

# Team Dynamics



**Overview:** Teamwork is a never-ending lesson in the *Learning Skills* classroom. Teamwork starts from the very first day when the new learners bond at their table—until the final day when they make their presentations. The elements of this lesson are taught throughout the course, but this lesson focuses on the elements of group and team development and roles that are required.

**Educational Goal:** The goal of this lesson is for each learner to understand the usual development of group and team dynamics.

**Objectives:** The learner will:

*Cognitive:* — Explain the stages of team development and be able to give an example of each stage

— Explain the process of team development

— Predict the benefits of working together in a team

*Affective:* — Appreciate the benefits of working together as a group or team

**Skill/Standard Connections:** This lesson has connections with the Tennessee KSA – *Getting Along With Others* and the EFF Standard – *Cooperate With Others*. (Appendix II)

**Teaching Strategy:** The *Learning Skills* classroom is purposefully constructed to build teamwork between all learners in the class.

The first part of this lesson starts by using the “Synergy” exercise to have small groups work together toward a goal. The “Synergy” activity is a fun way for learners to begin to work together to solve a seemingly insurmountable task. The synergy portion of the lesson develops the concept of “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” and power of teamwork. The great thing about this activity is that it works by the sheer numbers of people—increasing from an individual to a group to the entire class. Be observant and use the learner insights for the discussion points.

Using this exercise and the class development, the teacher should have numerous examples of team growth.

**Time:** 2 Hours

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**Synergy Materials:**

*Teacher—*

— Science fair display board or a large screen

— 50 assorted items

*Learners—*

— Pencil and paper.

— Team Dynamics Analysis Worksheet

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**References:**

1. Stephen Covey, *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*
2. Peter R. Sholtes, *The Team Handbook*
3. Bruce W. Tuckman, *Development Sequence in Small Groups*, Psychological Bulletin, 1965.

The second part of this lesson specifically introduces the Tuckman model of Stages of Team Growth by pointing out the stages of team growth the learners have gone through. The learners will review their time spent in *Learning Skills* and identify and understand the five stages of team growth (forming, storming, norming, performing, and transforming) and the feelings and behaviors associated with each stage. Have the learners use examples of how the class bonded through working together as a team. Have the learners predict how their team development will continue over the next two weeks till graduation.

The lesson has an assignment for each learner to view their family and identify the stages of team growth around an issue, goal, or problem. There is a team dynamic stair-step analysis form to help learners with the assignment.

## Section 1: Synergy Activity

**Attention:** We are going to spend some time discussing teamwork and how groups of people work together. But before we start let's do an activity to help us put teamwork in perspective. First, what is Synergy?

Let me write the definition on the board.

**Synergy = The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.**

Another way to look at this is:  $1+1=3$ .

(Teacher note: Allow time for the learners to respond and use those responses to focus the lesson.)

**Overview:** This lesson is a little different. We will walk our way through the activity, and then discuss what we have learned. Let's see if  $1 + 1 = 3$ .

### Body of Lesson

Let's try an activity that gets us right to the heart of teamwork. It is called SYNERGY or  $1 + 1 = 3$ .

#### Teaching Tip



This list of items on the next page is only a suggestion. Create your own.

Prior to class, set up your Synergy items on a table that is off to the side and hidden from the view of the class. A screen shielding the items works best.

Make sure no one looks at the items prior to the activity.

Develop your own list that somewhat reflects your personality and those of your learners.

- |                           |                         |                      |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Small Tennessee Flag   | 15. Calculator          | 29. Back Scratchier  | 41. Small Alf character |
| 2. Ceramic Egg            | 16. School Calendar     | 30. Wooden Ruler     | 42. Horseshoe           |
| 3. Pine Cone              | 17. Scissors            | 32. Toy Figure       | 43. Ring                |
| 4. Toy Car                | 18. Paper weight        | 33. Elephant Statue  | 44. Battery             |
| 5. Tongue Depressor       | 19. Refrigerator magnet | 34. Small Plaque     | 45. Cameo Pin           |
| 6. Coin Set               | 20. Cork Screw          | 35. Dart             | 46. Small Roller        |
| 7. Lighter                | 21. Cloth Patch         | 36. Military Meda    | 47. Ball Point Pen      |
| 8. Floppy Disk            | 22. Cork                | 37. Single Die       | 48. Window Ornament     |
| 9. Small Screw Driver     | 23. Metal Whistle       | 38. Small Disco Ball | 49. Letter Opener       |
| 10. Photo of Teacher      | 24. Small Wrench        | 39. Unicorn Statue   | 50. Yellow Marker       |
| 11. Pair of Glasses       | 25. Picture ID Card     | 40. Stick of Gum     |                         |
| 12. Perfume               | 26. Sales Book          |                      |                         |
| 13. Empty McDonalds Fries | 27. Plastic Fork        |                      |                         |
| 14. Sales Slips           | 28. Job Application     |                      |                         |

**1. The definition of Synergy is “The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.”** Let’s see how that works. The concept of Synergy comes from Stephen Covey’s book called *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

Behind this screen I have 50 items that I want you to view for 35 seconds. Try to memorize as many items as you can. I will bring you up to view the items in groups of threes; however, you cannot talk to anyone once you have seen the items. Just come up and look for 35 seconds and return to your seat and write down on the piece of paper as many items as you can remember.

