Student leadership resources

The eleven activities below have been developed with students, for students and can be adapted to individual school's context. Each activity takes approximately 30 minutes and can be facilitated by student leaders. They can be done in any sequence.

1. [**A team approach**](#_1._A_team)
2. [**Making decisions**](#_2._Making_decisions)
3. [**Values and visions**](#_3._Values_and)
4. [**Exploring team strengths**](#_4._Exploring_team)
5. [**Design thinking**](#_Design_thinking)
6. [**Inspirations**](#_6._Inspirations)
7. [**Project planning**](#_7._Project_planning)
8. [**Running successful meetings**](#_8._Running_successful)
9. [**Communicating with school staff and students**](#_9._Communicating_with)
10. [**Developing an elevator pitch**](#_10._Developing_an)
11. [**Reflecting and evaluating**](#_11._Reflecting_and)

## 1. A team approach

### Overview

This activity focuses on building teamwork and cohesion. Participants share reflections about themselves with their team, building engagement and connections. Participants think about the composition of the student leadership team and different leadership styles.

### Learning intentions

* To support a better understanding of personal and team strengths.
* To build relationships within the team
* To practice skills for active listening.

### Resources

* ‘Getting to know me’ handout

#### Instructions

* Give each student a copy of “Getting to know me”. There are six statements that they need to complete:

1. I’m passionate about….
2. A skill I’m proud of is…
3. A personal story that made me who I am is…
4. One way to get the best out of me is…
5. Things that energise me are….
6. I’m a good leader because….

* After 5 minutes, students share their answers with a partner.
* Each partner then shares the information they have learned with the whole group
* For example, “This is Ming. He is passionate about music. A skill he is proud of is composing hip-hop music. A personal story that made him who he is would be moving to Australia when he was five and having to learn English as a second language and making friends through actions rather than words. We can get the best out of him by working in small groups and being respectful. Things that energise him are music and spending time with friends and he’s a good leader because he listens to others and remembers what they say.”

### Debriefing questions

The following questions may help the group reflect on the activity, what has been learnt and experienced:

* Why do we need to know the strengths of the group?
* How can we use that information to make the group as strong as possible?
* How can we use our individual and team strengths to assign roles?
* Why form a ‘team’?

If a new team or ‘student body’ is being established, additional time may be needed to further explore questions such as:

* Are there any requirements or expectations of the team?
* How many members do we need? Who else should be involved?
* Should there be whole school representation? (ie: members from each year group)
* If it’s a co-educational school, should there be equal numbers of male and female students?

### Concluding comments

Everyone brings different strengths and skills to the group. Acknowledging your own strengths and those of your team are important for having a positive, cohesive team.

As a group, we’ve also talked openly and shared information about ourselves. Having respectful conversations is also important to building the strength of our team; we want everyone to feel they are a part of the team and have a role to play.

### Handout: Getting to know me

Questions for students:

* I’m passionate about...
* A skill I’m proud of is...
* A personal story that made me who I am is...
* One way to get the best out of me is...
* Things that energise me are...
* I’m a good leader because...

## 2. Making decisions

### Overview

There are many ways to make a decision. This activity supports students by raising their awareness of different decision making strategies that can be used and the importance of working together.

### Learning intentions

* Students understand different strategies for making decisions and coming to agreement.

### Resources

* ‘Decision making strategies hand out

#### Instructions

* Divide into smaller groups (up to 5 students) and give each group one of the strategies from the handout (depending on the number of groups, some could do two or more strategies).
* Ask the students to read the description of the strategy before discussing and suggesting:
  + at least one advantage of the strategy
  + a situation when it would be appropriate to use that strategy
  + a situation when a different strategy might be needed
  + what skills are required, for example, listening to others, willingness to consider others’ perspectives, problem solving.
* Allow about 15 minutes before asking each smaller group to share an outline of their strategy and explain the advantages and situations when it could be useful.
* The whole group can then discuss which strategies might be useful for team decisions, for example,
  + deciding between two different proposals for a student led activity (for example, a colour-run for the school or music performance at lunch)
  + deciding who will take minutes of a team meeting.

### Debriefing questions

The following questions may help the group to consider other decision making scenarios, the importance of negotiating and inclusive decision making.

* Which strategies are more likely to help the team come to a ‘fair’ agreement?
* How can we make sure everyone has a say and contributes to decisions?

### Concluding comments

In some situations, a majority of ‘votes’ may be used to make a decision, and while this can achieve a quick result, it may not always be fair and respectful of others or achieve the best result.

It’s important that as a team, we listen to the views and experience of others and ensure we have as much information as possible, to make our decisions. This may also include speaking with others outside of the team to find out their views, before we get to the decision making process.

### Handout: Decision making strategies

**The ‘one person’ decision**

* An autocratic decision made by an individual or small group in a position of authority
* Decisions can be made quickly and simply

**Voting**

* An efficient and democratic method of reaching a shared decision
* Can be done by secret ballots or with raised hands
* Votes are tallied and the greatest number of votes decides on the action.

