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Applying behaviour analysis to team-building in outdoor learning

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual article examines the role of team-building in outdoor learning, reviews group development theory in relation to teamwork, and outlines the Behaviour Analysis model as a tool to facilitate team-building. Working with this foundation, the theory and model are combined with discussion about team, leader, and facilitator behaviours at each stage of group development. The applications are valid for all clientele in all outdoor settings. Several strong recommendations for practitioner behaviours and future research are presented.

KEYWORDS

Outdoor learning; behaviour analysis; team-building; group development; communication; interpersonal interaction; emotional intelligence

Introduction

Team-building is listed as one of the many examples included under the broad term of outdoor learning as defined by the English Outdoor Council (2018). While team-building may form the primary purpose of some outdoor learning programs (Ebbeck & Gibbons, 1998; Williams, Graham, & Baker, 2003), teamwork has also long been at the centre of interpersonal group development in most outdoor learning programs (Kerr & Gass, 1987; McAvoy, Mitten, Stringer, Steckart, & Sproles, 1996). While this article focuses on outdoor learning, the development and behaviour of groups is comparable across methods and means because of its archetypal nature. A skillful leader or facilitator need not wait for a special outdoor learning event to apply the insights from these two frameworks. The same can be said for each of the four forms of outdoor learning tabled below.

Outdoor learning comes in many forms: outdoor recreation, outdoor education, outdoor development, and outdoor therapy. The differences among these four types of outdoor programs are summarised in Table 1 along with several of the most common pseudonyms for each type. Classification is determined by the program's main purpose to change feeling, thinking, behaving, or resisting assistance to change, while more than one domain may change simultaneously (Priest & Gass, 2018).

In addition, activities used in outdoor learning can be adventurous and/or environmental. Adventure activities range from games and problem-solving initiatives, through low and high ropes or challenge courses, to one-day excursions or multi-day expeditions (snowshoeing, skiing, bicycling, hiking, climbing, caving, canoeing, kayaking, and sailing). Environmental activities range from sensory immersion in nature, through mindful contemplation, to scientific or artistic ecological exercises (COTH, 2021).

The beneficial outcomes of outdoor learning are extremely diverse. These benefits range from learning new skills and enjoying the experience, through improving academic performance, to enhanced health and wellness resulting from exercise. However, the more common benefits include purposeful changes to relationships concerning: the natural ecosystem, human-nature connections,

Table 1. Program types according to program intent to change and learning focus.

Outdoor ...	Recreation	Education	Development	Therapy
Intends to change	Feeling	Thinking	Behaving	Resisting Assistance
Subject matter or learning focus on	Have fun, enjoy, play, learn new skills	Gain new/old concepts or awareness of need to change behaviours	Enhance positives (grow functioning)	Reduce negatives (ease dysfunction)
Also known as	Adventure Recreation, Wilderness Recreation, Nature Recreation, etc.	Adventure Education, Wilderness Education, Experiential Education, Environmental Education, Nature Education, Place-based Education, Eco-education, etc.	Outdoor Training, Adventure Development, Adventure Training, Development Training, Experiential Development, Experiential Training, etc.	Adventure Therapy, Wilderness Therapy, Experiential Therapy, Nature Therapy, Eco-based Therapy Forest Bathing, etc.

intrapersonal (self) skills, interpersonal (social) skills, and spiritual understanding (Ridley & Priest, 2022).

Of these benefits, team-building and the development of pro-social skills are at the forefront of outdoor learning (Huenis & Priest, 2022). Team-building is part of a recreation program and also part of a group of school children engaged in educational nature studies (Roux & Van Rensburg, 2019). Team-building is also necessary for the development of a corporate group stuck in conflict and in therapy with substance-abusing youth (Priest & Lesperance, 1994; Springer et al., 2004). Since adventurous and environmental forms of outdoor learning take place in small groups, team-building is both essential and unavoidable.

