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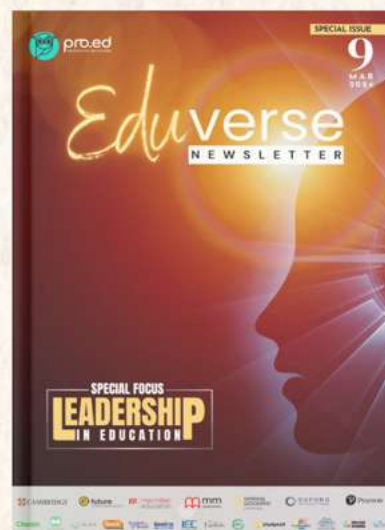
EduVerse
NEWSLETTER

**Welcome to EduVerse Newsletter
the educational newsletter powered by Pro.Ed Education Solutions!**

In this dynamic era of learning, staying ahead requires a constant thirst for knowledge and an openness to exploring new frontiers. That's why we created EduVerse Newsletter — to serve as your guide through the vast universe of education, where ideas collide, perspectives intertwine, and possibilities abound.

With a dedicated focus on the needs and aspirations of educators, we curate a diverse range of articles, tips, and best practices to support your teaching journey. From cutting-edge pedagogical strategies to engaging classroom activities, we are here to equip you with the tools and inspiration you need to ignite curiosity, foster creativity, and cultivate lifelong learners.

So, whether you're a teacher seeking new teaching techniques or an education enthusiast looking for fresh perspectives, EduVerse is here to accompany you on your educational odyssey. Join us as we embark on this exciting journey together—let's dive into the EduVerse and unlock the infinite possibilities of education!

Dr. Le Dinh Bao Quoc
Editor-in-chief

- *Special Intro and Ask the Experts interview conducted by Dr. Le Dinh Bao Quoc*
- *Teaching Techniques, Lesson of the Month, and Tech Tips and Tools columns overseen by Nguyen Tran Phuong Uyen, Pro.Ed R&D Specialist.*
- *Designed by EduVerse Design team*

SPECIAL FOCUS
LEADERSHIP
IN EDUCATION

Dear Esteemed EduVerse Readers,

As we navigate through the ever-evolving landscape of educational paradigms, it has become increasingly evident that effective leadership within educational institutions is not just desirable but essential for driving meaningful change and progress. It is with excitement we present to you another special edition of our EduVerse Newsletter, dedicated entirely to the pivotal theme of Leadership in Education.

In this special edition, we set our sights on the currents shaping the leadership discourse within the educational sphere. It's important to note that we're not merely discussing educational leadership in its administrative sense, but leadership in education, exploring the multifaceted dimensions of leadership that permeate every aspect of the educational ecosystem. Whether you're a seasoned administrator, a passionate educator, or an eager learner, there's something within these pages that will resonate with you.

We've had the privilege of engaging with numerous esteemed educators who graciously shared their wisdom and experiences, offering valuable perspectives on what effective leadership looks like in today's educational context. Their insights serve as beacons guiding us through the complexities of fostering innovation, inclusivity, and excellence within educational settings.

At EduVerse, our enduring mission has always been to act as a platform that promotes dialogue, fosters professional growth, and celebrates the dynamic essence of education. With this exclusive edition, our goal is to motivate, challenge, and ultimately enable you to lead with purpose and vision in your educational pursuits.

Our sincere gratitude goes to our dedicated contributors, our partners, and, most importantly, to you – our esteemed readers – for being integral to EduVerse's mission of promoting innovation and excellence in education.

Thank you for joining us on this enlightening journey into the heart of leadership in education.

Editorial Board,
EduVerse Newsletter

IN THIS ISSUE

LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION a brief history

Educational leadership has evolved over centuries, from the teaching methods of ancient civilizations to the modern, data-driven approach of today. Throughout history, various educational leaders have emerged to shape and influence the field, from philosophers like Plato and Confucius to pioneering educators like Maria Montessori and John Dewey. These leaders have championed innovative practices, such as student-centered learning and inclusive education, to meet the changing needs of students and society.

Ancient Civilizations
Before Common Era

In ancient civilizations like Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, and China, education revolved around religious and philosophical teachings.

The emphasis was on wisdom, scholarly knowledge, philosophical understanding, and moral and ethical education.

Educational authorities were frequently religious or philosophical figures, such as **Confucius** in China, and **Plato** and **Aristotle** in Greece, who steered the intellectual and moral growth of their societies.

Plato   Aristotle   Confucius

Medieval Period
5th to 15th Century

In the Middle Ages, education was mainly overseen by religious establishments, notably the Catholic Church in Europe.

The focus was on devotion, religious dedication, knowledge preservation, and a strong emphasis on classical education. Students could expect to learn basic arithmetic, writing, and grammar.

Monastic orders' educational leaders were instrumental in upholding and passing on knowledge within religious organizations.

Renaissance and Enlightenment
14th to 18th Century

Renaissance education inherited an established framework that originated in the Middle Ages. This period saw a renewed interest in classical studies and the emergence of humanism.

Educators emphasized the importance of critical thinking, liberal arts, and scientific inquiry, encouraging intellectual curiosity and humanistic values. Their goal was to rejuvenate classical studies, promote rationality, and expand educational perspectives.

Notable figures like **Erasmus, Thomas More,** and **John Amos Comenius** championed educational reforms and the widespread sharing of knowledge.

Thomas More
(portrait by Hans Holbein the Younger)

Comenius
(portrait by Jürgen Ovens)

Erasmus
(portrait by Hans Holbein the Younger)

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Martin Luther King, Jr.
(Image source: Britannica)

Rosa Parks
(Image source: Wikipedia)

Thurgood Marshall
(Image source: Getty Images)

John Dewey
(Image source: Britannica)

Maria Montessori
(Image source: Nationaal Archief)

Friedrich Froebel
(Image source: Britannica)

Civil Rights Movement and Beyond

20th Century

Throughout the 20th century, significant social and political changes influenced educational leadership. For example, the Civil Rights Movement in the United States led to efforts to integrate schools and guarantee equal educational opportunities for all students. Prominent personalities like **Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks,** and **Thurgood Marshall** advocated for educational equity and social justice.

Educational leaders during that period, inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, strived for desegregation, equal educational opportunities, and addressing systemic inequalities.

Progressive Era

Late 19th to early 20th Century

During the Progressive Era, influential educational thinkers such as **John Dewey, Maria Montessori,** and **Friedrich Froebel** advocated for an educational approach that prioritized student-driven experiences focusing on the holistic development of the child. They emphasized moving away from rote memorization towards student-centered teaching methods, hands-on learning, and integrating practical skills into the educational system. These educators underscored personalized teaching, active student participation, and the overall growth of learners.

Digital Age

21st Century

The 21st century's Digital Age has transformed educational leadership by utilizing technological advancements. Educational leaders have reshaped teaching, learning, and administration through online learning platforms, digital tools, and data analytics, influencing the future of education in our increasingly digital society.

Modern educational leaders need to focus on adaptability, technological skills, collaboration, and preparing students for a globalized world. They must navigate rapid technological progress, embrace cultural diversity, and meet the demands of a knowledge-driven economy.

Industrial Revolution

18th to 19th Century

Throughout the Industrial Revolution, society underwent notable transformations, leading to the necessity for a standardized and comprehensive education system to align with the industrial requirements.

Educational leadership during this era emphasized the establishment of public education systems, the implementation of compulsory schooling regulations, and the improvement of teachers' professional growth, focusing on managerial abilities, organizational leadership, and efficacy.

Horace Mann, the US Secretary of Education in 1837, is recognized for introducing the concept of a 'modern' school.

Horace Mann
(Image source: Britannica)

We rise by lifting others.

Robert G. Ingersoll
American lawyer and writer

LEADERSHIP
IN EDUCATION

THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF
MODERN LEADERSHIP
IN EDUCATION

Dr. Le Dinh Bao Quoc

The educational landscape is constantly evolving due to societal changes, technological advancements, and updated teaching approaches, especially the social and economic changes and demands after the COVID-19. Strong leadership is crucial in navigating these changes, enabling educational institutions to adapt and thrive in a dynamic environment. What lies ahead for leadership in education? What particular areas should contemporary leadership prioritize in education?

BEYOND THE WALLS OF HIERARCHY: REDEFINING LEADERSHIP

In the traditional sense, leadership is described as the ability to influence and guide others toward a common goal. When it comes to education, "educational leadership" conjures images of stern principals and distant superintendents, wielding titles and commanding authority from atop hierarchical pyramids, involving the necessary skills and qualities to lead educational institutions towards excellence.

In this piece of writing, the term "leadership in education" has a broader and more inclusive definition. It encompasses all types of leadership in the field of education, going beyond formal administrative roles to include researchers, teachers, students, and even parents who contribute to enhancing and advancing education.

It is important to note that the distinction between these terms can vary, and they are often used interchangeably depending on the context.

> *Educational leadership is the exercise of developing a vision, providing direction, and offering support to teachers, staff, students, and learning communities. In both formal management roles and informal positions of influence, educational leadership is the quality that guides learners to knowledge and skills for their lives and careers.*
>
> *(Scott Wilson)*

THE IMPACT OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION

Leadership in education is vital in overcoming obstacles and fostering innovative approaches to achieve shared goals. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic exemplifies effective leadership in schools. During this difficult time, educational leaders quickly adapted by introducing remote learning, supporting teachers and students, and ensuring educational goals were achieved. Their prompt decision-making, effective communication, and focus on the well-being of the school community were crucial in navigating unprecedented challenges.

Highlighted below are the key aspects underscoring the impact of effective leadership in education:

- Effective leadership is paramount for **shaping school culture and climate.** Leaders set the tone for the entire institution, influencing attitudes, behaviors, and values within the school community. They play a pivotal role in driving educational innovation and reform, championing new approaches to teaching and learning that meet the needs of a rapidly changing world.

- Effective leadership is key to **enhance teacher morale and professional development.** Effective leaders understand the importance of offering guidance, creating a positive work environment, and providing opportunities for growth. This ultimately leads to teachers feeling valued and motivated to excel in their roles, resulting in a successful and fulfilling educational experience for both teachers and students.

- Effective leadership is vital in **guaranteeing and improving student learning achievements.** Leaders play a key role in setting high standards and cultivating a supportive atmosphere for academic success. They not only define clear aims for their schools but also offer assistance and tools to aid teachers and students in realizing their maximum capabilities. It is, therefore, imperative for educational leaders to focus on student learning outcomes and continuously pursue excellence.

- Additionally, educational leaders must **address changes and challenges in the education system,** including policy adjustments, technological advancements, and shifts in student demographics. Skillful leadership is crucial to navigate these complexities and steer the institution towards success. The integration of AI technologies like the ChatGPT into the curriculum and school practices illustrates the need for strong leadership to embrace change and guarantee an outstanding experience for all stakeholders.

MODERN LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION
THE KALEIDOSCOPE

In the contemporary era, educational leadership extends beyond conventional roles and objectives. Modern educational leadership must address not just present challenges, but also the evolving society, including the business aspects of education, to ensure academic quality and prepare students effectively for the future. Modern leadership in education can be described as kaleidoscope with multiple facets that intertwine and mirror each other. Among these facets are:

FACET 1: STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Student leadership emphasizes fostering student agency and empowerment, enabling students to play an active role in their learning and growth. It transcends the traditional view of students as passive knowledge receivers, positioning them as engaged participants in their education and personal progress. Encouraging student agency means offering opportunities for decision-making, goal-setting, and taking charge of their learning journey. This strategy not only boosts their academic involvement but also cultivates crucial life skills like critical thinking, decision-making, and problem-solving, along with leadership qualities such as effective communication, teamwork, flexibility, and a strong ethical compass. Empowering students in this manner instills a sense of confidence, self-assurance, and resilience - traits that extend beyond academia and shape them into future leaders ready to make a positive impact on society.

FACET 2: TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Teacher leadership stands as a pivotal and transformative dimension in the kaleidoscope of modern leadership in education, presenting an opportunity to foster collaboration and drive positive change within their institutions and the whole educational system. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) underscores the foundational role of teachers in educational leadership. Teachers, beyond their roles in classroom management and instruction, assume leadership positions among their colleagues. They become invaluable resource providers, sharing effective teaching strategies and classroom management techniques with their peers. This peer-to-peer knowledge exchange cultivates a rich learning environment within the school community, enhancing the overall quality of education.

Furthermore, teachers, as leaders, extend their influence beyond the classroom. They actively engage with educational leaders and policy makers, providing constructive feedback that contributes to continuous improvement in curriculum design and educational policies. This collaborative dialogue between teachers and decision-makers ensures that the educational system remains responsive to the evolving needs of students and the demands of a rapidly changing world.

FACET 3: BUSINESS-ORIENTED LEADERSHIP

Business-oriented leadership in education signifies a strategic approach that seeks to integrate fundamental business principles into the realm of educational leadership. This innovative perspective transcends the traditional boundaries of academia, fostering collaborations between educational institutions and businesses. By establishing partnerships with the corporate sector, educational leaders bring real-world perspectives, practices, and resources into the educational setting, thereby equipping students with the skills and knowledge essential for success in the workforce. In addition, the integration of business principles into educational leadership, such as incorporating strategic planning and operational efficiency enhances the overall effectiveness and sustainability of educational institutions.

A noteworthy aspect of business-oriented leadership in education is the emergence of educational businesses, which refers to profit-driven companies offering educational services or products. Educational leaders within these enterprises face a distinctive set of challenges. They must navigate the intersection of academic integrity and the imperative for financial viability, striking a balance between maintaining educational quality and achieving profitable outcomes. They must be adept at fostering a culture of innovation and efficiency, continually seeking ways to improve educational offerings while remaining financially sustainable. This dynamic environment demands a keen understanding of market trends, consumer needs, and the ever-evolving landscape of educational technology.

