Student Work Plan

Exercise 1 of 3: SWOT Analysis

This exercise helps you reflect on the current reality of your student work.

Strengths

What it says on the tin! What are you good at? What do you have? Who do you have? What have you seen thriving in your ministry?

Weaknesses

What are you lacking? What are you not so good at? What's holding you back?

Opportunities

Where are your potential strengths that haven't yet been realised? This may be connections (e.g. with the Students' Union) or ideas you've had of new mission areas to step into. It may be a strength you see in your community that you could develop if given the opportunity.

Threats

What are the potential weaknesses or challenges which might threaten your vision? These may be within your community or external to it.

Questions

Begin by asking yourselves the following questions:

- What do we do?

- Who do we have?

- What are you grateful for?

- What do you wish was different?

Use the following matrix as a template for your SWOT analysis.

Use the results to inform the next exercise.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

Exercise 2 of 3: Two Year Goals

This is a simple exercise to help you consider where you are now and where you'd like to be in two years' time. This will help you then think about what short-term goals can help you work towards these dreams.

Bill Gates said that *"Most people overestimate what they can do in one year and underestimate what they can do in ten years."* Goals that look beyond the immediate are important!

Start with three realities about where you're at now

These don't all have to be 'disappointing' realities - they could be good things you want to see grow even more or just realities of the present, neither good nor bad, that you'd like to see change. Alternatively they may be things you're gutted about that you want to see change. They might include things like:

- We have ten students in our church
- We have 90% female students in our church
- We baptised one student this year
- None of our students read the bible of their own volition

Then ask yourself where you'd like to be in two years' time.

This is not where you *will* be in two years' time if things continue as they are (e.g. we get an average of 3 new students a year, therefore in two years' time we'll have 6 more students than now). It is where you *want* to be in two years' time.

Try and use measurable goals as much as possible – these are easier to work towards and to motivate yourself and others with ('see our community grow by ten' is better than 'see our community grow'). For example:

- We will have twenty students in our church
- We will have 30% male students in our church
- We will have baptised 6 students
- We will have taught our students how to read the bible and 60% of them will be doing so regularly

Use the following sheet as a template for your discussions & findings. Sometimes looking far ahead can help us raise our faith for what's possible beyond our current situation.

Use the results to inform the next exercise.

Vision • • •
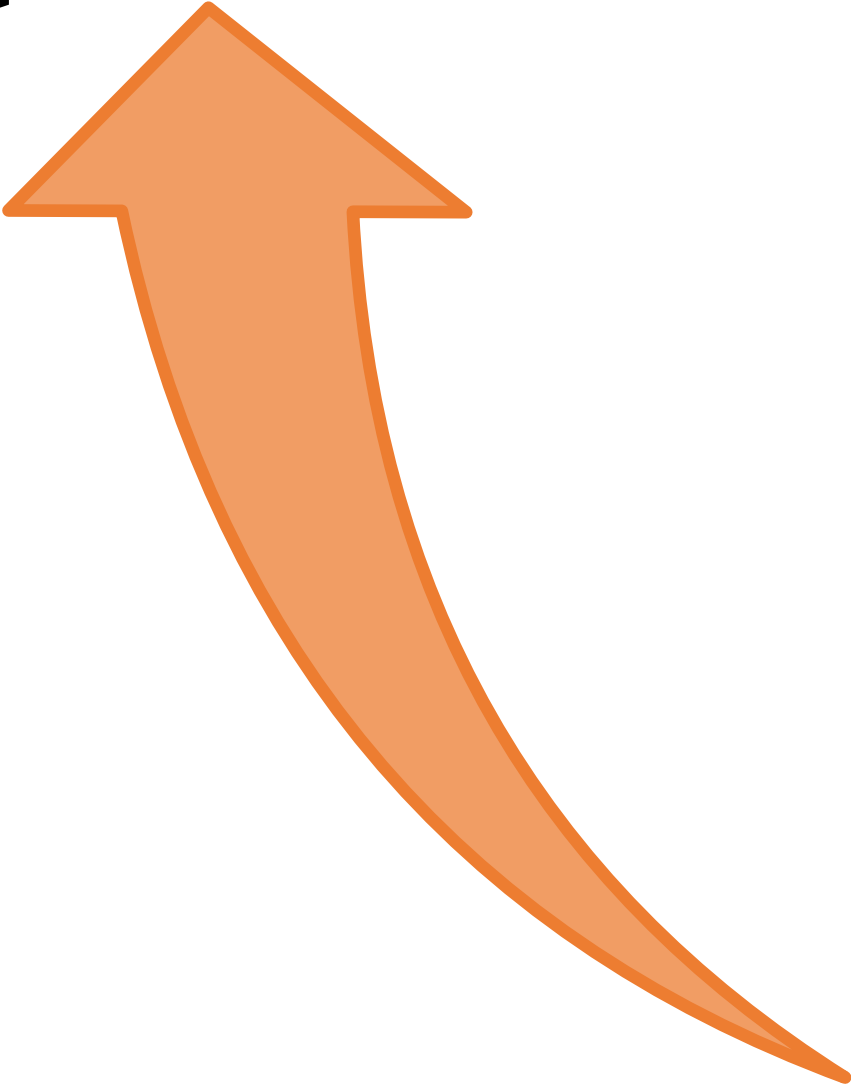
Reality • • •

Exercise 3 of 3: Planning

It's crucial to look ahead and give yourself realistic but challenging goals to get on with now! It enables you to go for things you'd love to see happen, identify challenges which are worth combatting and encouraging others to get on board with your vision.

Having identified things you'd like to see happen in two years' time, try filling out this sheet with goals that build towards that in the short term. You don't need to fill every line, three or four goals is ideal as it may mean that you're more likely to make them happen!

Column headings:

Goal, challenge, opportunity

Is your goal to start two new small groups by six months' time? Is your challenge that your students are really apathetic? Is the opportunity that you have a student wanting to start a new mission idea?

What do we know?

What do you know that affects your ability to complete your goal? For example; we have four potential small group leaders. Our students are really busy already so can't fit in more activities. We have a sermon series coming up that we can choose the topic of. We have budget available.

What to figure out?

What don't you know that you'd like to? For example; what nights are our students available on? What venues might be available? How much will this cost? Who might lead this?

Key next steps

These need to be tangible. For example; find four new leaders. Do a survey of our students' ideas. Cancel something we're already doing to make space.

Person responsible

This doesn't mean the person who's going to do everything! Choose one person to take responsibility for this goal. That might mean reminding the rest of the team about it, keeping it on your agenda, delegating further tasks etc.

How will we measure success?

This is really important - it may feel counter-intuitive but it helps to be able to know if you're on track or not. There's no point setting goals if you're not going to follow through on them. Measurables mean that you can say 'did we do it?' 'why didn't we manage it?' 'what would we do differently next time?' For example; two new small groups exist / We have new students in church / our weekend away is 60/40 Christian/non-Christian.

Use the following sheet as a template for your plan.
It's important to note that these goals may change over the six months as you pursue them and your wider student work. Be diligent in checking back and processing the changes as they happen.

[fusion]

Goal, Challenge, Opportunity	What do we know?	What to figure out?	Key next steps	Person Responsible	How will we measure success?	Notes
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						

Date: