Group Development and Team Effectiveness

*Using Cognitive Representations to Measure Group Development and Predict Task Performance and Group Viability*

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The authors reconceptualize the theory of group development for application to task groups and propose two key sequential phases: membership and competence. A method for measuring developmental progress in task teams based on congruence in group cognitive representations of the team as it is, the ideal team, and the team as it ought to be is proposed. A system for computing group states based on structural connections among member cognitive representations is offered. Measures of group state representations in 49 project teams were collected at beginning, midpoint, and end of each team and related to team effectiveness. Hypotheses based on group development theory predicting effects of convergence and congruence in group state representations on team effectiveness are supported. Further insights into the developmental process of group states are discussed. The authors conclude by arguing for the return of group development theory as an explanation for disparate findings in team research.

**Keywords:** group development; team effectiveness; shared cognition

Since Gersick’s (1988, 1989) studies purported to show that classical developmental dynamics were not observable in two samples of task groups, the use of group development theory in organizational behavior (OB) research has virtually