



Leadership Compass: Appreciating Diverse Work Styles

The Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum

BWBR Description: *Bonner Curriculum workshop explores different leadership styles and challenges students to identify and develop their personal leadership style.*

Overview:

This workshop allows participants to explore four primary work styles, as a tool for self-reflection and leadership growth. It encourages participants to delve more deeply into their strengths and weaknesses in all four styles, in the context of leadership and a working team. The purpose of this exploration is to enable participants to articulate at a higher level why they work the way they do, as well as identify skills and strengths they would like to enhance. It also is a tool for bolstering team accountability, by pushing people to consider the way in which their style(s) plays out on a team and how each person might become better at changing work styles to balance a team or fit a given work situation.

Category:

Diversity; leadership development; problem-solving; team and personal management



Level:

Suitable for all levels

**Recommended
Bonner Sequence:**

This workshop could be used at any time during the Bonner experience, but may be most suitable for during sophomore or

junior years. It can be used in conjunction with building students' skills in diversity awareness (sophomore baseline), because it helps students explore leadership and personal style dimensions of diversity.

Learning Outcomes:

In sum, Leadership Compass is about:

- Developing a deeper sense of self-awareness about one's leadership style and approach
- Developing a more balanced approach to work style; seeking out areas of growth or change
- Developing an understanding of how one's work style affects team functioning
- Deliberately building skills in all four directions to enhance personal and team performance

Materials:

- Ensure all participants come with pen and paper
- Handouts on the four directions and Leadership Compass
- Flip charts must include:
 - √ 1-2 posters for each of the four directions listing "approach," "overuse," for each direction (essentially, copy the handouts onto large poster paper, preferably 2 for each direction – one with approach and one with overuse)

In addition, other helpful charts are:

- √ goals
- √ three questions to ask yourself when determining primary direction
- √ each set of questions asked to the small groups
- √ large visual compass with directions
- √ blank flip chart sheets and 2 markers for each direction

How to Prepare:

Walk through workshop and revise to fit participants, if necessary. Prepare all materials, including directional flip charts. Prepare any case studies or scenarios to fit the group and its work. Prepare your own relevant introduction, including history, applications, context. Set up space.

Brief Outline:

This 1-hour workshop has the following parts:

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|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1) Introduction and Framing | suggested time 5 minutes |
| 2) Introduce the Four Directions | suggested time 5 minutes |
| 3) Primary Direction Discussion | suggested time 10 minutes |
| 4) Going To Extremes Discussion | suggested time 10 minutes |
| 5) Moving to 2nd, 3rd 4th styles | suggested time 5 minutes |
| 6) Case Scenario & Processing | suggested time 15 minutes |
| 7) Personal Maps | suggested time 5 minutes |
| 8) Wrap Up | suggested time 5 minutes |

Step 1) Introduction and framing of the exercise

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Introduce the basic concept and its history. Perhaps show the book [The Four Fold Way](#) (you can find this online).

History

The Leadership Compass draws from a Native American Indian -based practice called the Medicine Wheel or the Four-Fold Way. In the Four-Fold Way, the four directions are described as warrior (north), healer (south), teacher (west), and visionary (east). All directions have profound strengths and potential weaknesses, and every person is seen as capable of growing in each direction. Each direction has a primary "human resource," including power (north), love (south), wisdom (west), and vision (east), as well as primary struggles, associated with loss or difficulty. Each person can access the gifts associated with each direction- through work, ritual, a variety of practices- in order to become more whole.

This workshop builds on the Leadership Compass framework to allow individual participants to dig deeper in their perceptions of self and team. Non-profit organizations modified the original framework and language to be more suited to the professionally-oriented cultures of organizations. This workshop pushes the notion of the "learnable" qualities of each direction, when a person adopts a willingness to learn and change.

Ask participants to make a "leap" and allow themselves to go with the categorizations of the exercise. Some important introductory comments are:

- This is a diversity exercise that introduces a framework of four "directions" ~ representing qualities of work styles. When appropriately incorporated, the diversity of our work styles can be a great source of productivity and creativity; when inappropriately understood or incorporated, this diversity can bring about a lot of misunderstanding, tension, and confusion.
- For our purposes today we will be concentrating on the directions in which we personally use at work, particularly at work in community service efforts. Please answer and evaluate your responses in terms of how you currently approach your work.
- One style isn't better than any other. In fact, this workshop will allow us to look more deeply at the primary and other styles we use at work. All of the styles offer different strengths and challenges.
- You may find yourself critical of the categorizations or of having to reveal things about your own work styles. We request that you hold from making judgments about the usefulness of the exercise as you go through it. "Try on" this exercise. Go with it for awhile. We are confident you will find it useful.
- You may also want to introduce some of the history of this activity (see above).

Step 2) Start introducing the four directions

Suggested time: 5 minutes

You should have the boards with each of the directions "approaches to work/work style" listed (do not have the "overuses" or other elements visible at this point)

Explain that you're going to read off some of the approaches of each direction. Before you begin, present the following questions:

- 1. What's your first inclination when you get a new project?**
- 2. What's your tendency when you're under pressure?**
- 3. What feedback have you been given about yourself**
- 4. What seems most comfortable?**

Ask people to listen carefully and consider what is their PRIMARY DIRECTION, that is the direction they most identify as their own style, WHEN ACTING AS A PROJECT DIRECTOR OR STUDENT LEADER, keeping in mind that many of us work in some of all of the directions at different times.

Have participants write down the direction that best fits them. Again, remind people that later in the workshop, people will explore skills from all of their directions.

