How to Fill the World with Leaders

Presented by:
Mariam G. MacGregor
Director, Employee Engagement
and Organizational Strategy
Texas Christian University (TCU)
Author/Leadership Consultant

Define Leadership

There are many definitions of leadership. Because of this, there is no *exact* definition of leadership. People have different opinions about what leaders do, and how that translates into demonstrating leadership. If one is to only think of "positions," as the way leadership is demonstrated, the majority of individuals will be overlooked for the ways they truly act as leaders in daily interactions.

For example, here's the definition I keep in mind:

> **Leadership is doing the right thing, acting with integrity and humility, and making confident decisions, even in difficult situations where others prod you to act differently. Leadership also means treating others as you want to be treated and acting with good intent. You help others along so your team (family/class/school) thrives and succeeds, prepared for the challenges in each day.**

Step One: Write below your personal "working" definition of leadership.

_____

_____

_____

_____

How do you communicate and model this definition to students with whom you work? Be specific.

_____

_____

Write (3) significant leadership experiences you shared with a student (where you acknowledged how their behavior related to leadership). Be specific.

1)_____

_____

2)_____

_____

3)_____

_____

Describe students you consider leaders. Write about their strengths and challenge areas. Are they engaged in leadership activities the way you would like? Also, describe a student you consider 'not' a leader. What could you do to better engage these students in leadership? What could your school do to better engage these students?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Leadership Tip:
In your classroom, work with students to create the "final" version of a definition for leadership. Present the "draft" you developed and ask for suggestions. Encourage kids to interpret the definition for you – giving their own examples, being able to ask questions, and thinking of hypothetical situations. Make a poster and hang it in an obvious place in your classroom – at the cubbies, in the hallway, at the door. Talk with them about how it applies to friends and others who visit the classroom!

Assess Your Current State

A. Barriers that exist for student leadership efforts:

B. Opportunities that exist for student leadership efforts:

C. How the adults at our school influence (+/-) either or both:

D. What students might say:

E. Actions to make change:
(Specific, Measurable and Attainable, Realistic, Timebound)

Make Efforts Comprehensive and Integrated

Comprehensive Leadership Programs address leadership across the student experience:

- Skill Building (Leadership class or training workshops, leadership education in academic areas)
- Dialogue and Knowledge Enhancement (Leadership book clubs, film discussions, leadership concepts across the curriculum)
- Action Opportunities (student council, student clubs, team sports, service projects, Principal's Council and other shared decision making, etc.)
- "Menteeing" (developing ongoing relationships with high school students, college students, business leaders, etc.)
- Modeling/Mentoring (serving as role models and mentors for younger students)

Integrated Leadership Education implies that youth leadership experiences are connected to nearly everything they do. By incorporating leadership concepts across academic curriculum, in service projects, through daily discussion, within school-to-career initiatives and in the community, youth are exposed to a wide-range of positive possibilities related to being a leader (or taking on leadership roles). Approaching leadership education as an integration of experiences contributes to developing "citizen leaders" of all youth—individuals who conduct themselves as leaders, whether or not others are around.

Integrated Leadership Education hinges on several things:

- **Leadership Knowledge** – what do students know about leadership (what is leadership, what do others expect of me, who am I and where do I fit, what do we expect from leaders, heroes and role-models, how does leadership relate to everyday living)
- **Skills and Sensitivities** – what are the behaviors of leaders, what skills do students need to be good members of their circles
- **Practice and Competence** – how can we provide opportunities for students to practice and improve their skills and awareness as leaders, do we set a tone that allows for questioning and doubt, do we promote an atmosphere for discussion

Meaningful leadership development can and should be easily incorporated to support and enhance core subject matter. For example, writing prompts for journals or writing styles in language arts can involve leadership topics. In non-school settings, where academic alignment may not be necessary, gaining these core leadership competencies builds an atmosphere where youth can contribute in personally significant ways with the group.

Students with access to opportunities to gain a broad understanding of what leadership is, how it applies to them, where they fit in and how they can use their knowledge and skills to make a difference, tend to demonstrate more sustainable leadership behaviors.

Leadership Tip:
Leadership education goes beyond "character education" by promoting the ability to make a difference by taking individual and group action. Leadership education develops measurable skills and attitudes – decision making, acting ethically, communication, teamwork, critical thinking, empathy, etc. and builds character-based behaviors – responsibility, dependability, courtesy, respect, etc.