**Consensus**

* A decision made only when everyone agrees
* All views are sought and considered
* The group tries to understand all points of view and take them into account

**Brainstorming**

* All ideas are welcome and must be written down.
* The ideas are not judged at the time of recording
* Combine and improve ideas. The task is to find a solution
* Quantity is essential to broaden the possibility of finding an answer

**The 4:2:1 technique**

* Each person writes their top 4 ideas, then form pairs and reach agreement on 4 ideas.
* Pairs combine into groups of 4 and work together to reach agreement on 2 ideas.
* These groups pair with another group of 4 and work together to agree on 1 idea.

**Agree/ disagree/ unclear**

* 3 headers are put on the wall: 'Agree', ‘Disagree’ and ‘Unclear’.
* Each person writes 3 ideas and places them under ‘Agree’. The group discusses and can move items from the ‘Agree’ header to other headers. Discuss: What is unclear? What are the agreed good ideas?

**XYZ method**

* Each person writes 3 post-it notes: X is a short term solution, Y is a long term solution and Z is an, ‘out of the box’ idea which may not be feasible.
* Post all the notes up on a wall and use one of the other strategies to prioritise them.

## 3. Values and visions

### Overview

This group of activities encourage students to reflect and share values. Through discussion, the group will work towards developing a shared vision to guide the student leadership group.

A longer time period will help students explore more deeply around personal and shared values. Creating a vision statement may also take further time and it may be useful to develop a draft statement that can be reviewed and refined at a later meeting.

### Learning intentions

* To explore the values that are important to the participants
* To work cooperatively to establish shared values and develop a vision for the student leadership team.

### Resources

* ‘Values list’ handout
* Post-it notes
* Butcher’s paper or whiteboard and markers
* Copy of the school vision statement and/or values

### Activity 1: My personal values

#### Instructions

* Give the students a copy of the values list handout (please note, the values in bold are the Department of Education values; the list can be added to, to include the school’s values):
* Ask participants to circle 5 values that best reflect what is important in them, in their everyday decision making, behaviours and beliefs.
* Using post-it notes, ask participants to write a goal for themselves as a student leader, based on one of these values and to stick them on a nearby wall.
* Each student chooses someone else’s post-it note and reads it out to the group. They must then say which value they think that goal aligns to.

For example, goals: to speak confidently (underlying value: courage, excellence); to establish a student led environment team (underlying value: teamwork, environment).

* Discuss with the group and sort the post-it notes, based on similar goals and common values. This will help to determine any common goals and values shared by the group and will be used in Activity 2: Shared values.

Before moving on to Activity 2, you might like to discuss with the group how our values are developed and shaped, reflecting on our different life experiences, family and culture.

### Activity 2: Shared values

#### Instructions

* It can be challenging to reduce the list of values to just a few. Explain to the students that this activity is as much about working together as a team when faced with challenges and decision making, as it is about creating a final list of shared values.

Reflecting on the goals and values identified in activity 1, work with the group to come to an agreement about their common or shared values and why they are important. If possible, aim for 5- 7 values. Please note, other values including the school’s values can be added to the list.

* The students can decide how the values get ‘voted on’. If the students have completed the “Making decisions” activity, they could be gently encouraged to use one of the decision making strategies.
* Guiding points during this activity might include;
  + respecting the values of others
  + how personal experience and background can influence values
  + making sure the final choice is representational of the whole group
  + how values can influence decisions
  + which values matter most in emerging student leaders.

### Debriefing questions

This is a reflection on the teamwork that took place during activity 2.

* How did we decide on our shared values?
* Did everyone have a ‘voice’? Did we work well as a team?
* Did you feel comfortable to share your thoughts?
* Would you like the opportunity to redo the exercise? What could we do differently?

Please note, it may be important to repeat the decision making process and ensure everyone has a say and involvement.

### Concluding comments

Our values shape who we are, what we think and our day to day decisions and actions. While our team may have decided on some ‘shared values’, it’s important to respect that individuals may have other values that should also be considered and respected.

Knowing our shared or similar values can help to inform our next steps and team planning.

### Activity 3: Creating a team vision

#### Instructions

This activity builds on discussion from activity 1 and 2. Creating a vision statement may help students to understand the team’s purpose to communicate to others and provide a focus for future direction and actions. Depending on the time available, an initial draft statement may be developed that the group revisits at a later time, to then refine and consolidate.

Make sure the list of values identified by the group (activity 1 and 2) are clearly posted: this could be simply written on butcher’s paper or a whiteboard for students to refer to during the activity.

Ask students to suggest what a vision statement is and why it might be needed. You might prompt students with examples of vision statements. For example,

‘The Department of Education has a vision statement: To Be Australia’s best education system and one of the finest in the world, or,

‘Our school’s vision statement is, ‘to provide all students with quality education and opportunities to achieve their personal best’.

* Ask students what the vision statement tells us about the organisation and it’s impact on the audience. Answers might include: what the organisation does, what it’s aiming to do or its goals, what’s important or its values; it inspires confidence, it outlines a future focussed direction. It might be useful to capture some responses or key words on butcher’s paper or whiteboard.
* Explain to the students the next activity is to brainstorm ideas to help create a vision statement for our team. Divide the group into four smaller groups; hand out butcher’s paper (A4 or A3 paper can also be used) and ask one student to be the group’s scribe.
* Explain to the groups they will have 5 minutes to brainstorm each of the following questions:
  + What does our team do?
  + Who does the team: help, work with and represent?
  + What might the team’s goals for the next year include?
* Ask the groups to now craft a statement that reflects their brainstorm ideas, the values previously identified, and is future focused. Groups can write their draft statement on butcher’s paper or whiteboard to share with the group.
* The whole group then reads and considers all the draft statements, looking for similarities and agreement, how they align with the school’s vision and the team’s purpose and goals.

