

Cambridge Professional Learning

# From Teacher to Teacher Leader

Hayo Reinders



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Keys: Intro = Introduction, Ch = Chapter

Text

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# Dedication

To my amazing family. In love we trust.



# Introduction

When reading this book, you may not be in a formal leadership position, but perhaps you have been asked to coordinate one of the courses in your programme, or maybe people rely on you to select new teaching materials or to help out new colleagues. If you find yourself doing such things, you are a *teacher leader*, and engaged in what in the literature is called 'leading from behind' or 'leading from the periphery'. I like to call it 'leading from within', which better reflects the personal commitment we share as teachers to improving our environment, our students, our colleagues and ourselves, but seeing as 'leading from behind' is the most commonly used term, I will adopt this from now on.

There are many different ways in which we (sometimes consciously and often not consciously) take on roles that go beyond our everyday teaching responsibilities. Here are some of the more commonly reported by teachers from around the world at all education levels:

- mentoring new teachers;
- doing action research;
- joining a materials development team;
- coordinating a course;
- offering a professional learning workshop.

You have probably engaged in one or more of these. Maybe you have wondered how to perform these roles better, or have been tempted to take on other roles. Maybe you have ideas for a new course but are not sure how to get this off the ground. Or maybe you have a particular interest or skill that you feel could benefit your colleagues but you don't want to seem pushy or self-important. Where to start? Most teachers do not get guidance on how to expand their reach. We tend not to get sent on leadership courses, partake in management workshops or receive strategic planning and project management training, unlike professionals in, for example, the business world. Furthermore, among teachers there is an inherent suspicion of people who are considered too ambitious. Many of us have been stung too often before by poor management to want another power-hungry manager-in-the-making in our midst. But that should not stop you from looking for ways to improve – yourself and your environment. This is where the book you are holding comes in. It does not assume you are climbing the career ladder to Principal or Dean or Chief Executive (although it will certainly help you if so, and kudos to you), but simply provides you with the tools and confidence to better serve your community in the way you wish to.



In this book we will consider all aspects of leadership, starting from the personal (your values and assumptions, beliefs and preferences) to the interpersonal (how you communicate with and learn from others, how you share ideas, build trust and inspire people), to the technical (how to engage stakeholders or navigate the decision-making process).

Think of this book as a toolbox. In the following pages we will take out each tool and examine it, apply it to our practice, and sharpen it further if needed. Then, when the time comes, you have these tools at the ready. The book does this in three ways:

1. by giving examples of how the different aspects of teacher leadership work in practice;
2. by encouraging you to examine your own practice and create a Personal Development Plan;
3. by integrating Project-Based Learning throughout the chapters.

For 1) we include examples of best practice, as well as examples of when things did not go as planned. All illustrations come from teachers such as yourself, from a wide range of countries, working in a wide range of contexts. For 2) your Personal Development Plan (PDP from now on) is essentially a portfolio of those skills and areas you want to work on further. You can see an example of how a PDP is structured below. You will find one at the end of each chapter, containing questions/prompts relating to that specific chapter for you to reflect on. If there is any action you want to engage in, you include it here, along with any resources you have at your disposal (including those mentioned in the chapter). You assign a priority for working on the topic, and set a deadline. Of course, each of these is optional. Some reflective questions may prompt you to write down your thoughts, but no action may be necessary. Or no particular deadline is needed. You can add your own 'action' rows to your copy of each PDP with your own ideas for areas to improve or follow up on. When you have finished reading the book (or those chapters you are interested in), putting the PDPs together gives you a practical plan of action for your further leadership development.

Professional Development Plan	
Prompt/question	
Reflection	
Action	Priority (1–5)
Resources	By when

For 3) the Project-Based Learning (PBL from now on) component of the book is a practical way of applying what you read in the context of a project that you would like to carry out in your community. This could be anything from developing a new course to introducing new technology into

your class, from conducting action research to applying for a grant, and so on. In each chapter, a short section titled *Your Project* will apply what is explored in the main text to that particular stage of the PBL process. For example, in chapter 10 on stakeholder engagement, you will be encouraged to identify stakeholders *in the context of your project*, develop the necessary engagement plan, and carry it out. In this way, you apply what you learn immediately and the outcome of the entire process is a finalized project.

## What is leadership to you?

Let's start with a little thought experiment. Think of someone who has inspired you, someone who you see as an example of a true leader. This could be a public figure, like Gandhi, or it could be a personal hero, like a parent or a mentor. Next, write down in the table below what adjectives best describe the person's leadership and describe their actions as an example of each quality.

This leader is	(S)he
<i>kind</i>	<i>always gives people a chance to be their best and does not dwell on mistakes.</i>

From my observations of many hundreds of teachers' responses to this question, the following are often-mentioned characteristics:

- supportive;
- clear;
- trustworthy;
- inclusive;
- empowering;
- transparent;
- creative;
- patient;
- empathetic.

You may have different ones in your list. Whatever they are, a key point to make and one whose importance cannot be overstated is this:

*Each of the leadership qualities you admire can be nurtured and developed in yourself.*

*I had earlier assumed that leaders, at least good leaders, just were naturally able to lead. Realizing that leadership can be learned was comforting and supportive!*

(Anastasia, Moldova)

Very few teachers respond with leaders' qualities such as 'super-intelligent' or 'has incredible stamina', or other such unachievable characteristics. Mostly people who we recognize as leaders simply display many of the qualities we appreciate, and display them consistently. This opens the door for us to identify those qualities we want to develop and improve, and then create a plan to do so, as Anastasia recognized above. As Kouzes & Posner (2003) remind us: 'leadership is not a gene'. It is not something you are born with or without. For example, if you feel that being able to deliver a message clearly to different groups of people is important, then you can improve your communication skills, practise active listening, and seek out opportunities for collaboration. If you feel being supportive is important, you can organize your time so that you have the opportunity to mentor colleagues.

