

CREATIVITY, EDUCATION AND  
THE ARTS

Series Editor: Anne Harris

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**ETHNOTHEATRE AND  
CREATIVE METHODS  
FOR TEACHER  
LEADERSHIP**

**Jerome Cranston and  
Kristin Kusanovich**



# Creativity, Education and the Arts

Series Editor

Anne Harris

Monash University

Melbourne

Australia

This series emerges out of recent rapid advances in creativity- and arts-informed research in education that seeks to reposition creativity studies within (and in conversation with) education as a multi- and interdisciplinary field.

This series takes as its starting point the interrelationship between arts-based research and a growing neuroscientific, cultural and economic discourse of creativity and creative industries, and the need for education to play a larger role in these expanding discourses. It also takes as a priori an invitation to creativity scholars to move more robustly into theorizing the work of arts- and creativity-based research work, bridging a historical gap between ‘science’ and ‘art’, between ‘theoretical’ and ‘applied’ approaches to research, and between qualitative and quantitative research paradigms.

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- To put education at the heart of debates on creativity, re-establish the significance of creativity for learning and teaching and development analyses, and forge links between creativity and education.
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Jerome Cranston • Kristin Kusanovich

# Ethnotheatre and Creative Methods for Teacher Leadership

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Jerome Cranston  
University of Manitoba  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Kristin Kusanovich  
Santa Clara University  
Santa Clara, California, USA

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ETHNOTHEATRE AND CREATIVE METHODS FOR  
TEACHER LEADERSHIP BY *JEROME CRANSTON*  
AND *KRISTIN KUSANOVICH*

SERIES EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Beginning with their prologue *Stage Fright*, this new book by Jerome Cranston and Kristin Kusanovich follows their previous valuable and creative contributions to the field of arts-based and creative leadership and administration in education. They frame educational leadership in terms of its ethical and imaginative potential and pitfalls, not unlike the legendary creative education scholarship of Anna Craft (often in collaboration with Guy Claxton). Cranston and Kusanovich thus join a line of distinguished creative scholars who seek a more holistic approach to the business of making education creative, or what Craft, Gardner, and Claxton have described as a calling into question of the “unproblematized, value-neutral position on creativity as it applies to education in particular” (Craft et al 2008, p 3).

The question of transferability of creative “skills and capacities” learned most directly in the arts has been around for a long time. Creativity has gone through many ups and downs in education, from being considered a “feel good” non-academic endeavor for the well-rounded student to our current commodification approach to creativity as an employability skill for twenty-first-century “creatives” who will develop the next Pixar, Google, or Apple megacorporation or suite of innovative products. And as with any “popular kid,” tensions and debates within education lead many to claim that creativity really prefers my discipline to yours. But creativity is both bigger and smaller than these kinds of debates, and so it continues to shape-shift and avoid easy categorization. Indeed, this is one of its

strengths, and Cranston and Kusanovich identify an important if under-researched area of this mercurial field of study.

As Cranston and Kusanovich note, their book fills a gap in the body of literature concerning teacher leadership and education more generally. In particular they ask important questions for how to nurture creativity as a leader, not just as a practitioner. How might creativity in educators' work, not just in our students', be measured—or should it? We in arts education have not always been our best strategists or advocates as we celebrate the rigorous work we do while at the same time striving to improve our practice. Whether as teachers, teacher educators, school leaders, or education researchers, creative thinking and practice show us the enormous payoffs of intellectual risk-taking.

Foundational creativity scholar Robert J. Sternberg conceived of leadership as a basis for the education of children, or what you might call “small l” leadership (not unlike Anna Craft’s well-known “small c creativity”), in his recognition that, “we need to teach for leadership....In the end, true creativity in leadership requires solving not just any problems, but the important ones” (Sternberg 2008, pp 144–145). His model of creative leadership (WICS—*wisdom, intelligence, and creativity, synthesized*) points to a more holistic notion of success which, according to Sternberg, means an ability to attain the goals one sets out for oneself, an often especially challenging goal in educational settings. Is success measured by standardized testing and ranking success, as the neoliberal education wave would have us believe? And in such a restrictive educational environment, what can truly be called successful leadership in a school?