Purpose

The purpose of this conceptual article is to apply the Behaviour Analysis model (Rackham & Morgan, 1977) to team-building and group development (Tuckman, 1965) as practiced in outdoor learning. This application can empower leaders and facilitators to improve their practice with regard to enhancing the pro-social skills and interpersonal relationships of participants during outdoor learning programs.

For this article, team-building refers to the conversion of a group of individuals (two or more people) into a cohesive and functional unit or team (who share common tasks or goals and maintain healthy relationships or interactions) through an experiential learning process of alternating action and reflection on those actions (Huenis & Priest, 2022). The leader is an internal member of a particular group and is defined as the person who has been assigned accountability and control for the group or the one who rises to a position of social influence and power within the group (Priest & Gass, 2018). Therefore, leadership can be shared among more than one individual and can be delegated from one leader to other members in the group. The facilitator is external to the group and is responsible for easing and smoothing the experiential process of alternating action and reflection (Priest & Gass, 2018).

For example, working outdoors over several days, with a group becoming a team, a facilitator may offer a variety of adventurous activities like those listed earlier. Adventure activities are chosen in place of environmental ones, because the inherent and naturally arising risks and conflicts provide drive for the development of intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes. These pro-social skills are typically achieved through reflection on action and by the facilitator asking open-ended questions in a group circle and then gently steering their ensuing discussion toward the discovery of lessons about: what was learned, how this fits into their daily lives, and what they will do differently next time (Priest & Gass, 2018).

Group development

In becoming teams, most groups progress through variations of Tuckman's (1965) group development sequence, made famous by the words: forming, storming, norming, and performing. While many complex alternatives have been posited by academics over the years (Cassidy, 2007; Peck, 2010; Scharmer, 2009), this original model remains easy to use and simple to remember. The following descriptions are typical and presented in order, although exceptions are always possible. Some groups skip a stage, while others revert back one or even two stages during tough times (Warren, 2009).

Forming happens when a group first comes together (Tuckman, 1965). Initially, they work as independent individuals and hold doubts, discomforts, suspicions, apprehensions, fears, or concerns about this collection of strangers they just met. In their new group, they may not know their purpose or the opportunities and difficulties that lie ahead, so they want to get oriented to one another and to the job to accomplish. However, they begin to form a group identity and may agree on goals to seek and tasks to complete. Their interactions are polite and pleasant at the outset, but they are focused on themselves, almost to the point of competing with others in order to establish who is knowledgeable or should be in charge. Moving to the next stage requires them to let go of the comfortable distance between others, give up some power or status, and wade into potential conflict.

Storming is full of chaos and conflict (Tuckman, 1965). Group members begin to voice their opinions and their personalities or work styles may rub one another the wrong way resulting in social tension. If not dealt with, these minor clashes can degrade into widespread conflict (and even into major aggression for some less than mature individuals). Tolerance and tenacity help them survive this stage and establish a group hierarchy. Trust and communication often suffer during conflict, but as a group learns to resolve their conflicts, they also rebuild trust and improve communication enough to grow into the next stage.

Norming involves group members learning to create ground rules for behaving and treating one another with respect as they emerge from conflict and a greater sense of order prevails (Tuckman, 1965). Learning to resolve their own conflicts allows a group to become more intimate and understand each others' diverse perspectives. They are willing to share contentious ideas without fear of negative repercussions. In this stage, they accept one another, take personal responsibility for their behaviours or any setbacks that they incur, avoid blaming others, and aspire toward collective goals. At this turning point, they are now a cooperative group, about to become a collaborative team.

Performing occurs when they become a functional team as evidenced by their concentration on the tasks at hand, while also exhibiting supportive teamwork behaviours built upon a foundation of mutual trust and effective communication (Tuckman, 1965). With this foundation solidly in place, and clear norms and agreed roles in place, they can begin to grow the rest of their teamwork skills: autonomous problem-solving, decision making, sound judgment, planning, leadership and followership. When members disagree or dissent, their objections are managed in an affirming manner. Their newfound performance means common goals get achieved, relationships become healthy, and success replaces setbacks.