So, the question I ask you to consider at this point reflects the heart of this book:

*What actions are you taking at the moment to nurture, develop and improve those attributes that you admire and aspire to have?*

And related to this, if you are not fully committed to those actions you would like to take:

*What is holding you back?*

The rest of this book will give you plenty of opportunities to figure out your aspirations in greater detail, and give you ideas for the specific actions that are available to you.

*I wish I had taken courses on educational leadership and organizational management, since as one moves from teacher to teacher educator to educational leader, knowledge of one's teaching subject is insufficient to prepare one for the complex internal dynamics that arise in managing a university academic department.*

(Jack Richards, RELC Singapore)

## ***A note on terminology***

I use the word 'school' to describe any type of formal learning environment from early childhood to the tertiary level, including training centres and learning units in companies. When specifically talking about particular contexts, I use words like 'university' or 'vocational institute'.



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# **PART 1**

# **PERSONAL LEADERSHIP**

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# 1 What is teacher leadership?

## Overview

As teachers we play many roles. There are the obvious ones, such as delivering our classes, preparing materials and grading assignments. Then there are the equally important, but sometimes less visible, roles of communicating with parents, comforting a distraught student or engaging in professional development. And then there are those that may not even be in our job descriptions, such as checking in on a new staff member, offering a workshop to colleagues or sharing interesting new materials we picked up at a conference. It is these last roles that we will mostly be looking at here. They are examples of 'leading from behind', where teachers can play pivotal roles 'behind the scenes', so to speak. We will look at the many ways teachers take on such responsibilities and look at options for assuming and integrating them in a way that aligns with our personal values.

## Leadership is not the same as management

Before we get into the topic of teacher leadership, it is important to distinguish *leadership* from *management*. Many people mistakenly equate the two, and it is my belief that this is one of the main reasons why many teachers are reluctant to take on additional responsibilities in their organization. Many fear that doing so will mean more administration, less time for pedagogy and research, and – something that many teachers dread – having to supervise colleagues. None of this is necessarily the case.

Think of leadership and management as operating on a continuum. They are obviously related, but roles can include more or less of one or the other. Below are some examples of typical activities:

<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Management</b>
mentoring	financial planning
sharing materials	job interviews
action research	performance reviews
motivating colleagues	chairing meetings

As you can see, it is possible to engage in just the activities in one of the columns. In other words, developing leadership skills does *not* mean becoming an 'administrator' or a 'technocrat'.

However, I want to ask you to put any prejudices you may have about (or poor experiences you may have had with) management aside while reading this book. Although this book is about leadership, it is my belief that good leaders have managerial qualities and good managers have leadership qualities. The two are inextricably related. Although most teachers naturally feel more comfortable on the leadership side of the continuum, there is much to be gained from opening your mind to the benefits of some of the tools and techniques of successful managers.

As one example, many managers receive training in how to manage projects. They know how to set deadlines and monitor progress. They also know how to keep an eye on expenses so there is money left for salaries at the end of the month. These are valuable skills for all of us. Consider the skills of good management as extremely useful tools. You choose which ones are relevant to you in a particular situation, and you choose when to apply them. In this book we will not review management skills in detail. There are plenty of references to useful resources mentioned throughout the book, and there are numerous excellent materials and courses available. We will, however, show when and how situations call for, or benefit from, managerial skills and strategies, so that you can understand what resources you may need to bring in or develop yourself.

## From leading from the top to leading from behind

Leadership models have changed significantly over the years. Especially in education, it is now recognized that all teachers benefit from developing leadership skills, and that the strongest and most sustainable teams are those where responsibilities are distributed among teacher leaders, rather than centralized at the top. Previous models often placed considerable emphasis on a single leader and on the qualities and behaviours needed to be successful in a leadership role. Over the years, leadership has come instead to be seen more as a process in which multiple actors play a role, and leadership emerges as a result of what happens between people, the quality of their relationships, and the context they work within. We have also seen a shift away from a focus on technical processes, outcomes and resources to one that places people at the centre. Here are some common examples of leadership models in education:

<b>Servant leadership</b>	The role of the leader is to support the community they work in.
<b>Distributed leadership</b>	Leadership does not reside in one person, but is spread across the community, with everyone sharing responsibility for ensuring the success of that community.
<b>Values-based leadership</b>	The emphasis is on identifying and working towards implementing an organization's values. The leader's role is to facilitate this process.
<b>Instructional leadership</b>	Instructional leadership facilitates organizational and individual learning with the aim of growing as a community.
<b>Transformational leadership</b>	Transformational leadership is an umbrella term that encompasses leadership styles that focus on growth, purpose and value, and work towards long-term aims, with an emphasis on people's well-being and development.
<b>Transactional leadership</b>	The opposite of transformational leadership, with a stronger focus on improving efficiency and performance, systems and processes.

There are many other models, but the point to recognize is that the idea of a 'boss' managing an organization from the stratospheric heights of the hierarchy is not the reality in many educational environments. And it certainly is not a reality you would need to strive for yourself.

## What does teacher leadership look like?

Recent years have seen a growing recognition that developing teacher leadership is a vital aspect of ongoing teacher learning, and, as a result, a great deal of work has been done on investigating what makes some teachers successful leaders, identifying the types of practices they engage in, and developing guidelines and models for teachers' professional development.

