

Tuckman's Model of Team Formation

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ENGR240

**Introduce topic
and self in the
first slide**



Power statement – get audience on board

Why Learn about Teamwork?



Design work is generally done in teams.

Being an effective team member is critical to our academic and career success.

Current classmates may be future colleagues, or even bosses...

Questions you may have

Get audience input

- How do interpersonal dynamics work?
- What can I expect from my teammates and team leader in terms of behaviour and expectations?
- What is a successful, high-performing team?
How can I help to turn mine into one?

Bruce Tuckman

Some relevant background

- An American psychologist
- Did research with the navy into small-group dynamics: what makes teams succeed, what makes them fail?
- Isolated teams, stressful conditions
- Reviewed the psychological literature on team dynamics
- Generalized to a staged theory of the development of small groups

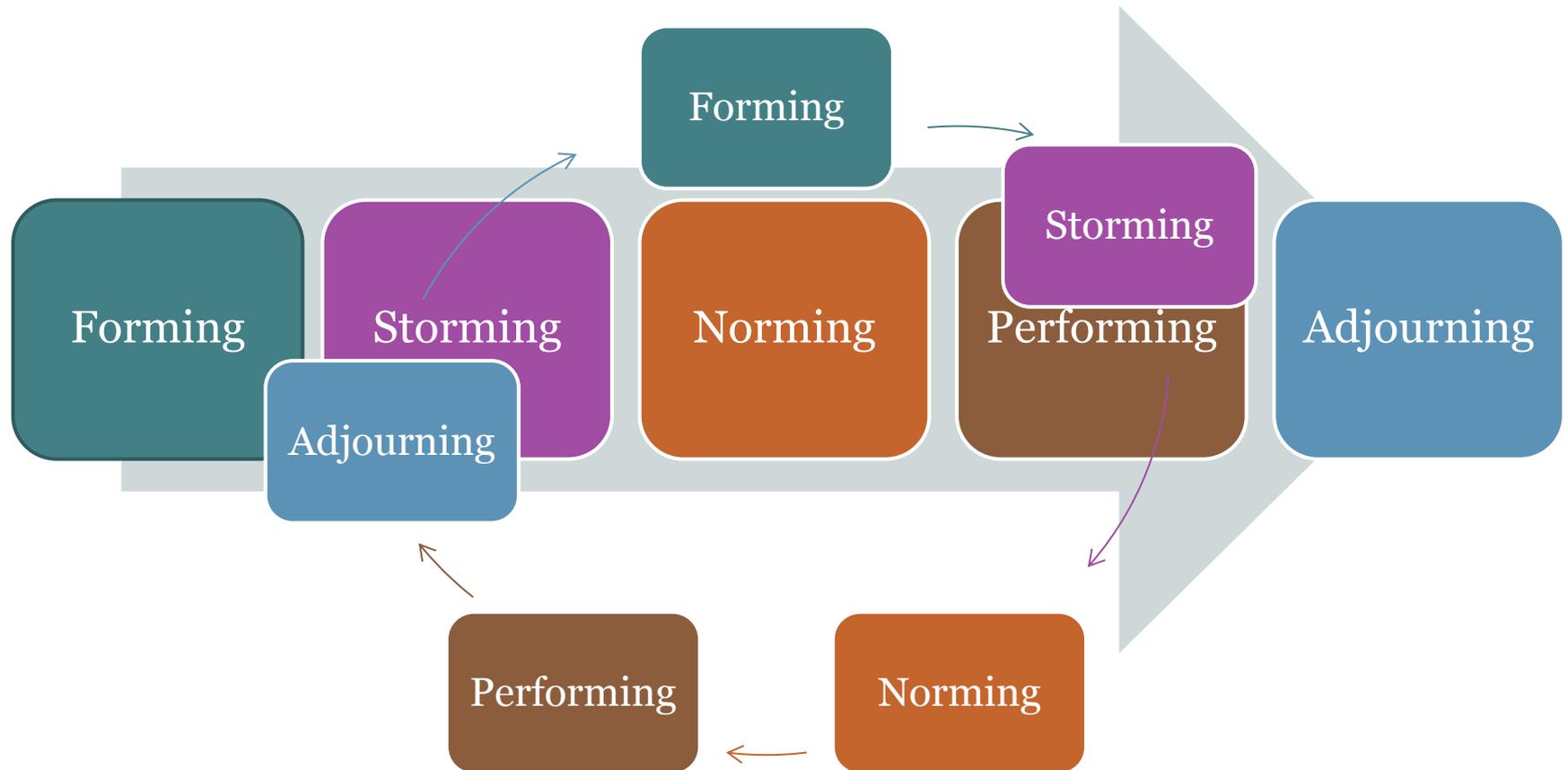
Overview Slide

The Tuckman Model

1. Bruce Tuckman, “The Tuckman model of team formation” – published in Psychological Bulletin in 1965
1. Tuckman and Mary Ann Jensen, “Stages of small-group development revisited” – published in Group & Organisational Studies in 1977. Added Adjourning/Mourning.
1. Then refined and updated continuously by other researchers.