Many of those in educational leadership—from schools to boards to policy-writers—are trying to model creative leadership in finding new ways to make the business of education more responsive to the rapidly changing learning and working environments of the global economies in which we all participate. These are not only the challenges and opportunities presented by technology and digital networking, but also by the workforce uncertainty that has seemingly become an unavoidable part of global working life. Like Anna Craft and Cranston and Kusanovich here, creative education leadership scholar Jacquie Turnbull draws useful parallels between the challenges of creativity in education institutions and creativity in workplaces, with the strategy of revealing the creative practices that have always been present to some degree in good leadership. But unlike Turnbull, Cranston and Kusanovich drill deep into drama and embodied performance as a toolbox for fostering those qualities, not just naming them.

The old adage “desperate times breed desperate measures” is not a sufficient response to the evolving nature of creativity education today for scholars like Cranston and Kusanovich, who have seen the flexibility of creative solutions at work in their workshops and classrooms. Sometimes it is as much a matter of creative problem-*posing* (Tan 2007; Harris 2014) as it is problem-*solving*. If more teachers had the artistic training and fearless commitment to creative pedagogies on display in this volume, creative education in the twenty-first century might look very different than it does, and these so-called desperate times might move toward being the unprecedented creative and innovative teaching and learning times they promise to be. Fortunately, this book can serve as a practice guide to those teachers and educational leaders who wish to embrace these creative possibilities but might not know how.

At a time where creative solutions to twenty-first-century education changes and challenges are finally being celebrated, many in our field can benefit from the kind of scholarship presented here by these two authors. They rightly acknowledge that, “Even though creativity is considered one of the top personal and professional assets in any employee and one of the motivating forces behind the success of any venture, teacher education still does not embrace it wholeheartedly” and, as I argued in my book *The Creative Turn* (2014), teachers, and particularly school leaders, are coming to realize we need creativity more than ever. This is one reason why I established this book series which finds creative solutions to better education through artful practices and ethics.

Texts like *Ethnotheatre and Creative Methods for Teacher Leadership* fit that brief perfectly. Responding to an established need for texts that show education and arts practitioners how to nurture their own and others’ creative development, this book will have a wide and appreciative audience. As the authors point out, it is people not systems that determine the success or failure of schools. And as arts educators like Cranston and Kusanovich know, creativity is not only one of the most under-defined and sorely needed skills identified for success across the “education lifespan” (Harris 2016) and into the workforce, but also one which also benefits the human beings who work together in this field.

Their writing is lucid, the arts-based work they present is achievable, and the structure of this book makes it effective and easy to use in a range of contexts. The clever and creative structure they have chosen for this book only highlights the synthesis of their dramatic form, their modeling of creative leadership, and the possibilities for arts-based research to take



new and engaging directions. As only the third book in this new series, I congratulate Jerome and Kristin on their enormous achievement, and welcome them to the *Creativity, Education and the Arts* suite of texts.

Melbourne, Australia  
January 2016

Anne Harris,  
Series Editor

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## OTHER BOOKS IN THIS SERIES

*Creativity and Education*  
Anne Harris

*Knowledge, Creativity and Failure: A new pedagogical framework for creative arts education*  
Chris Hay

## PREFACE

This is a book about serious, creative play. The kind of play that teaches better than any lecture or one-way transmission of information ever could. And it is about plays. The dramatic scripts that hold stories and wisdom and that we turn to when we want to or need to learn about the human condition. Few dramatic scripts are centered on contemporary issues in today's twenty-first-century schools, however. Even though creativity is considered one of the top personal and professional assets in any employee and one of the motivating forces behind the success of any venture, teacher education still does not embrace it wholeheartedly. In all sectors, creativity is being discussed with more seriousness and intentionality than perhaps ever before. School leaders seem especially poised to benefit from creative, effective approaches to professional development.

While we have traditionally attributed to certain fields, artistic ones in particular, a certain claim on creativity, the fact is all disciplines can regularly harness creative *forces* to expand or fine-tune their thinking, strategies, and attitudes. But do all fields that could be highly creative regularly engage in learning the actual techniques to think and act creatively? Which analytical techniques from the performing arts can transfer and enliven school leadership as a creative act? Which disciplinary sensibilities from the arts can be used to improve the perceptive, empathetic capacities of school leaders? And how might the study of leadership through a creative, arts-based lens lead to additional desired outcomes like professional and personal development for school staffs? We wrote *Ethnotheatre and Creative Methods for Teacher Leadership* to grapple with just such questions.