A collective statement is then created for the leadership team to consider and reflect on. Encourage students to chat with others (school staff and peers) about the proposed vision statement for feedback and comment.

The team should then re-consider and make any appropriate changes or additions before finalising their vision statement.

### Debriefing questions

This activity encourages students to collaborate on the development of a team vision. Questions to guide student and team reflection could include:

* How helpful was it to brainstorm ideas in small groups before sharing with the whole group?
* What other strategy could be used to work through ideas and to come to an agreement?
* Has the draft vision statement captured our team goals and values? Who else should we ask for feedback about the statement?
* How can we use this statement in the future? Think about team planning, recruiting new members, sharing information about the team with the school community.

### Concluding comments

Understanding our values and creating a shared vision is important. It helps:

* creates a sense of ownership and involvement for individual members
* strengthen relationships between team members
* to express what’s important to the team
* our planning for future actions
* others to understand the purpose and vision of the team.

The vision statement can help with our discussions with other people, including school staff and students, and also for our planning. We can also review this statement as our team grows and in future years to make sure it continues to reflect our goals and values.

### Handout: Values list

**Accountability**

Achievement

Adventure

Ambition

Authority

Challenge

Compassion

Connection to country

Competence

Courage

Creativity

Democracy

Dependability

Determination

Enthusiasm

Environmental awareness

**Equity**

**Excellence**

Excitement

Fame

Family

Financial security

Freedom

Friendship

Fulfilment

Happiness

Harmony

Health

Heritage

Honesty

Independence

Individualism

**Integrity**

Kindness

Love

Loyalty

Passion

Peace

Power

Quality of life

Relationships

Religion

Responsibility

Safety

**Service**

Social status

Spirituality

Stability

Success

Teamwork

**Trust**

Truth

Understanding

Wealth

Wisdom

## 4. 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?

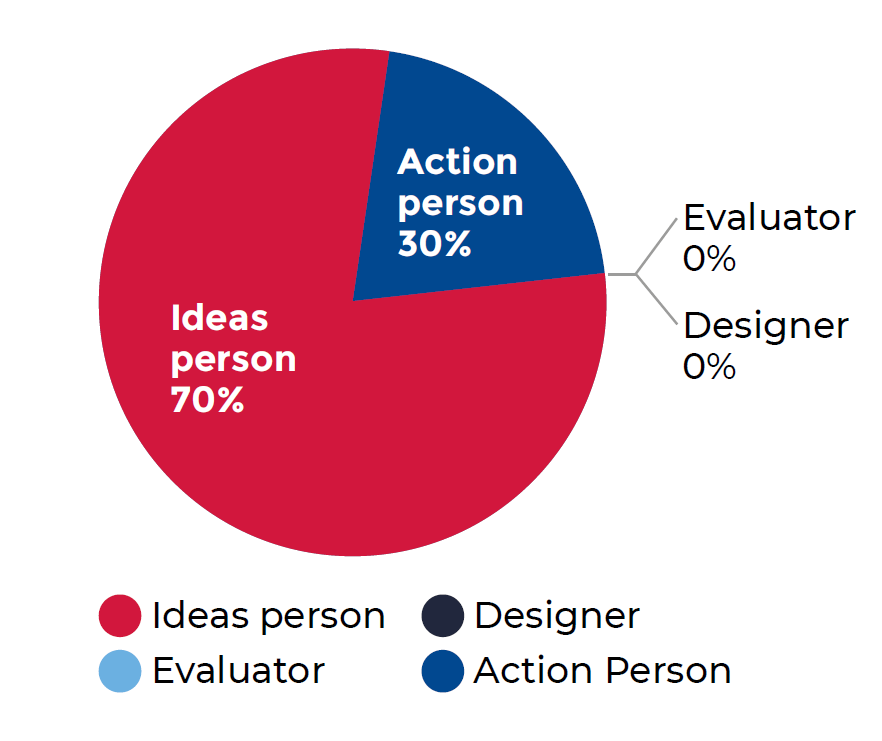
Are you an **ACTION** person?

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 reading out 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 not be able 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.

### Handout: Pie chart activity

Make a pie chart showing what your skills are

## 5. Design thinking

### Overview

This activity supports students to use design thinking approach as part of their student leadership tools. Students also identify areas or topics for further discussion and development as projects or actions.

### Learning intentions

* Following a design thinking process, students explore and share ideas and experiences about what matters or is of interest or concern, to collaboratively scope and assess ideas for action.

### Resources

* ‘Design thinking template’ handouts (2 pages)

#### Instructions

* Ask the students to form into smaller groups (suggest no more than 5 students per group).
* Give each group the ‘design thinking template’. Talk through each step, sharing the worked example over page, ‘improving the school environment’ to help explain the process.
* Ask students to spend a few minutes thinking about something they are passionate or curious about, or an issue they feel concerned about; this could be something in the school environment or wider community.

For example, someone might be passionate about basketball; a student might be curious about a recycle program in the community; another student might be concerned about some recent vandalism in the school toilets.

