

# Vignettes for Stages of Group Development

## **Forming**

A group of seven or eight people enters a room one or two at a time. They have folders or clipboards with them. They seat themselves around a table and begin to look at their notes or read a newspaper, glancing at each other silently and at the clock on the wall. As the time nears 9 o'clock, they begin to stir and speak to the person next to them at the table, introducing themselves, asking other's names and work titles and locations. Another person enters who seems to be the leader of the group. As soon as she is seated, she begins to talk about the group's purpose as a curriculum design team and mentions that she will ask each member to tell the group their name and job and what they hope to accomplish in the group. Before they move to introductions, she asks if there are any questions about the task. People ask such questions as: how many meetings will the group have and how often, what kind of time investment is expected of members and will others join them. Fade out on this conversation.

## **Storming**

Fade back into the group as they are beginning to introduce themselves. One member wants to have people give their names only and not tell anyone their position until later. He feels that knowing everyone's relative status in the organization will make it harder for the lower status people to contribute freely. Another group member says that he thinks that is a big mistake, because they all need to know what the experience and expertise of other group member is so they can best use one another as resources. Someone else suggests that everyone turn off their cell phones and not take calls during the meetings. Several people object to that because they are supervisors and have to be in touch for emergencies. Fade out on raised voices and attempts by the group leader to call for order.

## **Norming**

Return to the group as the group leaders suggests that ground rules be developed. They go around the group and get suggestions from each person about ground rules they feel are necessary for the group to function well. Members begin to suggest such things as confidentiality, time limits on discussions, agendas for the meetings and turning off cell phones but with frequent breaks to allow for returning calls. The leader is listing these on the board as we fade out.

## **Performing**

Return to a different meeting, farther along in the group. Each member is making suggestions about the best ways to teach report writing, using examples from their own experiences. A couple of people volunteer to bring examples of poorly written reports that can be used in the training. Others offer to give individual help to trainees who have a hard time with the subject. As the meeting closes, someone mentions how much work has been accomplished in a short time.

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## **Adjourning**

The group leader announces that the task of the group is completed and holds up a binder containing the lesson plans that the group has developed. She congratulates the group on a fine job and informs them that they will not need to meet again for six months, she knows they are relieved. Group members look at each other around the table and express themselves about how much they have learned and accomplished as a group. A pad of paper goes around for people to make a list of email addresses to stay in touch. A couple of people announce that while they have enjoyed working with the group, they will not be able to participate the next time due to changes in work duties. As people begin to leave the room, handshakes and hugs are exchanged.