Belbins Team Roles

- Most teams are self-assigned by students clustering into friendship groups or
- Assigned by tutors in a quasi-random fashion e.g. alphabetically.

Both of the practices undermine the potential effectiveness and learning from the group work.

- Meredith Belbin prominent writer on group formation and the specific combination of roles that comprise highly effective groups.

- 9 different team roles have been identified as shown below.

- The most effective teams may comprise just 4-6 individuals since all individuals are inclined and able to perform more than one role (Belbin, 2010).

- Training using on-line resources student cohorts could discover their preferred team roles and their relative strengths and weaknesses

- Help the students to select the working partners or tutors who can seek to compile balanced and effective groups to support greater task achievement and effective collaborative learning.

### Tuckman’s Group Development Model

- Even if group members are friends or peers suggests that they will not perform well as a group initially (Tuckman, 1965).
- Groups will pass through 4 key stages of development and only at the last one that the effective group working is achieved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forming</td>
<td>In this stage, most team members are positive and polite. Some are anxious, as they haven’t fully understood what the work the team will do. Others are simply excited about the task ahead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storming</td>
<td>People start to push against the boundaries established in the forming stage. This is the stage where many teams fail. Storming often starts where there is a conflict between team members' natural working styles. If differing working styles cause unforeseen problems, they may become frustrated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norming</td>
<td>Gradually, the team moves into the norming stage. This is when people start to resolve their differences, appreciate colleagues' strengths, and respect your authority as a leader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing</td>
<td>The team reaches the performing stage when hard work leads, without friction, to the achievement of the team's goal. The structures and processes that you have set up support this well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Source: MindTools 2014)

### References

Tuckman’s Group Stages Hersey and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership
Forming Telling
Storming Selling
Norming Participating
Performing Delegating

Working with the right approach at the right time leaders will facilitate swifter group progression to productivity and enhance the overall learning achieved.

### Proposal, Outcomes and Benefits

- Current practice in the group working of students does not appear to be well considered or optimal.
- The tutors should consider more fully the composition of student groups supported by an assessment of their students' characteristics through a tool such as Belbins team roles. Once teams have been carefully selected the principles outlined by Tuckmans and Hersey & Blanchard help guide tutors to the behaviours that they need to exhibit to support most effective group working.

Therefore these proposals combined would facilitate more effective group working resulting in a higher quality of work being produced and better learning curve
- Help acquire subject related skills and transferrable employability skills.
- Less or no additional workload through reactive intervention by the tutors.