FACET 4: DIGITAL LEADERSHIP

In the age of AI and technology, digital leadership is essential. Digital leadership in today's educational landscape goes beyond just embracing technology - it requires a deep understanding of ethical considerations and responsible innovation. Leaders must navigate the complex terrain of data privacy, algorithmic biases, and ensuring that the implementation of technology aligns with educational values.

A key aspect of digital leadership is promoting inclusivity and diversity by ensuring that technology is used in a way that benefits all students. Leaders play a crucial role in advocating for ethical practices and fostering a culture that values both innovation and responsibility. Moreover, the effective application of AI and technology in school operations, staff training, and cost management can streamline processes and improve overall efficiency within educational institutions.

By embracing digital leadership principles and incorporating technology thoughtfully, educational leaders can create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment that prepares students for success in a rapidly evolving digital world.

FACET 5: STUDENT-CENTRIC LEADERSHIP

Student-centric leadership stands as a cornerstone in modern education, requiring leaders to tailor their strategies to diverse student development. This type of leadership enables educators to create personalized learning experiences that cater to individual strengths and interests, fostering inclusivity and equity. In a learner-centered model, leaders focus on recognizing each student's unique attributes, accommodating diverse learning styles, and providing instructional flexibility.

This leadership extends beyond academics, prioritizing the holistic well-being of students, including social and emotional development. Educational leaders must create a supportive and nurturing environment that addresses the emotional and psychological needs of students, enhancing their overall learning experience and personal growth.

Additionally, a learner-centered leadership approach emphasizes providing essential life skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and digital literacy, etc., preparing students for success in their lives and future careers.

FACET 6: ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

Adaptive leadership in education is a dynamic approach that emphasizes navigating changes and uncertainties in the ever-evolving world (Wilson, 2023). This leadership style is characterized by the ability to respond effectively to emerging challenges and unpredictabilities, fostering a culture of resilience, promoting continuous learning, and encouraging innovation. Adaptive educational leaders empower their teams to embrace change, learn from challenges, and proactively respond to the evolving educational landscape.

In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, adaptive leadership played a pivotal role in swiftly adapting to remote learning, addressing the unique needs of students, and ensuring continuity in education. Similarly, in the face of rapid advancements in AI and technology, adaptive leadership becomes essential. Leaders must adeptly integrate technological tools into educational practices, ensuring that students are prepared for the digital age. This may involve developing new curricula, providing relevant training for educators, and creating adaptable learning environments that embrace technological innovations.

Ultimately, adaptive leadership in education is crucial for preparing students and institutions to thrive in an era of constant change and disruption.

FACET 7: SELF-LEADERSHIP

Self-leadership in education is a transformative style that centers on individuals taking charge of their own personal growth, encompassing both productivity and well-being. This approach extends to all educational stakeholders, including students, teachers, administrators, and support staff at all levels of the educational system.

For students, self-leadership involves setting and achieving academic goals, developing effective study habits, and prioritizing their well-being. Teachers can cultivate self-leadership by continuously refining their teaching methods, seeking professional development opportunities, and fostering a positive and inclusive classroom culture. Administrators and support staff can model self-leadership by promoting a supportive work environment, encouraging collaboration, and prioritizing the well-being of the entire educational community.

This style of leadership contributes to the overall quality of education by creating a community of empowered individuals who are motivated to excel and, in turn, positively impacts student learning outcomes and the quality of education as a whole.

> In conclusion, leadership in education is not merely about managing institutions; it is about inspiring minds, fostering growth, and shaping the future. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, the words of Nelson Mandela resonate: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Strong and visionary leadership will be indispensable in harnessing this power to guide institutions toward excellence and ensure equitable access to quality education for all. Embracing modern leadership practices is not a choice; it is the pathway to forging a brighter and more inclusive future for education, one where every student can wield the transformative power of knowledge to change the world.

Le Dinh Bao Quoc, with a Doctorate in Education, boasts 20+ years in ELT. He founded Pro.Ed Education Solutions, offering school consultancies. Author of "*The Art and Science of ChatGPT in Education,*" he highlights EdTech's role in enriching teaching, learning, and educational practices. Research spans EdTech's impact, teacher growth, and educational management.

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CULTIVATE COMPASSION

THE ROLE OF EMPATHY IN SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Gerry Docherty

In the world of education, where academic achievement and administrative efficiency often dominate conversations, the importance of empathy in school leadership can sometimes be overlooked. Yet, empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of another, is a critical element that can have a considerable impact on the process of changing school culture, raising student achievement, and enhancing staff satisfaction. This article explores why empathy is a desirable trait and a fundamental element of effective school leadership.

Understanding empathy in education

Empathy in educational leadership goes beyond mere kindness. It involves understanding the emotional landscapes of students, teachers, and parents by considering issues from their perspectives and feelings without necessarily taking on their emotional burden. This distinction is crucial; empathy empowers leaders to support their communities compassionately without becoming overwhelmed themselves.

The impact on school culture

Empathetic leadership can profoundly affect the school's atmosphere, fostering an environment where trust, openness, and mutual respect flourish. For instance, when leaders genuinely listen to and understand the challenges faced by their staff and students, they create a culture where individuals feel valued and heard. This supportive environment not only enhances morale but also encourages a more collaborative and innovative educational setting.

Empathy and student achievement

The impact of empathetic leadership can also extend to student achievement. Students thrive in environments where they feel understood and supported. Empathetic leaders who champion inclusive education and equity create conditions where all learners can succeed, resulting in improved engagement, motivation, and academic outcomes.

Measuring the impact of empathy in school leadership

Assessing the effectiveness of empathetic leadership practices can be challenging but is essential for continuous improvement. Feedback from the school community is invaluable in this process, offering insights into how empathy in leadership affects the school environment and student success.

Challenges to empathetic leadership in education

Despite its benefits, empathetic leadership faces challenges, such as the pressures of administration, the high-stress environment of schools, and, at times, a lack of experience. Overcoming these obstacles is possible through professional development, self-care, and the support of a leadership team who have been there, done that and bought several tee-shirts on their journey towards senior leadership in schools. After all, if we are to walk a mile in someone else's shoes, it often helps if we have walked several miles in our own shoes first.

EMPATHY IN ACTION: PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

Practising empathy involves more than intention; it requires actionable strategies. Active listening, where leaders give their full attention to others and reflect on their words, is key. Encouraging empathy among staff and students can also transform the school's culture, promoting a more inclusive and supportive environment. Balancing empathy with effective decision-making is vital; leaders must navigate the complexities of their roles with compassion, ensuring their decisions reflect a deep understanding of their community's needs.

Some examples of how to demonstrate empathy in daily interactions with teachers, students and parents might be:

1 **Active listening during meetings with teachers:** When a teacher expresses concerns about workload or student behaviour, actively listening, acknowledging the teacher's feelings, and helping them explore solutions, will go a long way towards demonstrating that we value them and that we are committed to supporting their well-being.

2 **Supporting students in times of stress:** If a student is going through a tough time, such as dealing with family issues or academic challenges, then take the time to check in with them, offer a listening ear, and provide appropriate support or resources. This could include connecting the student with counselling services or offering flexibility with assignments.

3 **Understanding parent concerns:** When a parent raises concerns about their child's education or well-being, it helps to take the time to meet with them to acknowledge their worries, and express a genuine desire to help by working together to find solutions that prioritise the child's needs.

4 Recognizing and celebrating success: Empathy also involves sharing in the joys and successes of others. We, therefore, should take every opportunity to celebrate the achievements of teachers, students, and staff, whether it's through a simple note of congratulations, or a public acknowledgement at a school assembly or event. This helps to demonstrate that we truly value and appreciate the efforts and accomplishments of our school community.

5 Addressing conflicts with compassion: When conflicts arise, whether between students or staff, we can offer to mediate the situation by listening to all sides, acknowledging the emotions involved, and guiding the parties toward a resolution that respects everyone's feelings and perspectives.

CONCLUSION

Empathy in school leadership is more than a soft skill; it is a critical component of effective, leadership. By displaying empathy, school leaders can create nurturing environments that support the success and well-being of students and staff alike. The call to action is clear: for those of us involved in educational leadership, cultivating empathy should not be optional; it is essential for the future of our schools and the success of our students.

Gerry Docherty began his career in education in 1982 as teacher of Mathematics in the UK and moved to his first overseas position in 1989. Since then he has held various roles in educational leadership such as Head of Department, Director of Studies, Deputy Principal, Principal and Headmaster in K-12 international schools throughout the world.

He is currently working as Regional Head of Education for South East Asia for Beaconhouse Malaysia.

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LEADING THROUGH TURBULENCE

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

In today's ever-changing world, school management faces numerous challenges. The concept of VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity), and its later derivations such as BANI (Brittle, Anxious, Non-linear and Incomprehensible), provides a framework to understand these challenges and adapt management strategies.

But what is VUCA in practice? VUCA refers to the unpredictable and dynamic nature of the environment in which schools operate. It encompasses several elements: volatility, which refers to the speed and magnitude of changes; uncertainty, which is related to the lack of predictability; complexity, involving multiple interconnected factors; and ambiguity, which represents situations with unclear meanings or interpretations.

Understanding these four elements is crucial for school leaders as we navigate educational contexts. Volatility can manifest itself in sudden changes in student demographics or changes in government policies. Uncertainty arises from factors such as technological advances that disrupt traditional teaching methods or unexpected budget cuts. Complexity arises from the intricate web of relationships between stakeholders such as students, teachers, parents, and community members. Finally, ambiguity can be observed when there is no clarity about goals or expectations.

Without a doubt, this panorama could be thought of as something paralyzing for those who exercise management roles in educational establishments, but as Bautista (2021) expresses: "It is no longer about saying that we live in a world full of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. It is about turning this descriptor into an authentic work tool."

With the recognition of this context, the solution is not a simple change in teaching strategies or specific modifications in the classrooms. The challenge is to work on building a specific type of leadership in schools so that they respond to the fast and complex reality that we are experiencing. According to José María Bautista "The key is in new VUCA leadership that builds a VUCA organizational culture."

Adapting our school management strategies to VUCA environments is essential to ensure the success of school life. Traditional approaches may prove inadequate when faced with such complex circumstances. Therefore, it becomes necessary to explore alternative leadership styles that are more suitable for managing schools in volatile times.
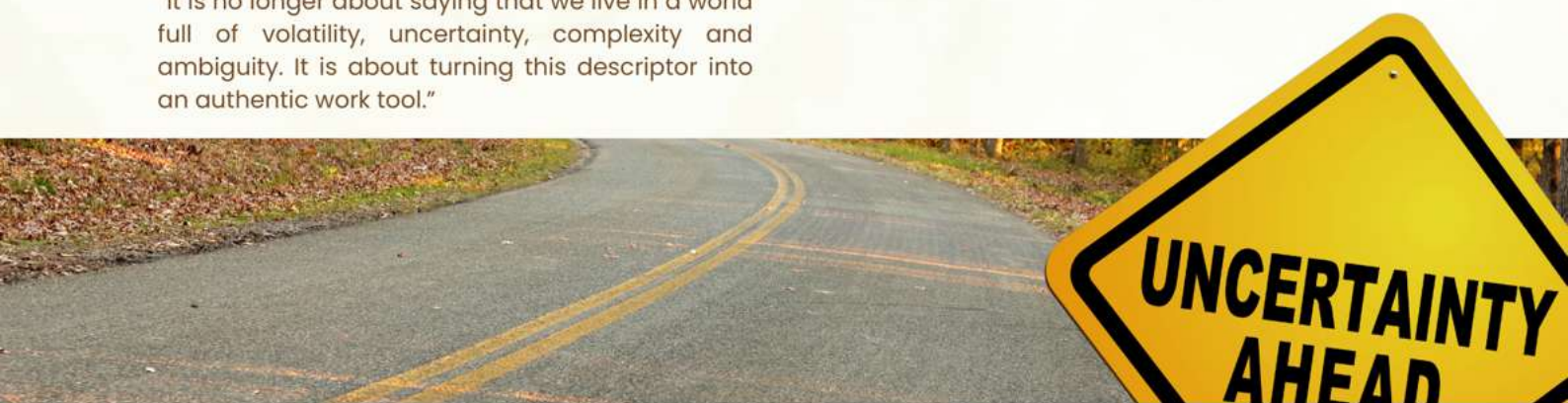
THE LIMITATIONS OF TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLES WITHIN THESE ENVIRONMENTS AND THE EMERGENCE OF ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

Traditional leadership styles often rely on hierarchical decision-making processes that may not effectively address needs that arise from volatility or uncertainty. These styles tend to focus on maintaining stability rather than embracing change or innovation.

However, adaptive leadership offers an alternative approach that aligns with VUCA realities. This style emphasizes flexibility and encourages leaders to collaborate with their teams while embracing diverse perspectives.

By adopting adaptive leadership, school leaders can foster innovation and resilience within institutions. This approach fosters creativity, problem-solving and adaptive capacity among staff members, enabling them to better cope with the challenges posed by VUCA environments.

VUCA adaptive leadership as a lever for a new institutional culture

Over the years, studies on organizational behavior varied and incorporated various perspectives that made it possible for organizations to respond to the realities in which they had to operate.

The perspective on the role of directors has evolved. Initially seen as authoritative figures exercising a "command role" or acting as "bosses," there is now a shift in understanding. Directors are now recognized as individuals who appreciate that working with people requires specific attitudes and skills. This approach aims to enhance the tasks and potential of each institution member, ultimately striving for educational organizations that effectively ensure the right to education.

According to Bautista's (2021) analysis, the characteristics of the context prior to the current one were marked by Taylorist ideas of organization. They are control, division of tasks, an orientation towards order, separate individuals working or studying, efficiency, hierarchy, respect for duty, stability, knowledge given by experience, static places for carrying out activities, neatness, punctuality, competitiveness, quality, data analysis without interpretations, and dehumanization.

On the other hand, in the VUCA context the following characteristics stand out as emerging: Self-management versus control, a systemic view versus division, chaos versus order, teams versus individuals, passion versus efficiency, post-materialism versus consumerism, horizontal communities versus hierarchy, self-respect versus obedient respect, mobility versus stability, multiple experiences versus uniform and linear experience, enjoyment versus sacrifice, 3-dimensional vision versus a univocal vision, design versus neatness, synchrony versus punctuality, the common good versus individualism, creativity versus cold analysis of data, liberation versus dehumanization.

