## LEARNINGLAB

Welcome back to BIG WORD Thursday!... Better known as the Learning Lab. Again, I'm Doc Studnek and this is Medic 101. Let's continue our conversation surrounding Medic's, Strategic Planning Process.

In order to start the class today, we need to spend just a moment defining two words that we frequently use to describe Strategic Planning Process' flow of ideas: **Divergent** and **Convergent**.

- **Convergent:** Coming closer together, especially in characteristics and ideas.
- **Divergent:** Following the journey of a female protagonist through a parallel, yet dystopian society. Oh wait that's the book series (and a not-so hit movie) by Veronica Roth. I digress... *Divergent:* tending to be different or develop in different directions or more specifically; a thought process or method used to generate creative ideas by exploring many possible solutions.

The heart of Medic's Strategic Planning Process includes moving through a series of divergent and convergent thinking steps. This allows us to produce well-articulated strategic objectives. Last week, we discussed Input Collection and Synthesis. The next step in the process is a diverging step where Agency Leadership takes the provided information and generates improvement ideas or areas of opportunity. This step is conducted by Agency Leadership (all Agency Leaders, Supervisors and above). The converging step takes the generated ideas, groups similar ideas together and looks for common themes within said groups.

To conduct this step, the Management Team (all Agency Managers, Deputy Directors and the Executive Director) takes all of the divergent ideas (or opportunities) and begins placing similar ideas into distinct groups. Here's where the fun begins... Managers and Directors write generated ideas on sticky notes, place them on the wall, shift them around until they identify similar idea groups. GO TEAM STICKY NOTE! This is the beginning of consensus building or general agreement on themes.

The ability to process a large number of ideas and agree on what the underlying issue (or identify themes) helps Agency Leadership become clear on the areas that need improvement or additional resources. The consensus building is also an opportunity to be sure that all managers are heard and can



MODULE THREE: STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS