



EARTHE

Activity 2

Digital toolkit for innovative curriculum and methodological development

Module - Leadership

Method - Leadership styles analysis

Case study



Module 5 - Leadership

Case study 1. - Leadership styles analysis

Related Method - Leadership styles analysis

Context and Background

A social business, growing quickly, employs 24 adults between the ages of 23 and 59 to run programs that teach people about the environment. The team is made up of educators, engineers, and marketers, and many of them were hired quickly after taking EU green skills training to improve their skills. Staff relied on natural ways of communicating that often didn't work well because they hadn't had any leadership training before. It worked with a local adult learning NGO to test a leadership styles analysis soft skills program (Red Yellow Green Blue model) in order to keep growth going and keep good employees.

Problem / Challenge Presented

The project talks were tense and didn't get much done. Coworkers who were more "Red" wanted decisions to be made quickly, while those who were more "Blue" wanted long readings of the data. "Green" members tried to keep the peace, and "Yellow" creatives felt like they weren't being heard. Due dates were missed because tasks were passed around without clear control. Exit interviews showed that people were unhappy with "communication chemistry," not workload. Instead of having strict rules, management needed to do something that helped everyone understand each other.

Actions Taken / Method Applied

The NGO delivered a three-session micro-programme:

Colour Clash Simulation – mixed-style teams solved a fictitious funding-crisis scenario, then debriefed on behavioural friction and synergy.

Style Mirror Feedback Workshop – staff compared self-identified colours with anonymous peer perceptions, revealing blind spots.

Leading in Colour Challenges – employees practised leading short tasks while exaggerating assigned colours, then reflected on situational fit.



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Throughout, the facilitator stressed flexibility: every person owns a palette, not a single hue.

Outcomes and Results

Three months following the colour-based program, the NGO saw noticeable changes:

- Project meetings became much more efficient, with an average session lasting only 85 minutes instead of 140 because participants now sign-posted their needs (e.g., "Blue details first, then Red decision"). There was a significant improvement in task ownership: after the training, over eight out of ten assignments were finalized without revision, whereas only roughly six out of ten had been finished on the first attempt. The psychological climate improved; according to survey data, the percentage of employees who felt "understood at work" increased from less than half (48%) to over four fifths (81%) of the workforce. On the qualitative side, team members started labelling emails with quick colour cues, such as "Blue detail inside" or "Green wellbeing check," which decreased misinterpretations; and several cross-colour mentoring pairs (e.g., a results-driven Red partnering with a harmony-oriented Green) emerged naturally to balance pace and empathy on community projects.
- Retention risk decreased: the percentage of employees considering resignation decreased from about one in four to less than one in ten.

Lessons Learned

A playful, neutral metaphor (colours) lowers defensiveness around behavioural feedback.
Real-time practice plus reflection (simulations, role challenges) cements insight far better than lectures.
Peer perception often differs from self-view; surfacing that gap is the catalyst for growth.

Key Success Factors

Whole-team participation, including managers—signals psychological safety.
Structured debrief questions that link style talk to concrete workflows.
Visual reminders (colour badges on desks, shared "palette board") keep language alive post-training.

Challenges Encountered and How They Were Addressed



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Scepticism (“another personality test”) – Countered by tying colours to live project pain points, not abstract theory.

Dominance of high-energy Reds/Yellows in activities – Facilitator enforced timed rounds and invited Blues/Greens first in some reflections.

Fear of labelling – Trainer reiterated that people shift hues across contexts; discussion centred on behaviours, not identity.

Applicability / Recommendations for Educators

Use the colour model early in multi-disciplinary or multi-generational adult cohorts to create shared vocabulary.

Combine at least one experiential activity (e.g., Colour Clash) with a feedback loop (Style Mirror) to embed insight.

Provide take-home visuals—mini “palette cards” participants can pin near workstations.

Revisit colours in later modules (e.g., conflict management) to reinforce transfer.

Stress that adaptability, not categorisation, is the ultimate learning goal.