* Allow students another 5 minutes to share their passions/curiosities with the smaller group.
* Ask students to then use the design thinking template and work through the first five steps (up to ‘Test’) with their group. They may prefer to work together on one topic, or alternately, work through their own individual topic using the design thinking process.
* Create a gallery walk to share each group’s design thinking.

Display the design thinking templates for each group around the room and allow time for students to read and comment on each. Invite students to add suggestions or ask questions.

##### Worked example: ‘Improving the school environment’ using the design thinking process.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Step | Questions | Example: improving the school environment |
| Identify a passion or an issue | How do you feel about this?  What value does it connect to?  What frustrates/worries/inspires you? | Too much litter, everything goes into the same bin (no recycling bins)  Value: Environmental awareness  Frustrates: Lack of school pride  Inspires: Opportunity to be more sustainable |
| Define the question | What are you trying to achieve?  What are your goals?  Can you refine this to a statement? | Goal: Have recycling bins  Goal: Inspire students to recycle  Goal: Inspire school pride  Make our school environmentally friendly |
| Develop a focus | What can we focus on?  What is the most important part?  What else has worked?  What challenges exist? | Educating and inspiring students to recycle  Last year, students worked together to fundraise for a school garden. We had a competition for the design and the winning design was created. |
| Ideate | Brainstorm and come up with as many creative solutions as possible. | Get the council to fund the bins  Someone from the council to speak to the students  Have a poster competition  Student leaders running sessions at Year Meetings  Start an environment committee |
| Prototype | How can you show your ideas? Can you build a representation of your ideas? | Map of the playground with bins  Make an example poster |
| Test | Share your prototype with others and get feedback.  What worked?  What could be improved? | Students and school staff are surveyed e.g. on the proposed location of the bins.  Students provide feedback on poster designs. |
| Refine and implement | How can we integrate feedback to make the idea better?  Whose approval do we need to implement it? | A working group is formed to analysis the survey results and refine the proposal.  Feedback on the poster designs is shared with the ‘design team’ to make changes as needed. |

### Debriefing questions

* Did you find this design thinking template useful?
* Who were the ideas people? The designers?
* This is just one tool you can use to guide your thinking and map out a group or individual project. Can you think of another tool or process to use?

### Concluding comments

Design thinking provides a solution-based approach to solving problems. It is important to note that the seven steps are not always sequential. This simply means that the design team continuously use their results to review, question and improve their initial ideas, assumptions, understandings and results, and possibly provide new insights so we can see any alternative solutions that might not have been available with our previous level of understanding.

### Handouts: Design thinking templates

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Key steps | Key questions | Students write their ideas in this section |
| Identify a passion or an issue | * How do you feel about this? * What value does it connect to? * What frustrates/worries/inspires you? |  |
| Define the question | * What are you trying to achieve? * What are your goals? * Can you refine this to a statement? |  |
| Develop a focus | * What can we focus on? * What is the most important part? * What else has worked? * What challenges exist? |  |
| Ideate | * Brainstorm and come up with as many creative solutions as possible. |  |
| Prototype | * How can you show your ideas? Can you build a representation or model to illustrate and test your ideas? |  |
| Test | * Share your prototype with others and get feedback. * What worked? What is supported by others? * What could be improved? |  |
| Refine and implement | * How can we integrate feedback to make the idea better? * Whose approval do we need to implement it? |  |

## 6. Inspirations

### Overview

This activity shares stories of success from the students’ school and in other schools across NSW and asks participants to think about how successes were achieved.

## Learning intentions

* To read or hear about initiatives of other individual students / or groups of students in their school setting and acknowledge their achievements.
* To identify their steps or actions that helped with the success of their initiative.

## Resources

The following articles are examples of stories of success from schools across NSW. Facilitators and students can share other articles or examples from their school. Please note: a variety of student stories will be useful for broadening students’ perceptions of student led initiatives and student leadership.

* [Article 1](https://education.nsw.gov.au/news/latest-news/fundraising-for-change-makes-cents-to-10-year-old)
* [Article 2](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-04-18/wagga-wagga-students-fundraise-for-people-in-need/11018646)
* [Article 3](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-11-06/nutri-grain-box-to-feature-women-after-daliah-lee-protests/10467508)
* [Article 4](https://www.theleader.com.au/story/5701830/student-solar-powers-his-school-slashing-thousands-off-the-energy-bill/#slide=3)
* [Article 5](https://www.kidsnews.com.au/humanities/school-students-send-letters-urging-farmers-to-keep-believing-the-drought-will-end/news-story/1147fc0180fa07903c60c56b19dc2f97)

### Activity: Stories of success

#### Instructions

* Give each group an article or share a story of success, and ask students to reflect on the following questions in their groups:
  + Is it a group or an individual that has initiated the project or idea?
  + Is it student initiated or teacher initiated?
  + Is it to help the classroom, the school or the community?
  + Who helped the individual student / group achieve their goal?
  + What resources did they need? What support did they get?
  + What inspired them to want to do something?
  + What action or change are they trying to make, for example: raise money to support a charity, being kind and supporting others in need, creating something to help others, improving facilities, having a positive impact on the environment
  + What values are being demonstrated? For example, friendship, compassion, environmental awareness, harmony.
* Invite each group to feedback key points to the entire group. Make a list of similarities or ideas people found interesting.