Once you have finished, just put your pencil down and keep trying. Remember, *No Talking!*

(Put learners in groups of three and provide them with a piece of paper and pencil and the following instructions. Have each group view the items and allow time for each person to remember as many items as she can. Ask them to count how many items they were able to remember. Take the highest and the lowest numbers and calculate the percentage of each. The high and low numbers serve as the range the group obtained

Construct the following chart so you are set to go when the activity begins.

H _____ = _____%	
TEAM	
H _____ = _____%	
L _____ = _____%	
GROUPS	
H _____ = _____%	
L _____ = _____%	
INDIVIDUAL	

working as individuals. Write these figures down on the chart. Then provide the next step of instructions. )

H \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_ %

L \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_ %

### 1st Step

**2. Now, I want you to work in your triads.** I want you to consolidate your three lists into one. Now count how many items you have. You just worked in a team using each other's memory to improve your numbers.

H \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_ %

L \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_ %

### 2nd Step

Take the highest and the lowest numbers and arrive at the percentage of the total items. Write these figures down on the chart. Then provide the next step of instructions.

**3. Now let's see how many items we can remember as a total class.** I want the group with the highest number to list the items they have.

H \_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_ %

### 3rd Step

#### Teaching Tip



As the group lists the items, remove each item from behind the screen.

**(4. Continue to go to all the groups to see whether they have any more items that can be removed.** Take the final number and arrive at the percentage of the total items. Write this number down on the chart. Allow time for the class to try to recall any other items through a collective-memory process of association by shape, color, and description. Once they have exhausted their guesses, remove the final items slowly. The reaction of the learners should be the sign of the success of the activity.)

This activity will prove the point that we gain strength from a team effort. The key is that people tend to remember different items, so the number is bound to increase, proving the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. At each step the range of items will increase, showing that as we work together we increase our potential (1+1=3).

- Question:** So what did we learn from this lesson?
- Anticipated Response:** — *Synergy happens in teams.*  
— *We get “1 + 1 = 3”*  
— *We really gain more strength when we work in teams.*

**Teaching Tip**

Work with the answers you get from the learners.

## Synergy Conclusion

**Summary:** Any high performance and successful person, family, community, team, and workplace uses the power of teamwork and synergy. If they don't, you now know how to bring it to them. It is the same way with our families. Do they work as a team supporting each other? How can we get the concept of synergy to work for them also? What about the neighborhoods and communities? Can they work closer together? (Ask the previous family and community questions as open ended to get some feedback from the learners. Let them know that they will learn some really great things that they can use at home and in their neighborhood. Encourage them to be aware of their surroundings and people when they leave to catch synergy in action.)

**Synergy Re-Motivation:** If we are able to understand how synergy works in a given situation, we should be able to use it in other situations like at home with our family or at work with our co-workers. So, now that you know this—think about being a person who can help to make it happen at home, in class, and in your community. Synergy works. We can cooperate and get along with other people for mutual benefits so everybody wins.

***“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common goal. With that nothing is impossible.” — Anonymous***

**Teaching Tip**

Accept the answers you get and allow learners to provide feedback to one another. Answers will range from a group of survivors on the bus, a caravan of recreational vehicles (RVs), and to the rag-tag jet-fighter pilots that led the final assault on the aliens.

**Teaching Tip**

Explore learner answers to develop their insights and relate them to the Stages of Team Growth. Your focus will be on the final team of the President and a handful of military staff, computer/intellectual, Marine fighter pilot, a drunken has-been crop-duster pilot, and an assortment of various types of people. These people, though very different, formed a common bond and purpose (Goal) and worked together to be successful (Synergy). Have the learners discuss the final team. Help them to reach the notion that this team had to go through stages of team growth, even if it was in a very short amount of time.

## Section 2: Team Dynamics

**Attention:** Now building off of what we have learned about Synergy, let's take a closer look at how groups work together to become a high-performance team.

**Question:**

How many saw the movie *Independence Day*? How did you like it? Name the different groups or teams that were in the movie. (Instructor: pick some other common frame of reference movie, television show, or something that connects for your adult learners.)

**Anticipated Response:** — *White House staff, television station staff, Marines fighter squadron, scientist working with alien and spacecraft, etc.*

**Follow-Up Question:**

What were the circumstances and events that placed these individuals, groups, or teams together?

**Follow-Up Question:**

How did they work together?

**Follow-Up Question:**

Did they go through growing stages of being a team?

**Motivation:** Teams go through stages. As future leaders it is important for you to understand those stages, how they work, and what you can do to help that process along. This session will focus on those stages of growth. It will also help us to build on what we learned about each other and the concept of Synergy.

**Overview:** We are going to look at five stages that teams go through: *Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Transforming*. Each stage has its own unique features. Dr. Bruce Tuckman, a social scientist, developed this concept of the Stages of Group & Team Development.