One of our goals in researching and conducting workshops that we entitled “The Drama in Teacher Leadership” over the last few years was to move beyond abstract notions of educational administration and to create a simulation to learn how leadership feels and how leaders from diverse ranks think and act in relation to other adult professionals at schools. The authors’ transdisciplinary approach has helped participants to concretize the highly relational aspects of leadership, creating a laboratory for safe play and experimentation, deep thinking and community building. A seamless synthesis of ethnotheatre, drawn from the applied theatre branch of the performing arts, and contemporary educational administration practices, the Drama in Teacher Leadership workshops have served to demystify and unveil leadership dynamics without oversimplifying the challenges. This book shares these methods with a wider audience, an audience capable of applying any or all strategies that are suggested here to their own context.

Relationships make or break a school. Although much has been written about school improvement initiatives over the past 30 years, it has been suggested that insufficient attention has been given to the important relationships among the adults within the school and how the social dynamics of those relationships support or hinder the efforts and energy required to commit to improving student outcomes school-wide. We feel this is a timely work as we move into an era in which persons rooted in the twenty-first century will lead schools. With some alarming regularity, studies showing a decrease in empathy for upcoming generations point to opportunities missed for face-to-face interaction and whole-person development in a community. Tools for expanding our empathetic selves will be greatly needed.

Teachers have long been seen as major contributors, if not the most critical factors, to a school’s success. But a resilient, productive teaching force is only possible inasmuch as school administrators are able to effectively serve and lead school staffs in ways that are compassionate, ethical, and take into account diverse paradigms and viewpoints.

This book helps fill a gap in the discourse around teacher leadership. It provides strategies for active learning experiences that help us perceive teacher leadership in the broader context of relational dynamics between adults at schools. We hope that readers will be encouraged to think creatively about how to perform their roles in schools to better support and advocate for high-quality teacher-leadership training and teacher-leadership initiatives. Both are needed to help schools flourish. We hope you will share your responses and results with us.

2016

Jerome Cranston  
Kristin Kusanovich

## PERSONAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ALSO BY JEROME CRANSTON  
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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Jerome A. Cranston** PhD is the Executive Director Student Engagement and Success and is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba. He has spent much of his professional life practicing and studying educational administration. He serves on the Advisory Committee of the University of Manitoba's Centre for Human Rights Research, and in 2014 was recognized by the American Educational Research Association's "Peace Education Special Interest Group" for his peace education research in post-genocide Rwanda. His Five-By-Five mini-documentaries on India's Barefoot Teacher Training Program have been screened at the University Council for Educational Administration's Film Festivals. He researches and teaches as part of an interdisciplinary, international "community of inquiry," and uses critical perspectives to uncover how organizational structures and behaviors can act as blinders to social injustice and inequity in the education system. He is committed to examine what can be done to lift the blinders to create more just schools and communities.

**Kristin Kusanovich, MFA** is a director, choreographer and arts education specialist. She has created and produced an extensive body of original work in modern/contemporary dance, drama, musical theatre, opera and film. She received her MFA in Choreography and Performance from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, and is Senior Lecturer at Santa Clara University. She served as Artistic Director of Kusanovich Dance Theatre of Minneapolis and has led master classes and workshops in dance and theatre performance at conservatories in the USA and Canada. A seasoned

performance coach, presenter and arts education advocate, she currently serves on the Executive Board of California Dance Education Association. Ms. Kusanovich has been awarded artistic and research grants supporting her teaching, creative and scholarly work, including the Brutocao Curriculum Innovation Award and a National Endowment for the Arts grant in Arts Engagement. She is committed to enlivening discourse around issues of justice, ethics and civic engagement through the arts.

Authors Cranston and Kusanovich have led dynamic intensives in Canada and the USA for principal and vice-principal teams, teacher leaders, superintendents, teacher educators, and graduate students. They offer co-facilitated workshops in ethnotheatre that examine interpersonal and ethical challenges around teacher leadership (The Drama in Teacher Leadership) or on school leadership in general (The Drama in School Leadership). They have co-authored 18 ethnodramas for various sized ensembles based on material that would usually be presented as a case study. Their work has been presented at American Educational Research Association (AERA), University Council on Educational Administration (UCEA), the International Confederation of Principals (ICP), California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE), Congress: The Canadian Federation of the Humanities and Social Science, Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools, Mississippi State University, University of Manitoba's Faculty of Education, and Santa Clara University's Markkula Center for Applied Ethics and Graduate School of Education.