One particularly useful example of this is the Model Teacher Leader Standards, developed in 2010 by the Teacher Leadership Exploratory Consortium in the United States. The document is available online for free ([tlstandards.weebly.com](http://tlstandards.weebly.com)) and is worth looking up. It describes seven broad leadership domains and gives examples of teacher activities for each of them. In our review below we draw on Baecher (2012: 320), who provides a useful summary. For each domain we include reference to resources, both within this book and elsewhere, to support your personal development.

As you read through the table, you can rate your level of interest or the importance you assign to each domain from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high), as well as your level of confidence in your abilities, again from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high); the domains with the highest interest/importance and lowest confidence ratings are your priority areas to work on. Transfer the top three of these to your Professional Development Plan (PDP) at the end of this chapter.



Leadership Domain 1	Sample Activities
<i>Understanding adults as learners to support professional learning communities</i>	Facilitates group processes to solve problems, make decisions, promote change.  Works to create an inclusive cohort of colleagues who share resources and trust each other.
<p><b>Comments and resources</b></p> <p>Fostering a collaborative culture relies heavily on strong communication skills and the ability to build trust and create enthusiasm among people from different parts of the organization. It also, at times, requires the ability to manage conflict. We deal with various communication strategies throughout the book but you will find that particularly the chapters on community leadership contain many useful examples. Chapter 7 deals specifically with trust-building and dealing with resistance. Building collaborative processes and involving other stakeholders in projects is covered in chapter 10.</p> <p>Many thousands of books have been published on communication skills for leadership (most in the area of business), but not many specifically for teachers. Instead, we recommend you look for books on specific topics that interest you, such as 'conflict management' or 'conducting efficient meetings'. The following are classic texts on building networks, often referred to in education:</p> <p>Lave, J., &amp; Wenger, E. (1991). <i>Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation</i>. Cambridge University Press.</p> <p>Wenger, E., McDermott, R. A., &amp; Snyder, W. (2002). <i>Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge</i>. Harvard Business Press.</p>	
<b>Importance</b>	<b>Confidence</b>

Leadership Domain 2	Sample Activities
<i>Assessing and using research to improve practice and student learning</i>	Assists colleagues in accessing research and student learning data.  Facilitates analysis of student data and application of findings to revise instructional strategies.
<p><b>Comments and resources</b></p> <p>It is remarkable how many teachers will say they are not researchers but will answer affirmatively when asked if they 1) monitor their learners, 2) evaluate their classes, 3) reflect on their practice, 4) share observations with colleagues, and so on. A teacher leader engages in all these practices, but perhaps in a more collaborative manner so as to inform and support colleagues, and in order to align observations and student data to get to the bigger picture. In other words, teacher leaders move beyond their own classrooms to support the wider community in their school. In chapter 4 we deal with different forms of teacher-led research, including <i>action research</i>, <i>exploratory research</i>, <i>appreciative inquiry</i> and so on. For more information consider:</p> <p>Burns, A. (2008). <i>Doing action research in English language teaching: A guide for practitioners</i>. Routledge.</p>	
<b>Importance</b>	<b>Confidence</b>

Leadership Domain 3	Sample Activities
<i>Promoting professional learning for continuous improvement</i>	Provides feedback to colleagues to strengthen teaching practice and improve student learning.  Identifies and promotes a variety of professional learning based on colleagues' needs for improvement.
<p><b>Comments and resources</b></p> <p>One of the most common leadership activities for teachers, and often one of the first, is involvement in professional learning. Maybe you have a particular interest in, say, using movies in teaching, or have recently taken a course on instructional design and would like to share your knowledge. Leading from behind involves identifying interests and needs that exist within your community, and finding out how best to share your expertise (or bring in that of others). This requires both obvious skills, such as knowing how to present academic content (chapter 6), and also more subtle ones, such as giving constructive feedback or raising issues with managers. If you are new to offering professional learning opportunities for colleagues, some of the more practical skills are covered in this book:</p> <p>Reinders, H. &amp; Lewis, M. (2013). <i>Facilitating workshops</i>. Palgrave Macmillan.</p>	
<b>Importance</b>	<b>Confidence</b>

Leadership Domain 4	Sample Activities
<i>Facilitating improvements in instruction and student learning</i>	Supports colleagues' growth by serving in roles such as mentor, coach, content facilitator or peer evaluator.  Serves as a team leader to harness the skills, expertise and knowledge of colleagues.
<p><b>Comments and resources</b></p> <p>Mentoring colleagues can be highly rewarding for both parties but certainly comes with challenges. Who initiates the relationship? And where are the boundaries of the collaboration? Teacher leaders actively look for opportunities to help colleagues where they can, with sensitivity, patience and compassion. This includes acting as a liaison between different people (including non-teachers) who can bring different insights. We talk about best practices in mentoring in chapter 6 and in the context of performance reviews in chapter 9. You may also want to consider this book:</p> <p>Smith, M. &amp; Lewis, M. (2017). <i>Supporting the development of English language teachers: Facilitative mentoring</i>. Routledge.</p>	
<b>Importance</b>	<b>Confidence</b>