How to Sustain Student Leadership Efforts

Leadership development efforts for students is best approached deliberately. To determine potential success of student leadership efforts, consider the following factors when designing meaningful student leadership programs and experiences:

Considerations of youth and adult populations:

	YOUTH	ADULT

- Culture
- Race/Ethnicity
- Socio-Economic Status
- Gender
- Identity
- Religion/Faith
- Social Norms
- Values/Beliefs
- Age

Desired outcomes (capacities or competencies) for students?

Outcomes students desire (have fun, not be a waste of time, resume builder, help others, etc.)?

How are leadership skills and contributions by students in your school/program acknowledged, rewarded and/or minimized? (Be honest)

How empowered are students (both within your school/organization as well as the neighborhood in which they live or other influential "communities")?

What is your (personal) relationship with students and student leaders in school and out? Who (or what program) is most successful at engaging student leaders in your school/community?

What stereotypes do students possess about certain programs/efforts in your school?

What stereotypes do adults possess about certain programs/efforts in your school?

How does territorialism prevent organizations from engaging student leaders in your school?

What steps are necessary to overcome these barriers? Are they reasonable and attainable?

How informed are you to contribute to this goal?

How motivated are you to contribute to this goal?

What measurements will be used to determine the success of student development efforts?

How will these measurements be communicated, promoted, and advocated across the collaborative and within individual organizations and the community?

When you present this outline to students, especially those you want to engage with the collaborative, how might they respond?

When you present this outline to adults (colleagues, administrators, school board, parents) how might they respond?

Leadership Tip:
One of the hardest things for adults to do is relinquish power from fear that giving it up doesn't mean kids run the show. When modeling and promoting a leadership attitude, find ways students can use their power at school. What decisions can they make that reinforce you value their opinions? What choices can you offer to apply newly gained skills and knowledge? In the daily routine, how often do students get your undivided attention to talk about things that are important to them?

Create Meaningful Leadership Curriculum

Suggestions of elements necessary for meaningful leadership education—all can be taught independently in a leadership class as well as built into subject matter:

I. Basic Leadership Knowledge

Defining Leadership
Identifying Characteristics of Leaders
Identifying Individuals with Leadership Capacity
Self-Awareness (Talent Inventory)
Determining a Philosophy of Leadership

II. Leadership Skills, Sensitivities and Capacity Building

Working with Others (Team Building; Group Dynamics, Norms, Roles & Expectations)
Resolving Conflict and Conflict Mgt
Giving and Receiving Feedback
Communication
Understanding Power, Influence and Authority
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Decision Making (Ethical; Situational; Group; Individual)
Collaboration and Consensus Building
Delegation Skills
Appropriate Risk Taking (Leadership-based)
Ability to Think Creatively
Adaptability

III. Building Competence

Putting Words into Action
Leadership Projects
Experiential opportunities
Reflection & Feedback
Abstract/Global Application

Additional details can be found in Leadership is a Life Skill and the collection of *Building Everyday Leadership* materials available from Free Spirit Publishing (www.freespirit.com)

Connect to Workplace Competencies

Communication Skills:
Demonstrate the ability to receive and relate information clearly and effectively

- Listening - receives, attends to, understands & responds to verbal & non-verbal messages
- Speaking - clearly organizes and effectively presents ideas orally
- Writing - organizes and effectively presents ideas and information in writing
- Interpreting - delineates & analyzes oral & written information; able to draw conclusions
- Negotiating - works toward agreement while maintaining position
- Persuading - communicates ideas to justify position, overcome resistance, & convince others

Organizational and Executive Function Skills:
Demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently operate within a workplace

- Planning - devising and outlining a process to achieve a goal and timeline
- Time & Priority Management - applies appropriate time to task and manages multiple priorities
- Using Resources - identifies, organizes, plans and allocates resources
- Systems Thinking - understands the nature of systems, develops & adapts systems to meet organizational needs
- Evaluating - collects, evaluates and uses data to monitor and improve performance

Thinking Skills:
Demonstrate the ability to use reasoning

- Problem Solving - identifies and recognizes a problem, considers alternatives, devises and implements a logical plan of action
- Decision Making - uses a process to identify goals and constraints, evaluate alternatives and reach a conclusion
- Creative Thinking - generates new and innovative ideas
- Learning - uses efficient techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills
- Analyzing - identifies bias of information sources, evaluates contradictory information and effectively manages information
- Mathematics - performs basic computations and solves practical problems by applying appropriate mathematical techniques