Step 3) Have people go to primary direction

Suggested time: 10 minutes

After everyone is finished writing, (re)introduce hands up, and have people move physically to one of four areas that represents that primary direction. Explain that in those directions, people will have the opportunity to discuss their styles in more detail.

Give people designated time (suggest 8 minutes) to discuss the following:

- **What's really great about being your direction?**
- **What's really hard about being your direction?**
- **What's difficult about working with the other directions?**

In those discussions, people can recognize that although they are at the same "primary" direction, they have different responses to these questions. Make sure to inform groups that someone should keep notes and be prepared to summarize what the group discusses.

Step 4) Discussion of Going to Extremes

Suggested time: 10 minutes

The purpose for this portion is to have people focus on how their style might be misunderstood, conflict with others, or be taken too far in a group dynamic. This should raise awareness of people for the "balancing" possibility of different styles.

Give the groups **five minutes** to focus on the following question:

- **When you take your direction to an extreme, or an inflexible with your style, what do you think the other directions are saying about working with you?**

Ask groups to brainstorm their responses. Have each group report out (**10 minutes of report backs and discussion**) what they say.

Then, go around the room and flip the cards to reveal the "OVERUSE" portions of the charts for each direction. You can introduce them by saying: "Take a look at these

charts. Some of the items you may recognize came up in your group. Some may be new."

The discussion of OVERUSE of styles is a good lead in to the next part, which is a focus on how one can balance one styles.

Step 5) Quickly move to secondary, third, and fourth styles

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Now you want to really get the group moving. Ask the group to physically get up and move to their SECONDARY direction - the side s/he feels is second most likely to use in the Executive Director role.

Give them 30 seconds to move. Ask everyone to look around. Take a few comments or ask a few questions -- e.g. to point out who moved "across" (west - east, north - south) and who moved "arounded" (west - south, west - north, north - west, north - east, and so on).

Now ask the group to move to their THIRD style. Give them 30 seconds to move. Ask everyone to look around. Take a few comments or ask a few questions.

FINALLY ask the group to move to their FOURTH style (what they perceive as their weakest). Give them 30 seconds to move. Ask everyone to look around. Take a few comments or ask a few questions. **TELL PEOPLE TO TAKE SEATS IN THIS DIRECTION.**

Close this brief round of movement by explaining that this exercise prefaces the next part of the workshop, which is to focus on developing strengths in all of the sides.

Step 6) From their fourth (weakest) directions, introduce a scenario or case to "MOCCASINS"

Suggested time: 15 minutes

Choose a scenario that represents some typical work of the team. It's good to have elements in the scenario that will allow people to grapple with the relevancy of different approaches and styles. Explain that you are going to present a scenario, and you would like people to tackle it FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THEIR FOURTH (WEAKEST) STYLE (the one they are in now).

POSSIBLE SCENARIO:

You are a team of Bonners/students that have been asked by the campus leadership and staff to help address an issue. There is just not enough campus-wide support and student involvement in community service. While there is a small core (like you) who are involved regularly, other students don't seem to understand the value, benefits, or great things about being involved, and the community service office/resources are being underutilized and could be cut as a result. Campus leadership and staff want this to change and they think you, as active students, can do something about it. They have given you a budget of \$2,000 and a timeline of nine weeks. By the end of this time, your group is expected to show that it has helped generate more campus-wide student (and other) interest in community service (in a way that will last).

Read the scenario and have it on paper as well. Give people 1 specific question to address in relation to the scenario, like:

- **"How do you handle this situation?"**

Give people a designated time for discussion (5 minutes), flip chart paper, and markers.

As facilitator, lead another round of report backs to draw out some the following information:

- 1. How did your group approach this?**
- 2. What did you identify as the issues?**
- 3. What did you decide/recommend?**
- 4. What did you notice about how your group handled this situation?**
- 5. How was it to work in your "weakest" direction?**

Allow for some direct conversation after each group has given their complete report:
"Does anybody have any comments or observations to share? Did the various styles seem to influence how the group approached the situation?"

This is where you can start to bring in questions about the team's ordinary work together:

- **Was it challenging to have to play out your weakest direction? What did you learn?**
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This leads in to the opportunity for each person to explain more about their work styles.

Step 7) Map out personal wholeness as individuals

Suggested time: 5 minutes

Pass out the packets with the separate grids (if you haven't already done so) and the compass personal charts.

REVIEW THE FOUR DIRECTIONS:

Ask people to take 5 minutes and look over the four directions again. As they do so, ask them to CHECK OFF characteristics they feel that they have in EACH direction (both regular and overuse).

MAP THEIR SKILLS:

Then, map where they believe they fall on in each of the four directions on a Cartesian grid. Explain that the farther from the center (5) represents the strength in that direction. Use an example, blown up on a flip chart, to show the group. Tell people not to be sidetracked by the "numbers" but to use their own sense of judgment. Have people "connect the dots" in the form of an inner circle.

SKILL IDENTIFICATION:

Ask people to jot down 3 TRAITS/SKILLS they have in each direction AND 3 TRAITS/SKILLS they would like to further develop.

Step 13) Group Debrief and Closing

Suggested time: 5 minutes

You can lead the group in a simple debrief by asking:

- **What have you learned?**

- **What struck or surprised you?**

You want to close the workshop with your own summary comments, take feedback, do evaluations, and lay out next steps. (You will probably want to figure out some specific, concrete next steps for using this information as a group and give specific individuals follow up roles in doing so).