The Importance of this Topic
The philosophy behind PLTL is that working on problems in groups rather than alone helps the student to learn more of the material. In order for the group to be functioning at its best it is important for leaders to understand how a group progresses and what they can do to help the group perform at the highest level of development.

Putting Theory into Practice
The group development theory (Tuckman, 1965) divides group development into four categories: Forming (getting acquainted), Storming (working through obstacles), Norming (making goals) and Performing (highest functioning level, no longer dependent on leader). By identifying which stage they are at with their workshop students, the leaders will be able to guide their group toward the highest stages of group development.

What The Leaders Will Gain From This Module
- How to accomplish goals through group work
- An understanding of how groups develop
- An understanding of the four stages of development
Outline of Module and Expected Outcomes

Traffic Jam

This game requires the group to split up as evenly as possible. Each section of the group should line up in a single file row so that both sections are facing each other and separated by one space. The object of the game is for the two sections to switch places without causing any traffic jams.

Outcome
The group will try several strategies before finally choosing the strategy that allows them to solve the game.

Objective
The leaders should use effective group work skills to solve the game quickly and efficiently.

Discussion Questions
- How many tries did it take for you to finally finish the game?
- What stages of group development did you notice your group go through?
Scenarios

The group must put the following four statements in order of progression

- Our team is really energized. We’ve been working well together, coming up with great ideas, and everyone is committed to doing their part.
- Being a member of this team has been a very positive experience. Although we had some issues, we worked them out, and we’re ahead of schedule in meeting our goals.
- I like my team members well enough, but we are not very efficient at decision-making. No one says anything, so nothing changes
- I’m so frustrated – all we seem to do is argue and nothing gets done!

Outcome
The leaders will work as a group to determine the sequence of the above statements.

Objective
This activity implicitly introduces the leaders to the four stages of group development. It is intended to get the leaders thinking about how groups develop and progress.

Possible Discussion Questions for Weekly PLTL meeting
- How did you number the statements? Explain your decisions
Four Stages of Group Development Activity

The leaders chose group development attributes from a list and had to determine where those attributes mapped into the four stages of group development.

Outcome
The leaders will work as a group to determine the best fit for each attribute. They may find that some of the attributes could belong to more than one stage of development.

Objective
This activity allows the leaders to connect attributes that they may have noticed in their own groups to the four stages of development.

Possible Discussion Questions for Weekly PLTL meeting
- Were there any attributes that fit more than one category?
- Did the group add any attributes that were not listed?
- What stage of development is your workshop group in?
Leader/Faculty Meeting Outline

1. **Hand out sign-in sheet**
2. **Questions to ask to open up discussion (20 min)**
   - **Traffic Jam**
     - How many tries did it take for you to finally finish Traffic Jam?
     - What stages of group development did you notice your group go through?
   - **Scenarios**
     - In the scenario section how did you number the statements? Explain your decisions
   - **Four Stages Activity**
     - During the Four Stages activity were there any attributes that fit more than one category? Which ones?
     - Did you add any attributes that were not listed? What were they?

3. **Points to emphasize**
   - Groups do not always progress all the way to the Performing stage but it should still be the goal.
   - Groups develop at different rates. Rather than comparing your group to a previous one, focus your energy on the progression of your current group.

4. **Have the leaders work on the workshops (30 min)**

References


----. Five stages of group development. Online at [http://clce.gmu.edu/leadership/5stages.html](http://clce.gmu.edu/leadership/5stages.html) [accessed June 6, 2009].