A trailer for their work using drama (as in art) to study the drama (as in strife) in school leadership contexts is available on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOHXS-JitCs>

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# Prologue: Stage Fright

**Abstract** *Prologue: Stage Fright* sets into motion the use of theatrical analogies, metaphors, and guideposts for thinking about educational leadership as a performative act and teacher leadership in particular as an under-supported performance. Authors Cranston and Kusanovich share challenges related to how teacher leaders' initiatives are perceived, received, and ultimately played out.

**Keywords** Performative • Performativity

Andover feared the sound of the words of the workshop facilitator before she uttered them. Now, deep into the first afternoon of the workshop, he knew what they were headed for. He had read it on the agenda provided earlier that day: "Afternoon Session: Putting our Learning on Display." Robert liked to know how things were going to work out. He often flipped, as casually as he could, to the end of any agenda the moment it was handed to him. The idea of putting his learning on display sounded simply dreadful to him. He didn't generally like to be a part of any display.

"What role would you like to play?" he imagined her asking over lunch. With a slight lilt to it, her way of speaking was both gentle and sharp. He guessed this was because she was from the "East Coast" and let it go at that. Even though he had not actually heard many of the instructions,

such as that the casting of roles would happen mid-morning, he noticed how she could turn an “o” sound into a “wa” sound, so “off” was more like “woff.” In listening for this, he had missed much of the facilitator’s explanation of role play. She had generally sounded pleasant to him, but now, in this imaginary dialogue, her voice sounded a bit frightening.

“Pardon me?” would be his planned response as he feigned a hard-of-hearing routine.

“What role? I’m not sure I’m following?” He would try to say casually as if he had not read ahead on the agenda or heard anything about a play he was to be in.

He figured that she would smile and say something like, “Are you trying to tell me that you did not remember that I told everyone that we were going to role play the leadership case we’ve been studying?” She would stand there, hands on her hips, planted like a tree, and hold that smile. Then she might add, “And not to worry if you don’t get a leading role. Remember, there are no small parts...only small actors.”

“Oh, Robert, you idiot,” he thought. “No one ever really says that. Do they? Okay, she won’t say that!”

He temporarily landed on: “Uhhhm, I sort of forgot about it.” He rehearsed these words in his mind. But in a sudden flash of inspiration he topped himself.

“Sorry I must have missed that part. Say, can a person just sort of watch the play? I think I learn better that way, you know, I can take it all in that way.”

He wondered if maybe he should add a slight shrugging of his shoulders. Maybe then with the addition of some body language, some “BL,” she wouldn’t know this was just a cover for his disdain for participatory learning, especially when he was the participant. Perhaps it would not appear to be an outright fib or at least he hoped she wouldn’t know he had rehearsed all these responses.

He could feel the perspiration pooling under his armpits.

“Never let ‘em see you sweat.” He could hear the faint voice of his middle-school drama teacher who had enthusiastically told the cast this once prior to the opening night of the spring festival performance.

“Did she really say that?” He couldn’t recall now if he ever really heard her actually say those words.

“Where the hell is Jaimie Young when I need him?” he thought. Jaimie was his childhood chum from back in drama class and right about now he needed him. Andover always needed to check with him back in eighth

grade to find out what the teacher had actually said as Robert Andover often only pretended to listen to his teachers.

“Oh my God,” he thought. “It’s really hot in this auditorium. Someone needs to turn the thermostat down.” Robert Andover wasn’t sure if his sweating was noticeable to anyone else but it surely was obvious to him.

## 1.1 CASTING THE LEADING ROLES

Leadership is a phenomena full of mystery and the unknown, but as elusive as it is everybody these days wants to get a handle on “it”. Anyone who has ever led anything knows that their actions, words, and dispositions are performative, that is, they are experienced by others as a performance of duties, skills, attitudes, accomplishments, and shortcomings that form a sort of representation of what kind of leader that person is. These visible, readable, felt responses to performances of leadership can engender a sense of respect and well-being or doubt and dissonance. The things a leader says and does fashion new systems of interaction, methods of getting work done, contexts for learning, and relationships among all stakeholders. Leadership acts are witnessed as performance, as *the performance of leadership*. If the anticipated performance does not ultimately match the actual performance, a dissonance ensues. Our language proves this: a person enacting leadership poorly is literally called a “poorly performing” leader.

On a real theatrical stage, if the performer fails to reach an audience, if the audience members cannot go along with the performer’s sensibility of the performance, there will be expressions of discontent: restlessness in the theatre seats, sudden coughing bouts, booing, hissing, and walkouts. Throughout history such performances have been cut short, and deemed unsustainable by those who are supposed to follow along.