Worker Qualities:
Demonstrate the characteristics of an effective worker

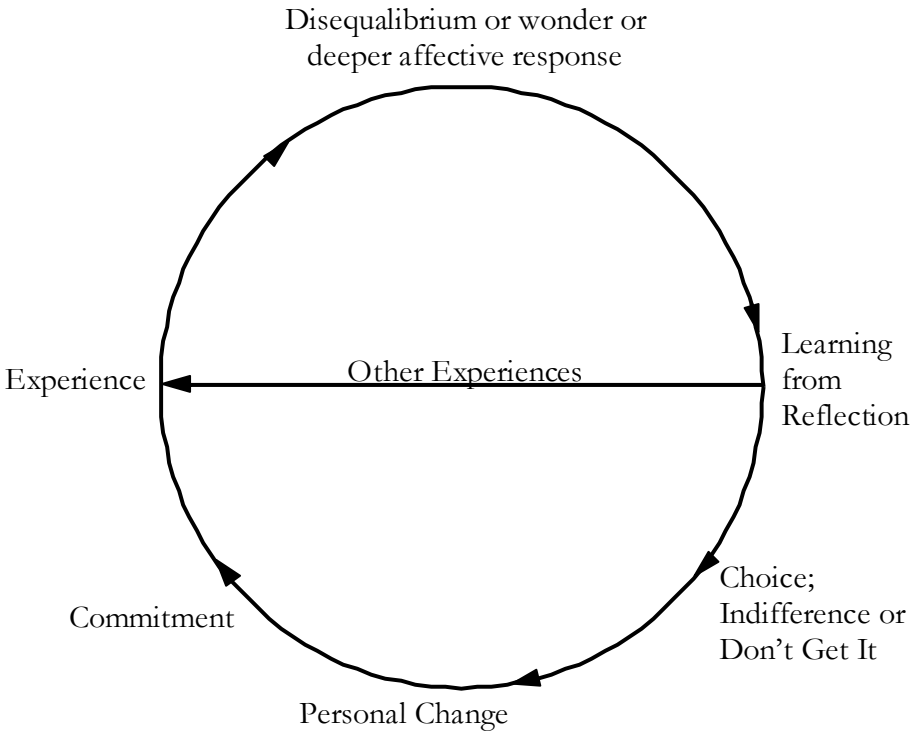
- Self-Management - demonstrates punctuality, readiness to work, initiative, and the capacity for life-long learning and personal growth
- Team Member - contributes to group effort through cooperation and consensus
- Responsibility - follows through consistently with honesty and integrity
- Flexibility - shows versatility and the ability to change
- Leadership - creates a direction/vision for others to follow, aligns management methods with vision and implements a system of accountability
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - accepts differences and works well with individuals from a variety of backgrounds, divergent philosophies or ideas and various perspectives

Technology Skills:
Demonstrate the ability to work with a variety of technologies, software, apps and equipment

- Computer Literacy - demonstrates key boarding skills, uses computer programs and understands basic computer operations, adapts to new technology
- Selects Technology - choose appropriate procedures, tools or equipment
- Applies Technology - understands overall intent and proper procedures for using selected technology and equipment
- Uses Technology Information - interprets and uses data generated from a variety of technological devices, discerns facts from falsehoods in information accessed on the internet

Attend to Intentional Reflection

The scheme below represents the process of moving from initial experience to reflecting upon the experience and applying it to one's greater sphere of influence. Begin the circle at "Experience," which represents the initial moment, activity, discussion, etc. that one goes through which challenges or causes wonder regarding previously held beliefs. Move through the circle going clockwise through disequilibrium and so on. This model can be applied on a small level (i.e. in activity debriefings) as well as on a large level (i.e. addressing issues with great societal consequence).



Used with Permission from Santa Clara University – Center for Student Leadership

Ideas for Facilitating Reflective Leadership Discussions

Observe what takes place during activities, projects and leadership lessons. Choose from these questions to help teams apply what they learned from the process. Add other questions if you saw certain behaviors (positive or negative) arise as the team worked through the initiative.

General Questions:

1. *What happened in this activity?*
2. *What leadership skills were needed for your team to accomplish it?*

Examples include: communication, listening, team work, finding a leader, delegating (spreading out the work), setting goals, having a vision, overcoming obstacles, decision making, creative thinking, taking risks, treating others with respect, valuing different opinions, positively dealing with conflicts, etc.