### Debriefing questions

* What surprised or interested you about these/this story? Answers might include how young the student was; the difference their idea/ project had for others.
* Why is it so important to get support when developing ideas or proposals? In our school, who would you ask for: support? permission? Answers might include, getting feedback and other ideas to help think through a proposal. Students might suggest asking the deputy principal or year advisor or another school staff for support and approval.
* What strategies used by the individual students in the stories could you try or use? For example, asking for help from a teacher/peer; starting off small and testing ideas, working with a team.
* There are many different ideas and initiatives student leadership groups can do beyond fundraising. How have some of the stories you have shared inspired you? Some students might share ideas that they would like to discuss further with the student leadership team.

### Concluding comments

While not every project may end up as a published ‘story of success’, remember to:

* ask for help and work with others: working as a team can help share tasks, bring new ideas and solutions
* think about learning to walk or ride a bike or any other skill you have – it often takes time and practice to develop our skills
* see challenges or setbacks as a learning opportunity
* set goals to work towards: short term goals can help us develop skills and build strengths to take on further challenges.

## 7. Project planning

### Overview

This activity assists students with the early stages of project planning with a user-friendly tool that also encourages collaboration.

### Learning intentions

* To improve the capacity of student leadership teams to develop and scope ideas for project planning.
* To assist students collect information and data to develop a presentation or pitch to the school staff or community groups.

### Resources

* ‘Planning tool’ handout

#### Instructions

Before Activity 1:Discuss the challenge for students of developing ideas and proposals into effective solutions. Students might comment about the limited time available for student leadership group meetings, challenges working through ideas, or coming to an agreement about the best idea or proposal.

Lead the discussion towards the need to be efficient in discussions and what process or steps might be useful. Finally introduce the idea of using a scaffolding tool to help solve some of these challenges.

### Activity 1: Planning tool

* Hand out the planning tool and explain to the group they will use a scenario to trial the planning tool. Please note the scenario below is a suggestion only; you can choose another scenario relevant to the school or the student group.
* Present the scenario ‘there is not enough seating in the playground’ and ask students to complete the top section of the handout (the setting, what, who, when and why).
* Ask students to brainstorm possible ideas or solutions for the scenario; set a time limit of 5 minutes for this task. It may help students to work in pairs or small groups for this task.
* Ask the students to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each idea: prompt thinking about the cost; if the idea will suit all or most students or just a few; if the idea is long-lasting/sustainable; if there are existing examples that could be used as a model.
* The students’ final task is to list their two ‘best’ possible solutions. Remind them they should be prepared to explain their decision to the group.
* Allow time for students to put forward and explain their best solutions.

### Debriefing questions

* In which situations would you use the tool?
* Is this something that as a student leadership team, we could use for future planning?

If the team decides to use this tool in the future, encourage them to consider:

* + Who they will communicate this plan to?
  + Who else might you ask to support your project?
  + Have you developed a plan or a timeline for the project?
  + What resources will you need?
  + How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your project?
  + How will you share your success with the school community?

### Concluding comments

This is an example of a planning tool that can help us work together and use critical thinking and decision making skills to develop ideas and solutions. The tool helps to structure our thinking using different planning considerations: what the need is and what evidence we have to support this, who might be involved, how the idea will help others, who might benefit from the solution and eventually, identifying the best solutions from the ideas considered.

Working through the planning tool together allows us to share our ideas and insights – we can learn from each other’s experience and knowledge. Collaborating allows everyone to contribute to the discussion and planning.

Mapping our thinking and ideas in this format can help us to reflect. It also creates a tangible resource that can be shared with others to communicate ideas and to show that you have invested time and thought into the planning.

### Handout: Planning tool

Setting (enter school name here):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| What | Who | When | Why |
| Describe the current situation. | Describe who is involved in the change. | Describe when the change is needed. | Describe why you think change is needed. |

All ideas and possible solutions are recorded BEFORE any strengths and weaknesses are discussed.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Possible solutions | Strengths | Weaknesses |
|  |  |  |

List the best possible solutions below:

| 1. | 2. |
| --- | --- |

## 8. Running successful meetings

### Overview

These activities explore challenges related to meetings and examine suggestions for running meetings efficiently and respectfully.

### Learning intentions

* Students develop an understanding of how efficient meetings can be planned.
* Students identify opportunities to improve existing meeting practices.

### Resources

* ‘Running successful meetings’ handout
* Large space, 4 tables, chairs.
* 4 sheets butchers’ paper.

### Activity 1: Who are we and who do we want to be?

#### Instructions

* In this activity, students will evaluate how the student leadership meetings currently operate. Begin by saying:
* ‘Let’s have a think about how our student leadership meetings run and see if there are things we can improve to be more efficient.
* Give students ‘Running successful meetings’ handout.
* Read aloud the statements from column one and after each statement, have participants show ‘thumbs up’ for ‘I agree’ or ‘thumbs down’ for ‘I don’t agree’. Keep an approximate tally of the responses – not a precise count but the general consensus.
* Option: students can move between two locations in the room to demonstrate their response to questions. This can help show the group’s response and also acts as an energiser.
* Repeat the same process using the statements in the second column. If using movement for the students to illustrate a response, you might like to change the action for example, ‘stand up’ (I agree) or ‘sit down’ (I disagree).
* Have a group discussion about the results: highlight statements that the majority of the group agreed or disagreed and invite students to comment and offer an explanation for this decision.
* Create a list of the key things students feel should happen during meetings, based on the team’s response to the statements, and how they might action each. For example, if everyone agreed that meetings should run to a set time, the team could decide to set a time limit for each meeting agenda item.