Given this profound change in the context, the conception of directors as leaders in educational institutions gains strength and the adaptive leadership model is conceived as the leadership style of the future (Gil and Alcober, 2003). Since, according to Sánchez and Zorzoli (2019), "it makes it possible to direct organizations that learn, change and adapt permanently, facing new technologies and the needs and expectations of the communities and active participants in the educational service."

The main difference between adaptive leadership and transactional leadership (which predominated previously) is that the former seeks to change the status quo by articulating the problems in the current system with a compelling vision of what the new organization could be for the teaching team while the Second prioritizes stability through economic and social incentives (Lussier and Achua, 2016).

It should be added that several studies demonstrate that with adaptive leadership, positive effects are achieved on organizational performance, culture and learning (Broun, Peus, Weisweiler and Frey, 2013; and Choudhary, Akhtar and Zaheer, 2013).

WHAT QUALITIES SHOULD AN ADPATIVE LEADER POSSESS IN VUCA CONTEXTS?

According to Bautista, leaders in VUCA contexts must possess the following competencies: creative leadership, existential leadership, and horizontal leadership.

1

Creative Leadership
Creative leaders are recognized for their proficiency in a range of skills. These leaders engage in divergent thinking, fostering an environment that encourages innovative ideas and solutions. Simultaneously, they employ convergent thinking to connect all parts of complex reality in solving problems or generating new proposals. Collaboration is paramount, with leaders actively co-creating alongside their teachers, recognizing that individual efforts in such intricate contexts may not contribute to the solution of problems. Furthermore, their comprehensive approach involves critical thinking and adept language skills to explore and comprehend the intangibles of reality.

2

Existential Leadership
In the pursuit of existential leadership, school directors focus on empowering their teaching staff. They must foster a culture of passion within the educational institution, promoting continuous learning, and a commitment to improvement. These leaders prioritize empathy and expressiveness in their interactions with work teams, recognizing the importance of emotional intelligence in building a cohesive and motivated educational community.

3

Horizontal Leadership
Finally, whoever manages educational institutions in an adaptive way must exercise horizontal and participatory leadership. This leadership style grants members of the teaching team the necessary autonomy for the school to involve into a dynamic learning organization. The ultimate goal is a permanent search to guarantee every student's right to education.

Although the study of leadership in this context is extensive and involves many more factors than those mentioned here, this analysis aims to be a trigger to rethink the role of school principals under the characteristics of VUCA contexts. It is crucial for school principals to adapt to the ever-changing landscape of education in order to effectively lead their schools through VUCA environments, driving positive change and create a culture of growth and success within their schools.

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Alfredo da Costa holds a Master's degree in Education from the University of San Andrés and is a graduate in Communication Sciences with expertise in educational technology. Serving as a secondary-level director since 2012, Alfredo is the director of the magazine "Gestión Educativa" and the visionary founder of the Network of Directors of Educational Institutions (REDIE). Alfredo also serves as the Executive Director of Design for Change Argentina and the of CEO at NextBrain Education.

Widely recognized for his influence, Alfredo is acknowledged as a Top Educational Leadership Voice on LinkedIn.

It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.

Charles Darwin
English naturalist and biologist

THE ART OF
DATA-DRIVEN
DECISION MAKING
IN LEADERSHIP

Prof. William J. Peters

There is a place for data in schools and it should be welcomed, but it should not be allowed to override good judgment. For instance, while designing curriculum and teaching approaches data can clarify student performance rates and learning results. Nevertheless, educators also need to employ their professional judgment when taking into account factors like the needs of individual students.
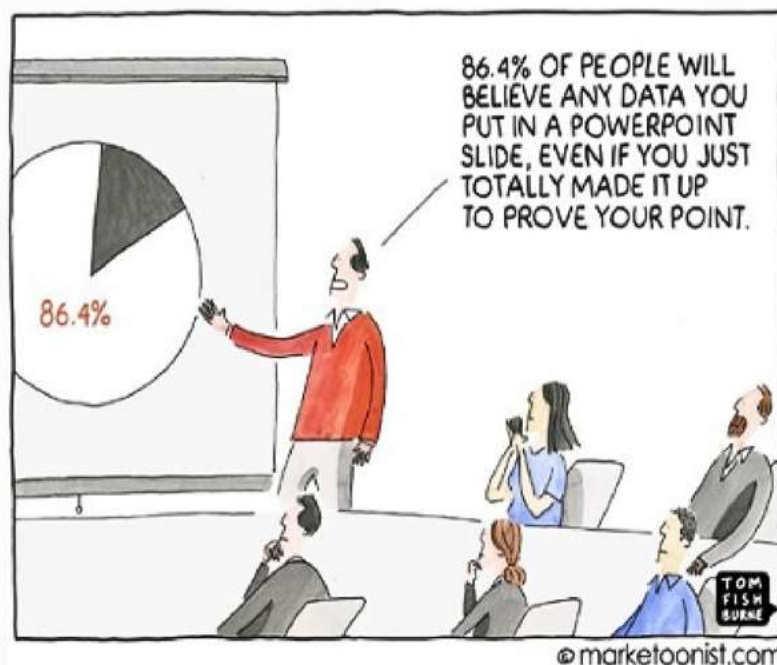
It is a welcome change from days when data was ignored or marginalized to afterthoughts that data has become the cornerstone for making major decisions in schools. Even so, the times are changing, and it appears that schools have developed an overdependence on data-driven outcomes. There has been a tendency among educators to rely so heavily on data that they have forgotten to ask questions based on common sense that data cannot provide answers to.

In 2008 Hess identified three critical ways in which data can be misused in educational contexts.

1 Firstly, he notes the tendency for school officials to rush into data-driven decision-making without applying common-sense reasoning to the situation. Often, they prioritize data over fundamental questions that should guide their actions.

2 Secondly, Hess emphasizes the need for a nuanced and thoughtful translation of research data. Merely collecting data is insufficient; it must be interpreted accurately and comprehensively to avoid potentially disastrous consequences. Data, he asserts, should complement critical thinking, not replace it.

3 Lastly, Hess highlights the risk of sidelining management data in favor of an exclusive focus on student achievement metrics. Schools, he argues, must not neglect their broader responsibilities, such as improving overall school system performance, operational efficiency, hiring practices, and financial management. This broader perspective on data utilization is essential for the holistic advancement of educational institutions.

When viewing data, it is important to use good judgment.

Educators must prioritize a thoughtful approach to implementing data findings. This entails posing critical questions to ensure a well-informed decision-making process.

- **Educators should ponder the expected advantages of the proposed program or reform.** Understanding the potential benefits is crucial to evaluating whether the initiative aligns with the educational goals and objectives in place.

- **It is essential to delve into the associated costs of the program or reform.** This encompasses not only financial expenses but also resource allocation and time commitments. Assessing the costs allows educators to weigh them against the anticipated benefits.

- **Educators should inquire about the replicability of promised results.** Determining whether the outcomes achieved in one context can be reproduced in different educational settings is fundamental in gauging the sustainability and broader applicability of the initiative.

- **Educators need to identify potential factors that might complicate projections based on the data findings.** Recognizing variables or circumstances that could influence the program's success or failure is vital for crafting strategies to address these challenges effectively.

However, despite all the progress in data collection and assessment, many schools still lack the information that they require. In spite of the value of assessments as data sources, schools tend to focus all of their attention on the data available, neglecting to focus on the data required for making sound decisions.

There is no substitute for common sense decision-making when it comes to data.

School administrators are often blinded by the data in front of them, and do not look for additional data that would provide a more complete picture of current conditions.

It is important to identify weaknesses or limitations in the data, as well as where the data can be improved. There is a place for research, but it should know where it belongs. It is not reasonable for educators to expect research to carry out all the heavy lifting for them. It is unlikely that the research will achieve its intended goals if they do so.

In spite of the fact that data can justify decisions, this does not necessarily mean that the best course of action has been taken.

As leaders are revered only for their success at consensus building and gathering stakeholder input, moving from the rhetorical embrace of data to truly data-driven decision making will remain an elusive goal in many communities" (Hess, 2008)

What is the point? It can be beneficial to conduct research and collect data; however, when it is used beyond its intended purpose, it can cause much damage. Schools should be made aware of the risks associated with misinterpreting the capabilities of data.

It is true that research and data are indispensable tools, but they should not be substituted for the good judgment of those who intend to use them. While research and data provide valuable insight and evidence, focusing on only them can result in lack of critical thinking skills. An effective judgment involves an amalgamation of knowledge and experience as well as intuition; through which individuals can analyze or interpret information in a comprehensive way.

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LET'S SOLVE THIS PROBLEM BY USING THE BIG DATA NONE OF US HAVE THE SLIGHTEST IDEA WHAT TO DO WITH

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Professor William J. Peters, Ed.D. (Educational Leadership) with over 20 years in education is a visiting professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at Kunsan National University.

Ask the experts

Welcome to **Ask the Experts**, the ultimate column dedicated to professional development in the field of education. In this dynamic and ever-evolving field, continuous growth and learning are paramount. In each issue, we explore the most commonly asked topic by interviewing an invited expert for their insights, experiences, and strategies.

EXCLUSIVE

LEADING BEYOND TITLES
WORK HARD, AND WORK WITH PASSION

with Dr. LINH PHUNG

EduVerse: Welcome to **Ask the Experts**, our exclusive interview series. I'm so excited to introduce **Dr. Linh Phung**, an accomplished leader in education. Former Director at Chatham University in Pennsylvania, USA, Dr. Linh is now the Founder of Eduling International and the Chair of the Affiliate Network Professional Council of TESOL International Association. In today's discussion, our spotlight is on leadership in education, as we explore Dr. Linh's noteworthy experiences and groundbreaking contributions to language education.

① Welcome Dr. Linh, great to have you here. To kick things off, can you share a bit about your journey in educational leadership, and what inspired you to take on leadership roles in the field?

Absolutely. Andy Curtis once said, *"You become a leader not because of what you want but because of who you are."* That really resonated with me. Throughout career, I have never aimed to attain a leadership role or a specific title; rather, my focus has always been doing the work in front of me.

After graduate school, my first full-time position in the U.S. was interestingly a managerial position. I found myself overseeing an English language program for international students, managing teachers, student workers, and other staff for a solid 12 years. Subsequently, a colleague of mine involved me in volunteering for Three Rivers TESOL (3RT), a teacher organization in Pennsylvania. Turns out, my active participation, enthusiasm, and creative problem-solving skills propelled me to leadership roles on the board, culminating in serving as the president of 3RT. Since then, my involvement with TESOL International Association grew, and I ended up in a few more leadership positions. The latest one is Chair of the Affiliate Network Professional Council, where I get to collaborate with leaders from 120 teacher organizations across the globe. What inspires me has always been the desire to be more engaged in the profession.

Dr. Linh Phung

(*) **Andy Curtis:** Professor at Anaheim University and the 50th President of TESOL International Association

2 Fascinating journey, Dr. Linh. Can you share some pivotal moments or experiences early in your career that shaped your approach to leadership in education?

To me, life and work is like this constant river with one moment just seamlessly blending into the next. But some pivotal moments include things that have been said to me or about me.

Do you teach Chinese? Do you teach English to Chinese people? You need to control your emotions. You come across too aggressive. Your communication style is indirect. She's just an ESL teacher.

These are words of bewilderment, skepticism, criticism, and belittlement that have stuck with me during my career as a Vietnamese non-native English speaking ESL teacher in the U.S. I suspect they have more to do with the assumptions and expectations based on my race and gender than how I really am. During my academic career in the U.S., I have always enjoyed the freedom to pursue my dreams in my studies, work, research, and community service instead of being caught up in what I once saw as the "insufferable" web of obligations, expectations, and interdependence in my home country. I used to think the road ahead was barrier-free until I woke up to the reality of limited opportunities for minority communities.

Sitting on the margin of the academic life of a university, serving minority students in the U.S., and striving to advance as a minority without the social capital others enjoy have made me realize the once invisible barriers. These realizations have highlighted the responsibility of inclusive leaders to remove barriers and provide opportunities for all to rise.

3 Powerful insights there. Now, moving on to your leadership philosophy, especially when directing a dynamic team of educators – how would you describe that?

Perhaps the most influential aspect of my leadership is that I work hard and work with passion. I often do the tasks together with my team or at least learn to understand the work they do. For example, in my role leading the development of the Eduling Speak app, we have been working diligently in the past two years and created an innovative app that we are very proud of. This achievement is possible because we believe in the direction of the product, enjoy our work, and inspire each other with creative ideas. My heart is in the work as Andrew Carnegie, one of the two founders of Carnegie Mellon University, once said.

4 Do you believe that teachers and educators tend to have high levels of ego, making it challenging to direct and manage them? If so, how do you approach this difficulty, and what strategies do you employ, particularly during your tenure in the Director role at Chatham University?

Actually, during my time at Chatham University, I didn't really notice that ego thing among the teachers. Perhaps this is because ESL is different from other academic disciplines in the U.S. The program that I ran was not part of an academic department at Chatham University. In addition, working with international students, we were all very focused on supporting students to ensure not only academic progress, but also social and cultural integration.

But, sure, university faculty and staff tend to work independently because teaching and research are often very time-consuming and self-directed. So, I think universities should really focus on creating a more engaging and supportive environment to promote everyone's well-being and prevent burnout and social disengagement. That might be a good strategy for the situation you raise.

Dr. Linh Phung at Chatham University

Ask the experts

Dr. Linh Phung is a language teacher, researcher, and innovator with experience in directing successful educational programs, fostering academic excellence, and driving innovation in language learning. With Eduling, she leads the development of the Eduling Speak app that connects learners to talk in pairs based on 1000+ communicative tasks and games. She's also a published author and expert in language education with publications in high impact journals. She currently serves as an English Language Specialist with the U.S. Department of State.

