This lecture is about different styles and strength. To have a successful team, you need to know team members styles and strengths. This is not the job of the team leader only. It is the responsibility of everyone in the team.

Let us start by playing a simple game. Please pause the video and choose the five words that best describe you.

Please pause now and resume after you have chosen five words.

Now, mark the words by the colors.

Please pause the video and mark the colors.

The four different colors correspond to four styles of thinking: logic, manage, feelings, and imagine. Do you have more words in one specific category?

I have done this experiment in my classroom. More than half students had three to five words in the same category. Several students even had all five words in the same category. In the experiment, few people chose words from all four categories.

What does this mean?

It means most people have style and strength in specific category. I understand that this is a game and it is not a scientific study. Nevertheless, this game suggests different people have different styles.

If you want to have a successful project, you need people of different styles. Imagine the following situation. Every member in a team is creative and nobody cares about management, what will happen? The team will miss deadlines, over spend, and ignore customers’ needs.

If everyone is a manager, the team will also fail. They care about budget, deadline, reliability, but their solutions may be not creative and cannot compete.

If you want the team to succeed, you need to know your own style and the other members’ styles. Assign the right tasks to the right person.

Every successful team needs diverse talents. An orchestra needs musicians of different instruments.

A baseball team needs pitcher, catcher, bases, fielders, and so on.

An airline needs pilots, flight attendants, gate agent, mechanics, and many other talents. You cannot fly an airplane if you have only pilots.

Remember, your team can be better if the members have different expertise.

After understanding these, what can you do? You need to understand the differences of the members. This is not the responsibility of the team leader only. This is the responsibility of every member.

Miscommunication may occur because different members value and focus on different things. Consider a situation when several people are discussing a feature in a new product. One person may focus on whether this feature is easy for customers. Another person may want a creative solution. Yet another person is worried that this feature may cost too much and make the product miss the delivery date. They may think that they are discussing the feature. In reality, they focus on different topics.

If you are the leader of the team, it is particularly important for you to know the members’ styles and assign the right tasks to them.

You should try to know people outside your social circle and invite them to join your team. These people may different majors, study at different schools, and come from different countries. Even though the differences may occasionally cause disagreement or misunderstanding, the different styles will make the team much stronger. If your team have diverse talents, the team is more likely to succeed because different people pay attention to different parts of the projects.