Our goal of this unit is to understand the stages that a team goes through. Let's take a look at these stages and see if your past experiences relate to these specific stages and the behavior connected with them.

## Body of Lesson

(For each of the five stages have

- learners offer a working definition.
- teachers read the descriptions of feeling and behaviors associated with this stage.
- a discussion about this stage bringing in the learners' and teachers' experiences.)

**Stage 1: Forming** (*characterized by testing and dependence*)

**Forming includes these feelings:**

- Excitement, anticipation, and optimism
- Pride in being chosen
- Initial, tentative attachment to the team
- Suspicion, fear, and anxiety about the work ahead

**Stage 2: Storming** (*characterized by conflicts*)

**Storming includes these feelings and behaviors:**

- Resistance
- Sharp fluctuations in attitude
- Arguing
- Defensiveness
- Questioning on being together

**Stage 3. Norming** (*characterized by developing unity and cohesion*)

**Norming includes these feelings and behaviors:**

- Open constructive discussions
- Acceptance of each other
- Relief that things will work out
- Attempts to achieve harmony
- Friendliness and confidence in each other
- Sharing personal insights

**Stage 4. Performing** (*characterized by the getting down to the real work*)

**Performing includes these feelings and behaviors:**

- Better understanding of each other's strengths and weaknesses
- Good insights into how the team and the people work
- Everyone feels good about the team's progress
- Team has the ability to prevent and work through its problems
- There is a close attachment between the team members

### Teaching Tip



Hand out copies of the "Team Dynamics Analysis" worksheet and perform the following steps stage by stage.

**Stage 5. Transforming** (*characterized by ending and closure of the team's existence*)

**Transforming includes these feelings and behaviors:**

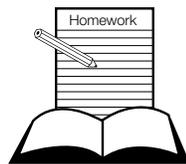
- Sad and awkward period
- Difficulty or avoidance of ending and saying good-bye

**Activity Review:**

1. Have the learners look back at the Synergy exercise and identify and describe the stages of their team growth.
2. Have the learners look back at their experience in *Learning Skills* as a team. Have them identify and describe the stages of their team growth.

## Conclusion

**Summary:** We learned that there are stages that a team goes through as it grows together to reach a goal. As members of a group, team, or family, it is important for you to understand those stages, how they work, and what you can do to help that process along. Each stage is unique. We had a chance to try an activity and identify some of those stages in action. Now that you understand these stages, watch other teams and try to identify what stage they are operating at.



**Homework Assignment:**

(*Team Dynamics Analysis Worksheet:* Have the learners use this form—in Appendix I—to identify and analyze the various stages of a group or team growth within the class, their family, or community. Have them select a specific event, issue, goal, or problem that shows the stages of team growth.)

**Re-Motivation:** By understanding Synergy and the stages of team growth, you are starting to build important skills that will help you on a team or within your family and community. However, the only way to really learn to perfect those skills is by getting involved and doing it. The more you work with teams, the more you will see how to make them better. Even a negative situation will teach how to avoid problems within a team situation.

**Close:** Watch and learn. There are groups or teams going through the various stages all around you. Some are doing it right, and others are making mistakes. Learn from life and the people around you, everyday.

**Homework Review:** Team Dynamics Analysis Worksheet

**Thought for the Day**

“I must create a system, or be enslaved by another man’s.”

—*William Blake*

Be a leader. Empower yourself by creating your own way to success.

**NOTE:** Teachers may wish to continue Note-Taking Skills (Lesson 14) to support the activity, “Independent Work on Research Paper.”

**Teaching Tip**



Begin each day with a review of the previous day’s homework. Allow 15-20 minutes to review the homework.

Then begin the “Thought for the Day.” Give students time to answer the four questions. Then discuss the “Thought for the Day.”

**ACTIVITY: Independent Work on Research Paper**

**Goal:** The goal for this hour is for the learners to continue working on their topics and research papers for 45 minutes. The last 15 minutes should be dedicated to students’ showing their work to one another for feedback about what they’ve written so improvements and revisions can be made.

**Procedure:** Over the last couple of weeks, learners have been researching, developing, and writing an essay on a topic of their choice. They have been following the writing process and should be editing and revising their papers. On graduation day, learners will deliver a 3- to 5-minute public speaking presentation on the topic and answer questions from the audience.

The reason this activity takes the form of an essay is to show learners that through systematic hard work they can accomplish a somewhat difficult task. This lesson and project promotes research skills, independent action, self-reliance, public speaking skills, and a positive learning experience.

The teacher should slowly work with the learners in a systematic way so the learner gets the most out of the process. The teacher should continue to provide guidance and support.

**Summary:** Learners have learned more about their topics by visiting the school library, browsing the Internet, and tapping other sources of information. They have brainstormed and organized their topic using the writing process. They should continue writing and improving their work using the feedback and information they have gathered. Learners should continue to complete their final draft during this hour and for homework. They will have the opportunity to practice presenting their papers next week.