<b>Leadership Domain 5</b>		<b>Sample Activities</b>	
<i>Using assessments and data for school improvement</i>		<p>Facilitates teams of teachers in evaluating and interpreting student performance data.</p> <p>Works with colleagues to use assessment and data findings to recommend potential changes in organizational structure or practice.</p>	
<b>Comments and resources</b>			
<p>Assessment for learning (or 'formative assessment') has emerged as one of the most impactful activities schools can engage in to enhance learning outcomes. Similarly, the use of learning analytics and other forms of data gathering and dissemination are increasingly accessible and very promising tools for teachers with the willingness to engage with these – at first – challenging topics. Teacher leaders who can identify, share and draw on data can play a significant role across (and beyond) their organization. We deal with the leadership aspects of dealing with data in chapter 11, including how to communicate its use in a transparent manner within and across teams and how to go about raising issues with managers or other stakeholders in the organization. For more specific information about assessment for learning and learning analytics, consider:</p> <p>Black, P., Harrison, C. &amp; Lee, C. (2003). <i>Assessment for learning: Putting it into practice</i>. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).</p> <p>Lodge, J. M., Horvath, J. C. &amp; Corrin, L. (Eds.). (2018). <i>Learning analytics in the classroom: Translating learning analytics research for teachers</i>. Routledge.</p>			
<b>Importance</b>		<b>Confidence</b>	

<b>Leadership Domain 6</b>		<b>Sample Activities</b>	
<i>Improving outreach and collaboration with families and communities</i>		<p>Uses knowledge of different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures and languages to promote effective interactions with families.</p> <p>Facilitates colleagues' self-examination of their own understandings of community culture and diversity.</p>	
<b>Comments and resources</b>			
<p>Many teachers enjoy the community engagement aspect of their work and as such it is an excellent starting point for expanding one's leadership activities. Collaborating with communities is something we cover in different chapters; in the context of projects and stakeholder engagement in chapter 10 and in terms of understanding issues of culture and diversity in chapter 7. As a way of broadening an organization's horizons – and possibly playing a more active role in its community – we look at best practice through a couple of case studies in chapter 9.</p>			
<b>Importance</b>		<b>Confidence</b>	

Leadership Domain 7	Sample Activities
<i>Advocating for student learning and the profession</i>	Advocates for the rights and needs of students, to secure additional resources for student learning. Represents the profession in contexts outside of the classroom.
<p><b>Comments and resources</b></p> <p>Advocacy requires a good deal of diplomacy and – when moving beyond your own classroom – a good grasp of policies and regulations. The former is covered in the various chapters that deal with communication skills and the latter specifically in chapters 9 and 10. Many teachers report a great deal of satisfaction in being able to step beyond the boundaries of their own immediate work environment and to see – and to help develop – the bigger picture. Active involvement in professional bodies can open up wonderful opportunities for learning and collaborating with a wide range of colleagues, something we touch on in chapters 5 and 11.</p>	
<b>Importance</b>	<b>Confidence</b>

## The challenges in assuming leadership roles

Taking on new leadership roles is like broadening your horizons: it is exhilarating and inherently valuable. It can also be unsettling and demanding. It requires taking on a calculated degree of risk and mustering the flexibility to adopt new viewpoints. Doing so means engaging in a process of change, and change involves challenge. This is particularly so, it seems, for emerging teacher leaders, as the process is often not supported (or even recognized). Consider Siew's account below:



### ILLUSTRATION 1: SIEW, MALAYSIA

I have only been in my job for just under a year and although I am slowly starting to feel like I know what I'm doing, I am very aware, every day more so, it seems, of how much more I have to learn. I am impressed by how some of my colleagues seem to juggle the million things that go on every day, and stay reasonably sane doing so! Last month my manager surprised me by asking if I'd like to do a workshop for the department on giving feedback online. He knows I did my TESOL qualification online and try to use technology in the classroom a lot. I am comfortable teaching online but I definitely wouldn't call myself an expert or anything. I didn't really feel I could say no. I mean, it's a great opportunity for me and it's certainly nice to do something for my colleagues, but now I really worry about it. How am I, as a newbie, going to tell these experienced teachers how they should teach? And what if things go wrong? I am kind of wishing I had said no but I've spent so much time on the weekends already looking at online tutorials and thinking about how to run the workshop...

Siew's example above speaks for many teachers' experiences in that leadership roles are often ad hoc, informal and – usually – not supported. It can be exciting, nerve-racking, empowering and demotivating and often several of these at the same time. We will come back to Siew soon to see what she could have done in her situation, but for now let's look at some of the challenges that teachers report. As you read through these brief comments, consider if you have had similar experiences. How did being in these situations make you feel?

[1]

*I don't mind doing the mentoring – I quite enjoy it really – but I have too much to do already. Where am I going to find the time?*

[2]

*When I proposed that we do an action research project on the new CLIL initiative in our university, I could sense some of my colleagues rolling their eyes, like 'Who does she think she is to tell us what to do?'*

[3]

*I don't think my supervisor was entirely straight with me when he asked me to run a workshop on online assessment. It's a contentious topic and some of the teachers really don't support the idea. I am worried about being associated with it.*

[4]

*The other week I was asked to coordinate the development of a last-minute course for an unexpected group of overseas students. Why does it always feel things have to be done in no time?*

[5]

*I was asked to be the liaison for our department with the parents, which involves a lot of meetings, sometimes about quite sensitive things. I wasn't trained for this and apart from reading some books about it, I wouldn't know where to go for support.*

[6]

*I recently completed our in-house materials development. Although I am reasonably happy with the results, I would have really liked to get more feedback, both from my manager and from the other members on the team. It wasn't clear what standards I was supposed to work towards.*

You may have had similar experiences in your own work. If so, you are not alone. Baecher (2012) reports that it is common for teachers to have to balance conflicting demands and signals. So, in the next section, we will look at ways of managing these challenges.

