tag 4+5	Zukunftsaussicht	
Care Paket	Mittag	Mittag	Mittag	Begrüßung	Mittag	Mittag	Mittag	
Orga-Infos	Einstieg ins Thema	Input/Thema	Input/Thema	Active Listening	Gruppenarbeiten	Diskussion, Zusammenführen	Abschied	
	Reflexionsgruppen	Reflexionsgruppe	Reflexionsgruppen	Reflexionsgruppe	Reflexionsgruppen	Reflexionsgruppe		
			Abendprogramm z.B. Filmabend		Abendprogramm z.B. Gesprächsrunde	Abendprogramm, Feiern		

Source: Alessa Rhode

Suggestion from a participant: Use *Watch2Gether* to watch a film together (<https://w2g.tv/>)

## STILLNESS: Closure

### Check-Out activity: Farewell ritual with candles

All participants close their eyes and reflect on an aspect they have encountered over the last 90 minutes hours that they will continue to remember or can act upon in future; alternatively they may want to set an intention for the next event they plan to attend. In preparation for this, they all light up a candle of their own. After they log out, the candles can continue to burn a while longer to symbolise what they want to keep hold of, and as something that connects the group once they have left the virtual space.

## Digital Tools

Zoom (Videokonferenz-Tool): <https://zoom.us>

Mural: <https://www.mural.co/>



# Imprint

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