Facilitators are responsible for shepherding a group through this growth by meeting the group at their current stage and guiding them to do the necessary work in order to move on to the next stage with the ultimate aspiration of becoming a high performing team. Therefore, facilitators must be competent at identifying which stage a group is in, coaching the leader to lead through that stage and into the next, while also enabling the group to change shortcomings, solve problems, and progress to the next stage.

Other theories

As noted earlier, other theories of group development have been suggested over the years and some of these have been specifically applied to outdoor learning and adventure programs. Initially, a fifth stage of adjourning was added to the original four stages (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Adjourning involves the ‘final break up and group dissolution, typical of loosely cohesive teams that come together only for the ... team-building program’ (Mercure, Bilodeau, & Priest, 2022, p. 2). Group members may have strong emotions about this stage and can minimize or magnify the success or importance of their team. Jensen (1979) applied the five stage model to adventure programming and experiential learning.

Tuckman’s (1965) original model has been critiqued for a lack of empirical research (Cissna, 1984) and for its creation from research conducted mostly on therapy groups (McCullom, 1990). While the latter criticism was levelled by management researchers, the model’s foundation has merit for the outdoor learning profession which aims to provide beneficial and therapeutic outcomes. In addition, the model failed to examine leadership and concerns for task and relationship dimensions of teams (Cassidy, 2007).

Jones (1973) divided the four stages into dimensions of task and relationship. His first stage was concerned with task orientation and relationship dependency, while the second stage was about organizing and conflict. The third focused on data flow and cohesion, while the fourth addressed problem-solving and interdependence. This model added dimensions to Tuckman (Chang, Duck, & Bordia, 2006).

Garland, Jones, and Kolodny (1973) proposed a progressive model with pre-affiliation, power and control, intimacy, differentiation, and separation as the five stages, but these were similar to those of Tuckman and yet more oriented toward social skills. This model has also been applied to adventure (Kerr & Gass, 1987).

Despite these other theories, forming, storming, norming, and performing (with or without adjourning) remain extremely popular. A quick look in Google Scholar, during mid-2022, showed almost 5000 citations for Tuckman and Jensen (1997), while Tuckman (1965) alone had over 11,000 citations. Tuckman’s (1965) original model is widely accepted, commonly understood, and considered relevant by the adventure education and outdoor learning community (Egolf, 2022). For the application of behavior analysis in this conceptual article, Tuckman’s (1965) original model with four stages was used, because most adventure and team-building programs, with the exception of lengthy programs and expeditionary trips, are rarely charged with facilitating a fifth stage of group break-up or adjournment (Warren, 2009).

Behaviour analysis

At the time, Tuckman’s (1965) theory was a breakthrough in group development. However, how does a leader or facilitator in outdoor learning use the theory to help the evolution of a group in practice? One way to understand group behaviour is to analyse communication, or verbal behaviour (Ashby & DeGraaf, 1998). While that may seem obvious, communication is the foundation of teamwork, and a group’s notion of how it communicates is typically tacit (Stavros & Torres, 2022). This means that unhelpful patterns of verbal behaviour rarely surface and helpful behaviours are not identified or explicitly nurtured.

Nearly a decade after Tuckman, British research psychologist, Rackham and Morgan (1977), developed a training method to analyse verbal behaviour. Behaviour Analysis (BA) removes much of the mystery of group behaviour by providing a quantitative and highly objective approach to identifying how people communicate verbally—or use their ‘airtime’—within a group. Applied Behaviour Analysis uses knowledge of interpersonal communication to promote change and improve quality of life (ABAI, 2022). A trained Behaviour Analyst can record each verbal behaviour that group members utter in real time.

Behaviour Analysis has common roots and many branches. One behaviour framework categorises 18 verbal behaviours into four categories of behaviour: Initiating, Reacting, Clarifying, and Processing. To better understand how BA can help teams develop, below is a definition of the four categories and the specific related behaviours within each category (Rackham & Morgan, 1977). Each behaviour label is capitalised (and abbreviated), thus indicating a precise and specialised meaning within the practice of BA. Airtime is a snapshot of the behaviours that a member used during the period that they were being observed while working with others (Yates, 2017).

