

BNC Case

When Talent Becomes a Boundary

Case Goal

To develop students' Whole Mindset by helping them recognize the natural talents of the Thinker, Dreamer, Challenger, and Lover, understand how dominant Intelligence creates both strengths and limitations, and practise Self-Expansion by preserving their natural talents while deliberately developing the intelligences and talents they may need for future roles.

William, Catrine, Elisabeth, and Henry were final-year university students who had worked together on several assignments. They were close friends, but anyone who spent time with them quickly noticed that they approached everyday situations very differently.

William liked order. As a Planner, he rarely began an assignment without first deciding what needed to be done and when it should be completed. As an Analyzer, he compared information carefully before choosing anything, even when deciding which laptop to buy or which elective course to take. His friends considered him Responsible because if William promised to finish something, it was usually finished on time. During group work, he naturally became the Coordinator, dividing tasks and keeping everyone aligned. He was also a clear Communicator, able to explain complicated ideas in a logical and understandable way.

Catrine was naturally curious. As a Learner, she was constantly discovering new things, often outside her own field of study. As an Innovator, she enjoyed finding different ways to do ordinary things. As a Synthesizer, she could connect ideas from different subjects and turn them into something new. She often became a Change Agent, questioning why people continued doing something simply because it had always been done that way. As a Trend Watcher, she frequently noticed new technologies, lifestyles, and consumer trends before her friends paid attention to them.

Elisabeth preferred movement to prolonged discussion. As a Commander, she naturally took charge when nobody knew what to do. As a Competitor, difficult challenges usually increased rather than reduced her energy. As a Motivator, she could push friends forward when they became tired or discouraged. As an Achiever, she liked setting clear goals and enjoyed the satisfaction of reaching them. As an Actor, she preferred trying something, seeing what happened, and learning from the result instead of discussing possibilities endlessly.

Henry paid close attention to people. As a Role Model, he tried to behave in ways that others could respect and follow. As a Connector, he enjoyed introducing people and bringing different friendship groups together. As a Mentor, he patiently helped classmates who needed advice. As an Altruist, he was often willing to help without expecting anything in return. As a Unifier, he naturally stepped in when disagreements began dividing a group and helped people find common ground again.

During their final semester, the university announced a business challenge. Student teams would receive Rp100 million in seed funding and six months to build a real business. The winning team would receive additional investment and an opportunity to continue developing the company after graduation.

The four friends formed a team.

Their initial idea was to create an affordable healthy-food service for university students. Healthy meals around campus were becoming popular, but many were expensive. Cheaper food was widely available, yet students increasingly complained about nutrition and convenience. Catrine believed there was a business opportunity between the two.

During the first month, their different talents seemed to create an ideal team. William studied competitors, customer spending, costs, and demand before building a financial plan. Catrine interviewed students, followed food trends, and repeatedly improved the original concept. Elisabeth contacted suppliers, negotiated prices, set weekly targets, and pushed the team toward launch. Henry developed relationships with student organizations, recruited product testers, and gathered feedback from students who might otherwise have remained silent.

Their lecturer was impressed.

“You seem to have everything a business team needs,” she told them.

The four students agreed.

Without formally discussing it, they gradually divided responsibilities according to what each person did naturally. William handled planning and analysis. Catrine handled innovation. Elisabeth handled execution. Henry handled people and relationships.

For several months, the arrangement worked well.

Then the business stopped growing.

Students generally liked the product, but repeat purchases were lower than expected. William’s numbers revealed another problem. If they lowered prices further, the business would eventually lose money.

The team needed to change something.

Catrine proposed transforming the business from a meal-delivery service into a campus food platform. Students could combine meals from different small food producers, subscribe weekly, and eventually receive personalized recommendations based on their preferences.

William immediately began questioning the idea.

“How many students actually want this? How much will the platform cost? What is the break-even point? Do we have enough evidence that this is better than improving the existing business?”

Catrine became frustrated.

“We are trying to discover something new. We cannot have all the evidence before we try it.”

Elisabeth looked at the calendar.

“We have only three months left. We can keep analysing and imagining, but at some point somebody has to decide and move.”

Henry noticed that the conversation was becoming increasingly personal.

“All of you have reasonable points,” he said. “Maybe we should wait until everyone is comfortable before making a major decision.”

Everyone became calmer.

But the business still had no decision.

Two weeks later, sales remained flat.

Their lecturer asked each student separately what they thought was going wrong.

William believed the team was considering ideas without sufficient analysis. Catrine believed William analysed ideas until they lost momentum. Elisabeth believed the team was avoiding decisions. Henry believed the team needed to restore harmony before pushing further.

The lecturer listened carefully.

Then she asked them one question.

“What if each of you is seeing the problem correctly, but only from the way of thinking that comes most naturally to you?”

The room became quiet.

At the next meeting, she gave them an unexpected assignment.

William would lead the development of a new business concept. For the first stage, he was not allowed to begin with spreadsheets, competitor analysis, or financial feasibility. He had to generate possibilities first.

Catrine would take one promising idea and determine whether it could become a realistic business model. She had to work with cost structures, operational processes, risks, and implementation constraints rather than simply generate more ideas.

Elisabeth would conduct the next customer interviews. She could not persuade anyone, defend the existing idea, or move the discussion toward action. Her task was simply to listen, observe, and understand.

Henry would lead the final decision meeting. He could listen to everyone, but eventually he had to recommend one direction even if some team members remained unhappy with his decision.

None of them liked the assignment.

William looked at Catrine.

“She is obviously better at generating ideas. Why would you ask me to do her job?”

Catrine laughed.