The final list could be used to plan actions for an upcoming meeting, or written into a guide for student leaders to refer to.

### Activity 2: Global café

#### Instructions

This activity builds on the team’s review of existing meeting practices, and looks at the different ‘roles’ that might be needed to facilitate meetings.

* Divide the students into **4** groupsand give each table one of these questions:
  1. **What do we currently have in our Student Leadership team?**

Prompt: think about positions, people, practices

* 1. **What do we need to include to our meetings?**

Prompt: refer back to activity one and things the group agrees were needed

* 1. **What roles do we need in our Student Leadership team?**

Prompt: these could be formal roles, or relate to tasks team members complete

* 1. **How will we know when things are working well?**

Prompt: what changes will be seen? How will people feel?

* Ask each group to democratically elect a recorder (for example, each person votes for the person they think will be best for the task).
* Groups will spend 3-5 minutes discussing the question at their table. The recorder will note the responses from the group.
* When asked, groups move to the next table; the recorder stays at the table ready for the next group to arrive. They provide a summary of the previous group’s responses and then continue to add notes from the next group’s discussion.
* Once all groups have visited 4 tables, recorders give feedback to whole group.

Students have the opportunity to clarify any comments or add further information. The facilitator works with the group to highlight the top three responses for each question. For example,

* 1. What do we currently have in our Student Leadership team?
     1. representatives from each year group; a teacher coordinator; a vision statement
  2. What do we need to include to our meetings?
     1. a meeting agenda; set time for discussion; record of discussion
  3. What roles do we need in our Student Leadership team?
     1. a chairperson; minute taker or secretary; an elected leader
  4. How will we know when things are working well?
     1. meetings will run to time and follow an agenda; the team will make decisions and plan actions; team members work well together to achieve team goals.

The group should then discuss which of the suggestions should be actioned.

## Activity 3: Top tips for running successful meetings

#### Instructions

Share the following tips with students and see whether they can add any more. For each ‘top tip’, have a student suggest if and why this would benefit the team.

**Before meetings**

* Define the goals of the meeting beforehand
* Let people know in advance how long the meeting will go for
* Prepare and share an agenda
* Identify people to run each section or agenda item of the meeting
* Check meeting room arrangements, including:
* Is the room the right size for the group?
* Are the chairs set up so that it’s easy to see and hear each other?
* Is there a whiteboard for brainstorming?
* Have a sign-on sheet to record attendance
* Have copies of materials for people to read or take

**During Meetings**

* Discuss expectations for behaviour such as: speaking respectfully and politely to everyone, taking turns to speak, actively listening to others.
* Take notes during the meeting
* Set an agreed timeline for completing tasks if people offer to do something
* Make sure the meeting keeps to the agenda and the set time.

### Debriefing questions

Suggest to the group that they bring together all the information from the three activities to make a document, outlining agreed actions to support how the student leadership team will run.

The group can decide whether to include some or all of the ‘top tips’, the ideas collected from the Global café including team roles, and actions for running meetings.

### Concluding comments

Efficient and respectful meetings are really important. They ensure people stay focused, engaged and committed to their involvement and responsibilities. As student leaders, we need to recognise that our peers (and the supervising teacher) are volunteering their lunchtime or afternoon to meet, so using the available time carefully is essential.

Efficient meeting help to ensure the team can plan and action their goals, and as a result, are more likely to achieve success.

Running efficient meetings also develops valuable skills to support us in the future, such as: managing our time and working with others in a respectful manner. This can earn the respect of others by demonstrating our commitment and willingness to act responsibly.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Is this our student leadership group? | Is this what our student leadership group should be like? |
| No agenda is prepared  Meeting starts late  No time schedule has been set for the meeting  No one is prepared  No facilitator is identified  No one agrees on anything  No action plan is developed  Everyone is off task  Negative tone throughout the meeting | **Agenda is published beforehand, has who is speaking to each topic and is used to guide the meeting**  **Has a start and finishing time**  **75% of team members are present and engaged in topic(s)**  **A system is used for monitoring progress of implemented solutions (Action Plan)**  **A system is used for documenting decisions (Minutes)**  **Facilitator & minute taker and come prepared for meeting and complete during the meeting responsibilities**  **Next meeting is scheduled**  **All regular team members (absent or present) have access to the meeting minutes within 24 hours of the meeting**  **Decision makers are present when needed** |

### Handout: Running successful meetings

#### Activity 1: Who are we and who do we want to be

#### Activity 2: Global Café questions (recorders to write notes to the following)

* What do we currently have in our student leadership group?
* What’s missing from our meetings?
* What roles do we need in our student leadership group?
* How will we know when things are working well?

## 9. Communicating with school staff and students

### Overview

The activities support students in communicating with staff and students.

