

MAKING TEAMWORK SUCCESSFUL

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Abstract: *This article tackles the subject of the teamwork through a Problem Based Learning perspective. PBL, the new approach to learning allows all participants of the learning process to grow faster. Also, the article presents in detail the 5 stages of forming of a team, types of teams and, of course, the roles that are shared among the members. The foundation of every great team is a direction that energizes, orients, and engages its members. Teams cannot be inspired if they don't know what they're working toward and don't have explicit goals. Those goals should be challenging (modest ones don't motivate) but not so difficult that the team becomes dispirited. They also must be consequential: People have to care about achieving a goal, whether because they stand to gain extrinsic rewards, like recognition, pay, and promotions; or intrinsic rewards, such as satisfaction and a sense of meaning.*

Keywords: *PBL, teamwork, support, success.*

1. Introduction: PBL – a new teaching paradigm

Problem-based Learning (PBL) is an approach which was adopted in Maynooth to give students a ‘**real-world**’ experience in software engineering based on a learning technique that introduced McMaster Medical School in the 1960s.

PBL reverses the traditional process of learning. Traditionally students are presented with course material and after are tested on that material through individual examination. Generally, PBL introduces the student to the real-world problem and respectively, they must explore the solution domain in a self-learning capacity or how is applied here, at TUM, in a team. Each semester includes a new problem, which you must analyze, summarize and find solutions.

The core principles of PBL are:

- Learning takes place within the context of authentic tasks, topics, and problems that are aligned with real-world concerns;
- In a PBL course, students and the instructor become co-learners, co-planners, coproducers, and co-evaluators;
- The PBL approach motivate students to take responsibility to learn independently, since there are few lectures and no structured sequence of assigned readings;
- PBL promotes the collaboration between students, stresses the development of problem solving skills, promotes effective reasoning, and is aimed at increasing motivation for life-long learning.

2. Team vs Group

Groups are usually **created** around common interests or purposes with the goal of sharing information, *but there is no collective accountability*. It could be a social club or a workgroup with volunteer efforts. Teams’ focus is collective performance, where the members have both individual and mutual responsibility. Therefore, companies create teams to bring together groups of people with compatible skills and interests to work toward a common goal.

Table 1 . Differences between Groups and Teams.

	Groups	Teams
Goals	Goals may be discussed in general terms	Clear, elevating goals drive all aspect of team accomplishment
Roles and Responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities may be discussed but are not always explicitly defined or developed	Roles and responsibilities are clearly developed and discussed
Rules	Rules are not formally developed and envolve according the greop’s needs	Rules and operating procedures are clearly discussed and developed to help team work together
Methods	Group members interact, and work is usually divided	Team members colaborate and coordonate efforts. Team members work together interdependently

So, a group is a collection of individuals who coordinate their individual efforts but on the other hand, a team is a group of people who share a common team purpose and a number of challenging objectives.

3. How teams work in PBL

It is time to mention that PBL works better and more efficiently when assignments are performed in teams, where each member has a vital role to play for fulfilling the tasks correctly and finally for gaining success and pleasure after the work is finished.

You can't build a team without purpose and goals. The purpose must be worthy and create a sense of doing something important together. The goals must be challenging and specific so that each member can understand how they can contribute to the success of the team.

The power of a team emerges from the sense of community (FAF) that develops and exerts strong influence on the attitudes and behaviors of the participants.

4. Everything about team

"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. It is the ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results." --Andrew Carnegie [1]

a. Types of teams

The career of a product manager definitely demands working with teams. About 75% of employers estimate teamwork and collaboration as "very meaningful".

Only 18% of employees gain communication evaluations at their performance reviews. 39% of surveyed employees consider that people in their own companies don't collaborate enough.

There are **four** different types of teams: [2]

Tactical Teams--whose job is to *do* something. Specifically, to follow a well-defined plan;

Problem-Solving Teams--whose job is to *fix* something: solve a problem, correct an error;

Creative Teams--whose job is to *build* something. Possibly something that has never existed before;

Learning Teams--whose job is to *learn* something.

b. Stages of forming a team

Psychologist Bruce Tuckman first came up with the memorable phrase "*forming, storming, norming, and performing*" in his 1965 article, "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups." He used it to describe the path that most teams follow on their method to high performance. Later, he added a fifth stage, "adjourning" (which is named and as "mourning").[3]

So we have five different stages of "building" a team. Each student, pass through these stages, and achieve some skills in order to be a perfect piece for the system called Team.