⑤

Moving on to your role as the Founder of Eduling International, what inspired you to transition from a university setting to entrepreneurship, and how has this change impacted your perspective on educational leadership?

> *Perhaps the most influential aspect of my leadership is that I work hard and work with passion. (Dr. Linh Phung)*

I founded Eduling because I wanted to do more work. I wanted a place to experiment with new ideas and make a greater impact. Especially, as I have been leading a team to develop the Eduling Speak app for a few years, I see that the joy in creating something together has been the driving force in my team. A small team in a startup can be in a better position to be innovative than small program as part of a bigger university. You know, universities have their own priorities and a certain level of inertia that is difficult to change. But don't get me wrong, I appreciate the role of universities in pursuing knowledge through cutting edge research, which drives wider innovation. Being in both spaces allows me to appreciate the work and leadership in and outside academia.

⑥

As the Chair of the Affiliate Network Professional Council (ANPC) of TESOL International Association, you're involved in a global leadership role. How do you approach leading a team with members from diverse cultural backgrounds to ensure a strong network of affiliates?

It has been my pleasure to serve on the Affiliate Network Professional Council of TESOL International Association for over three years now. I'm currently the chair of the council working with other 8 members and supporting leaders of about 120 Affiliates worldwide. Because of my background of having worked with international students and colleagues, I find myself at home working with colleagues from different countries and backgrounds. We're eager to learn about TESOL in various contexts through webinars, networking events, and articles written for the Affiliate News.

Dr. Linh Phung at a meeting of ANPC of TESOL International Association in 2023

I think the key to be a volunteer leader is this eagerness to learn, an open-minded, "ready to be amazed" attitude, and a level of commitment and responsibility to get things done together. Since we're all volunteers, the biggest challenge is to engage all members for projects that they find meaningful. While I think I've been successful in driving initiatives and delivering results, I've come to realize that it's equally crucial to foster a more cohesive team. Building that sense of connection among team members ensures that everyone is equally invested in the Council's work.

7 **Currently juggling roles in entrepreneurship, full-time employment, and leadership at TESOL, how do you manage the balance between all of those commitments?**

You're correct. It's challenging to balance those commitments. However, with my result-oriented disposition, I've been able to hit certain milestones in the Eduling Speak app, an innovative, first-of-its-kind app to connect learners to talk in pairs while performing tasks together. With Eduling Speak, I find so much joy in its creative process that it is not difficult to dedicate time to it. I always tell people that the way I manage my time is to work with some level of obsession. With TESOL, the Affiliate Network Professional Council has offered many opportunities and programs for TESOL Affiliates to connect. Currently, I'm planning five presentations, two workshops for TESOL Affiliates, and a networking event at the TESOL Convention in Tampa, Florida this March. However, with my new role as a senior research analyst for a global education company, more than ever, I'm really looking at ways to streamline my commitments and be more strategic in the use of my time.

8 **What do you believe are the most important qualities a leader should possess to navigate the future of education?**

I think whether one is a leader or not, the most important quality is the ability to continuously learn and engage with students, employees, and colleagues. Without learning and this engagement, we will be out of touch with the needs of those we lead and serve.

I often recall the wise words of a colleague: "It's not about the title, but the work that you do that makes people relate to you and recognize you." My approach to leadership has consistently centered around my actions. Whether through initiating projects or volunteering, I naturally take on leadership roles with added responsibilities and tasks. Yet, having a seat at the table and engaging in impactful work is a privilege I appreciate. (Dr. Linh Phung)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Passion-driven leadership:** Dr. Linh's leadership evolved organically from a genuine passion for the work rather than a pursuit of titles.

- **Hands-on approach:** Dr. Linh's leadership style involves active participation and contribution to tasks, fostering team commitment and creative ideas.

- **Diversity and inclusion focus:** It is essential to create supportive environments in academia to prevent burnout and promote opportunities for all, regardless of background.

- **Academia to entrepreneurship:** The creation of Eduling International stems from a desire to innovate and make a greater impact, with Dr. Linh appreciating the agility of small startup teams.

- **Global leadership and team dynamics:** Leading a global team involves an open-minded attitude, eagerness to learn, and cohesive teamwork to enhance the effectiveness of initiatives.

LEADING WITH LOVE

LESSONS FROM JESUS ON EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Dr. Le Dinh Bao Quoc

In the complex and dynamic world of education, the call for leadership that transcends managerial roles and embraces profound humanity has never been more critical. While leadership theories abound, the enduring teachings of Jesus offer a timeless blueprint for compassionate and transformative educational leadership.

In this exploration, let us embark on a journey through the Gospels, unraveling seven profound lessons that Jesus imparts on educational leadership, lessons rooted in love, compassion, and servitude.

However, it is crucial to interpret these biblical stories within their cultural and historical context. While educational leadership principles can be extracted from these texts, applying them directly to modern educational equity concepts may necessitate interpretation.

LESSON 1   LEAD BY SERVING

At the core of Jesus's teachings is the concept of servant leadership. In the Gospel of John, chapter 13, Jesus is described as sharing a significant moment with his disciples during the Last Supper. Knowing that his hour had come and fully aware of the impending betrayal, Jesus exemplifies humility and servant leadership by washing the feet of his disciples. Despite initial resistance from Peter, Jesus insists on the symbolic act, teaching a powerful lesson on the importance of humility and selfless service.

FULL CHAPTER

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.
(John 13:12-15)

This act of humility goes beyond the physical act; it represents a deep truth - that real leadership is about serving. At another scene, Jesus said, *"Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all"* (Mark 9:35). Educational leaders, like Jesus, are tasked with leading through service, putting the needs of their students and staff above personal gain. Through selfless acts of kindness, leaders can create an atmosphere of respect and unity within their educational communities.

LESSON 2   EMBRACE INCLUSIVITY AND EQUITY

In the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10, there is a compelling story that underscores the principles of inclusivity and equality in education. The story recounts an incident where people are bringing their children to Jesus for him to bless them. The disciples, perhaps unintentionally, try to prevent this, considering it a trivial matter. However, Jesus responds with a profound lesson.

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."
(Mark 10:14)

FULL CHAPTER

In this story, Jesus challenges the prevailing societal norms that overlooked the significance of children. He not only embraces them but also emphasizes their importance in understanding the essence of the kingdom of God.

In the context of education, this narrative becomes a powerful metaphor for embracing the diversity and unique perspectives that each student brings. Educational leaders should value each student regardless of background or abilities, fostering a welcoming and valued environment.

The encounter between Jesus and the woman caught in adultery, as depicted in the Gospel of John, chapter 8, unfolds as an emotional example of compassionate correction. In this narrative, a woman is brought before Jesus, condemned by the religious authorities for her adultery. Instead of delivering a harsh judgment, Jesus responds with a merciful approach.

"Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"
"No one, sir,"
"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. *"Go now and leave your life of sin."*
(John 8:10-11)

FULL CHAPTER

His statement, *"Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin,"* captures a powerful message. Jesus, instead of focusing on judgment, offers compassion and a chance for redemption. While recognizing her mistakes, he offers a path towards transformation and growth.

In practical terms, this means educational leaders should approach students' shortcomings with understanding and empathy. It involves creating an environment where students feel supported and encouraged to learn from their mistakes. Rather than imposing strict punishments, the focus is on guiding students towards a path of improvement and personal development.

ENCOURAGE AND EMPOWER | LESSON 4

In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 14, the narrative of Jesus calling his disciple Peter to walk on water serves as an inspiring metaphor for the transformative impact of encouragement and empowerment. In this story, Jesus beckons Peter to step out of the boat and join him on the violent waters. Initially, Peter walks confidently, but as he becomes aware of the storm around him, fear sets in, and he begins to sink.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"
Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"
(Matthew 14:29-31)

FULL CHAPTER
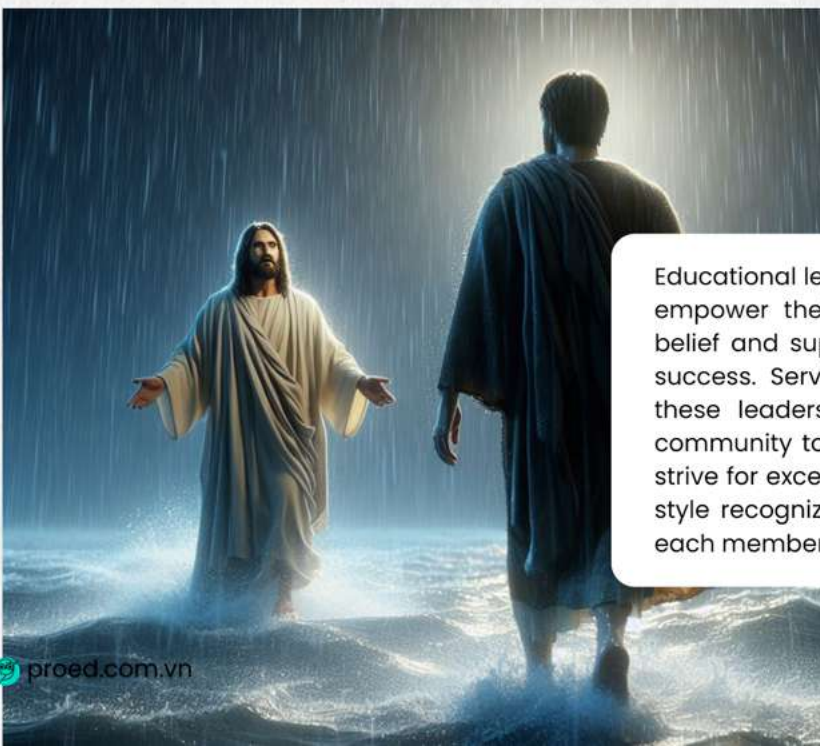
Educational leaders have the potential to uplift and empower their teams, fostering a culture where belief and support become powerful catalysts for success. Serving as beacons of encouragement, these leaders call upon individuals within their community to step out of their comfort zones and strive for excellence. This transformative leadership style recognizes the potential for greatness within each member of the educational community.

LESSON 5   CHAMPION VALUES AND ETHICS
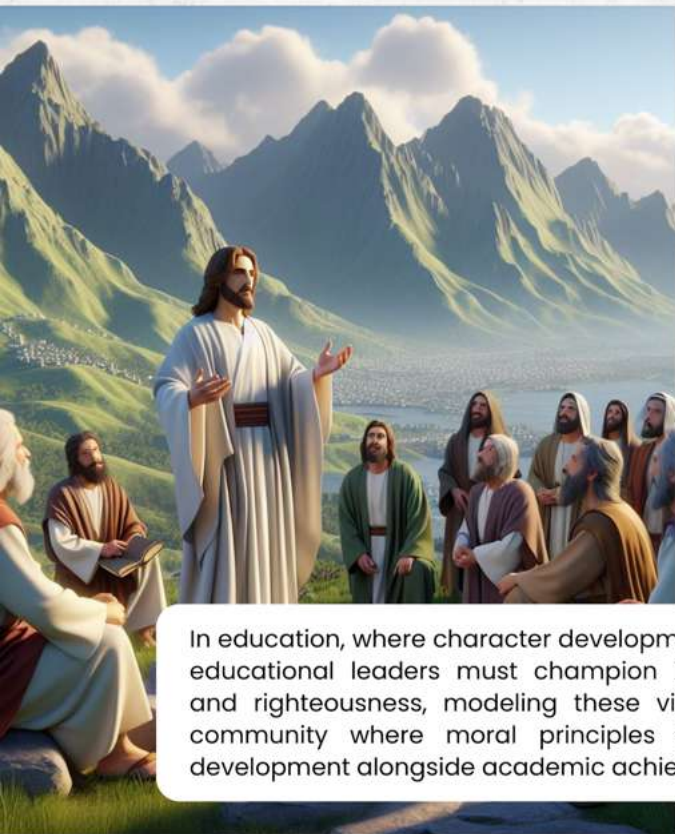
The Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount, as expressed in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 5, provide a foundational guide for ethical leadership. Within the Beatitudes, Jesus highlights virtues like humility, mercy, and righteousness, presenting a viewpoint that prioritizes character above material success.

FULL CHAPTER

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
  for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
  for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
  for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
  for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
  for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
  for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
  for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
  for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
The Beatitudes *(Matthew 5:3-10)*

In education, where character development is paramount, educational leaders must champion integrity, humility, and righteousness, modeling these virtues to foster a community where moral principles shape character development alongside academic achievement.

LESSON 6   COMMUNICATE WITH CLARITY AND IMPACT

Communication lies at the heart of effective leadership. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus often used parables—simple stories with moral or spiritual lessons—to convey profound truths. The use of parables allowed him to communicate complex concepts in a way that was relatable and easily understood by diverse audiences. An typical example is in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 13. Jesus uses the Parable of the Sower to illustrate the importance of clear and impactful communication.

Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. (Matthew 13:3-9)

FULL CHAPTER

Another example of Jesus's effective communication is in **The Beatitudes** (Matthew 5:3-10), showcasing Jesus employing a range of rhetorical techniques, including repetition, contrast, and vivid imagery to convey ethical and moral principles. By structuring his message into memorable sections and utilizing clear, practical language, Jesus imparts insights into kingdom living to a diverse audience.

Educational leaders play a crucial role in disseminating information and promoting understanding within their communities. Leaders should attentively listen to the concerns and perspectives of students and staff, ensuring messages are not only heard but also understood and valued. Utilizing diverse communication mediums, including verbal, written, visual, and interactive methods, enables leaders to engage learners on various levels, catering to individual preferences and learning styles.