A. Initiating or introducing new ideas to group conversations so as to create opportunities for others to react, clarify or build upon:

1. **Proposing Procedures** (PP) for conversation,
2. **Proposing Content** (PC) about the task,
3. **Building** (B) to expand on other ideas.

B. Reacting or responding to information or ideas put forth by another member:

4. **Supporting** (S) what was said,
5. **Disagreeing** (D) with what was shared,
6. **Defending/Attacking** (D/A) others (with emotional or personal disapproval, as often sarcastic or disguised humour).

C. Clarifying or seeking transparency for self or others that deepens conversations and explores previous initiating or reacting:

7. **Testing Understanding** (TU) with others,
8. **Summarising** (S) previous contributions.
9. **Seeking Proposals** (SP) or suggestions,
10. **Seeking Reasons** (SREAS) behind logic or ideas,
11. **Seeking Reactions** (SREAC) to what was shared,
12. **Seeking Information** (SI) or facts,
13. **Giving Information** (GI) in reply to the above,
14. **Giving Feelings** (GF) as feedback to the above.

D. Processing or managing airtime for self and others (may include some prior behaviours):

15. **Shutting Out** (SO) by talking over or interrupting by answering on behalf of others,
16. **Bringing In** (BI) others to the conversation by giving them the chance to speak,
17. **Behaviour Labelling** (BL) or announcing which behaviour is exhibited or will come next,
18. **Label Disagreeing** (LD) by beginning a shared contribution with dissension.

While BA as a technique emerged in the 1970's, Rackham and Morgan (1977) were more interested in the practical application of the technique than in academic research. BA has been used with success in corporate settings, largely to improve personal communication among individuals and groups (Booth, 2019; Rackham, 2020). However, since academic interest and attention of BA applications in organisational settings has been sparse, empirical evidence of its application to group development has been underutilised.

Table 2 combines the group development sequence (Tuckman, 1965) with BA (Morgan, 1979; Rackham, 2020; Rackham & Morgan, 1977). It is a summary of how BA, in its practical application, maps onto Tuckman's stages of group development and which behaviours should typically occur at each stage.

Using behaviour analysis to facilitate group development

At its core, Tuckman's model is about communication. After all, teams can only develop through communication, and the markers that identify the various stages of group development are driven by communication. The value of BA is that it objectively notices aspects of communication that are often taken for granted. Typically, practitioners pay attention to the *content* of communication—

Table 2. Comparison of team, leader, and facilitator behaviours in the four stages of group development.

	Sharing of Airtime	GROUP BEHAVIOURS exhibited: what a facilitator should look for	LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS required: how a facilitator ought to coach the leader	FACILITATOR BEHAVIOURS: what a facilitator might do to enable the group to progress
FORMING (to establish shared purpose & identity within an initial climate of psychological safety)	CAUTIOUS: unevenly distributed with some speaking much more than others (who easily accept imbalance)	POLITE INTERACTIONS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Behaviour Labelling ● Seeking Information 	DIRECTIVE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposing Procedures ● Proposing Content ● Giving Information ● Giving Feelings ● Summarising 	Meet and greet clients Enable them to learn names (if not already known), gain familiarity and uninhibitedness, and understand personal attributes
STORMING (is characterised by risk taking and conflict in order to establish who is in charge and where to go next)	COMPETITIVE: chaotic, directly & indirectly fought over	PREDOMINANTLY PUSH: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Proposing Content ● Disagreeing ● Giving information ● Defending/Attacking ● Shutting Out ● Labelling Disagree 	GENERATIVE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seeking Proposals, ● Seeking Reactions, ● Bringing In 	Emphasise the development of trust and communication as a foundation to build teamwork; help them to learn from mistakes and resolve conflicts
NORMING (to determine the ground rules of engagement and how to treat each other by bringing order from chaos)	COOPERATIVE: unevenly shared	DIVERSE, DIVERGENT & CREATIVE THINKING: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Giving Information ● Proposing Content ● Proposing Procedures 	PREDOMINANTLY PULL: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building ● Supporting ● Testing ● Understanding ● Seeking ● Proposals ● Seeking ● Information ● Seeking ● Reasons ● Seeking ● Reactions ● Bringing In 	Assist them to establish ground rules and operating procedures Capitalise on the all- important turning point by drawing attention to when functional team skills begin to show up and success follows

