

Qualities of Effective Teacher Leaders

Teacher leaders exhibit a number of important qualities that allow them to have considerable influence in their school and make significant contributions to it. Two key qualities are usually present; namely, credibility and expertise.

Credibility: Teacher leaders gain credibility due to the deep commitment that they demonstrate towards their students, their colleagues and the parents of their students. In doing so, they gain their trust and respect.

Expertise: Effective teacher leaders are often recognized as excellent teachers. Most importantly, they are willing to help their colleagues and lead or support school-wide activities.

Let us take a closer look at the types of knowledge that teacher leaders exhibit using the knowledge-based model of leadership expertise presented in Figure 1 (Wall, 2008).

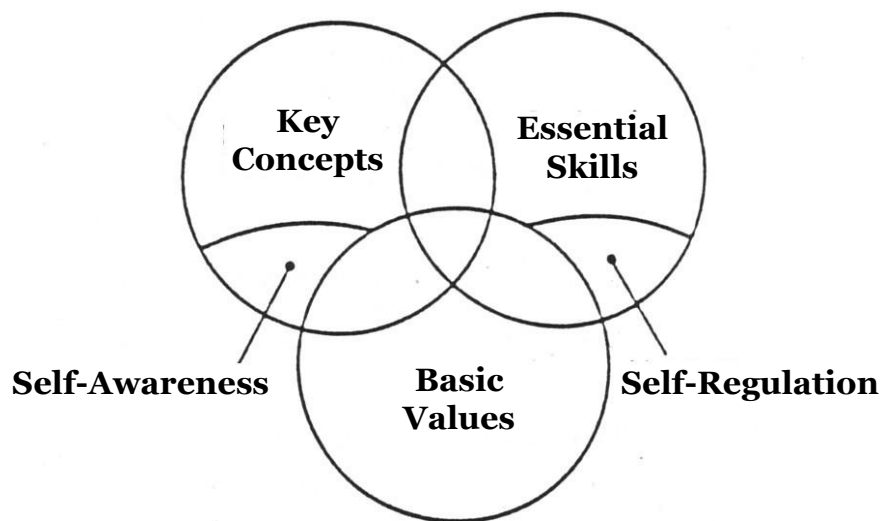


Figure 1. A Knowledge-Based Model of Teacher Leadership Expertise

Knowledge: Teacher leaders develop a masterful understanding of the subjects they teach and use a wide array of teaching and learning strategies. They also develop an appreciation of the strengths, needs and challenges faced by their students and colleagues, as well as, a healthy respect for the traditions and values of their school.

Skills: Teacher leaders also develop the ability to listen for understanding and exhibit strong group and teamwork skills. Most importantly, they are able to communicate and discuss professional practices in a positive way. Quite simply, they are able to work effectively with their colleagues, including those in formal leadership positions. Finally, they have good time management skills so they can actually get things done.

Attitudes and Values: Teacher leaders exhibit a healthy respect for all members of the school or centre community. Moreover, they are willing to give of their time and willing to collaboratively contribute to team activities. They are also able to place people and situations into perspective and provide help in a respectful way when needed.

Self-awareness: Teacher leaders regularly reflect on their own experiences and professional practices. By doing so, they develop a realistic appreciation of their own strengths and limitations. They are also able to identify areas that they need to improve.

Self-regulation: Teacher leaders are willing and able to plan their own learning and they seek support when they need it. They often mentor others and benefit from conversations with those who mentor them. Finally, they are able to maintain a happy and healthy life-work balance.

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