It is painful to be subjected to leadership—or a show—that is being performed poorly. Inside we might cringe when we witness it, but still applaud a poorly performed show of leadership for social, political, or collegial reasons. Whereas a theatre audience has a temporary relationship to what is *staged*, the school employee projects a long view and weighs her reactions carefully because the typical teaching career lasts about 25 years. In schools things change rather slowly and the charade of order often wins out above change even when change that would lead to improvement is needed. Yes, the show usually keeps going whether it is really inspiring or not. In fact, poor leadership in the absence of critical and immediate

evaluation is an act that somehow perseveres in schools despite its lack of efficacy. It can be staged for weeks, months, or even years as those in power equate success with longevity.

It almost sounds like cowardice to mention that our mindfulness around learned protocols, manners, and for most employees, the reality of retaining our family's livelihoods prevents us from booing, hissing, or catapulting vegetables through the air at our boss to bring the curtain down until the leader can once more earn the rights to the stage they are on.

When the curtain figuratively opens in schools we become a cast of co-workers. We receive multiple cues that tell us that our job is to stick it out, no matter how the performance fares, hang in there until the final act, to support those in leadership roles to garner applause or laughter at the appropriate times. We can't up and leave in the middle of the play because there is a better play going on down the street. In reality it might be safer to seek out new employment opportunities while such a limited show is up and running.

Fortunately or unfortunately, people in official leadership roles in schools have a lot of built-in protections against losing their position. They often have seniority, have come through the system, and have built networks of supporters who have a vested interest in having them lead. When leaders initiate changes there are built-in professional and social protocols that allow them to at least think that things are indeed changing or will change in the ways they have envisioned they should.

So what about those leadership roles in schools that have no *formal stage* on which to be enacted? Those so-called leadership roles that are full of expectation but, ultimately, are unofficial? What about the creative, informal positions that get initiated by someone with a good idea? Such as teachers who lead by being the exemplary teachers children deserve or who take risks by pushing the boundaries of traditional understandings of curriculum or lead by responding to their students' requests to form new support groups?

These informal positions come without budget lines, office space, guidelines, roll-out schedules, or a marketing and communications team. So why does anyone say "yes" to an informal position of leadership? The reasons are many. Perhaps it is like a promotion within a position rank that otherwise would have no immediate promotion possibility. Perhaps it is a sign that one's talent for producing good results has been noticed. Perhaps it is because people who have leadership acumen are often picked

to lead new things. One thing is for certain. A lot of teachers in the name of school improvement are being asked or professionally forced to *step up* to teacher leadership in many cases without any preparation. We will be looking at informal leaders in schools in greater detail in the upcoming chapters.

## 1.2 SRO: STANDING ROOM ONLY

The creative act of leadership can be an enthralling, impressive, and compelling process. It can be a performance that we are glad we are attending. We are speaking now of leadership when it is performed well. The creative act of leadership well-performed sets a stage for possibilities that no one knew existed. Though leaders working within given parameters always require some managerial thinking skills, a visionary leader facilitates change and growth for the systems and people in a school. Change and growth happen only when a leader is trusted and there is a tolerance for some degree of ambiguity on the part of all stakeholders. People really benefit from good leadership, and they want to work where there is strong, fair leadership happening. Being a part of a community of diverse individuals forming an ensemble in order to enact a leader's vision, when that vision is perceived as positive for the whole school, is a tremendously fulfilling experience.

## 1.3 THE SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF

When people gather in a theatre before the curtain rises, they anticipate they will experience something original and thought-provoking. They sit literally and figuratively in the dark. Even if it is a familiar show they still look forward to the unique interpretation made by the director, designers, and cast. The audience know a little about what they will see but that depends on how much they are oriented. Previous experiences, assumptions, recognizing title, plot, or actors, scanning the program notes and marketing materials telling them how they might think or feel about this upcoming performance have all colluded to create certain expectations in the mind of the spectator. For instance, when the curtain goes up, an audience might expect to find Romeo and Juliet in the rose garden but they might actually encounter the young lovers outside a condominium surrounded by a high security fence. The audience becomes aware this play is not a familiar version of Romeo and Juliet but some entirely new interpretation...and

they are ready to accept this creative new vision and critique it as they see fit. Differences in style are acceptable and even exciting in the theatre. The audience is adaptable but remains critically reflective as the play takes them away to places unknown, mysterious, and uncharted.