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued).

<p>Tuckman's Four Stages of Group Development</p> <p>PERFORMING (functional productivity and problem-solving with effective communication and mutual trust)</p>	<p>Sharing of Airtime</p>	<p>GROUP BEHAVIOURS exhibited: what a facilitator should look for</p> <p>FULL RANGE: designed to produce</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● coherent communication ● group well-being & psychological safety ● innovative thinking ● effective problem-solving 	<p>LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS required: how a facilitator ought to coach the leader</p> <p>PUSH & PULL: all of the above plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building ● Supporting 	<p>FACILITATOR BEHAVIOURS: what a facilitator might do to enable the group to progress</p> <p>Highlight the move from cooperation (work together for the benefit of select members) to collaboration (work together for the benefit of the whole team)</p>
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what is being conveyed, whereas BA analyses *how* communication is being verbally conveyed. Because BA categorises communication according to the type of verbal behaviour, a skilled leader or group facilitator can step back from a group discussion and, using BA, recognize *how* group members are verbally behaving, rather than getting swept up by *what* they are saying. Furthermore, BA isn't an esoteric psychological analysis or a subjective determination about group members' psychology or intentions. BA uses abstract, yet specific and objective measures of communication to shine a light on verbal behaviour patterns (Rackham, 2020; Rackham & Morgan, 1977).

Sometimes referred to as 'the 10,000 foot perspective' or 'going to the balcony' (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002), the ability to rise above the action of a group and objectively view group communication from a larger perspective provides clues to how a leader or facilitator might identify what level of group development a group might be at and recognize the types of behaviours that could be helpful for the leader or facilitator to enact that would help the group further develop. With the assistance of BA, a leader or facilitator can maximise group learning by adjusting his or her own verbal behaviour to help a group make the most of the stage they are in. When the time is right, the leader can nudge and nurture a group to move to the next stage in the group's development.

By mapping BA communication types into Tuckmans' model (Table 2) one can understand what types of verbal behaviours would signal group member behaviour, leader behaviour, and facilitator behaviour at each level of group development. To better understand the practical application of BA, consider this illustration that walks through each stage of Tuckman's model in Table 2. The story below is a narrative familiar to most readers who work with groups, but it is also an opportunity to see their development from the perspective of BA. Although a linear sequence is rarely followed, as groups bounce back and forth among stages (Egolf, 2022), this story presents one sequenced evolution for easy understanding.

Their story

A newly organised group is enrolled in a multi-day long team-building program and they have just met one another for the first time. Their designated leader is Laura and her job is to coordinate the group to achieve common goals through her influence (Northouse, 2022). Their team-building facilitator is Frank, and his job is to enable the group to grow through the development stages to become a team. Frank is also coaching Laura as her leadership capacity grows over several days. The primary program goal is for the group to become a high performing team, who exhibit healthy relationships, have a sense of purpose, are able to collaborate to create efficiencies and complete tasks.

At the start of the program, early on the first day, the group is **FORMING**. Their communication is cautious and is characterised by polite verbal behaviours. Some group members feel awkward, while many are protective of their egos (Heron, 1992; Senge, 2006). Others want to establish their knowledge or expertise early, while a few protect themselves by compliantly stepping back and waiting to speak later. Speaking is unevenly distributed in the forming stage, with some members speaking more than others. Initially, at the outset and as the leader, Laura is expected to speak more than her followers, because this reassures them and sets the tone for assertiveness. She is somewhat reluctant at the beginning, and her speaking absence threatens to immediately plunge the anxious group into storming. However, with encouragement from Frank, she takes control of the situation. This directive leadership initialises a feeling of psychological safety and clarifies the knowledge that she is in charge.

