



Module 8.4 Synthesis Stage Project Leader Maintenance Tasks

STAGE 3 - SYNTHESIS

- Team members learn to work together successfully
- Resistance fades
- Collaborative efforts are initiated
- Team members begin to give each other positive criticism
- Members begin to reestablish a harmonious team culture
- Begin committing to the tasks to accomplish the goals
- Realistic planning takes place
- Conflict management is established and agreed upon
- The team's mission begins to be realized
- Team and personal goals are discussed and implemented
- Ground rules are implemented
- Maintenance of team is established
- Discussion begins on how to maintain the team culture
- Beliefs, assumptions, and values are acknowledged
- Progress on the task is significant

Challenge – Managing relationships and task efforts.

What does it look like? A sense of renewed optimism as the team begins to feel a sense of team identity. Team members experience increased cooperation as roles and responsibilities become clearer and agreement on the team culture and expectations for behavior are reached.

Feelings - Team members begin to resolve the discrepancy they felt between their individual expectations and the reality of the team's experience. If the team is successful in setting more flexible and inclusive norms and expectations, members should experience an increased sense of comfort in expressing their "real" ideas and feelings. Team members feel an increasing acceptance of others on the team, recognizing that the variety of opinions and experiences makes the team stronger and the project more meaningful. Constructive criticism is both possible and welcomed. Members start to feel part of a team and can take pleasure from the increased group cohesion.

Behaviors - Behaviors may include members making a conscious effort to resolve problems and achieve group harmony. There might be more frequent and more meaningful communication amongst team members, and an increased willingness to share ideas or ask for help. Team members refocus on established ground rules and

practices and return their focus to the team's tasks. Teams may begin to develop their own language (nicknames) or inside jokes. Leader spends time implementing the team's performance expectations, re-establishing specific roles and operating procedures. Roles are defined for problem solving. Ground rule system for settling conflicts is clarified. The team culture is reorganized and established with more concrete boundaries.

Team Tasks - Members shift their energy to the team's goals and show an increase in productivity, in both individual and collective work. The team may find that this is an appropriate time for an evaluation of team processes and productivity by assessing how the team is using their strengths and developing their weaknesses into strengths.

Questions - Who does what and when?
How often will we meet?
How do we settle problems?
How do we make decisions?
How do we handle conflicts?
What makes our team special?

Maintenance Tasks for Synthesis Stage

1. Review the **Strengths and Weaknesses and Expectations** that each team member is working to develop individually. Use your notes from the Transition Conference as a reference.
2. Implement the Project Leader's suggestions from the **Transition Meeting** Rotation 1.
3. For task allocation and brainstorming, use **Coaching** as a leadership style because the team has begun to trust one another and some (if not all) members are usually experiencing high competence with variable commitment.
4. Review the conflict situations of the past. Discuss the different **Conflict Styles** each of the members used to manage and negotiate the conflict. Don't forget that the avoidance conflict style is overused during the **Criticism Stage** in a team. Many may still cling to this conflict style in the hope that ignoring the problem will make it go away, or hoping that they can tough it out.
5. Go over your time management system, particularly your **Milestones and Activity Lists**. Make changes if necessary where time estimates are not accurate. The team now has some historical information about the time it takes a particular team member to do a particular task. Use this information to adjust the time.
6. Begin to plan ahead for the next stage of development. Look for differences in the perception of quality by the individual team members, and address the problem.

7. After a **milestone** is reached, summarize how the team used their time to understand how the time was really spent. Implement any changes from the Team Leader Transition Report Rotation 1.

7. Review and revise the **ground rules** and adapt them to provide more clarity on difficult issues encountered. Many times a person commits to a ground rule because they wish to change their behavior to the ideal. A team member who is habitually late may agree to always be on time for meetings. Many times this commitment results in that person honestly thinking their behavior is congruent with their new commitment, while it is not. They can be unaware that they are behaving in a manner that is preventing them from accomplishing the commitment. The team member may no longer be a half hour late, but still show up ten minutes late. Although this may be frustrating to other team members, it could be a radical change in behavior for the first team member.

8. Bring up any incongruities in team members' behaviors in a nonjudgmental forum.

9. Review the **mission statement** and revise if it does not adequately describe the mission of the team.

10. Have each member write a synopsis of how they feel the team is behaving. Use this to determine the behaviors that are actually emerging in the team. (The team needs to discuss behaviors openly and honestly.)

11. Check recent **Weekly Progress Reports** against earlier progress reports to determine if there is evidence that effectiveness and efficiency has increased.

12. Review the Logical Framework and discuss changes with the team.

13. Is your recorder filling out the **Weekly Progress Reports** properly so they are useful to the team? Is your faculty advisor referring to your reports in meetings?

14. When rotating roles, the leader should prepare for **Transition Meeting**.