## Leading from within to lead from behind

Although altruism is a virtue, saying yes to all requests is not sustainable. Either you will take on more than you can handle or you will develop resentment, neither of which will be beneficial to your organization in any case. Much better is to consider what your own priorities are, based on your personal and educational values (which we will explore in more detail in chapter 2). By reading this book and taking notes in your PDP, you will get a good sense of the areas with the greatest potential, and in so doing will be 'leading from within'. This will help you to more clearly see opportunities around you and will also help you quickly evaluate requests and offers – and to say no if they do not match.

Of course, saying no is particularly challenging, and we dedicate some space to it in chapter 6; however, knowing why you can or would rather not take on a particular task enables you to respond positively, even when declining. Rather than simply offering a refusal, perhaps accompanied by a generic excuse ('I am too busy'), you can explain how that particular task does not play to your strengths and instead offer to contribute to a different activity in the organization. In other words, establish your priorities and communicate your desire to help out in other, specific areas. Quotes 3 and 5 are good examples of situations like this.

Knowing your professional aspirations also allows you to plan ahead and enlist support. Consider what resources you have within the organization. Maybe you have a Centre for Professional Development that offers leadership courses or a Psychology Department that offers workshops on conflict resolution. Consider the people in your environment: who in your community (both within and outside the workplace) could help you? Is there a colleague whose outreach work you could shadow?

And of course, communicate your aspirations to your colleagues. Let them know what areas you are interested in and offer to help. Your supervisor can play a significant role here too, perhaps giving you time or other resources. Maybe there is a formal opportunity (such as an annual performance review) to bring this up, or perhaps your work environment offers more informal options for sharing your ideas. Either way, think about what you would like to get out of the conversation. Time? Funding to go on a training programme? An opportunity to join one of the development teams? Something else? As a generalization, supervisors like to hear details. What exactly do you want? What are you hoping to do, and in what context? The more specific you can make your request, usually

the better. Although it is fine to ask them to 'keep me in mind for future leadership opportunities', proactively identifying opportunities that match your interests is more likely to convince – and to lead to involvement in activities that matter to you, not (just) others.

This also includes setting boundaries, including around the amount of time you can dedicate to activities. If a project will eat into your teaching preparation time, it may not be sustainable. Be realistic about the time commitment you are taking on, and communicate your expectations to managers and colleagues. Likewise, communicate your expectations about feedback and support. You may ask for a mentor (many large organizations have mentor programmes) or perhaps a regular 'check-in' meeting with your supervisor to share your experiences. This should help avoid situations like in quote 6.

As for dealing with resistance or even jealousy from colleagues, first verify that your impressions and assumptions are correct. When we place ourselves in a more visible and vulnerable position, we can become overly sensitive to criticism, real or perceived. Colleagues may simply notice a change in you, and respond to this in different ways and act differently from before – but 'different' does not necessarily mean 'negative'. If you do experience a less-than-positive response to your offer of leadership (after all, it is an offer, not a demand), communicate and verify. Ask colleagues whether your impressions are correct and ask them to tell you in what ways they would rather you support them. We deal with communication skills, and in particular handling resistance, in chapters 6 and 7.

## YOUR PROJECT

Your project may involve an extension of (some of) the roles you already play in your institution, in which case it is vitally important to consider your strengths and areas for improvement for each of them. But it is also possible that this chapter has given you ideas for how you can better achieve your goals, either by taking on new or additional roles in leading from behind, or by identifying and supporting others in doing so (itself an example of leading from behind!). Make sure to complete the 'importance' and 'confidence' columns in the tables on pages 10–13, and then transfer the priority ones (high importance, low confidence) to your PDP as action points.

<b>Professional Development Plan</b>	
<b>Prompt/question</b>	
In considering the leadership qualities you identified on page 3 ('What is leadership to you?'), which do you feel you have/are your strengths? Which would you like to develop further?	
<b>Reflection</b>	
<b>Action</b>	Priority (1-5)
<b>Resources</b>	By when
<b>Prompt/question</b>	
As an extension to the previous question, C-STEP (the Center for the Strengthening of the Teaching Profession) has an online self-assessment tool that helps you to identify leadership skills: <a href="http://cstp-wa.org/cstp2013/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2018-TLF-Self-Assessments-Editable.pdf">cstp-wa.org/cstp2013/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2018-TLF-Self-Assessments-Editable.pdf</a> What do the results tell you?	
<b>Reflection</b>	
<b>Action</b>	Priority (1-5)
<b>Resources</b>	By when
<b>Prompt/question</b>	
How could you handle possible reluctance on the part of your colleagues when you show (your willingness to assume) leadership?	
<b>Reflection</b>	
<b>Action</b>	Priority (1-5)
<b>Resources</b>	By when



# 2 Getting to know yourself as a leader

## Overview

Leadership for others starts with leadership for self. And leadership for self starts with knowledge of self. One characteristic of successful leaders is their high level of self-awareness. They are in touch with their values, are clear on their aspirations, hopes and dreams, and both recognize their strengths and acknowledge their weaknesses. They also constantly seek out their blind spots, for example through self-reflection and by inviting feedback from others. In this chapter we will look at some tools that will help you become more aware of yourself as an aspiring teacher leader, and ensure that your everyday work and life reflects your values.



### REFLECTION TASK 1

Think of a time when you were at your personal best. What did you do?  
How did you feel?