### Learning intentions

* Students understand rights and responsibilities of student voice.
* Students develop confidence communicating ideas with other students and staff

### Resources

* UN Convention of the Rights of Children: <https://www.unicef.org.au/Upload/UNICEF/Media/Our%20work/childfriendlycrc.pdf>
* ‘Communicating with staff and students’ handout

### Activity 1: Rights and Responsibilities

#### Instructions

* Read aloud: Article 12, UN Convention of the Rights of Children:
* ‘Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.’
* Invite students to comment on this statement: prompt questions might include:
  + Why do you think this right is needed? Can you think of situations when children might not experience this right?
* Depending on available time and room resources, watch the Advocate for Children and Young People ‘Child Rights Educational Video at <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/child-rights-educational-resource> Note: this video runs for 9 minutes and include Child Rights (Articles 2, 3, 6 and 12.)
* Propose the statement, **We all have rights, but rights also come with responsibilities** and ask students to comment. They might like to use an example or share a scenario to explain.
* Give everyone a copy of the ‘Communicating with school staff and students’ handout to read.
* Ask students, ‘Based on our discussion,
  + are there any rights or responsibilities that should be changed or removed from the lists?
  + are there other rights or responsibilities that should be added?
  + are there situations when the rights or responsibilities might not apply?’ For example, students might suggest that a person’s age might impact on their rights and responsibilities.
* Expand the discussion to consider how ‘respect’ for others relates to our rights and responsibilities. Ask the students how respect can be can be displayed, for example, during student leadership team meetings. Students may comment about taking turns when speaking, actively listening, and addressing people by their name etc.

### Activity 2: Role play

#### Instructions

Explain to the group the next activity involves role play to illustrate communication skills and the responsible use of their student voice.

* Choose two people to role-play the following scenario (don’t tell the rest of the group what the scenario will involve).
  + Student A role: is an excited student who has what they think is an amazing idea to have a “crazy sock day” - students wear crazy socks and donate a pair of socks to homeless people. They haven’t made a project plan for the idea, and haven’t made an appointment to see the deputy principal (or year advisor). They rush excitedly into the deputy’s office but become annoyed when the deputy principal asks questions and says he/she will think about it.
  + Deputy principal (or year advisor) role: the Deputy is in the middle of something important when student arrives. They can see they are excited but have trouble understanding what the proposal is about. They ask a few questions before saying they’ll think about it as there are 5 other fundraising activities on this term.
* Ask the student audience to comment about the scene: what did they notice about the student’s preparation and delivery of their idea?
* Choose two other students to role-play a second scenario:
  + Student B role: is excited about a proposal for a ‘crazy sock day’ to donate socks to the local homeless support centre. They have made an appointment to see deputy principal (or year advisor) and asked the front office to print a list of student led activities for the year. Looking at the school calendar, they can see some date options that don’t clash with school events. They have made a draft poster to advertise and have spoken with the charity and front office staff about how to collect and bank the money. They arrive at the Deputy’s office and when invited in, calmly outline their proposal.
  + Deputy principal (or year advisor) role: listens, asks questions to clarify before saying they will think about it as there are 5 other fundraising activities on this term.
* Ask the student audience to compare their observations of this scene with the previous: what did they notice about the second student’s preparation and delivery of their idea?

### Debriefing questions

**Discussion:** What are the differences between the two role play scenarios? What actions did the second student do prior to presenting their proposal? Which student was aware of their responsibilities? What other information would be useful for presenting to the deputy principal?

### Concluding comments

We all have rights such as having a say in decisions that matter to us, and along with our rights, come responsibilities. We need to be mindful of this when communicating our ideas or when working with others, including during our team meetings, or in our classrooms and across the school. Rights and responsibilities also apply in the wider community as well.

Along with the list on the handout and the additional rights and responsibilities discussed, we also have a responsibility to present our ideas as effectively as possible.

As student leaders, you will put a lot of effort into developing and refining ideas and planning projects. You owe it to yourselves to present these ideas as accurately and concisely as possible to maximise the chance of them being accepted and succeeding.

And even if you prepare your presentation or proposal as thoroughly as you can, you might still experience situations when the answer is ‘I’m sorry we can’t do that at the moment’. Remember to accept the decision respectfully and thank the person for their time – there’s always the next project idea to pitch!

### Handout: Communicating with staff and students

**Activity 1: Rights and responsibilities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Examples of rights | Examples of responsibilities |
| * to be listened to and taken seriously * to be treated with respect * to respectfully express opinions and feelings * to respectfully ask for what you believe is fair * to ask for more information or clarifications * \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | * to listen and take others seriously * to treat others with respect * to allow others to express opinions and feelings * to allow others to ask for what they want * to allow others to ask for more information * \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

Table for recording meeting outcomes

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Item to discuss | Feedback/outcome | Action |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

## 10. Developing an elevator pitch

### Overview

The activities will help students share ideas and influence decision making.

### Learning intentions

* Students understand how to create an ‘elevator pitch’ to confidently present ideas and proposals to the school executive or other community groups.