After meeting and greeting the group, Frank conducts some ice-breaker and socialisation games designed to learn one another's names and some identifying skills or interests. The group slowly warms up, becomes de-inhibited, and gets to know each other. During these games, they are **Seeking Information** (SI), such as wanting to know what lies ahead for them, Laura responds by modelling the behaviour of **Giving Feelings** (GF), as she expresses gratitude for the group, expresses

her excitement for the coming program, and personally shares her vulnerabilities about the opportunity to work together. She is also **Giving Information** (GI), helping the group orient themselves to the site, to one another, and to the expectations for the program and their future together. These directive leadership behaviours help the group to establish a sense of security and order, so they can focus on relationship building, and lays a foundation of psychological safety by modelling positive emotions.

When the group is presented with their first challenging activity that requires them to solve a problem, they begin with **Behaviour Labelling** (BL) by saying what they are going to say before actually saying it, such as 'If I may ask a question' In return, Laura is encouraged toward **Proposing Procedures** (PP) such as suggesting ways to play the game or solve the problem, and **Proposing Content** (PC) by offering some of her own possible ideas. Finally, she is **Summarising** (S) when she paraphrases what the group has aired and decided. These directive leadership behaviours reinforce the climate of psychological safety, while successfully building the functionality of the group until they are ready for more agency. By the end of the first day, the group begins to glimpse some early hints of success that builds their efficacy. The group identity and culture is starting to take shape.

By the next morning, the group reconvenes, but soon enters into **STORMING**. Frank presents a series of problems that rely on solutions engaging trust and communication as the important foundation of future teamwork. In their efforts to solve these problems in a climate of psychological safety, group members take increasing risks that often lead into occasional disagreement and passionate arguments with one another. Conflict inevitably arises naturally in some of these stressful situations. Their communication becomes competitive and is characterised by chaos and struggle. During the group debriefs that follow each activity, Frank helps them to identify, learn from, and change their teamwork. As conflicts arise, he teaches them resolution techniques, remains neutral without taking sides, and then steps back to support the group in resolving their own conflicts.

During the storming stage, the group displays a predominant range of **push behaviours**. Push behaviours are those that make individual members' ideas explicit, where the speaker is advocating for a position or giving information or ideas (Tompkins, 2001). For example, members now exhibit the **Proposing Content** (PC) and **Giving Information** (GI) behaviours, that previously came from their leader, Laura, by sharing ideas to problem solve, solutions to consider, and evidence to support their proposals. They feel safe enough to take creative risks and must think divergently, if they are to innovate and eventually become a high performance team. However, they are not yet ready for this because they have not set the ground rules and normative behaviours that are necessary to support and encourage divergent thinking. In minor divergence, they experience **Disagreement** (D), while in major divergence to the point of polarisation, they exhibit **Labelling Disagree** (LD): 'I completely disagree with you!' The latter comment is unproductive and an indicator of group anxiety. In addition, a couple of members frequently display **Shutting Out** (SO) behaviours by interrupting others' thoughts or presentations of ideas.

Frank recognizes the messiness of this stage and provides space for group members to work through their tensions and to learn to trust one another. He identifies and appropriately addresses all potential **Defend/Attack** (DA) behaviours, where the group goes beyond disagreeing with content or ideas and some members make comments in an attempt to undermine the personal identities of others. While a sprinkling of good-natured **Defend/Attack** (DA) behaviours can signal comfort and humour, cutting attacks can rupture newly forming relationships and be difficult to repair. Therefore, Frank remains in close contact with Laura and encourages her to use generative leadership behaviours that engage the group. For example, she frequently uses **Bringing In** (BI) to inquire about the thoughts and ideas of introverted group members. She also is constantly **Seeking Proposals** (SP) to nurture creative and divergent thinking, while **Seeking Reactions** (SR) to those proposals, in order to ensure all group members are authentically weighing in on various ideas and generating plenty of solutions.