## Living your values

In the interest of educational sustainability and in order to build on the strongest foundation of all, we start this chapter with *you*. What matters to you and does your everyday life reflect this? It is my contention (based both on my personal experiences and observations, as well as documented research; see, for example, Kouzes & Posner 2010) that the most successful leaders do not tell people to 'do as I say' but rather 'do as I do'. They lead by example. If you want to be part of or develop a strong, healthy, dedicated community that lives by its principles, then you can start by role-modelling this in your work. This includes considering how you balance the different demands on your time and energy. Teaching has one of the highest burnout rates of all professions (McIntyre, McIntyre & Francis 2017) and so a good starting point is looking after yourself and ensuring others do so too.

Swedish psychotherapist Tobias Lundgren and his colleagues (Lundgren et al. 2012) created an exercise designed to help you 1) identify and clarify your values in four domains of life (work/education, leisure, relationships and personal growth/health), 2) identify how closely you are living by those values, 3) identify barriers that prevent you from living your values, and 4) create a Values Action Plan.

# The Bull's Eye Activity



## REFLECTION TASK 2

### PART 1: YOUR VALUES

To begin with, please write down your values in the four domains of life listed below. Not everyone has the same values, and this is not a test to see whether you have the 'correct' ones. Think about your general life directions, rather than specific goals. There may be values that overlap; for example, if you value studying psychology, that may come under both Education and Personal Growth.

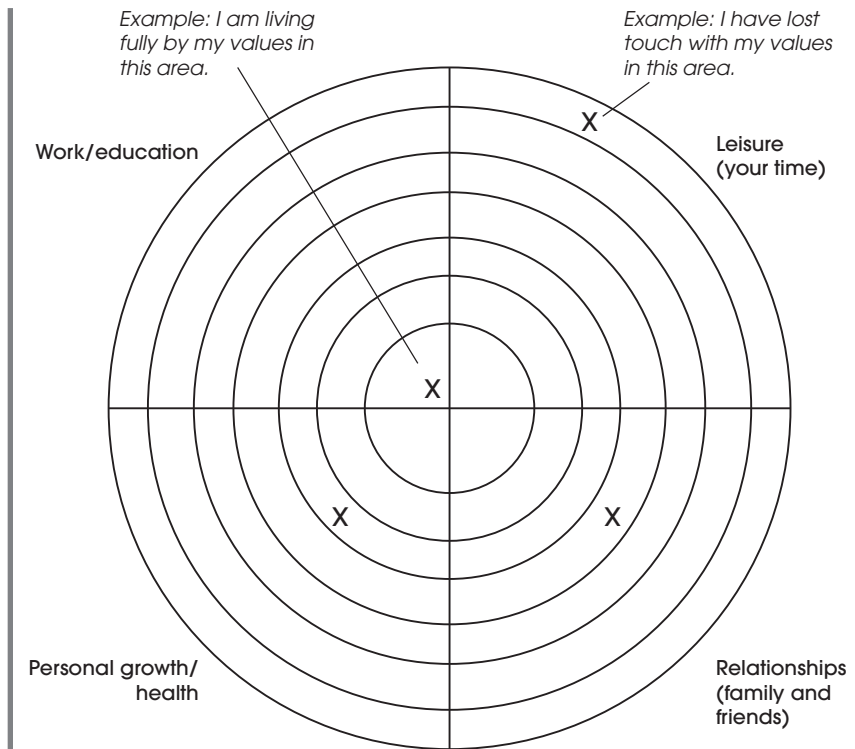
As you write your values, consider: *What would you value if there was nothing in your way, nothing stopping you? What's important? What do you care about? And what you would like to work towards?* Your value should not be a specific goal, but instead should reflect a way you would like to live your life over time. For example, to take your son to the movies might be a goal; to be an involved and interested parent might be the underlying value.

**Note:** Make sure they are your values, not anyone else's. It is your personal values that are important!

- 1. Work/Education:** refers to your workplace and career, education and knowledge, and skills development. (This may include volunteering and other forms of unpaid work.) How do you want to be towards your students, colleagues, employees, clients? What personal qualities do you want to bring to your work? What skills do you want to develop?
- 2. Leisure:** refers to how you play, relax, recharge or enjoy yourself; your hobbies or other activities for rest, recreation, fun and creativity.
- 3. Relationships:** refers to intimacy, closeness, friendship and connections in your life. This domain of your life includes relationships with your partner or spouse, children, parents, relatives, friends, co-workers and other social contacts. What sort of relationships do you want to build? How do you want to be in these relationships? What personal qualities do you want to develop?
- 4. Personal Growth/Health:** refers to your ongoing development as a human being. This may include organized religion, personal expressions of spirituality, physical health and well-being, developing life skills and engaging in self-care to promote positive mental health.

### PART 2: LOCATING HOW FULLY YOU ARE LIVING YOUR VALUES

Read through the values you identified in Part 1. In the dartboard image overleaf, draw an X in each quarter to represent where you stand today in that domain. For example, an X in the bull's eye (the centre of the board) means you are living fully by your values in that domain of life. An X far from the bull's eye means that you are way off the mark in terms of living by your values in that domain. Since there are four domains to evaluate, you should mark four Xs on the dartboard.



### PART 3: IDENTIFYING BARRIERS OR OBSTACLES

Now write down what stands between you and living your current life as you want, according to what you have written in your domains of value. When you think of the life you want to live and the values that you would like to put in play, what gets in the way of you living that kind of life? Describe any obstacle(s), and estimate to what extent the obstacle(s) you just described might prevent you from living your life in a way that is in keeping with your values, on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means 'doesn't prevent me at all' and 7 means 'prevents me completely'.

