Ypar NEXUS

RESOURCE

Charting Your Course: Problem Identification

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Problem Identification

Identifying Problems: The First Step to Change

As you embark on your journey to make a positive impact in your school, the first step is to identify the problems that matter most to you and your peers. This process involves brainstorming a wide range of issues that might be hindering your school's growth, affecting your well-being, or simply making school less enjoyable. As always with brainstorming, there are no bad ideas. The goal is to identify as many issues as possible, without judging or criticizing your initial ideas.

1. Begin by reflecting on the following questions:
➡ What frustrates or bothers you about school?
➡ What contributes to the stress you feel at school?
➡ What types of support do you wish your school had?
➡ Are there any rules or policies that seem unfair or unhelpful?
➡ Are there any resources or support services that you feel are lacking?
➡ Are there any safety concerns that you've noticed?
➡ What challenges do you face in your school?
➡ Are there any inequalities or injustices that you observe?
➡ What changes would make you look forward to school more?

2. Prioritizing issues and selecting a problem:
➡ **Step 1:** Identify the key indicators that will help you prioritize your list of problems. For example:

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Impact: How does the problem affect individuals, organizations, or society as a whole? How many people and to what extent does the issue affect others?

Urgency: Determine the time-sensitivity of the problem. Does it need immediate attention or can it wait?

Feasibility: Assess the likelihood of successfully addressing the problem. Are there available resources, expertise, and support?

Relevance: Evaluate the alignment of the problem with your goals and objectives. Will addressing it contribute to your desired

outcomes (i.e., the change you want to see in your school or community)?

➡ **Step 2:** Assign a numerical value to each indicator, such as a scale of 1-5.

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- 1- Low
- 2- Medium
- 3- High
- 4- Very High
- 5- Extremely High

➡ **Step 3:** Evaluate Each Problem.

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For each identified problem, rate it on each indicator based on your own experiences and expertise.

➡ **Step 4:** Calculate a Priority Score.

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Sum the scores to determine the overall priority of each problem.

➡ **Step 5:** Rank the Problems.

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Arrange the problems in descending order based on their priority scores.

The higher the score, the more urgent and impactful the problem.

➡ **Step 6:** Consider Additional Factors.

6

○ While the priority scores provide a quantitative assessment, it's important to consider qualitative factors as well.

○ For example, are there ethical concerns associated with the problem or its potential solutions?

➡ **Step 7:** Make Informed Decisions.

7

○ Use the priority scores to make informed decisions about which problem(s) to prioritize for your project.

○ Consider the overall goals and objectives of your project, as well as the available resources and constraints (e.g., limited timeframes due to academic calendars or standardized testing schedules, mandated curricula, need for permission from district officials).

Example:

Problem	Impact	Urgency	Feasibility	Relevance	Priority Score
Poor quality of school lunch	3	2	3	4	12
Lack of connection between students and teachers	5	4	4	5	18
Too much homework and too many tests	4	4	3	4	15

In this example, "lack of connection between students and teachers" would be considered the highest priority problem.