

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.

Planning tool

Setting (our school)

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.