We trust this process in the theatre. On some level we trust because we are reasonable people who are aware that anything can happen, that we probably will not experience real bodily harm, and that it will be over in a few hours, so we tolerate just about anything. Sometimes we are quite enthralled, swept away as it were and we relish in the mystery of the performance, bringing a sense of awe and wonder to learning as we experience the story together. We may not know why what is happening is happening, but we give it time to unfold. In fact, we assume it took time and effort and a multitude of preparatory acts to make a play: to write the words, learn the words, understand and interpret the words, and to embody and give physical and visual context through directorial staging choices and design elements to the words. Just as we give a new interpretation of a timeless play the benefit of the doubt for a certain amount of time, we frequently give a new leader a sort of grace period too, a time to get acclimated with the expectation that we will soon perceive or witness how leadership is being enacted. Will it be a carefully crafted play or a chaotic improvisation?

At some point, our willingness to suspend our disbelief and trust in the unknown begins to diminish. After some grace period, our tolerance for ambiguity, for a leader who is not revealing their perspective, strategy, or vision, who is not performing in a clear way, can run dry. Some people walk out of the middle of plays at small, informal venues because any combination of various performance expectations has not been met and a calculation is made that they never will be. But most people at a large concert hall seeing something they paid a high price for, even if it is not going as well as they thought, trust that there is something to be learned, felt, and experienced in the temporary commitment to *suspend our disbelief* and enter the world of the play. They follow the leader in this case because the performance is taking place on a highly respected, socially approved stage. In the case of school leaders who have what we might call a formal role on a formal stage, the audience knows they are the audience and that they are simply expected to follow along. If official leaders benefit from well-rehearsed audience behaviors, imagine the unique pressures on those holding informal leadership positions in schools. Imagine the life of a teacher leader!



## Setting the Stage

**Abstract** In *Setting the Stage*, authors Cranston and Kusanovich introduce a vignette that will carry the reader through the entire book, depicting the dynamics of professional development workshop facilitation. This chapter probes what real creativity is about, whether in a professional development session or in the day-to-day life of schools and suggests some reasons for a school's limited receptivity to teacher-leader innovation.

**Keywords** Professional development • Teacher leadership

Andover was keenly aware that his foray into teacher leadership was tied to the acceptance of his first teaching job. Although it had only been a few years since he had graduated from the pre-service teacher-training program at Millennium University, Andover had been hired as the “lead science teacher” of the newly renovated Einstein Science Academy, a kindergarten to fifth grade public school. Right after signing the contract, he had been called into the district office, congratulated, and told that he was to lead a “revamping” of the science curriculum in order to make it fit the new State standards. Andover knew from the word on the street that a few science-savvy classroom teachers, especially some more senior ones across the district, had resented that they were not appointed for this role. The Assistant Superintendent of Curricular Innovation, however, reassured Andover, when Andover asked if there were any potentially angry

colleagues he ought to know about, that he needn't worry because he was exactly what the district needed to lead the changes.

"We need new ideas. More energy. Fresh blood!" The Assistant Superintendent of Curricular Innovation had declared at that first meeting.

Andover remembered recoiling when he heard his boss mention "blood" because in his mind it evoked a brutish image of fresh meat being fed to a pack of ravenous hyenas.

When he offered to help his older colleagues, they responded by asking him to meet impossible deadlines, and they found fault with the littlest mistakes he made, like having the wrong number of test tubes set up for their hands-on science sessions. Complaints and emails to the superintendent had made it a rough first term and he never felt he had any leverage. Andover wished he had been given the opportunity to test-run some of his ideas with a supportive group of colleagues rather than simply being pushed into the lion's den as a teacher leader in science.

After Andover sent an email expressing his frustration with not getting any traction, the Assistant Superintendent of Curricular Innovation signed him up for a workshop being put on by the *Learning Vine*. The one-day workshop for "new leaders" was branded with the slogan "Inspiring Peak Performance."

Andover did not put much stock into the name of the workshop. "Marketing gibberish," he thought. He didn't imagine that he was performing anything really or playing a role of any dramatic sort. He conceded to himself that if he was playing a role, he was not too interested in summiting the peak, even temporarily, if it meant changing his leadership style. "It's about style," he recalled a university professor saying one day in a psychology of learning class. And Andover did not see anything wrong with his leadership style.

The facilitator's cell phone conversation during the next break was not audible to anyone. "Yeah, we are heading in to the sit-down role-play section and I just know it is going to be a disaster, as always. By the way: got any leads for me? I am only contracted until summer with these Vine folks. Time to find a new gig."

