

DEBRIEF SESSION GUIDELINES

Purpose

The Big Ideas Programme is based on Project-Based Learning (PBL), which emphasizes reflection during the ‘debrief’ stage. This allows students to review their achievements, skills gained, and overall learning. Debrief sessions are held as students exit the programme, whether after the initial submission or the regional and national finals. Non-shortlisted teams receive feedback and have the chance to reflect on their experience

Your role

As a mentor/teacher, you will facilitate debrief sessions with non-shortlisted teams, serving as a sounding board and guiding the discussion. Share positive feedback from the judges, let teams ask questions, and give them space to express their thoughts and feelings as well as reflect on their skills development, and acknowledge their progress throughout the programme journey. Stay positive and praise their efforts.

Highlight that not advancing doesn’t mean their Big Idea lacked quality or impact. This is a national competition with many schools competing (109 submissions from 20 schools involving 421 students this year!), so to have committed to working on their Big Ideas through all the development sessions is a great achievement—reinforced by the achievement certificates.

Suggested steps for a debrief session:

1. Preparation

- Print out the Debrief Activity sheets, double-sided, one per student
- Print out the Achievement Certificates, filling in the individual names for each student, ready to hand out at the end

2. Group size – will the session be done as a whole or split into smaller groups? (Depending on number of students)

3. Short discussion about how they feel about their time on the programme as a whole (5 minutes)

How are they feeling now that their time on the Big Ideas Programme has come to a close? (some may have nothing to say, some may feel angry/upset/disappointed, some may feel proud...it’s important to give them the space to express these feelings and acknowledge them).

4. Complete the Debrief Reflection Activity (15 minutes)

- Using the Reflection Activity template, get the teams to fill out the 4 spaces. The speech bubbles help to provide guidance on:
 - ‘Skills’ (the second page provides more guidance on this section)
 - ‘Highlights’
 - ‘Lessons’
 - ‘Moving Forward’
- **Students can complete the activity how they wish.** Some might want to write key words, others full sentences, some might prefer to draw pictures or use symbols - any option is fine, let them be creative.

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- 5. Summary discussion (10 minutes)** - Use the completed Reflection Activity Sheets as prompts, share the responses as a whole group (or in smaller ones), encouraging each student to share.
- 6. End by reading the judges' positive feedback for each team** and contribute any of your thoughts/praise/encouragement, and hand out the Achievement Certificates (take photos if permitted!) and end with a big round of applause!

Additional Points:

- Please make notes on your conversations with teams (excluding student names) or scan completed activity sheets and email them to your S4TP Programme Coordinator.
- The key focus of this session is engaging students in discussion, helping them reflect on our feedback and their skills development, and encouraging them to believe in their ability to make a difference.
- Emphasize the 4 skills from Big Ideas Day: teamwork, listening, creativity, and problem-solving.
- Participation in the Big Ideas journey qualifies students to apply for a CREST Discovery Award—more details will follow.
- Teams can continue developing their Big Ideas even if they're not progressing in the competition.
- There are many opportunities that can be shared with your students, for example:
 - <https://www.iwill.org.uk/join-iwill/become-an-iwill-changemaker/>
 - <https://www.iwill.org.uk/be-an-ambassador/>
 - <https://www.thebigbang.org.uk/the-big-bang-competition/how-to-enter/> (entry next year)