The cornerstone of Jesus's teachings is the commandment to love one another. In the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 22, Jesus declares,

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"
(Matthew 22:37-39)

FULL CHAPTER »

This commandment serves as a cornerstone for educational leaders, urging them to cultivate a culture embedded in love and compassion. Through love, educational leaders can nurture a sense of belonging and support among students, faculty, and staff. With compassion, leaders can connect with their community, offering empathy in times of struggle and celebrating achievements with genuine joy.
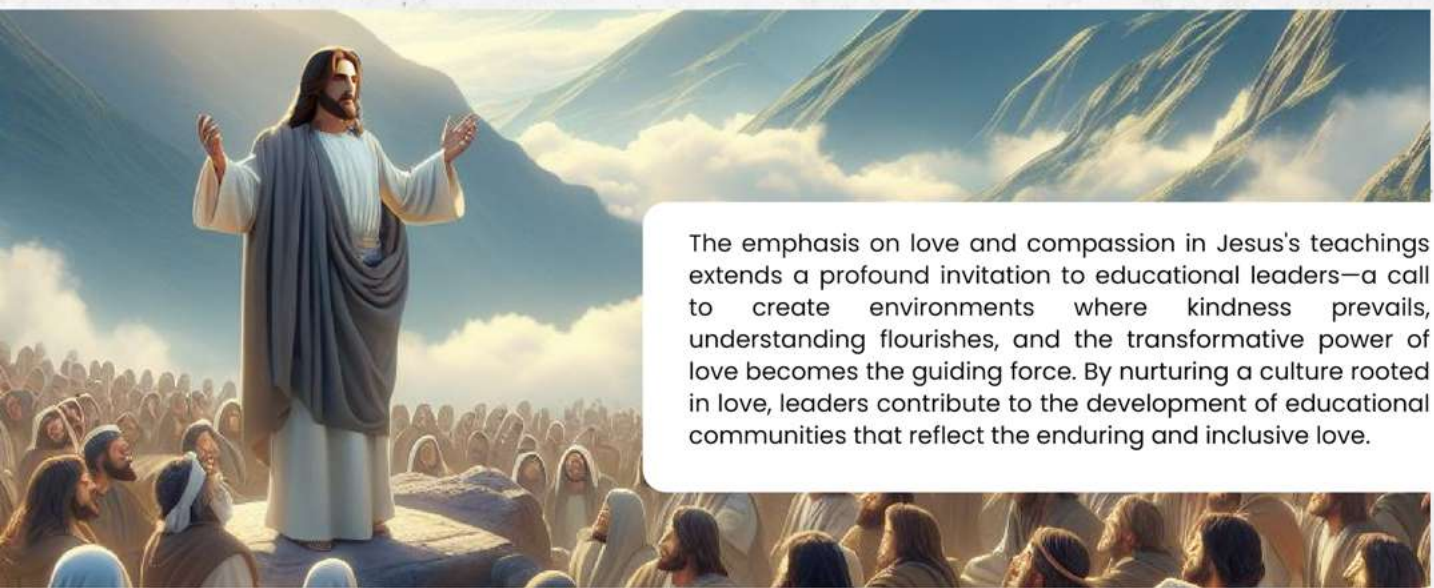
The emphasis on love and compassion in Jesus's teachings extends a profound invitation to educational leaders—a call to create environments where kindness prevails, understanding flourishes, and the transformative power of love becomes the guiding force. By nurturing a culture rooted in love, leaders contribute to the development of educational communities that reflect the enduring and inclusive love.

CONCLUSION

Reflecting on the profound teachings from the Gospels, it is evident that Jesus's lessons provide an enduring and motivational compass for educational leaders. With these values, educational leaders can cultivate transformative and encouraging environments, influencing both the intellects and emotions of those under their guidance.

In a world that constantly seeks innovative approaches to education, the age-old wisdom found in the Gospels remains a beacon of inspiration. Let us, as educational leaders, commit to nurturing a supportive, empowering, and compassionate educational journey for all. For in leading with love, we pave the way for a brighter, more harmonious future for our students and communities alike.

Le Dinh Bao Quoc, with a Doctorate in Education, boasts 20+ years in ELT. He founded Pro.Ed Education Solutions, offering school consultancies. Author of *"The Art and Science of ChatGPT in Education,"* he highlights EdTech's role in enriching teaching, learning, and educational practices. Research spans EdTech's impact, teacher growth, and educational management.

Resources
- The Bible verses in this article are sourced from The Bible Gateway at https://www.biblegateway.com.
- The illustrations depicting the Bible scenes are generated by Image Creator, an AI tool developed by Microsoft.

"

I am not afraid of an army of lions led by a sheep; I am afraid of an army of sheep led by a lion.

Alexander the Great
King of Macedon

WHY SCHOOL LEADERS MUST PRIORITIZE MENTAL FITNESS

Paul Grainger

There's a joke I recall from my childhood. The short version goes something like this:

A mother is waking her son: "Paulie, come, wake up, you have to go to school."
"But I don't want to. The children annoy me and the teachers are a complete pain!"
"Stop it, now. Get up and off to school now!"
"Mom, give me two good reasons why I should go to the stupid school."
"Paulie, first of all, you're 53 years old, and second, you're the headmaster."

I'm not sure why this joke has stuck in my head for so long. Perhaps it was because even back then, I felt it contained a strong element of truth to it. Over forty years later, this sense of truth continues to be echoed by recent findings. Gallup's 2022 poll revealed educators experiencing the highest burnout levels among all US industries. It wasn't the only source reporting this. Another 2022 US survey in Education Week across 2,360 teachers and 1,540 principals revealed the education sector as one of the most stressful. Nearly three-fourths of teachers and 85 percent of principals reported experiencing frequent job-related stress, compared to just a third of working adults. Fifty-nine percent of teachers and 48 percent of principals felt burnt out, compared to 44 percent of other workers. Finally, more than a quarter reported experiencing symptoms of depression.

WELL-BEING OF TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, AND WORKING ADULTS IN JANUARY 2022
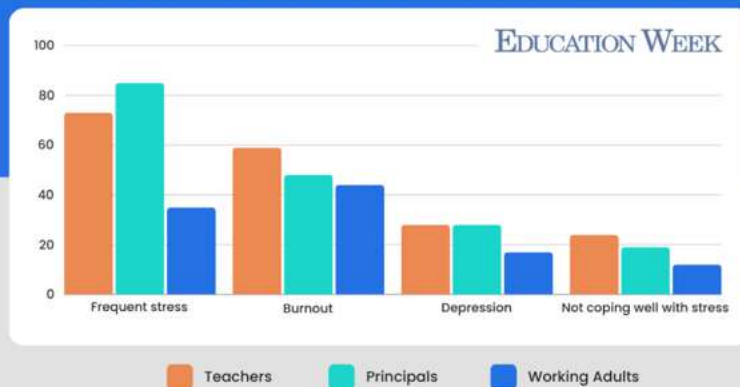
EDUCATION WEEK

This survey, conducted by RAND Corp, included 2,360 teachers and 1,540 principals in the US, and was published in Education Week in June2022.

The causes are readily apparent. Unlike large corporations where CEOs sit in beautiful offices, well shielded from the outside world, School Heads don't have that luxury and are constantly in the public eye. Their office frequently lies in the heart of the school, as people expect direct access to the Head, even in large schools with distributed leadership. The situation is even more extreme in small schools, where the status quo can be to go to the Head for EVERYTHING. Delegation is rarely an option.

Furthermore, schools can often inadvertently resemble a pressure cooker of emotions, fueled by the composition of their stakeholders – stressed staff, demanding parents, impressionable primary-aged children, and sensitive teenagers. It's not hard to see how this combination frequently ignites some of the most emotionally charged situations, with leaders usually thrown right into the heart of the fire.

As the beating heart of the school, Heads are constantly pulled in different directions by conflicting demands of multiple internal stakeholders including parents, students, teachers, admin staff, senior leadership teams, and the Board of Directors. If this wasn't challenging enough, there's also a host of external parties including examination boards, inspection committees, recruitment agencies, alumnae, and more.

Conservative statistics reveal School Heads average an astounding 53 interactions per day. That normally equates to extinguishing 53 emotionally charged fires while worrying about when and where the next crisis will come from. Whether it's a school bus crash, a hyped-up scandal, or financial concerns, leaders are cast as perennial problem solvers, constantly resolving issues, brokering compromises, and mediating between parties.

It's little wonder they frequently resort to 'reactive' mode, struggling to maintain their rational thinking. With the expectation of needing to be all things to all people, they often forget the one thing that matters most – themselves. They rank lowest on their own priority list.

Amid all the post-pandemic initiatives to focus on the mental health of the students, little is being done for Heads and their senior leadership teams. Heads set the tone for the school. If they are not energetic and positive, soon the whole school will feel the same way. Good leaders must be calm, confident, and always appear positive, even if they don't feel that way inside. Like one leader humorously said, " You need to be very positive, even if it means being absurdly positive sometimes."

WHAT IS MENTAL FITNESS?

Imagine the possibilities if school leaders were able to remain calm, clear-headed, and positive even in extremely stressful, exposed, and unfamiliar situations? That's the power of mental fitness.

The weaker your mental fitness, the faster, longer, and more intensively you feel mental stress - anxiety, frustration, or unhappiness - through work and relationship challenges. The bad news is that 80% of people score below the minimum level of mental fitness required for peak performance and happiness. Unsurprisingly, for school leaders, this percentage is significantly higher.

SELF-SABOTAGE

The major cause of these low percentages is not due to external sources. It's people subconsciously holding themselves back. Think of it this way - anytime your mind is in negative emotion for longer than a second, you're self-sabotaging. Not convinced? If you believe negative emotions play a positive role in driving you, imagine placing your hand on a hot stove. How long would you want to feel the pain before you get the message? As soon as possible, right? The same is true for our negative emotions – they are only helpful for a second as an alert to dangers, threats, or challenges. However, staying in these emotions hurts your ability to see clearly and choose the best solution.

To illustrate, when your mind tells you that you should prepare for tomorrow's important Open Day, it is acting as your friend, causing positive action. When it wakes you up at 3:00 a.m. anxious about the day and warning you for the hundredth time about the many consequences of failing, it is acting as your enemy; it is simply exhausting your mental resources without any redeeming value. No friend would do that.

MEASURING MENTAL FITNESS

IQ and EQ are well known, but neither has ever shown a consistent correlation to success. The lesser-known, PQ (Positive Intelligence Quotient) is what measures your mental fitness by the strength of positive mental responses to negative ones. For example, a PQ of 75 means that your mind is serving you 75 percent of the time and sabotaging you about 25 percent of the time. Compelling evidence from a synthesis of research in psychology, neuroscience, and organizational science shows the emergence of PQ being the most reliable predictor of an individual and team's ability to reach their full potential and achieve peak performance and success. Importantly, leaders perform 30-35% better on average.

THREE STRATEGIES TO INCREASE PQ

I have worked with multiple school leadership teams on the tools of Positive Intelligence. I take them to the frontlines of the unceasing battle raging in their minds. On one side of this battlefield are the well-disguised Saboteurs, who wreck any attempt at increasing either happiness or performance. On the other side is the "Inner Wisdom", which unlocks five hidden powers (empathy, discovery, innovation, purpose, and laser-focused action) to conquer life's challenges with flair and elegance. The Saboteurs and Inner Wisdom are fueled by different regions of the brain. We are literally of two minds and two brains. This suggests three strategies for increasing your PQ.

I WEAKEN YOUR SABOTEURS

The Saboteurs are the voices in your head that generate negative emotions when you handle life's everyday challenges. They are a set of automatic and habitual mind patterns, beliefs, and assumptions that work against your best interests. Saboteurs cause all negative emotions, like stress, anxiety, anger, frustration, restlessness, self-doubt, and even imposter syndrome. In doing so, they sabotage our performance, well-being, and relationships. Like a band of bandits, they come in ten varieties, with names like the Judge, Controller, Victim, Stickler, Pleaser, and Avoider.

Unfortunately, saboteurs are a universal phenomenon. The question is not whether you have them, but which ones you have, and how strong they are. Out of the Heads participating in my programs, nearly 95% conclude that they do have Saboteurs that cause "significant harm" to them reaching their full potential for success or happiness.

The great news is that you can significantly reduce the power of these mental foes. The key to weakening your Saboteurs is to identify which one you have and expose its key hidden beliefs, patterns, thoughts, and emotions. This, in effect, allows you to "expose" your internal enemy, and label it the moment it shows up in your head. Rather than get frustrated, which fuels the Saboteurs further, my favorite tip is to 'play' with the Saboteur by saying something like "Oh, Restless, there you go again! You're late today. What's been keeping you?!" To be sure, it will keep coming back, which means you will keep labeling it, and letting it go. This simple act of observing, labeling, and letting go has a profound impact. It's this habit that breaks us out of cruising mindlessly on autopilot, which is the precursor to self-sabotage.

2 STRENGTHEN YOUR INNER WISDOM

While your saboteurs thrive from keeping you in "survival" mode, more fearful, and less inclined to take risks, what they're really doing is blocking you from your inner wisdom. This great wisdom and strength is rooted in its perspective: *any problem you are facing is either already a gift and opportunity or could be actively turned into one.* Your Saboteurs mock that perspective and cause you instead to feel anxious, frustrated, disappointed, stressed, or guilty over "bad" outcomes.

However, if you're able to successfully shift to your Wise Self, you unlock five hidden powers in your mind that help you deal with any challenge calmly. To facilitate this process, there are several simple and fun "power games" you can play in the back of your mind. My favorite is the "Yes...And" game which generates one of the five powers of your inner Wisdom – the "Innovate" power. To play, simply follow each new idea others have by saying "Yes, what I love about that idea is...and...". With this approach, every idea is appreciated rather than judged before the next one is generated in reaction to it. Ideal for team meetings.

3 STRENGTHEN PQ BRAIN MUSCLES

The PQ Brain "muscles" are activated and strengthened when you command your mind to stop its busy mind chatter and direct its attention to any of your five physical sensations. An example might be to feel the weight of your body on your seat, or feet on the floor, or sensations of your breathing. A 10-second PQ Rep technique intercepts the old Saboteur responses, so we can pause and choose a new Sage response. Repetition results in Sage neural pathways (muscles) to counter the old Saboteur muscles. Rapid change can be observed when reaching 100 PQ reps per day. This equates to approximately 15 minutes, or 1.5% of one's waking hours. The beauty of PQ Reps is they can be completed in 30 seconds or less, and can be done anywhere, anytime. They can even be done in meetings, for example, by carefully observing the colour of someone's eyes or hair, or rubbing your thumb and forefinger together. The versatility and ease of PQ reps allow School Leaders to integrate them into even the craziest of days.