### Resources

* Writing paper, pens
* Whiteboard or butcher’s paper

### Activity: The elevator pitch

#### Instructions

* Explain to students that an elevator pitch is a brief, persuasive speech that can be used to spark interest in a project, idea, or product. It needs to be succinct (brief), while conveying important information. The speech should be no longer than 4 minutes. To craft a great pitch, follow these steps – it may be useful to write each step as discussed, on a whiteboard or butcher’s paper:
* Identify your purpose in speaking.
  + Summarise in one simple sentence what your project / idea / product does or provides.
  + Describe the benefits of your project / idea or product.
  + List the features that differentiate your project / idea or product.
  + What sets it apart or makes it standout from others?
  + Explain key features of your proposal.
  + Give an example of a successful outcome of your project.
  + What will be achieved as a result?
  + Sum your project / idea or product up in one key sentence to persuade your audience.
  + Smile!
* Have a student read out this example:
  + ‘*My name is Sarah and I come from Port Sinclair High School. It’s a really good school but I think we can do more to involve the community to help students feel like they belong.*

*Recently we enrolled a large number of students from refugee backgrounds and I think it would be fantastic to have some people from Syrian backgrounds come and teach us about Arabic food and customs.*

*It would be a great way to show them they are welcome and that we want to learn about their background. They could also benefit from meeting people from their language background to find out information about our local area. We could even get the students themselves to work with the community groups to teach us these things.*

*I think it would be an excellent way for us to show we care about them.’*

* Ask the students to work in pairs or groups to create and deliver their elevator pitch. They can use their own idea or you can give them one of the following;
  + New water bubblers for the playground
  + A common room for senior students
  + Starting an after-school homework club
  + Starting a hip-hop dance club run by students
  + Going on excursion to “Sculpture by the Sea”.
  + Starting a breakfast club
  + Having a school wellbeing day with neighbouring schools
  + An anti-bullying poster competition
  + Including students on the selection panel for a year advisor
* When they have finished writing their pitch, ask them to practice it with another pair who gives them “2 stars and a wish” as feedback (two things they really liked about the pitch; one suggestion of something that could be improved or changed).
* The students make changes to their pitch before delivering them to the whole group.

### Debriefing questions

Ask the group to consider:

* Which pitch did you find most effective and why?
* What else be useful when you’re doing an elevator pitch to support your proposal? Some examples could include a prototype, the project plan or a poster.

### Concluding comments

Some people find public speaking difficult. To help you to feel more relaxed and confident, remember to allow time to prepare what it is you would like to say. You might also like to try:

* practicing with a friend and get them to give you feedback, like we did in the above example.
* film yourself speaking and give yourself feedback
* set yourself a goal of gradually speaking in public for example, speaking to the leadership team, speaking in class and gradually building up to a larger audience over time

Alternately, you might decide to ask another member of the student leadership team whose strength is public speaking to deliver it for you – you’re on the same team and your message is still being heard.

## 11. Reflecting and evaluating

### Overview

This activity supports students to reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of their student leadership group and their involvement as participants.

### Learning intentions

* Students reflect on and evaluate the effectiveness of the whole group.
* Students reflect on and evaluate their own progress and participation.

### Resources

* Reflecting and evaluating handout

### Activity 1: Evaluating a project

#### Instructions

Say:

‘It is important that ongoing evaluation occurs to ensure that the plan is working. It’s also important to collect data and evidence about how successful a project was For example, ‘In Term 1, we organised a school disco, 85% of the school came, there were no problem behaviours and we surveyed 200 students who said they really enjoyed it.’

* As a group, choose a project from this year or last year and answer the following questions to evaluate it (you may need to ask additional questions to fit the project);
  + Did we achieve what we set out to do?
  + What did we do well?
  + What could we have done better?
  + What did we learn from what we did?
  + What evidence do we have that the project was successful?
  + Did we make any lasting changes?
  + If we were to do it again, what would we do next time?

### Activity 2: Evaluating the group

#### Instructions

* Give everyone a copy of the handout to complete the first activity. As a group, discuss and add any other practices the group feels it has achieved. Fill in the other columns together.

### Activity 3: Self-reflection

#### Instructions

* The handout contains some starter sentences for self-reflection. Allow students some quiet time to read through and complete their answers on the sheet or on a separate piece of paper.
* Invite each person to choose one sentence to share with the group. Remember to thank each student for sharing their reflections.

### Debriefing questions

This activity was about evaluating a project, evaluating the work of the group and reflecting on our own participation in the group. Final discussion with the group could explore:

* Why evaluating and reflecting is important – how can we use this for future planning?
* What kind of skills do you think it builds?
* Why is it good to collect evidence of our work and achievements?
* How can you use evidence and evaluations?

### Concluding comments

Evaluation can help us to identify areas for improvement. This is useful to help plan for and work towards achieving our goals efficiently.

Evaluations can also provide examples of success to guide, teach and inspire others.

It can sometimes be hard to evaluate something after the project has ended, especially if the project happened over several weeks or months. Making regular time and opportunities for self-reflection and collecting evidence of our work and achievement are also important. It’s also a good way of learning about yourself, your strengths, things you want to improve on and future directions.

Communicating with school staff and students

## Handout: Reflecting and evaluating

**Activity 2: Evaluating the group**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Effective practice | Where are we now? | What can we do to improve? |
| We organise a variety of wellbeing activities for students such as speakers or events |  |  |
| We are involved in school events such as Year 7 orientation or sports activities |  |  |
| We are involved in the running of school assemblies |  |  |
| We are accessible and known to the school community |  |  |
| We work with school staff to achieve our planned projects |  |  |
|  |  |  |

**Activity 3: Self-reflection (answer the following questions)**

* My roles in the team are…
* I enjoyed…
* I had difficulties with…
* I learnt…
* I wish I had…
* A project I worked on was….
* Something I am proud of is….