Elaborations to the model



Forming Stage

**Elaboration of first key idea
presented in the overview**

- Get to know teammates, their strengths and weaknesses
- Develop trust; try team-building activities
- Think about selecting roles, team leaders
- Start to focus on task definition, purpose

Dynamics characterized by

- Careful body language, polite speech, small talk
- Anxiety, fear of causing offense, conservative tone and gestures, ready laughter

Leaders: focus on creating team structures, developing clear team rules/guidelines, professional environment. Paperwork (agendas, minutes, bylaws, etc.) can reduce anxiety.

Storming

Elaboration of 2nd key point

- Brainstorm solution ideas.
- Test opinions and assumptions.
- Work habits are revealed.
- Frustration, conflict appear.

Team members: respect and maturity are critical.
Depersonalize conflicts. Address/critique IDEAS, not people.

Leaders: Assertive, not aggressive or passive. “What do we want to accomplish?” Leader’s role is to help team members do their best work to achieve team goal.

Norming

Elaboration of 3rd key point

- Team members are aware of their roles.
- Norms of behaviour appear; expectations are known.
- Body language, speech, terms of address become more relaxed.
- Implicit as well as explicit rules established.
- “we” and “us” replacing “me” and “I”
- Taking individual responsibility for group decisions.
- Willingness to compromise and abide by team decisions.

Leaders: Time to back off. Monitor and enable; be ready to reassert if necessary.

Ask audience for suggestions: what might be an “implicit rule”?

Performing

Elaboration of 4th key point

- Synergy
- Self directed, but oriented to team goals
- Team members support one another
- Enjoy yourself!

(Few teams reach this stage, and usually only after working on several projects together)

Leaders: Stay out of the team's way. Now a facilitator.

Define "synergy"?

Adjourning / Mourning

- End of project or departure of member
- Take pride in your work. Celebrate success!
- Review lessons learned
- Enjoy group loyalty, but beware of avoidant behaviour / formation of cliques.

Example of “end of project celebration”

Skyrim Development Team Photo



Insights

Draw on previous material; highlight important “take-aways”

- Conflict during the Storming stage is NOT a sign of a defective team – it’s a necessary and productive precondition for success and innovative thinking. Conflict can be productive if handled well, but destructive if managed poorly.
- It’s OK to return to a previous stage if circumstances warrant.

Engage audience in discussion about
“potential issues” – get critical feedback?

Potential issues

- Stage metaphor – what if stages are missed?
- Causation – what allows movement between stages?
- Pedagogical concerns
- Self-fulfilling prophecy?
- Generalizability

Conclusion

Summation/wrap up

Tuckman's model and its derivatives are powerful, insightful and useful tools for understanding your team dynamics, but his stages are not necessarily prerequisites for success, and this is not the only successful model of successful teamwork.

Think for yourself – apply your own critical thinking capacity to your team experience.

Any Questions?

Give audience a chance to ask questions and have further input/discussion

**Provide references and
sources for further study**

Thank you!

References

- [1] B. W. Tuckman, “Developmental sequence in small groups”, *Psychological Bulletin* #63(6), pp. 384-399, 1965.
- [2] B. W. Tuckman, and M. C. Jensen, “Stages of small-group development revisited”, *Group & Organizational Studies* (pre 1986), p. 419, 1977.
- [3] M. K. Smith, “Bruce W Tuckman – forming, storming, norming and performing in groups”, infed.org: The Encyclopedia of Informal Education, 2005. <http://infed.org/mobi/bruce-w-tuckman-forming-storming-norming-and-performing-in-groups/>. Retrieved Feb 26, 2016.
- [4] A. C. Hurt and S. M. Trombley, “The punctuated Tuckman: towards a new group development model.” Texas A&M University, 2007. <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED504567.pdf> Retrieved Feb 26, 2016.
- [5] S. McCahan, et al., “Introduction to teamwork,” in *Designing Engineers: An Introductory Text*. Wiley, 2015, pp 2019-246.
- [6] Skyrim: Development Team [Photo]. Available: http://en.uesp.net/wiki/Skyrim:Development_Team