CONCLUSION

Challenges in life and at school will never disappear. Leaders who simply hope and pray for the best each day are unwittingly setting themselves up for failure and a life of misery, stress, and burnout.

For School Owners and Governors, the high turnover of School Heads is highly disruptive, time-consuming, and expensive. A happy, healthy, productive Head is more likely to stay. Resilience is the antidote. The wise investment is to prioritize mental fitness, and boost Positive Intelligence first.

How to get started? First, the bad news. Rewiring the brain at the root cause level to create a shift from negative to positive is not an overnight fix. The benefits and impact of most training programs fade rapidly over time because they stop at insights. Insights only account for 20% of the shift needed to improve our mental fitness and increase our positive intelligence. The remaining 80% should be focused on building the mental muscles required to intercept and discredit these saboteurs, while strengthening our "Inner Wisdom" powers.

The Results Span Both Performance and Wellness Among Participants*

*Based on survey results from cohort of >2000 Positive Intelligence Program participants after 6 weeks of mental fitness training

- **90%** Use Mental/Emotional Energy More Effectively
- **83%** Improve Self-Confidence
- **85%** Increase Happiness
- **92%** Improve Ability to Develop Others
- **84%** Are Better at Conflict Management
- **91%** Manage Stress Better

Finally, the GREAT news. With recent breakthroughs in neuroscience and technology, education leaders can now improve their mental fitness significantly – as evidenced by new neural pathways in MRI imaging - within 6-8 weeks of practice. The results, validated by more than 500,000 participants from 50 countries are often reported to be life-changing for the individual, pivotal for their teams, and transformative for schools.

Resources
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Paul Grainger, with 30 years in education and Edtech, founded Unlock Dynamic in 2020 to help aspiring and current educational leaders shift from stress to success. His company leverages modern coaching, neuroscience, and technology to enhance mental fitness and brain function within six weeks.

FROM TEACHER TO TEACHER LEADER

BY HAYO REINDERS
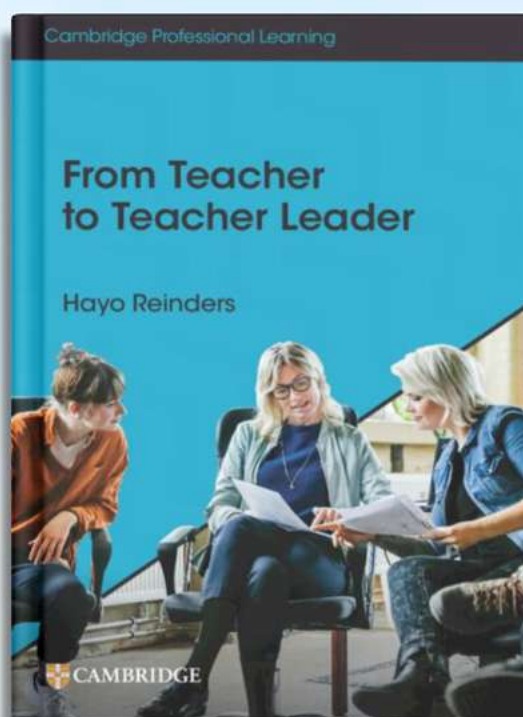
In this dynamic field of education, teachers often find themselves in leadership roles, whether formal or informal. Dr. Hayo Reinders explores this concept in his transformative book, *From Teacher to Teacher Leader*, offering practical insights for educators seeking to enhance their impact within their educational communities.

Published by Cambridge in 2023, this book is not about climbing the traditional career ladder; instead, it equips teachers with the tools and confidence to be effective leaders. Dr. Reinders introduces the notion of '**Leading from within,**' emphasizing the personal commitment teachers share in improving their environments, students, colleagues, and themselves.

The EduVerse Newsletter is excited to feature a brief interview with Dr. Hayo Reinders, the esteemed author of this inspiring book. Discover his drive behind the book, important insights, and guidance for educators aiming to excel as impactful teacher leaders.

Key features

- **Real-world examples:** Drawing on experiences from teachers globally, the book shares best practices and lessons learned.

- **Personal development plan (PDP):** Each chapter includes a reflective PDP, guiding readers to set goals and actionable steps for continuous growth.

- **Project-Based Learning (PBL):** Practical application is encouraged through PBL, enabling teachers to implement leadership concepts in real projects within their communities.

LEADING FROM WITHIN

Dr. Hayo Reinders

OVERVIEW

Teaching is primarily about relationships. We develop connections with our learners, with our colleagues and with our communities. Leadership is much the same. Successful leaders work with, for and through others by building trust, developing a shared vision and by consistently communicating and manifesting their values, in alignment with those around them. Leadership is therefore not synonymous with management. The latter is primarily about achieving outcomes, whereas leadership is about determining what those outcomes should be. Many teachers are put off by the idea of taking on leadership roles as they worry about ending up in administrative or technical management roles, drawing up budgets, hiring and firing people, and operating increasingly far away from the classroom. This is not an accurate view of the many leadership roles teachers play, from mentoring colleagues, to advocating for students, or supporting parents. These are examples of the many actions teachers take that enable them to positive contribute to a community much larger than the one found in their individual classrooms. Such leadership activities are not only intrinsically meaningful, they have also clearly been shown to enhance teacher wellbeing and learner achievement.

Leadership for others starts with leadership for oneself, 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 recognise their strengths and acknowledge their weak spots. They also constantly seek out their blind spots, for example through self-reflection and by inviting feedback from others. This involves working up the courage to ask deep, reflective questions of ourselves. Who are we, as teachers? What do we aim to achieve? What are our values? And, importantly, is the way we are currently leading our life enabling us to live by those values?

EduVerse: Welcome, Dr. Reinders. We're excited to have you discuss your book in the context of our special edition on leadership in education. First of all, can you share with EduVerse readers a bit about the inspiration behind "From Teacher to Teacher Leader"?

Dr. Reinders: One of the most important and most impactful things we can do as teachers, especially looking at the longer term in the long run, is to contribute to our community, which of course is our own classes, but also the school and the wider environment, by contributing our knowledge and skills and experience in such a way that other people can stand on our shoulders in the future. So it's really like a future-proofing, sustainable effort to make our community stronger in the long term.

Dr. Hayo Reinders at the interview with EduVerse about his book **From Teacher to Teacher Leader.**

Like sharing and contributing to develop a new generate of effective teachers?

Yeah. Imagine you are a very experienced teacher yourself. And so you can run your classes really well. Okay. That's good for you. And it's good for your learners, too. But I might be new to your school, or I might be coming from a different type of school, or a different country. And I may not yet have that confidence and those skills that you have. So you can keep all of that to yourself, or you can find ways to guide me, support me, encourage me, motivate me. And of course, not just me, but also other people around you. So the stronger you get, the more you need to share that energy so that everybody can benefit from it.

You know, I find the concept of "leading from within" in your book very interesting. Could you elaborate on this idea and its significance in the context of education?

Certainly. What I mean is, in the old days, leadership and management literature was about leading from the top, like you have to be a strong executive leader or principal to make all the decisions. But of course, over the years, we've really moved away from that. And we now recognize that it's a lot more about working together with others, developing and building relationships, supporting people, motivating people. And so a lot of that is really about values. It's about understanding not just what you do, but understanding why you do what you do and why your colleagues, your school, and your community do what they do. And this idea of leading from within is really closely aligned with your own and your community's values. And that's a very powerful concept.

> *Leadership is about understanding not just what you do, but understanding why you do what you do. (Hayo Reinders)*

Very inspiring notion! Let's go to another remarkable feature of your book. The book is described as a toolbox for teacher leadership. How does it practically guide teachers in developing their leadership skills?

Actually, one of the reasons I wrote the book was to really try and create something practical. I think that was one of the things missing in a lot of leadership books out there, especially for teacher leaders. And very little was practically useful for people like you and I. And so the idea of creating the book as a toolkit meant that I wanted every single chapter to have lots of practical applications. So the book throughout invites teachers to engage in reflection, in observations, and in trialing things in their workplace as they learn about different topics. By engaging in the tasks and questions in this personal leadership plan, at the end of the book, you know where you stand. You know what your strengths are, and which areas to further develop.

You've emphasized the importance of reflection. Including it as an essential part in the book will make the book standout in the market.

Yes, I hope so. The other way that I do it in the book is by what I called the project. It's not required the readers to engage in, but it's something that I strongly encourage. If you are starting to learn about leadership in a broad general sense, it would be helpful to try and apply that immediately to a specific challenge or problem that you have in your immediate work environment.

So don't just read about it in a general sense and say, oh, these are good communication strategies or that's a good way of leading a team. Figure out an actual problem at work and then apply all of these concepts and ideas to that problem as you engage with the book. I think that's the most useful thing to do because it forces them to incorporate these ideas into their own daily practice.

Absolutely. And with reflection, the readers know how the theories will be applied in their real context. I think that's the reason why you include the project-based learning in every chapter, right? So how does this component enhance the practical application of leadership concepts?

Yeah, that's correct. The issue with a lot of projects is that, we're often not specifically trained for implementing a project in the real world. For example, if you wanted to experiment with AI in your class. Probably the IT department of your school will have something to say about that. Probably the legal department will have some questions for you about how you're going to stay within the law. Probably your head of department will be worried that some of the parents of the children that you're teaching might be worried about this new technology.

In other words, no project is ever an island. Every project is always a whole collection of relationships with different people and you need to know how to manage those relationships. And that's why the project-based component is so important because as you go through the book, it asks you questions like who are you going to be working with, how are you going to reach out to them, what do you want from them? So it really encourages you to think about not the project as an intended product but as a process of implementation.

That sounds very helpful for readers. Finally, as an experienced educator, any key takeaways or advice you'd like to share with our readers?

Well, one of the key takeaways for teachers is to recognize that, and I make this point early on in the book, leadership and management are two different things.

> *Leadership and management, yes they can go hand in hand but they are also two completely different sets of skills and attitudes. (Hayo Reinders)*

There are teachers who don't want to be the manager, don't want to be the person responsible for hiring and firing staff or writing budgets or doing annual performance reviews. As a result, now we have managers who are not actually leaders in charge of many schools and organizations. We need people who are actually leaders, who can lead from within and engage in true teacher leadership activities, like supporting each other, like mentoring colleagues, like doing action research. So if you have any doubt in your mind, as a teacher, leadership and management, yes they can go hand in hand but they are also two completely different sets of skills and attitudes.

Thank you, Dr. Reinders, for sharing valuable insights into your book. We look forward to having you in EduVerse future events.
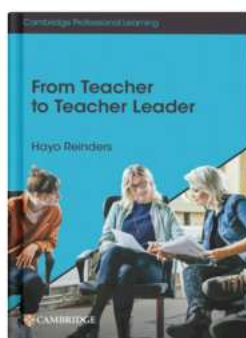
For more information about the book, click **HERE** or scan the QR.

Dr. Hayo Reinders (www.innovationinteaching.org) is TESOL Professor and Director of the doctoral programme at Anaheim University in the USA as well as Professor of Applied Linguistics at KMUTT in Thailand. Hayo is Editor of the journal Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching and edits a book series on "New Language Learning and Teaching Environments". He founded the Institute for Teacher Leadership. He has published 30 books and over 200 articles on such topics as teacher leadership, learner autonomy, and educational technology. He is a speaker for the Royal Society of New Zealand.

THE BIG QUESTIONS

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

🎯 STEP 1

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 were 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, stimulate, or enjoy yourself; your hobbies or other activities for rest, recreation, fun and creativity.

3. Relationships: refers to intimacy, closeness, friendship and bonding 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, engaging in self-care to promote positive mental health.

🎯 STEP 2: LOCATING HOW FULLY YOU ARE LIVING YOUR VALUES

Read through the values you identified in Step 1. In the dart board on the next page, draw an X in each quarter to represent where you stand today (a total of four Xs) in that domain. For example, an X in the Bull's Eye (the center 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 of valued living, you should mark four Xs on the dart board. See the diagram below.

THE BULL'S EYE ACTIVITY

Example: I am living fully by my values in this area.

Example: I have lost touch with my values in this area.

