

BNC Case

The Festival Challenge

Case Goal

To help you discover not only who you are today, but also who you are capable of becoming by learning to think beyond your natural strengths.

Four Grade 10 students—Alex, Bella, Chris, and Dina—were selected to lead their school festival. They were good friends, but everyone knew that they approached situations very differently.

Alex liked to think carefully before making decisions. He enjoyed working with facts, numbers, schedules, and clear explanations. Whenever the group proposed something new, Alex usually asked, *“How much will it cost?”*, *“What could go wrong?”*, and *“Do we have enough information?”* His careful thinking often prevented the group from making unnecessary mistakes.

Bella was very different. She loved imagining possibilities. While Alex was thinking about whether something would work, Bella was already thinking about what had never been tried before. She imagined unusual performances, creative decorations, new competitions, and a festival that students would remember long after graduation. Her ideas often excited the team, although some initially seemed unrealistic.

Chris preferred action. Once he understood the objective, he wanted everyone to stop discussing and start doing. He enjoyed setting targets, dividing responsibilities, solving practical problems, and seeing visible progress. When meetings became too long, Chris would usually say, *“We can keep talking about this forever, or we can actually make something happen.”*

Dina paid more attention to people. She quickly noticed when someone was uncomfortable, helped friends who were struggling, and tried to make sure everyone felt included. When disagreements occurred, she usually helped the group calm down. Her friends trusted her because she listened before judging them.

At first, their differences seemed to make them the perfect team. Alex could analyse, Bella could create, Chris could execute, and Dina could maintain good relationships. Each person contributed something that the others did not naturally provide.

For the first few weeks, this arrangement worked extremely well.

Then the school principal gave them an unexpected challenge.

The festival had to attract more students than the previous year, but the available budget would be 20 percent lower. They had only ten days to redesign the programme.

Bella immediately proposed replacing several traditional activities with a completely new festival concept. Alex objected. There was no evidence that students would like the new idea, and he wanted to conduct a survey and calculate the financial consequences before making a decision.

Chris became frustrated with both of them. Ten days did not leave enough time for extensive research or endless creativity. He wanted the group to choose the most realistic option immediately and begin implementation.

Dina could see that the disagreement was becoming personal. She actually disagreed with parts of all three proposals, but instead of saying what she really thought, she tried to reduce the tension.

"Maybe everyone's idea is good in a different way," she said.

Everyone became calmer.

But the problem remained unresolved.

That afternoon, their teacher asked each student what had happened.

Alex explained that careful analysis was simply his strength.

"Bella is better at creating ideas. Chris is better at making things happen. Dina is better with people. Isn't a good team supposed to let everyone do what they are best at?"

Bella agreed.

"Exactly. Why should Alex try to be creative when I can do it better?"

Chris added another argument.

"And we only have ten days. Our responsibility is to make the festival successful, not to use it as an experiment for our personal development."

Dina remained quiet.

She could understand their arguments. If everyone concentrated on what they already did best, the team would probably work faster and make fewer mistakes.

But another question began to bother her.

What would happen if everyone spent years doing only what they were already good at?

Their teacher did not tell them who was right.

Instead, she gave them a different challenge for the following meeting.

Alex would have to present three original festival ideas before he was allowed to analyse them.

Bella would have to select her favourite idea and produce a realistic budget, schedule, and implementation plan.

Chris would chair the next meeting but could not make or recommend a decision until everyone had spoken.

Dina would have to identify one idea she genuinely disagreed with and explain her disagreement directly to the group.

None of them liked the assignment.

Alex protested first.

"But generating unusual ideas isn't what I'm good at."

Bella laughed.

“And detailed planning definitely isn’t what I’m good at.”

Chris looked annoyed.

“So I have to keep listening even if I already know what we should do?”

Dina looked even more uncomfortable.

“What if saying what I really think hurts someone’s feelings?”

Their teacher listened but did not change the assignment.

Before leaving the room, she said only one thing:

“I am not asking you to stop being good at what you already do well. I am asking you to discover whether that is all you are capable of becoming.”

The sentence stayed with them.

At the next meeting, Alex struggled to generate ideas without analysing them immediately. His first two ideas were ordinary. His third idea, however, surprised everyone. He proposed combining several smaller activities into one interactive competition. The concept could reduce costs while giving students an experience the school had never offered before.

Alex was surprised too.

He had always thought of himself as someone who evaluated ideas, not someone who created them.

Bella experienced a different problem. Her first budget showed that her favourite concept would consume almost half of the entire festival budget. Normally, she would have asked someone else to handle the numbers. This time, she worked through the plan herself. She reduced unnecessary elements, changed several activities, and eventually discovered a way to preserve the central idea at a realistic cost.