### PART 4. YOUR VALUES ACTION PLAN

Think about actions you can take in your daily life that would tell you that you are zeroing in on the bull's eye in each important domain of your life. These actions could be small steps toward a particular goal or they could just be actions that reflect what you want to be about as a person. Usually, taking a valued step includes being willing to encounter the obstacle(s) you identified earlier and to take the action anyway. Try to identify at least one value-based action you are willing to take during this coming week, in each of the four domains.

It is useful to consider the broader implications of the above exercise. One way to make this tangible is by engaging with reflective questions such as those below. You could ask these about your professional life or about life in general:

*If you had the life you wanted, what would today look like?*

*What are the five most common things in your daily routine – apart from the basics such as eating and sleeping? What do you wish those five things were instead?*

*What is holding you back from doing them?*

As a follow-up to completing part 4, you could integrate your responses to these questions into your PDP at the end of this chapter.

## Teaching from your values

Teaching is values-driven. Few people become teachers for the money, and most enter the profession to make a difference to people's lives. Regularly touching base with this fundamental driver helps us see the big picture, and monitor whether we are living out our aspirations. Psychologists refer to this as *value congruence* – in other words, the degree to which our daily practices and our environment are in alignment with our values. Higher value congruence leads to greater job satisfaction (Erdogan et al. 2004), better work engagement (Li et al. 2015) and lower burnout (Wang & Hall 2019). It is therefore important to understand and connect with our own values.



### REFLECTION TASK 3

What are your values in teaching? Below is a list of those that are commonly reported. Add any more values that you feel are missing. Then, pick your top five, and reflect on the extent to which you are able to demonstrate them in your everyday teaching and complete the table below.

*achievement \* adventure \* affection \* challenge \* comfort \* control \* cooperation \* creativity \* directness \* economic balance \* expertise \* fairness \* flexibility \* freedom \* friendship \* happiness \* hard work \* harmony \* helpfulness \* honesty \* integrity \* involvement \* leadership \* loyalty \* morality/ethics \* order \* personal development \* power \* predictability \* recognition \* responsibility \* responsiveness \* risk \* security \* self-respect \* tradition \* trust \* variety \* wisdom*

	TOP FIVE VALUES	I live out this value in my everyday teaching life			
		not at all	a little	largely	fully
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

Based on my observations of teachers completing this exercise, it seems fair to say that most people recognize there is room for growth. Although quitting tomorrow and looking for the perfect job may work for some, more likely the answer lies in developing yourself and working to improve the conditions in your current environment; in other words, exercising teacher leadership. Have a look at the questions in the PDP at the end of this chapter to help you consider your next steps.

### On the role of religious and spiritual beliefs

*People who describe themselves as having a faith would probably say that this colours all aspects of their lives. It uplifts them in the difficult times (of which there can be plenty in teaching) and directs them at times of doubt. They may be asked questions that are not easy to answer, such as: If your faith tells you to be kind to others, then how can you justify punishing students? Do you find any clash between what your soul and your mind tell you to do? In which situations is it hardest to live out your faith? What do you do if there is a conflict between how your faith tells you to live and what your school authorities require you to do? In general, the main faiths of the world advocate showing positive qualities such as tolerance, kindness, generosity and forgiveness. One primary-school child said in an end-of-year thank-you card to her teacher (who was a Christian), 'I like you because even when we are naughty and you have to tell us off, you look as if you like us.' Those words sum up what a teacher of faith would like to demonstrate: fairness, firmness and friendliness.*

(Marilyn Lewis, New Zealand)



### REFLECTION TASK 4

#### Vision statement

A vision is a powerful image of what we want our future to look like, reflecting what we care about deeply. We all know companies and schools like to produce vision statements. But what is your vision of yourself as an educator? Write your own vision statement.

In writing a vision statement, keep it short and simple. You should be able to give it to someone else and they should be able to understand what you stand for.

Be ambitious. A vision is, after all, something to strive for, a signpost, if you will.

## Foundational skills for teacher leadership

Realizing your aspirations through teacher leadership requires moving beyond your own boundaries. At its core, it involves relationships, and our ability to form and maintain these relationships. This point in the book is as good as any to touch base with your level of comfort in doing so. Below are a few instruments that will help. The results will enable you to identify which parts of the book will be most useful to you. The tools allow you to explore the following: emotional intelligence, resilience and conflict avoidance. Let's start by exploring the theory of emotional intelligence.

*Leadership is a relationship.*

(Kouzes & Posner 2003: xii)

## Emotional intelligence

High emotional intelligence is considered fundamental to success as a team player, and in particular as a leader. It involves recognizing, understanding and regulating our own and others' emotions, as laid out in the model proposed by Goleman (2002) below:

	<b>SELF</b>	<b>SOCIAL</b>
<b>RECOGNITION</b>	SELF-AWARENESS	SOCIAL AWARENESS
	Emotional Self-Awareness	Organizational Awareness
	Accurate Self-Assessment	Service Orientation
	Self-Confidence	
<b>REGULATION</b>	SELF-MANAGEMENT	RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT
	Self-Control	Inspirational Leadership
	Transparency	Developing Others
	Adaptability	Influence
	Achievement Drive	Change Catalyst
	Initiative	Conflict Management
		Building Bonds
	Teamwork and Collaboration	

Goleman's research found that emotional intelligence (EI) significantly explains the difference between average and extraordinary leaders. Although his research mostly confined itself to the business world, his results have been widely replicated in other fields, including education.