If your group struggles with identifying skills as "leadership," give them examples or rephrase with: *What did your team need to do during this activity in order to accomplish it?*

3. *What happened if people on your team made mistakes?*
4. *How did you treat each other as you were trying to reach your goal?*
5. *Was it necessary for your team to have a leader in order to succeed? Why or why not?*
6. *What did you learn from this activity that makes sense in your own life?*

Note: When conducting leadership efforts within the context of an academic discipline include questions and prompts to connect leadership ideas to the subject area.

Ideas for Developing Extensions & Enrichments

Observe what takes place during any leadership activities or events in which you and your students participate. Take cues from their attitude and interest level during the activity to develop meaningful extensions. Consider all academic subject areas as "fair game" for connecting the learning at deeper levels.

For example:

Advanced Language – consider additional activities that build on advanced vocabulary, language comprehension and application, writing techniques and oratory.

Some Ideas: _____

_____

_____

Analytical Thinking – consider additional activities that build on math and science strengths, visual/spatial learning patterns, abstract concepts and complex connections.

Some Ideas: _____

_____

_____

Meaning Motivation – consider additional activities that build on digging deep on specific leadership topics and utilize Socratic seminar to build on skills related to rhetoric and questioning.

Some Ideas: _____

_____

_____

Perspective – consider additional activities that build on exploring different viewpoints, going beyond the obvious and balancing multiple concepts related to leadership.

Some Ideas: _____

_____

_____

Sense of Humor – consider additional activities that build on entertainment and witty behavior, incorporate drama and performance and presentation skills.

Some Ideas: _____

_____

_____

Sensitivity – consider additional activities that build on empathy and human connection such as service-learning projects and exploring social change.

Some Ideas: _____

_____

_____

Accelerated Learning – consider additional activities that build on quick mastery of leadership skills, influencing school culture in obvious ways and pull from interests in multiple subject areas.

Some Ideas: _____

_____

_____

Leadership is a Life Skill and the *Building Everyday Leadership* curriculum materials available from Free Spirit Publishing (www.freespirit.com) contain additional ways to enrich and extend leadership learning.

Student Leadership Blueprint

To assess whether or not programs/activities/projects belong on the continuum, consider five fundamental questions. A program does not need to develop *every* characteristic identified. Rather, this outline provides a model for programs to evaluate evaluating how student leadership development is supported through its efforts.

1. Does the program cultivate these skill areas and behaviors within the context of our service offerings, mission, and other aspects of service to student?
2. Does the program create opportunities for students to practice the leadership skills and behaviors they learn in the program?
3. If a student participates in the program, can they articulate that they learned certain leadership skills, behaviors and expectations from our program (or that our program supported further development of leadership behavior learned in other settings)?
4. Does the program compliment and support the need for developing lifelong appreciation for leadership in everyday life for students ages 5-21?**
5. Does the program provide resources, support and meaningful opportunities for students to practice or learn about leadership and their role as leaders outside the program?