On the next day, the group begins **NORMING**. They have recognized the detrimental impacts from storming and unresolved conflicts, but also understand the need to determine their ground rules for how they will work together and treat one another fairly. Frank facilitates this process toward developing norms by guiding their discussions and recording their decisions on a screen or posterboard for all to see. The group's communication becomes cooperative as they begin to share airtime, albeit unevenly in this stage. No longer needing to protect themselves as much as they did in times of conflict, group members are free to engage in rich and creative thinking, as evidenced by their **Giving Information** (GI) and **Proposing Content** (PC), while **Proposing Procedures** (PP) so as to suggest paths forward in setting group norms.

Frank also helps Laura to transition from her earlier push behaviours to pull behaviours that will elicit participation from group members. Pull behaviours are those that help group members work with one another's ideas. Communication that elicits responses from others and demonstrates **Supporting** (S) behaviour is desirable from a leadership perspective (Tompkins, 2001). Balancing advocacy behaviours with inquiry behaviours opens up conversation and signals inclusiveness and respect for others (Argyris & Schön, 1996). Since the transition to norming from the chaos of storming can be a difficult, frustrating, and confusing time for some group members, they may retreat back to the conflict of storming or even into the earlier safety of forming. Others may prematurely reach for performing, but without group norms in place, this try often fails. Pull behaviours draw them back to the task at hand and keep them integrated with their group. For example, by focusing on clarification while setting group norms, she is **Testing Understanding** (TU) by paraphrasing what others have said and checking for group comprehension. She also models behaviours for others by **Seeking Proposals** (SP) and **Seeking Information** (SI), while exhibiting trust in others to develop their own ideas and actions. As before, she is also **Seeking Reactions** (SR) and **Bringing In** (BI) any quiet members in an effort to generate consensus. She adds to her behavioural repertoire, by **Seeking Reasons** (SR), where she asks group members to 'walk her through' their rationale for their proposed content. Laura looks for **Building** (B) behaviours as a sign that the group is listening to each other and improving on each other's ideas to the extent possible. Building is an indicator that the group has shifted from cooperation to collaboration. Her skilled clarifying behaviours model complex and healthy communication for the rest of the team, and they allow group members to engage in reflective dialogue.

Mid-program, the group reaches a **TURNING POINT**, where their teamwork becomes functional and they may be surprised by a sudden achievement. John has been waiting for the opportunity to capitalise on this turning point by contrasting their past efforts with their newfound teamwork. In the debriefs, he assists the group to celebrate their successes and identify what is working well for them. He may also help them highlight what elements of teamwork need improvement. These reflective discussions aid them in establishing explicit ground rules and practising implicit norms of behaviour. Through talking, the group starts to see how their new accomplishments are due to their recent normative treatment of one another. New healthy relationships allow them to become highly effective at tasks and they start to perform. Individual behaviours become more open and authentic as the group safely navigates through the rough waters of storming to further develop their trust and communication within norming.

In the last days, the group steadily progresses deeper into **PERFORMING**. Their communication becomes collaborative with an open and even sharing of airtime. Mutual trust is now well established and the group has become highly productive at solving problems. They are working toward the benefit of the whole as an indication that their individual identities are merging with the group identity and the need to protect individual egos is easing. Predominantly push behaviours give way to more pull behaviours on the part of the group and their leader. Laura is **Supporting** (S) other group members by authentically acknowledging the value of divergent ideas, and by **Building** (B) upon others' ideas. An outside observer might not recognise her as the leader, because all group members are now displaying a variety of leadership behaviours.