Most teachers report strengths in some of the above areas (mostly emotional self-awareness, empathy and service orientation) but less so in others (mostly initiative, developing others, and conflict management). It is important to recognize that 1) all of these operate on a continuum, with few of us being perfect or terrible on any, and that 2) all of these can be developed.

How can you determine what your specific emotional intelligence (EI) profile is? A quick online search for 'Emotional Intelligence Test' will bring up many results, so have a closer look to decide which of these work best for you.

Another powerful, but perhaps somewhat daunting, approach is to ask trusted colleagues to complete an evaluation of *your* EI, or to read and comment on your own evaluation.



## REFLECTION TASK 5

To give you an idea of what an Emotional Intelligence survey looks like, we include below a short version that was found to have good internal consistency and reliability, developed by Schutte et al. (1998).

You would rate each statement for your competence from 1–5 (from 'not at all' to 'very much'). Note that statements marked \* are reverse scored (1 = very much, 5 = not at all)! This gives a total score range of 33–165. There are two useful points of information this survey yields: your overall score will give you some indication of your level across all 33 items, and any outliers (items where you score particularly low), which will help you recognize in which areas you may want to invest your time.

### The 33-item Emotional Intelligence Scale

- (1) I know when to speak about my personal problems to others
- (2) When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them
- (3) I expect that I will do well on most things I try
- (4) Other people find it easy to confide in me
- (5) I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people \*
- (6) Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important
- (7) When my mood changes, I see new possibilities
- (8) Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living
- (9) I am aware of my emotions as I experience them
- (10) I expect good things to happen
- (11) I like to share my emotions with others
- (12) When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last
- (13) I arrange events others enjoy
- (14) I seek out activities that make me happy
- (15) I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others
- (16) I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others
- (17) When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me
- (18) By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing
- (19) I know why my emotions change
- (20) When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas
- (21) I have control over my emotions
- (22) I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them
- (23) I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on
- (24) I compliment others when they have done something well
- (25) I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send
- (26) When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself
- (27) When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas
- (28) When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail \*
- (29) I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them
- (30) I help other people feel better when they are down
- (31) I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles
- (32) I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice
- (33) It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do \*

\* These items are reverse scored.

*The Bull's Eye Activity got me thinking about what it means to take one of my core values: INTEGRITY, and consider what it means for me in Leisure and Personal Health. In light of the reading we did on teacher well-being, I also thought it was interesting to see that I was 'vulnerable' on the Emotional Intelligence survey under self-awareness and resilience, but 'optimal' for awareness of others and compassion. Hum...how do I care well for others if I am weak in how I do it for myself? Ekkkkkk.*

(Christine Rosalia, USA)

## Resilience

Teacher resilience has been defined as 'the positive capacity of teachers to maintain effective functioning in their practice despite threatening circumstances and to develop increased productivity through consistent achievement in the classroom' (Hiver 2018: 231). Essentially it refers to our ability to 'bounce back' after a challenge or setback. Leadership can sometimes require us to operate at the edges of our comfort levels, and so the ability to 'shrug off' a disappointment is not only important for emotional self-preservation but also an inspiration to those around us. Research has shown that resilience is emotionally 'contagious' and positively affects other teachers and learners. There is even evidence of a relationship between teacher resilience and learners' well-being and success (Mansfield et al. 2016).

Perhaps you are not sure of your skill set in this area. Daniilidou and Platsidou (2018) developed an instrument to gauge your own or your colleagues' resilience. Simply respond to the statements below and add up your scores: 26–35 *very low*, 36–48 *low*, 49–72 *average*, 73–104 *high*, 105 and above *very high*.

	never	rarely	sometimes	often	always
I am able to adapt to change	1	2	3	4	5
Sometimes fate or religion can help me overcome my challenges	1	2	3	4	5
Sometimes I believe things happen for a reason	1	2	3	4	5
Under pressure, I am able to focus and think clearly	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer to take the lead in problem-solving	1	2	3	4	5
I am not easily discouraged by failure	1	2	3	4	5
I think of myself as a strong person	1	2	3	4	5



	never	rarely	sometimes	often	always
If necessary, I can make unpopular or difficult decisions that affect other people	1	2	3	4	5
I can handle unpleasant feelings, such as anger or fear	1	2	3	4	5
Sometimes I have to act on a hunch	1	2	3	4	5
I like challenges	1	2	3	4	5
I work hard to attain my goals	1	2	3	4	5
In my workplace I enjoy being together with other people	1	2	3	4	5
New friendships are something I make easily in my workplace	1	2	3	4	5
Meeting new people in my workplace is something I am good at	1	2	3	4	5
In my workplace, when I am with others, I easily laugh	1	2	3	4	5
My family's understanding of what is important in life is very similar to mine	1	2	3	4	5
I feel very happy with my family	1	2	3	4	5
My family is characterized by healthy coherence	1	2	3	4	5
In difficult periods my family keeps a positive outlook on the future	1	2	3	4	5
Facing other people, our family acts loyally towards one another	1	2	3	4	5
In my family we like to do things together	1	2	3	4	5
I can discuss personal issues with my peers	1	2	3	4	5
The bonds among my peers and me are strong	1	2	3	4	5
I get support from my peers	1	2	3	4	5
I always have someone in my workplace who can help me, when needed	1	2	3	4	5

Regardless of your scores, it is worthwhile to recognize that although some teachers are naturally less affected by emotional turmoil, resilience can be developed over time by looking at its individual components. Ginsburg (2011) proposed seven distinct elements and manifestations of resilience, called the 'seven Cs', which we use below to offer some suggestions for developing yourself.