

Exploring team strengths

Overview

These activities will help to determine and celebrate each participant's strengths as part of a team.

Learning intentions

- To assist students to understand their character strengths and the strengths of others, and how strengths can support team goals and actions.

Resources

- 'Pie chart' handout and pen/pencil for each student
- Space large enough for a group exercise

Activity 1: Pie chart

Instructions

As this activity will require students to later stand up and move, you may want to clear a section of the room prior to starting.

Read the following script out loud:

Let's have a think about how our Student Leadership team works. Does it work as a team where all members are willing to take on the roles needed to see initiatives through to completion? Or do you get stuck at certain points? This activity will help us understand where our strengths lie and what weaknesses we might need to overcome.

There are four different team skills that people can possess. The IDEA formula is one way of looking at it.

- I** = The **IDEAS** person
- D** = The **DESIGNER**
- E** = The **EVALUATOR**
- A** = The **ACTION** person or **DOER**

Are you an **IDEAS** person?

Do you have lots of ideas? When others are working on another issue, are you on to solving the next problem? Are you happy to change, adapt and rethink your ideas? Do you provide the big picture goal and solution but need other people to help carry out the ideas?

Are you a **DESIGNER**?

Do you like designing the plan and the steps for carrying out the ideas? Do you enjoy figuring out how to make something happen?

Are you an **ACTION** person?

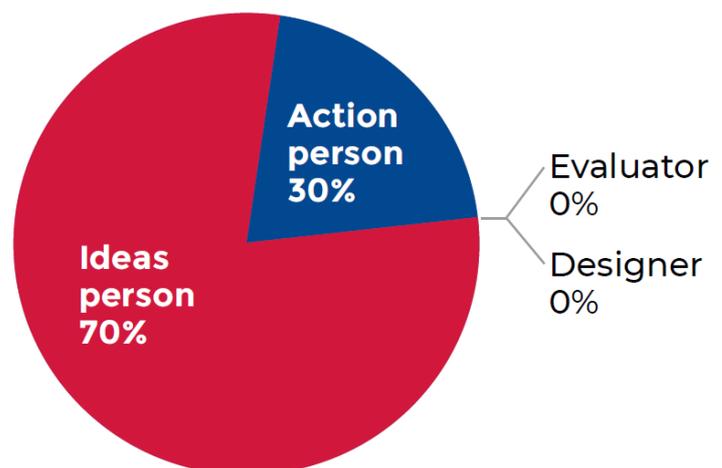
Do you like actually carrying out the plan? Are you happy to do what has been agreed on? Are you good at getting things done? Do you prefer 'doing' to 'planning'?

Are you an **EVALUATOR**?

Are you good at measuring the impact and figuring out whether it's a good idea, a good plan or whether the project has been successful? Do you like figuring out why something was or wasn't successful and how to do it better?

After listening to this script, hand out the pie graph template and,

- Ask students to complete a pie chart of where their skills lie on the handout. The chart below is an example.
- Remind participants they are looking for the areas they are good at and that it will probably be very biased towards one or 2 of the 4 choices.
- Ask them not to fill in the second circle yet. This will be completed after the activity 2.



Activity 2: Knots

Instructions

Once pie charts are completed tell participants, 'We are now going to play a game called Knots'.

- Organise students into circles of 7-8 people. As you are doing this, select 1 person per group to be an observer.
- Ask the students to hold their arms out in front of them and blindly grip random hands in the circle. Once all hands are connected tell the student to untangle themselves without letting go.
- The facilitators and observers watch the students and the decisions they make. Students will act differently depending on their areas of skill.
- The observers should note down the comments, who says them and which skill it shows. For example,
 - "If we all go through here it might work" **Ideas**
 - "Yes, but we need to step over" **Designer**
 - "Hang on, this might make things worse" **Evaluator**
 - Either staying silent and following or "come on let's just start" **Action**
- After finishing the game, provide feedback to the group about the particular strengths each of the participants displayed.
- Ask students to review their pie chart of the perceived strengths. Invite them to complete the second pie chart on the circle sheet if they want to make changes to their original decision.

Debriefing questions

- Are you surprised at which strength was most prominent?
- Can you think of a situation when this strength will be useful?
- Are there other skills that you'd like to develop and what do you need to do to get them?

Concluding comments

It's important to take note of the skills and strengths we each bring to our team. You may also find that your strengths change in different situations – often when we feel more confident or engaged.

All four strengths should be represented across the team when we start an initiative or project, otherwise it may fail to be completed. For example, if everyone's strength is as an "IDEAS" person, we might plan some amazing ideas but struggle to take the next steps and action the ideas.

Pie chart activity

IDEAS · DESIGNER · EVALUATOR · ACTION

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