Chris found his assignment equally difficult. Several times during the meeting he wanted to interrupt and move directly toward a decision. But because he had to listen, he heard Dina identify a problem in his implementation plan that he had completely overlooked.

Listening had temporarily slowed him down.

But it eventually helped him make a better decision.

Dina faced perhaps the most uncomfortable challenge. Bella presented an activity that Dina believed could exclude students who did not enjoy performing publicly. Her first instinct was to remain silent because Bella was clearly excited about the idea.

This time, Dina spoke.

She explained her concern directly.

Bella initially defended the idea. The conversation became uncomfortable for several minutes. But after listening to Dina, Bella redesigned the activity so that more students could participate.

Dina discovered something unexpected.

Caring about people did not always mean avoiding disagreement.

Sometimes, saying something difficult was the more caring thing to do.

Something was beginning to change within the team.

Alex had not stopped being analytical. Bella had not stopped being creative. Chris had not stopped being action-oriented. Dina had not stopped caring about people.

Their original strengths remained.

But each of them had discovered that a natural strength did not have to become a personal boundary.

Alex could imagine before analysing.

Bella could turn imagination into a realistic plan.

Chris could listen before acting.

Dina could disagree while still caring about relationships.

They began to understand that knowing what came naturally to them was useful. It helped them understand who they were.

But saying *“This is just who I am”* could also become a reason for avoiding who they might become.

Two days before the festival, however, the team faced its most difficult decision.

There was still a great deal of work to complete.

Chris looked at the unfinished task list and made a practical suggestion.

“We should stop experimenting. Alex should go back to analysis. Bella should focus on creative work. I’ll handle execution. Dina should manage the team. We already know what everyone does best. Right now, performance matters more than learning.”

Alex looked at the remaining work.

Chris had a point.

If everyone returned completely to their strongest roles, the team would probably work faster.

Bella agreed. The school had trusted them to deliver a successful festival. Perhaps this was not the right time to continue experimenting with unfamiliar responsibilities.

Then Dina asked a different question.

“If we always return to what we are already good at whenever things become difficult, when do we actually learn to become good at something new?”

Nobody answered.

Alex thought about the idea he had created.

Bella looked at the budget she had learned to develop.

Chris remembered the problem he had discovered because he had finally listened.

Dina remembered that an uncomfortable disagreement had actually improved Bella’s idea.

They were now facing a decision with no perfect answer.

If everyone returned to their strongest roles, they could probably maximize their performance during the final two days.

If everyone continued working outside their natural strengths, they might learn more—but they could also make unnecessary mistakes when the deadline was approaching.

Or perhaps there was a way to combine both.

The four students now realized that the real challenge was no longer simply organizing a successful festival.

They had to decide what being a strong team actually meant.

Was the strongest team one in which every person specialized in what they already did best?

Or was it one in which people preserved their natural strengths while gradually becoming capable of thinking and contributing beyond them?

The festival would begin in two days.

They could not maximize everything.

They had to decide.

And this time, their teacher would not give them the answer.

Your Challenge

Imagine that you are the fifth member of the team. Alex, Bella, Chris, and Dina ask you to help them decide how they should work during the final two days.

You have three possible recommendations:

A. Return to their strongest roles.

Each person should concentrate on what they naturally do best so the team can maximize its performance before the festival.

B. Continue working outside their natural strengths.

Each person should continue practising unfamiliar ways of thinking, even if this temporarily makes the team slower or increases the possibility of mistakes.

C. Combine both approaches.

Each person should use their natural strengths when the situation requires them, while continuing to practise other ways of thinking whenever appropriate.

Choose A, B, or C.

Then explain your decision by answering these questions:

1. Who demonstrates the Thinker, Dreamer, Challenger, and Lover Mindset in the case? What evidence supports your answer?
2. What is the strength of each student's natural mindset?
3. When could each strength become a limitation?
4. What did each student learn when asked to do something outside their natural strength?
5. What is the difference between knowing your natural strength and allowing that strength to define everything you believe you can do?
6. Does becoming more flexible mean Alex should stop being a Thinker, Bella stop being a Dreamer, Chris stop being a Challenger, or Dina stop being a Lover? Explain.
7. Which recommendation—A, B, or C—would you choose for the final two days, and why?

Now Think About Yourself

Imagine that the four students represent four different ways of thinking:

Thinker — *I like to understand and analyse.*

Dreamer — *I like to imagine and create.*

Challenger — *I like to act, compete, and achieve.*

Lover — *I like to understand, support, and connect with people.*

Which one feels most natural to you?

Now think about the other three.

Which way of thinking feels least natural to you?

Think of one real situation at school, at home, in sports, or with friends where developing that less-natural way of thinking could help you.

Finally, answer one question:

“If I continue doing only what I am already good at, what might I never discover that I am capable of becoming?”