The first stage, called Forming is when we direct the team, and establish clear objectives, both for the team as a whole and for each member in part.

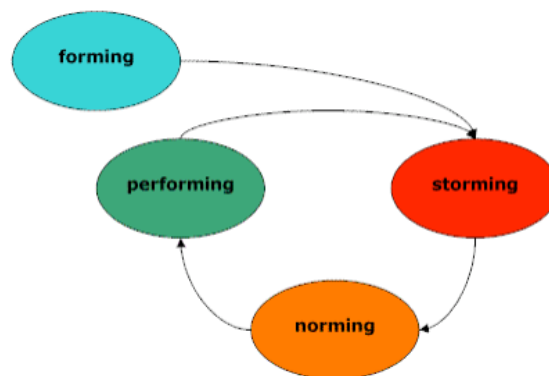


Figure 1. A cyclical version of Bruce W. Tuckman's group development model

When we were at the second stage, Storming, we: Built trust and good relationships between team members, solved conflicts swiftly if they occurred, provided support, especially to those team members who were less confident.

Explain the "forming, storming, norming, and performing" idea, so that people understand why problems are appearing, and so that they see that things will get better in the future.

In the third stage, Norming, we step back and help team members take responsibility for progress towards the goal. (This is a good time to organize a team-building event.)

The fourth one, named Performing, was when tasks and projects were Delegated as far as we could. You will now be able to start focusing on other purposes and areas of work.

And the last stage, Adjourning, we take the time to celebrate the team's achievements – you may work with some of your people again, and this will be much easier if people view past experiences positively. You can't hope for a new team to perform well when it first comes together.

Forming a team takes time, and members often go through recognizable stages as they change from being a collection of strangers to a united group with common plans. Bruce Tuckman's Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing model describes these stages. Understanding it, you can help your new team become effective more quickly.

c. *Roles in a team [4]*

A team is not a bunch of people with job titles, but a community of individuals, each of whom has a role which is understood by other members.

According to a research of R. Meredith Belbin that are included in the book “ Team Roles at work” there are 9 different roles in a team. Because of few people in a team, we assigned, more than one role per member. And each of us developed him/herself in many fields, and learn more things about the problem we solved.

Resource Investigator: the main purpose of this role is to find ideas to bring back to the team.

Team-worker: Helps the team to gel, using their versatility to identify the work required and complete it on behalf of the team.

Coordinator: Needed to focus on the team's objectives, draw out team members and delegate work appropriately.

Plant: Tends to be highly creative and good at solving problems in unconventional ways.

Monitor Evaluator: Provides a logical eye, making impartial judgements where required and weighs up the team's options in a dispassionate way.

Specialist: Brings in-depth knowledge of a key area to the team.

Shaper: Provides the necessary drive to ensure that the team keeps moving and does not lose focus or momentum.

Implementer: Needed to plan a workable strategy and carry it out as efficiently as possible.

Completer finisher: Most effectively used at the end of tasks to polish and scrutinize the work for errors, subjecting it to the highest standards of quality control.

Conclusion

In any activity, success is the fruit of joint effort and team work. Success or defeat is not exclusively due to the boss or subordinates, but is the result of both parties. Reality demonstrates that it is not enough for a professional group to be made up of strong, competent and experienced personalities. If there is no compatibility, mutual understanding, common visions and motivations centered on accepting the proposed goal, no winning results can be obtained. Empowering everyone's work potential, evolving into professional careers do not do without working and respecting the requirements of team spirit formation and maintenance. This state that enhances the quality and efficiency of everybody's work is reached only when people understand that the whole is not equal to the sum of the parts, but rather more, which is born from the interaction with the group, from the harmony of interpersonal relationships, from the identification of the people with the values and the goals of the group. To work in a disunited group where quarrels and misunderstandings are frequent, pride and dislike, isolation attitudes, disregard or predominant indifference, in which each attempts on its own to solve the problems in which the other's denigration is practiced in a way current is undoubtedly a serious obstacle to working with pleasure. In order to avoid this situation, everyone has to contribute to transforming a number of people who work together in a homogeneous and functional group. A team is more performing than the sum of individuals in an organizational context, especially when performance requires different skills, experiences and approaches. Most people understand and recognize the importance of teams, and some are making efforts to make the teams they are part of to work for. However, many are those who neglect the opportunities offered by teamwork in favor of apparently personal benefits. We can honestly say that the team has become not only a part of our university life but also everyday life.

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