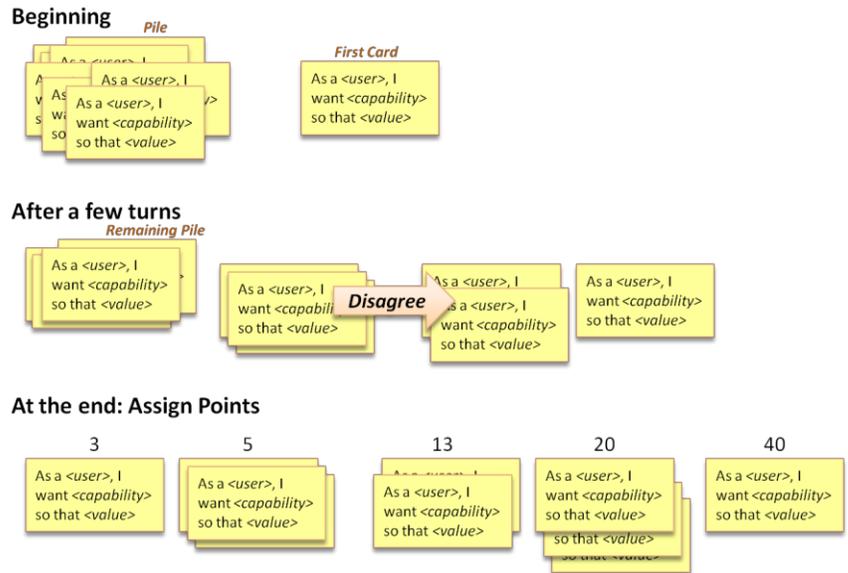# The Team Estimation Game

The Team Estimation Game (originally created by Steve Bockman) helps teams size features and stories based on *relative* complexity. It works because people find it easier to compare the complexity of one feature or story with another even if they do not yet know all aspects of that story. This game is fast, easy, and fun. It helps people not to get bogged down into too many details, which is always a risk during estimation exercises. Relative ranking gives the team the information they need to decide what to work on and how much to commit to in current the planning horizon.

Remember, Estimates represent our best guesses about the effort required based on what we currently know. As we gain more experience, we will have more information and can then refine the estimates.

One good way to think of feature or story complexity is the degree of connectedness of the feature or story. This can indicate how inter-connected it is with itself or the number of connections to other features or stories.

Traditionally, this game is played at the iteration planning session to size stories for the next iteration.

Step	Do this
Set up	Place story cards in a pile on the table. Select the top card in the pile and place it on the playing surface a foot or so away from the pile.
First play	A player takes the top card off the pile and places it somewhere on the playing surface indicating its size relative to the first card: to the left if it is easier, underneath it is the same size, to the right if it is more complex.
Relative estimation of the rest of the deck	Each person plays in turn doing one of the following: • Play the top card from the pile as described above • Move a card already on the playing surface, declaring disagreement about its relative size • Pass Play ends when there are no more cards in the pile and there are no more adjustments to be made. Note: During play, anyone may talk about why cards are being moved or about what they think about size of the stories. The goal is to get clarification and not to get too hung up on the exact sizes of the estimates. Remember that these are just estimates!
Assign points	The team works together to assign points to each stack to indicate the size (level of effort) of stories that are in that stack. Use the sequence: 0, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 20, 40, 100, 200, 400, 800. When done, write the assigned points on each card.