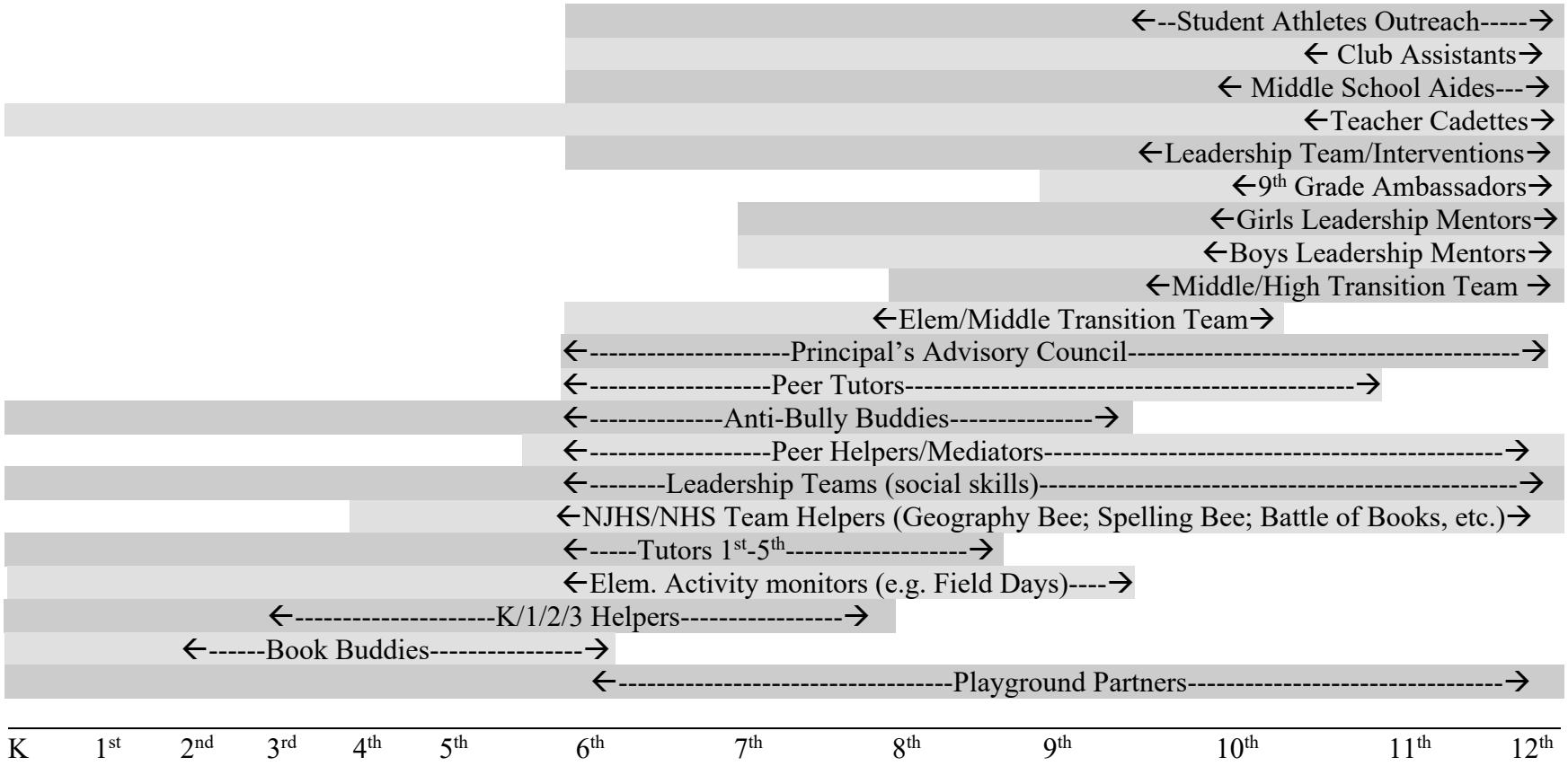
Every school/program benefits from identifying specific leadership skills and competency outcomes desired for student participants/partners. Here is an example:

Example of attributes and qualities of leadership that [name of school/program] develops:

- Vision (motivating others to a common goal) and Goal Setting (personal and community)
- Motivation (self and others)
- Teambuilding (working with others, encouraging teamwork)
- Taking action (achieving goals; making things happen, follow through, etc.)
- Developing character (e.g. responsible behavior, honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, etc.)
- Communication
- Conflict Resolution/Problem solving
- Values (society, personal) and Ethics
- Appreciating differences & tolerance
- Appropriate risk taking as a leader
- Public speaking (being prepared, having my voice heard)
- Civic/community awareness
- Mentors (adult, peer, youth; providing mentors and offering opportunities to serve as mentors)
- Positive participation in community (service, volunteerism, meaningful positional opportunities)
- Respect (personal and community)
- Promoting success in all students
- Leadership competence (willingness to take on everyday leadership roles, large or small)
- Understanding balanced lifestyles (health and wellness, stress management, low-risk choices)

**Note: *This age range is used because it aligns with guaranteed public educational services in the U.S.*

Example of Programmatic Leadership Blueprint (School-Based)



Key –	Arrows and lines indicate target Student Resources Shaded areas indicate target Student Recipients (and include students serving as mentor/tutor/role model or in other leadership role)

Name of School: **Student Leadership Blueprint**

Write the names of existing programs, as well as those you hope to create. Identify resources/recipients based on age/grade using lines & arrows and shading.

K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th

Key – Arrows and lines indicate target Student Resources/Partners
Shaded areas indicate target Student Recipients (and include students serving as mentor/tutor/role model