### WHO IS DIRECTING THIS PLAY ANYWAY?

In exploring enactments of teacher leadership, and particularly the informal leadership positions acquired by teacher leaders, we ought to be concerned with questions such as, how is teacher leadership experienced

by those performing it, those witnessing it, and those affected by it? Do teacher leaders thinking imaginatively really receive accolades for their ability to innovate beyond the four walls of their own classroom? Or, are we so accustomed to disappointing performances of people with “leadership vision” that we doom them to failure before they ever get to the second act? Do teacher leaders really have the support to enact what we imagine teacher leadership to be? What does it mean to follow both official and unofficial leaders at the same time? Would a colleague defend the virtues of an unofficial leader like a teacher leader to an official leader who has leverage over jobs, their budgets, and school programs?

These sorts of questions reveal the myriad of assumptions we each have about leadership that deserves to be probed. Questions such as these ought to haunt those of us who profess on and on about the virtues of leadership:

- How good is the average teacher at following another teacher who has the caché of teacher leader or is at least enacting that role?
- How willing is a person in a formal position of leadership, the administrator, for example, to follow a teacher leader’s ideas?
- What is the teacher leadership climate like at each different and unique school?
- Is anyone in the teacher leader’s immediate audience able or willing to be thoughtfully present to what unfolds and then form their own responses?

In this book we propose that *the stage* of teacher leadership, the site where such acts of leadership are performed, is really more like an itinerant, traveling road show; as good or effective as that show might be, informal stages are easily dismissed, ignored, or relegated to an outsider status.

When those who are committed to improving schools for students are reluctant to consider questions such as these, let alone seriously consider plausible answers to them, then those poor souls who are thrust into taking on teacher-leader roles face what theatre professionals call *a tough house*—that is, any seemingly unforgiving or unresponsive audience. We believe that if teacher leaders can be better rehearsed for the successful staging of teacher leadership in their schools, then their work is more likely to be received well and have lasting, positive effects.

Let’s investigate the idea of audience in relation to teacher leadership a little further. In what manner do fellow colleagues pay attention to teacher

leadership? Once the person who appoints the teacher leader is confident the project will be carried out, she might just turn her focus to more pressing problems. So an ally to a project can lose touch with it. Or, if there are people waiting in the wings who had coveted the position, and any perceived power, leverage, or budget that could be associated with it, these overlooked colleagues could decide that undue scrutiny and criticism of other teacher leaders will assuage their hurt feelings. These folks might also want to make sure the spotlight on any teacher leader's success does not shine too brightly. There might also be many supportive, good-hearted colleagues in the audience who are too crazed and overworked to really note what is going on over on that little make-shift teacher leadership stage. In any case, plenty of dynamics are set off when someone is given, or takes on, even the most informal task of leadership, without holding a formal title.

### PLAYING TO AN EMPTY HOUSE

Why do great plays sometimes perform to little or almost no *audience*? It could be that in some cases the work is not valued, or it would be valued and could be great but there is no audience that has been primed to receive it. Let's say we could somehow *objectively* say it was a "good play," but hardly anyone was there to see it. Would it be analogous to the metaphysical possibility of an unwitnessed tree falling in the forest and making no sound? Is leadership only leadership if people are following it?

This strange phenomenon of leadership performed well but somehow without an attentive audience has to do with the state of the audience: a certain level of focus, a readiness for change, and a lack of personal ego have to be present in order to follow along with any new story. Otherwise, there is no possibility for the critical reception of an idea. Dramatic representations are not just acts of speaking that are heard by passive bystanders, but, rather, are the creation of dynamic interactions among the participants in the play and between those performers and the audience.

For a school, the critical reception received by teacher leaders is often coming from an already stressed, overworked, under-resourced group of colleagues who are too wrapped up in their own individual performances of teaching to really support anyone else in a genuine way. At best, this audience finds it difficult to critically receive new, possibly very good, ideas; at worst, they may be resentful or just simply confused by people from their own ranks taking on leadership tasks and roles, perhaps especially when they appear to be succeeding!

In the business of theatre, when there is no give and take between the audience and the show, no focus being brought to what the performers are offering, it is referred to as *playing to a tough house*. We believe teacher leaders these days are facing a tough, distracted house, but not a house that cannot be won over. Performers anticipate the occasional off-night, learning how to *play to a tough house* by adjusting their strategies. Perhaps teacher leaders who are strategically prepared for some degree of resistance and reticence can actually knock out an effective performance.