Work/Education

Leisure/Recreation (Your Time)

Personal Growth/ Health

Relationships (Family and Friends)
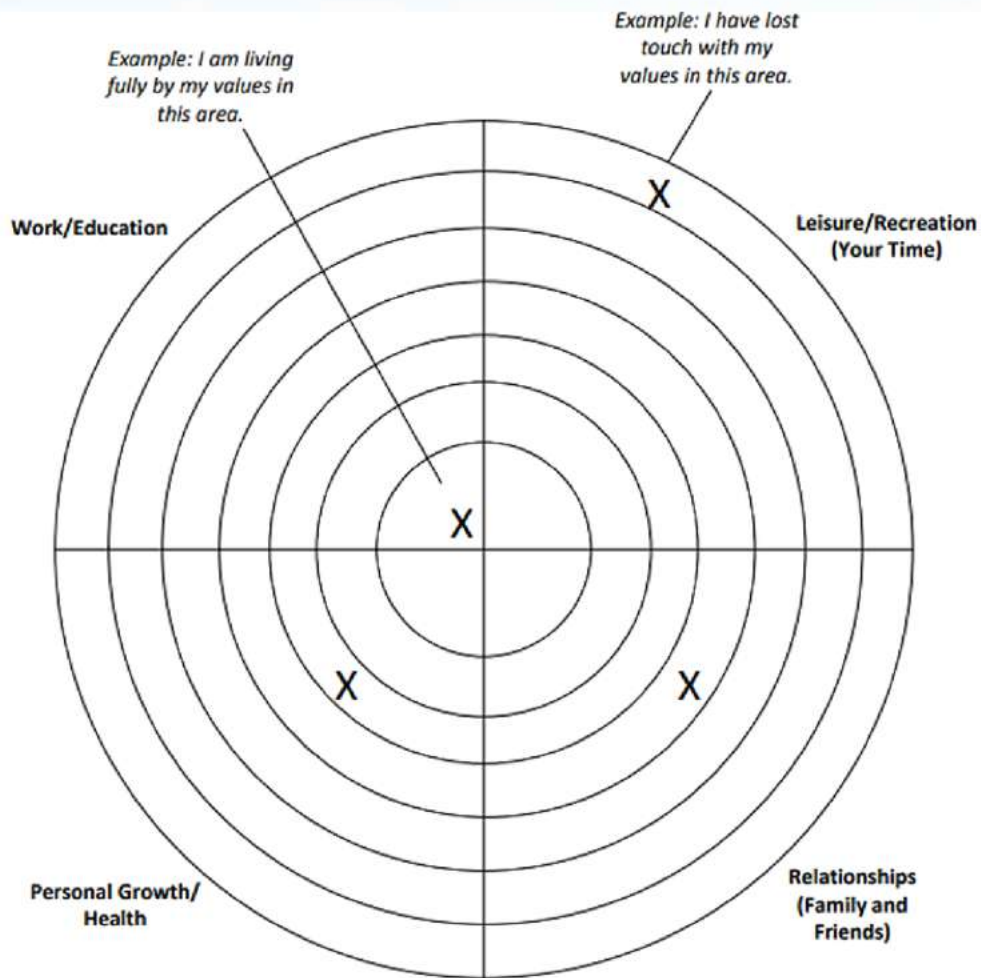
🎯 STEP 3: IDENTIFY BARRIERS OR OBSTACLES

Now write down what stands between you and living your current life as you want to, from 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) in the space below and estimate to what extent the obstacle (s) you just described can 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".

🎯 STEP 4: IDENTIFY BARRIERS OR OBSTACLES

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 I had the life I 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?

Such questions are not only meaningful at the individual level but can also be asked of others. I have worked with many teams over the years that have completed this and similar exercises to develop a much deeper understanding and appreciation of shared values and goals. Such teams go on to develop a level of resilience that is reflected at all levels, from higher job satisfaction to better academic outcomes.

Resources
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Management is doing things right. Leadership is doing the right things.

Peter Drucker
American author

CLASSROOM LEADERSHIP

THE CRADLE OF FUTURE LEADERS

Nguyen Thi Quynh Anh

Classroom leadership traditionally entails the teacher taking on the role of the class leader, overseeing effective classroom management to foster a disciplined learning atmosphere and achieve specific educational objectives. As the leader, the teacher is tasked with not only maintaining order but also establishing meaningful connections with students and offering support to ensure academic success. This support encompasses creating a stable learning environment, sharing expertise, and providing essential social support.

Yet, in our fast-evolving society, especially in the post-COVID-19 era, is the traditional concept of classroom leadership still relevant? As stated by Leadership Success (2023), leadership skills are crucial for guiding and motivating others towards shared objectives. These skills are vital for upcoming work environments as they contribute to fostering a positive atmosphere, enhancing productivity, and molding organizational culture. Therefore, what strategies should educators employ in the classroom to better foster leadership and prepare students for the challenges they will face in the future?

Classroom management vs. Classroom leadership

➤ **Classroom management**

Traditionally, classroom management refers to the ways in which student behaviour, movement and interaction during a lesson are organised and controlled by the teacher, involving efficient utilisation of time, space, and resources to attain educational objectives, as articulated by Richards (1990) and Malik et al. (2011). Marzano (2000) acknowledges the complexity of classroom management, highlighting the prominence of rules, regulations, and procedural frameworks.

In contemporary education settings, classroom management goes beyond employing a diverse range of skills and techniques aimed at maintaining students' organisation, focus, and academic productivity during class. It also underscores the importance of fostering a safe and supportive atmosphere conducive to positive student engagement, social interaction, and effective teaching and learning (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006).

➤ **Classroom leadership**

"You manage things, you lead people." This famous quote stated by Grace Hopper, American mathematician and rear admiral in the U.S. Navy vividly best describes what is called classroom leadership.

Classroom leadership embodies a multifaceted concept, encompassing diverse perspectives that collectively shape the educational experience. At its core, classroom leadership involves guiding and empowering students to reach their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally (Gavoni, 2023). This multifaceted nature is evident in various definitions, where classroom leaders are described as mentors who facilitate learning, motivators who inspire student engagement, and facilitators who foster collaboration and critical thinking.

Grace Hopper
(Image source: Britannica)

Given the ongoing changes in society and enhancements of technology, it becomes imperative to cultivate leadership skills among students. This will enable them to assume responsibility for their learning and make constructive contributions to the classroom community. This can be achieved through various approaches, including teachers serving as exemplars of these skills, engaging students in activities that enhance leadership capabilities, or directly instructing them in these skills. The objective is to furnish students with a valuable set of leadership skills, thereby enhancing their prospects for success in the future.

➤ **Key differences between classroom management and classroom leadership**

It is obvious that the central objective of both classroom management and classroom leadership is to create an optimal learning environment conducive to student growth and achievement. Nonetheless, significant and distinctive differences exist between these two approaches.

Aspect	Classroom Management	Classroom Leadership
Definition	Involves the organisation and control of the classroom environment to facilitate the effective teaching and learning process	Focuses on inspiring, guiding, and motivating students towards academic and personal growth
Teachers' roles	Teachers primarily ensure discipline, order, and efficiency in the classroom, emphasising adherence to rules and routines	Teachers serve as role models and mentors, inspiring students to excel academically and personally.

Aspect	Classroom Management	Classroom Leadership
Focus	Emphasizes maintaining a structured environment conducive to learning, with an emphasis on behavior and task management.	Prioritizes building meaningful relationships, fostering student engagement, and nurturing individual potential.
Student Interaction	Often involves direct instruction and guidance	Encourages critical thinking and autonomy
Approach	Directive, task-oriented	Inspirational, visionary
Impact on students	Ensures immediate classroom functionality and order, aiming to create an environment conducive to teaching and learning and minimize disruptions	Strives to inspire, motivate, and empower students, nurturing student's intrinsic motivation and fostering leadership skills and attitudes.

Fostering Leadership in the classroom

➤ **The importance of teaching leadership skills in the classroom**

First, leadership must be taught. Warren Gamaliel Bennis, widely regarded as the creator of the modern field of leadership studies stated that "the most dangerous leadership myth is that leaders are born - that there is a genetic factor to leadership. That's nonsense; in fact, the opposite is true. Leaders are made rather than born."

Second, the school setting provides an ideal platform for the cultivation of leadership skills. Leadership is a dynamic skill set that matures through continuous practice and exposure to diverse situations, both of which are readily available within the school context. Here, students can actively engage in various activities and experiences that contribute to the nuanced development of their leadership abilities, offering a practical and conducive environment for honing these essential skills.

Finally, according to Richard Greenwald (2010), fostering leadership in the classroom is very important since it will provide students with skills to "lead tomorrow's generation and to thrive in the new economy". Teaching leadership can prepare students for future roles in various aspects of life, including academic, professional, and personal domains. Leadership skills can promote creativity, innovation, and flexibility, some of the key qualities that are essential for success in today's ever-changing world. Involving in leadership learning in class, students can be well-prepared for the future's challenges and opportunities.

➤ **Suggested teaching strategies**

Leadership Success (2023) outlines ten essential leadership skills that exceptional leaders should have. They are Strategic thinking, Planning, Ethical behavior, Communication, Decision-making, Creative problem-solving, Fostering potential, Taking on and Giving up responsibility, Time management, and Emotional Intelligence. They also highlight Motivation as a crucial skill to assist leaders in navigating the challenges and uncertainties of the constantly evolving world.

This list of skills can serve as a reference for classroom leadership. Teachers can utilize this list to adapt their teaching methods and activities to enhance these skills in their lessons, ultimately nurturing a future generation of capable leaders. Here are some suggested strategies for fostering leadership in the classroom.

Strategy 1: Being the role models

Above all, fostering leadership in students necessitates the teacher serving as a role model. Consistently demonstrating effective leadership qualities and traits, the teacher can inspire students to cultivate these traits within themselves. For example, a teacher who consistently displays integrity by being honest, fair, and reliable in their interactions with students and colleagues can serve as a powerful role model for students. When students see their teacher consistently upholding these values, they are more likely to internalize them and strive to emulate them in their own behaviors.

Strategy 2: Putting the students in charge to promote responsibility and ownership

Leadership skills in school cannot simply be taught as part of a lesson plan; they have to be developed through hands-on learning. Consider delegating some of your daily tasks to students, allowing them to take on more responsibility and ownership. This provides an opportunity to impart leadership skills by demonstrating delegation and expressing confidence in their abilities. Explore delegation opportunities by assigning tasks like being the classroom greeter, creating posters for class events, or leading a group project.

Strategy 3: Giving space to promote critical and strategic thinking and decision making skills

Providing students with necessary information, data, scenarios to make their own thinking and decisions allows them to face challenges and setbacks. Let students discuss and choose their own group projects, choose their partners or group members, and participate in building classroom rules with teachers. Let them work together on how to do a project or present a topic, etc. In such circumstances, teachers play the roles of supporters and mentors to help them when needed. While failure is recognized as a valuable learning experience, offering assistance during difficult times or inspiring their recovery can make a significant difference.

Strategy 4: Fostering empathy and self-awareness to develop students' emotional intelligence

One way to build empathy is by incorporating simple classroom practices, like conducting emotional checks before and after class or encouraging peer feedback following a task. Additionally, reflective journals and exercises prompt students to identify challenges, celebrate successes, and outline strategies for improvement. Perspective-taking exercises further enhance empathy, encouraging students to step into others' shoes to comprehend diverse viewpoints and experiences. Engaging in discussions about the significance of empathy in relationships completes the holistic approach to developing emotional intelligence.

Strategy 5: Deploying teamwork and project-based activities to foster collaboration and communication

Participating in group projects and extracurricular activities helps students express ideas effectively, listen actively, appreciate diversity, and foster each member's potential. It teaches planning, time management, resource utilization, and leveraging strengths for common goals. Simple activities like Pair sharing, Role-playing, Group writing, etc. are great opportunities for students to practice these leadership skills.

In conclusion, while establishing a positive and productive learning atmosphere through effective classroom management is crucial, nurturing students' leadership abilities is equally essential. Leadership skills significantly impact students' personal growth, academic achievements, and readiness for the future. Teachers play a pivotal role in turning their classrooms into the cradles for future leaders by employing proactive approaches to leadership education. Through the cultivation of leadership competencies, teachers not only enhance academic performance but also empower students to navigate life's hurdles and make positive contributions to society.

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Nguyen Thi Quynh Anh is a language teacher, a teacher trainer and an academic manager with 10 years in ELT. She holds extensive expertise in teaching methods and English instruction within the Vietnamese context. She is currently Head of the English Department of FPT Polytechnic College - FPT Education.

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Welcome to our monthly **Classroom Techniques** column, where you can find practical teaching techniques that can be implemented in your classroom right away. Whether you're a seasoned ELT professional or a new teacher full of enthusiasm, this column is designed to supply you with new ideas every month to improve your classroom performance.

GAMES & ACTIVITIES TO BOOST
LEADERSHIP

Leadership skills are essential for students in this modern day, as they prepare them for success in various aspects of life. Leadership skills help students communicate effectively, collaborate with others, listen to feedback, make decisions, and motivate others. These skills can also help students cope with the challenges and opportunities of the modern world, such as globalization, digitalization, and social change.

Motivation

01 Marshmallow Challenge
Kindy and Primary

Participants split into small groups, tasked with constructing the tallest tower using marshmallows and spaghetti within a time limit. Tallest tower wins.

Communication

02 Build a Story Together
Primary and above

Each student adds a sentence to a story, taking turns and weaving together a narrative with unexpected twists and turns.

Creative Problem-solving

03 Back-to-Back Drawing
Elementary and above

Provide scenarios for each group based on the chosen leadership role. Students share solutions with the class and discuss feasibility and impact.

Communication

04 "If I Were in Charge..."
Elementary and above

Participants pair up, sitting back to back. One describes a picture while the other draws it based on the instructions without peeking.

Feedback

05 Three Stars and a Wish
Teens & Adults
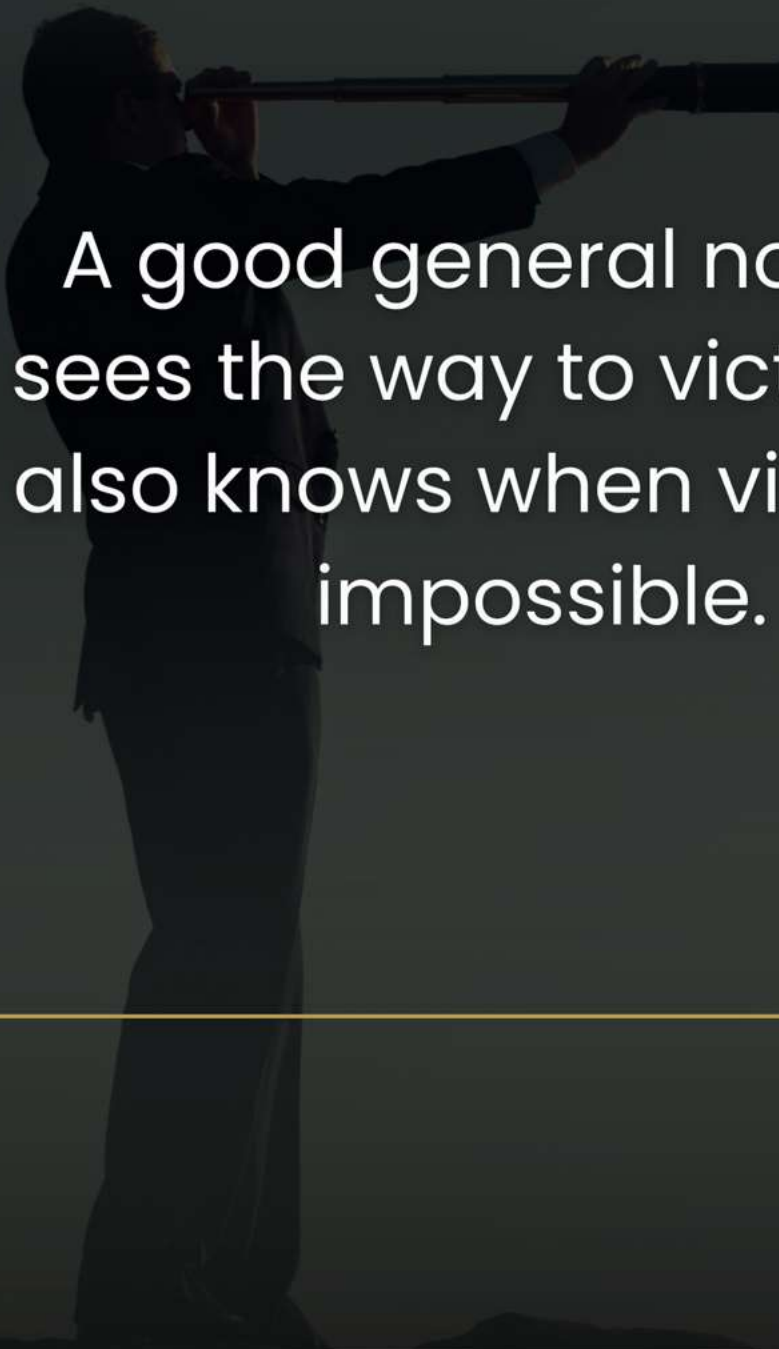
After a presentation, classmates silently write down three strengths (stars) and one area for improvement (wish). Share anonymously and discuss as a class.

