

Stages of group development



The group that I am going to be reflecting on is the group of students that I began with at ITT-Tech. The day was Monday, December 6th 2010, the class was Strategies for the technical professional. There were about twenty-five students total and all of us had the look of deer in headlights. The first stage, forming, took place immediately upon walking into the classroom. There were only two people in the entire class that knew each other and the rest of us were strangers. The anxiety in the room was thick, I personally was scared to death!

When the instructor would ask a general question of the group of us nobody wanted to answer for fear of looking like an idiot. The storming stage, stage two, took place on the first day of class as well. Mrs. Tacket, our instructor, went around the room having all the students introduce themselves and give a little history on who they are, where they have been, and what has led to them attending ITT-Tech. Once this introduction began you could tell that almost everyone was trying to impress and "one-up" everyone else's circumstances.

Stage three is the norming stage. It was week three or four of the quarter and the class was beginning to settle in and get comfortable with each other. Comfortable enough that the decibel levels in the room were to the point where the instructor was unable to do her job due to all of the side conversations going on. When I saw that the instructor had lost control I took it upon myself to put the room "at ease". "At ease" is a command used by the U. S. military to get the attention of whoever the command is directed, it is intended to be loud and authoritative.

Once I gained the attention of the entire class I made it known that I was not going to allow all of the chatter that was going on to continue. From that point forward there were no problems with decibel levels, you could say that the class was "normal". The final stage is the performing stage. The hallmarks of this stage are cooperation and productive work. After I had my moment with the classes attention, during the norming stage, the students in the class had figured out who they got along with best and formed their own smaller groups.

These groups all worked together throughout the remainder of the quarter on their assignments and final projects and, as far as I know, everyone in these sub-groups all worked together to pass the course. Why do so many resist group projects? In the forty(+) years I have spent on this planet I have been a part of many groups. Some groups I wanted to be a part of, but most groups I was a part of were not by my choosing. I personally do not like groups for several different reasons.

The first reason that comes to mind is the fact that just about every time I am a part of a group I end up with the reins. Don't get me wrong, it is good to know that people trust me to lead them but it can get tiresome. To be the leader, to have everyone looking to you for answers, to be responsible for the group accomplishing their goals, it can be taxing and sometimes you just don't want to have to deal with all that. That is just one reason why someone might resist being part of a group.

Some may resist because they just don't like dealing with people, some may not agree with certain beliefs that a particular group may have. I could sit here for days and think of reasons, some legitimate and some just excuses

but all reasons. Why do group projects often fail? It has been my experience that group projects fail because, on many occasions, members of a group are not members because they want to be, but because they have no other choice. They may be selected by a committee or boss or even a teacher. This is not the only reason why groups fail.

Groups can fail because of people joining without full commitment. Not all groups are mandatory groups a lot of groups are groups that people join of their own free will. The problem with these groups failing is that some of the members of the group may be involved for all the wrong reasons. Every group that forms has goals. These goals should be the priority for every member of the group and often they are not. Some people just join a group to be able to say that they are a part of something and others may join just because someone they know is a member.

These people may cause friction within the group and cause it to fall apart from the inside, simply because the goals are not as important to them as they are to the rest of the group. How can I help my permanent group in this class be successful? That is a good question. In this group I have taken the opportunity to step back from the leadership role that is usually bestowed upon me and try to just be a member of the group. I will give my opinion, but I will not make a decision. I will communicate and participate fully with the members of my group to ensure that we reach our goal of passing this course.