“And why should I spend hours analysing numbers when William can do that much faster?”

Elisabeth shook her head.

“You want me to spend an entire interview listening when the business needs action?”

Henry looked even more uncomfortable.

“And if I choose one direction, somebody may feel ignored.”

Their lecturer did not change the assignment.

“You have already shown what happens when you use your strongest talents,” she said. “Now I want you to discover what happens when the situation requires something else from you.”

The experiment was difficult.

William initially struggled to generate ideas without evaluating them. His first suggestions were simply improvements to the existing business. After several attempts, however, he proposed using unused kitchen capacity in nearby restaurants during their quiet hours. The business would no longer need to prepare every meal itself and might be able to offer more variety without immediately investing in additional facilities.

Cattrine initially found financial modelling frustrating. But while analysing William's idea, she discovered that several assumptions made it commercially unrealistic. Instead of abandoning the concept, she redesigned it. Her creativity became more focused because she now understood which constraints could not simply be ignored.

Elisabeth entered the customer interviews assuming that students would ask for lower prices. Because she was required to listen rather than sell or immediately solve the problem, she discovered something different. Several students were willing to pay the existing price but disliked committing to meals they had never tasted. Their problem was not simply affordability; it was uncertainty.

Henry faced the most uncomfortable challenge during the final decision meeting. Three possible directions remained, and everyone preferred something different. Normally, Henry would have continued discussing until agreement emerged.

This time, he listened, summarized the arguments, and made a recommendation.

Two people disagreed.

The atmosphere became uncomfortable.

But the team finally had a direction.

Over the following weeks, each student noticed something unexpected.

William remained the team's strongest Analyzer and Planner, but he had become more comfortable exploring possibilities before judging them. Cattrine remained its strongest Innovator and Trend Watcher, but she was becoming better at turning imagination into something economically and operationally realistic. Elisabeth remained highly action-oriented and achievement-driven, but she discovered that listening carefully could sometimes produce better action. Henry remained the strongest Connector and Unifier, but he began understanding that maintaining relationships did not always mean avoiding difficult decisions.

Their original talents had not disappeared.

They had expanded.

One month before the competition ended, the business attracted the attention of a local restaurant group. After reviewing the concept and meeting the four students, the group offered Rp500 million in investment if they continued the business after graduation.

The offer was attractive, but the investor proposed a clear organizational structure.

William would become responsible for planning, analysis, and financial control.

Cattrine would lead innovation, products, and market trends.

Elisabeth would manage operations, targets, and business growth.

Henry would manage people, partnerships, and organizational relationships.

On paper, the structure looked almost perfect.

Each person would be placed in the role that matched what they already did best.

Elisabeth wanted to accept immediately.

“This is exactly what businesses do. Put the right person in the right job.”

William agreed.

“If we already know our strengths, why deliberately make the company less efficient by putting people into roles where they are weaker?”

Cattrine looked again at the organization chart.

“But if I spend the next ten years only generating ideas because that is what I am good at now, what happens if one day I need to lead the entire company?”

Henry had another concern.

“And what happens if the business changes? The role I am best at today may not be the role the company needs from me five years from now.”

William responded that businesses needed specialization. A company could not constantly ask people to become beginners.

Elisabeth agreed. They had spent six months trying different roles because they were students. Once real investors, employees, and customers became involved, performance would matter more.

Cattrine was not convinced.

“Maybe. But perhaps becoming good at something should not mean becoming trapped by it.”

For the first time, their different talents created a deeper question.

Their natural talents had helped them build the business.

But could the same talents eventually limit their development?

William could continue becoming a better Planner, Analyzer, Coordinator, Responsible manager, and Communicator.

Catrine could become an even stronger Learner, Innovator, Synthesizer, Change Agent, and Trend Watcher.

Elisabeth could deepen her strengths as Commander, Competitor, Motivator, Achiever, and Actor.

Henry could continue developing as Role Model, Connector, Mentor, Altruist, and Unifier.

That would make each of them increasingly valuable within a particular role.

But it could also make the business increasingly dependent on everyone remaining exactly where they were.

The investor needed an answer the following morning.

The four students now had to decide whether development meant becoming better at who they already were, or becoming capable of more than what currently came naturally to them.

For the first time, they were not simply designing the future of the business.

They were also deciding the future of themselves.

Your Assignment

Imagine that you are the fifth founder of the business. Tomorrow morning, you must help William, Catrine, Elisabeth, and Henry respond to the investor.

First, identify how each founder represents the Thinker, Dreamer, Challenger, or Lover Intelligence Mindset. Explain how the five natural talents associated with each person have contributed to the success of the business and where those same talents could eventually become limitations.

Then use a Whole Mindset to decide whether the founders should accept the investor's proposed specialization, reject it, or redesign the roles. Your recommendation should not require them to abandon their natural talents. Instead, explain how the business can benefit from specialization while still creating opportunities for Self-Awareness, Self-Expansion, and Whole Talent development.

Your team must also consider the future. Explain what could happen if William always remains the Analyzer, Catrine always remains the Innovator, Elisabeth always remains the Achiever, and Henry always remains the Connector. Would specialization make them stronger leaders, or could it eventually make each person dependent on the others whenever a new situation requires a different intelligence?

Finally, reflect on yourself. Identify whether you naturally approach situations more as a Thinker, Dreamer, Challenger, or Lover. Which talents already appear naturally in your daily life? Which talents from another Intelligence feel least natural to you, and what experiences could help you begin developing them?

Be prepared to defend your answer: **Does your natural talent determine the role you should always play, or does it simply reveal the strongest starting point from which your Whole Mindset can continue to grow?**