By conducting leadership-boosting activities in the classroom, teachers can help students discover and unleash their potential as leaders. Leadership skills are not only beneficial for students' future careers, but also for their personal growth and happiness.

A good general not only sees the way to victory; he also knows when victory is impossible.

Polybius
Ancient Greek historian

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In the verse

Welcome to **In the Verse**, your go-to column for curated education articles and news from across the internet. We'll sift through the digital realm to bring you concise summaries, keeping you informed and inspired. Join us as we navigate the vast sea of online resources and uncover the latest in educational innovation.

* Scan the QR codes or click on the titles to read more.

Embracing thought leadership in education: A people-centered approach for educational leaders

Study shows teachers feel misunderstood by leaders, impacting productivity. Thought Leadership advocated for guiding innovation in education to inspire effective learning. Prioritizing people over processes fosters psychological safety and continuous improvement.

Leadership for educational equity – 5 Tips

Creating more equitable school districts is more critical than ever. Studies show that schools are facing a retention crisis that goes beyond teachers and counselors—education leaders are also leaving their roles in record numbers.

How leaders can get the feedback they need to grow

In times of high uncertainty, understanding your position and recognizing your mistakes early on, when there is still an opportunity to correct them, becomes crucial.

Four pillars for aspiring leaders for self-discovery and growth

Aspiring leaders must prepare for a transformative journey from doing great work to thinking strategically. Before immersing themselves in leadership, what foundational pillars should these aspiring leaders explore

Management is doing things right, leadership is doing the right things

Peter Drucker emphasizes the distinction between management and leadership. He underscores the importance of leadership in setting priorities and guiding organizations towards a better future. He also discusses personal leadership and the impact of actions over words in leadership roles.

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What are leadership skills?
10 key skills that make a great leader

Leadership skills are crucial in real-world settings, where actions and interactions impact team and organizational success. Effective leaders demonstrate qualities daily, inspiring and guiding their team. What are the skills for leadership that every effective leader should possess if they wish to achieve their goals?

A teacher's view on impactful school leadership

From passion projects to kindness audits, these strategies allow school leaders to foster collaborative environments with and for teachers. What are some effective leadership strategies for school leaders?

10 uncommon behaviors that define good leaders

The article outlines 10 specific leadership behaviors that aim to cultivate a positive work environment. These behaviors act as a guide for individuals striving for a higher level of leadership.

9 little habits that make you a better decision maker

Making sound decisions requires accurate information, risk assessment, and steering clear of biases that could sway your judgment. To enhance your decision-making skills, integrate the suggested daily habits into your routine.

Empowering student leaders: 11 fun ideas that promote student leadership and allow the school community to flourish

Prioritizing leadership development over managing behavior can transform a school's culture. By implementing a school-wide philosophy and providing leadership opportunities for students, behavior referrals decreased significantly over five years in one school. What was the secret?

Tech tips & tools

Animate from Audio

A Tool Powered by Adobe Express

https://new.express.adobe.com/tools/animate-from-audio

Animate from Audio of Adobe Express is a free online tool that allows you to **create animated characters from your own voice recording or an audio file.** You can choose from a variety of characters and backgrounds, and download or share your animation in different sizes. It is a fun and easy way to make your voice come to life.

Key Features

- **User-friendly platform:** Simple interface for easy use by teachers or students.
- **Voice to animation:** Generate an animated character that can lip-sync to your voice or audio file.
- **Speech enhancer:** Enhance input recordings to sound professional studio quality.
- **Diverse character and background options:** Select from a range of characters and backgrounds to match your style and mood.
- **Easy sharing and downloading:** Effortlessly share animations online and download in different sizes and formats.

Teaching ideas

- **Self-introduction animation:** Create a short animated video using your own voice to introduce yourself.
- **Story to animation:** Transform or summarize a book story into an animation.
- **Dialogue practice:** Use animations to prompt students to complete conversational dialogues.
- **Pronunciation practice:** Create animated content for practicing word, phrase, or sentence pronunciation.
- **Engaging feedback:** Generate a set of feedback animations to inspire and motivate students.

Quick Start Guide

Step 1
Access the website
Access the website and sign up for the first time.

Step 2
Choose a character and a background
Select from a variety of characters and backgrounds. For background, you can upload your own image.

Step 3
Record or upload your audio
Record your voice using the microphone icon, or upload audio files from your device. Your audio can be up to two minutes long.

Step 4
Preview and download
Play and trim your audio or make any change if needed. Download your work in different formats, or share it through multiple channels.

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CREATE A PRESENTATION WITH YOUR

AUDIO ANIMATION

1 Create text-to-speech audios

Besides using Animate from Audio to record your own voice, you can also utilize other tools for text-to-speech generation.

Narakeet (narakeet.com) *is an online tool that converts text into voiceover audios with a variety of voice options, accents, and languages.*

2 Upload audios to generate animation

1. Choose character and background.
2. Upload own background.
3. Customize character and background size.
4. Record voice or upload audio.
5. Preview and adjust before downloading.
6. Repeat for more audios and characters.
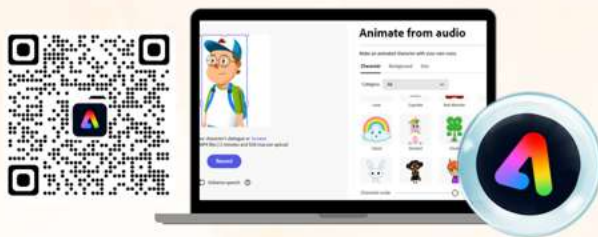
3 Edit the animation

Now it's time to make your animation more captivating and interactive by adding various elements, such as background music, text, images, videos, gifs, transition effects, and more. These elements can help you convey your message, express your emotions, and create a unique style for your animation.

Canva, *a familiar online tool for teachers, offers a user-friendly interface and powerful editing features.*

4 Add subtitles

Veed.io *is a user-friendly web-based tool that helps you generate subtitles in the simplest way possible.*

Adding subtitles to animations is a great way to make your animation comprehensive. It provides visual support and helps with learning languages. Subtitles also work well for different learning styles and make the content accessible to everyone, making it more inclusive and engaging for all students.

There are numerous tools available that serve different purposes, so opt for the one that suits you best.

Lesson of the month

Welcome to the **Lesson of the Month** column, a dedicated space in our EduVerse newsletter where we bring you insightful and engaging English Language Teaching (ELT) lessons. Whether you're a seasoned ELT professional or a passionate new teacher, this column aims to provide you with a monthly dose of inspiration and practical ideas to enhance your classroom practice.

Why we sleep

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SLEEP?

Lesson Goals

Problems
- learn some interesting facts about sleeping and identify the importance of sleep and its benefits for the body and brain.
- aware the importance of good sleeps
- identify your own sleep needs and commit to improving your sleep quality.

Language Competence
- define and use new vocabulary related to sleep in different contexts.
- talk about sleeping habits, using sentences with IF.
- enhance listening skills by actively listening to a story with gaps and filling them in with relevant information.

STUDENT WORKSHEET
(6 PAGES)

TEACHER'S GUIDE
(5 PAGES)

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EDUVERSE PD WEBINAR #4

*Edu*verse *Kowalska*

PD WEBINARS

What's your key takeaway from the webinar?

It is important to know what is our teaching strategies because it can help us to be an effective teachers. Also, in terms of businesses, it is also important because we can engage more in business industries.
from the Philippines

The 9 action steps for building our personal brand and the importance of staying consistent in what we do and starting with what we've already got.
from Vietnam

Being in the field of education takes effort and perseverance. The experiences we have from teaching can be tiring yet rewarding. As a teacher, we can always grab the opportunity to improve and create our own brand.
from the Philippines

A huge thank you to Ms. Ola Kowalska for hosting an outstanding session for educators representing over 20 countries! We were delighted to witness the lively participation and excitement in the chat box yesterday from teachers and educators in Vietnam, India, the UK, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Spain, Egypt, and beyond!

With her extensive background in English teaching and building teaching businesses, Ola shared insights on how teachers can establish a reliable teaching brand for themselves and offered helpful tips on utilizing social media to achieve this goal.

The overwhelmingly positive feedback from the audience demonstrates their commitment to growth and willingness to apply the valuable tips and techniques from EduVerse webinar series. This is what inspires us to continue providing EduVerse PD Webinars as a valuable resource for professional development for educators globally.

Webinar recording is available at https://www.proed.com.vn/eduverse-webinars

IMPRESSIVE NUMBERS

Diversity: **22 countries**
Overall impression: **91% (Good + Outstanding)**

Please rate your experience on a scale of 1-5, using the following descriptors:
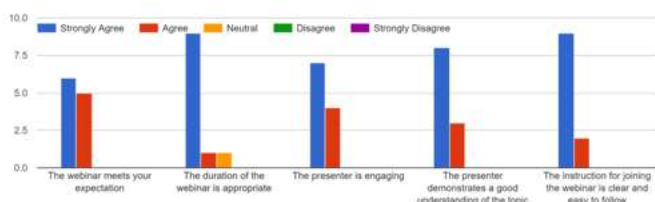
Other comments

Really love her webinar on creating a teaching personal brand! The advice she shared was super helpful and gave me a clear direction to work on.
from the Philippines

Thank you for the informative webinar. I look forward to participating in all your future events and seminars for language educators.
from Pakistan

The webinar was really cool and gave me a new perspective on how to stand out as a teacher.
from Vietnam

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The changing landscape of how English language teachers interact online led to the creation of ELT Buzz in 2018. We provide teachers with a directory for ELT and updated news and events. Also, a professional lesson library, print and digital. Lastly, a video platform with the best videos for teaching English.

Our LinkedIn community serves 88,000 teachers daily. We also provide individual lesson resources through TpTs.

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ELT Buzz aims to provide English language teachers around the world with essential information about the profession and inspiration for their own classroom teaching and professional development.

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he's: hi:s ✗ hi:z ✓ 10:12

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WH QUESTI... INGLÊS PARA INICIANTES 11:5...

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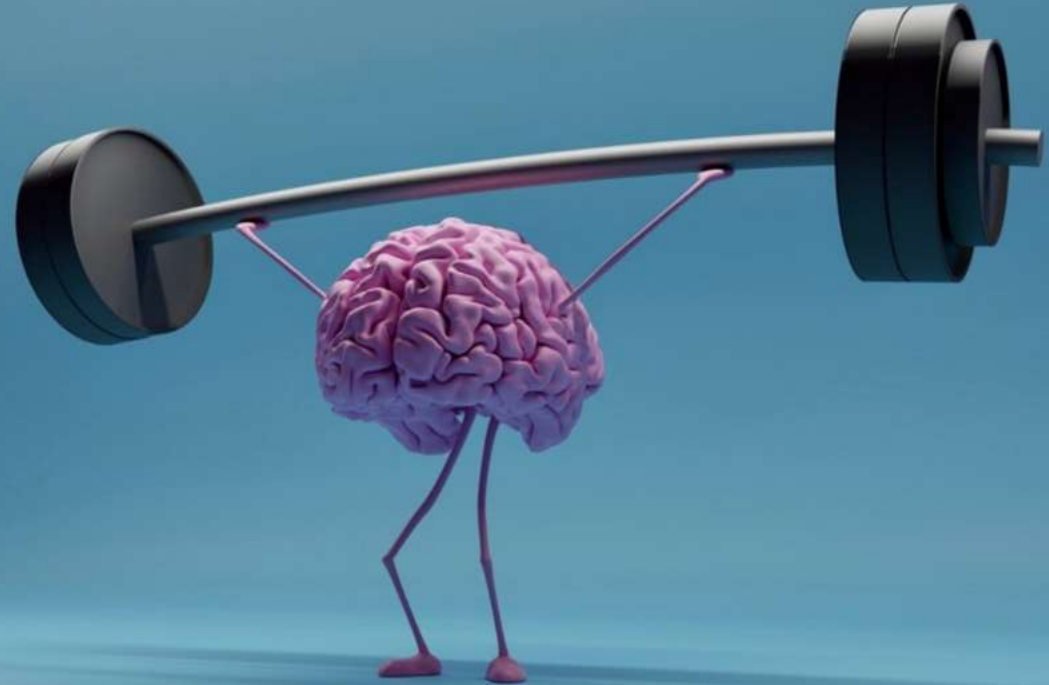
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