John notices that group dialogue in the debriefing sessions has a natural rhythm that includes reciprocal push and pull behaviours, punctuated with frequent **Supporting** (S) remarks and **Building** (B) behaviours from the group that accelerate their innovative problem-solving. Their sense of mutuality is palpable. At the end of the program, late on the last day, the group has clearly evolved into a healthy **TEAM**. They end with a celebration composed of **Giving Feelings** (GF) and **Giving Information** (GI) through storytelling and reflective presentations. After personal action planning, they depart with some homework: a special high-stakes project they can work on together in their daily lives.

Conclusion

High functioning groups are more innovative, more productive, more efficient, and enjoy their work more than the average group (Duhigg, 2016). Clearly, the best interests of a group leader suggest nurturing group development, and Tuckman's theory is a well-researched and well-established conceptual framework through which to view group development. However, Tuckman's theory doesn't prescribe exactly how to evaluate the stage of development a group has reached, how to develop groups, or how to change behaviours of individual members to help them move toward performing.

BA offers a relatively objective tool through which to view verbal behaviours that can help leaders and facilitators understand a group's developmental stage, thereby, providing clues as to which types of behaviours the leader and facilitator might engage with to help the group further develop. The list of 18 behaviours categorised according to initiating, reacting, clarifying, and processing behaviour, can assist a leader or facilitator to identify behaviours that might be helpful in fostering the group's development in an experiential learning context.

The leader or facilitator who becomes adept at using BA mapped onto Tuckman's theory to assist group development is taking a meta-approach to teaching and learning. By separating themselves from the content and process of the teamwork, leaders and facilitators trained in BA avoid becoming subject to group dysfunction and distractions, and can objectively view group behaviours through an encompassing vantage point that is above the group dynamics (Kegan, 1982, 2009; McCauley, Drath, Palus, O'Connor, & Baker, 2006).

Group development is too important to be left up to chance (Senge, 2006). Skilled use of BA provides the potential for leaders and facilitators to form more productive and agile teams, capable of arriving at solutions more efficiently and more effectively. Here are some practice recommendations for leaders and facilitators. These naturally lead into recommendations for further research.

Recommendations for practice

Leaders should identify the behaviours that are most evident for group members to better determine their stage of group development. Leaders should highlight the leadership behaviours that are most effective for fostering group development, but also those that model group members to become skillful leaders. Leaders should also take advantage of BA as a menu of potential behaviours to expand their range of verbal behaviours. Specifically, moving from advocacy (push behaviour) to inquiry (pull behaviour) creates conditions for individual or group reflection and growth (Argyris & Schön, 1996).

Facilitators should highlight group development by explicitly identifying leader and group behaviours that are helpful for developmental progression and worthy of celebrating success and learning. Facilitators should partner with the leader in sharing a group development lens and identifying verbal behaviour that is most likely to assist group development. Facilitators should sustain a higher view of the group development process to best build the holding environment (Drago-Severson, 2016) and psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) necessary for advanced development and to best coach the leader in advanced verbal behaviours (Attarian & Priest, 1994).

Recommendations for research

BA was developed with the practitioner in mind, and though it has been used successfully within the corporate learning and development field for decades, it has seldom been the study of academic research (Booth, 2019). Rackham and Morgan (1977) demonstrated BA's effectiveness in improving team efficacy in the corporate context. McCredie (1991) explored connections with BA and found stronger connections between behaviour and managerial job performance than between behaviour and personality traits.

Fundamentally, BA is a tool for improving interpersonal skills (Booth, 2019; Yates, 2017) and it appears to advance group development via its effectiveness in improving interpersonal skills. Therefore, future research ought to investigate the explicit connections between interpersonal effectiveness and group development, among pro-social skills, and within emotional intelligences (Goleman, 1995, 2004) as these are linked by effective leadership and group work (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008; Kunnanatt, 2008).

More attention should be paid to empirical investigation into the mechanism by which BA improves interpersonal relationships. This would be a first step toward laying a solid foundation for how the categories of BA map onto Tuckman's theory of group development. Clearly, more research is needed in these relationships and BA for team-building programs in outdoor, adventure, and experiential learning.

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