### LEVERAGING CRITICALITY AND CREATIVITY

This book functions as a navigation tool for emerging and practicing teacher leaders and the teacher educators and school leaders who support their ongoing professional growth. It provides a window into the worlds of some of the typical dilemmas teacher leaders might face as they enact their growing identity as teacher leaders. The particular dynamics captured in the stories that are woven throughout the book can be mapped on to many analogous situations in teacher leadership. We hope the content of this book provides not only a compass to better focus our perspectives and expectations of teacher leadership, but some ballast to steady and give balance to your career pursuits in education. These methods call upon and inevitably engage the whole person in learning and require that its users construct and understand many perspectives. It is our hope that it is an eye-opening resource for all those interested in cultivating a more savvy, sophisticated, and resilient teacher leadership workforce. We want to see the unique strengths of today's teacher leaders featured and supported within the admittedly complex organizational culture and climate of any given school.

We do not think the requisite empathy required to support teacher leaders or the socio-emotional commitment needed to be one can be learned entirely through abstract means, that is, we do not think the best approach to teacher-leadership development is through language alone. Nor do we see lecture, conversation, homework, traditional case studies, or random role-playing exercises as methods capable of sufficiently illustrating the cognitive, affective, and embodied experience of teacher leadership. Because whole school improvement has so many moving parts, we do not think it can be learned in isolation. Teacher leadership, though sometimes initiated by an individual, is by no means a solo act. Everyone invested in building healthier schools should be concerned with learning

more about the dynamics of teacher leadership in order for students to succeed. This book is meant to inspire an active learning process and to be read in working groups consisting of professional colleagues from diverse positions and ranks. It is meant to appeal to the sensibilities of emerging and practicing teacher leaders as well as those in positions of training and employing them.

### WHO THEN IS THIS BOOK FOR?

This book should appeal to:

- Early career teachers who want to better understand the dynamics of teacher leadership;
- Mid-career teachers considering more formal or informal leadership roles;
- Teacher mentors who wish to serve an even greater role in the lives of mentees;
- Vice-Principals, principals, and district-level personnel who wish to better support teacher leadership; and
- Teacher educators looking for more powerful pedagogical tools for transformative, experiential, and active learning tasks.

Essentially, the *Drama in Teacher Leadership* (what we refer to in this book and in our approach to ethnotheatre as *DiTL*) will be of interest to anyone who is committed to better understanding how teacher leadership, which goes beyond the confines of any individual's classroom, is best leveraged to serve the multiple and complex needs of students who should be at the center of all decisions that we make. Students cannot remain at the center of our efforts if professional relationships between adults in schools become strained.

We genuinely hope that the ideas and educational schemes contained in this book might help the complex adult working relationships at schools function better. As obvious as it is to state that the ultimate beneficiaries of strong adult working relationships in schools are the students, the adults themselves also benefit from better professional relationships. Students expect a school staff to be working collegially. They neither expect nor deserve a bunch of isolated individuals running around, vying for the gold medal award for leadership and not knowing how to support each other.

The ultimate beneficiaries of this book are students and their families who deserve teachers who are professional, prepared, and ready to function at exemplary levels. They do not deserve to see or feel that good teacher leaders are getting fatigued, demoralized, and frustrated with the way schools are. We believe that teacher leaders are critically important to the foundation of our next generations of schools. Our transdisciplinary perspective that merges theatre, embodied learning, creativity, active reflection, and analysis, with leadership education, is designed to help readers envision and ultimately reshape the reality of teacher leadership today.

### THE GOAL OF GREAT PERFORMANCES IN SCHOOLS: ALL STUDENTS' SUCCESS

We know that student learning is influenced by a great many factors: students' skills, expectations, motivations, and behaviors; family resources, and attitude and encouragement toward school; peer-group attitudes and behaviors; school organization, resources, and climate/culture; curriculum design, structure, and content; and teacher skills, knowledge, dispositions, and practices. The list of factors contributing to student learning actually goes on and on.

However, teachers and their teaching are the most impactful in-school factors related to student learning. In particular, the broad consensus is that "teacher quality" is the single most important school variable influencing student achievement. While there are some things about teaching and learning that are hard to qualify and even more troublesome to try to quantify, one thing seems clear: in order to affect improved learning opportunities school-wide, we need to develop a resilient teaching force capable of enacting their careers in ways that are generative and fulfilling. We need teachers of the highest quality and caliber.

No single principle of school improvement is more valid or durable than the maxim that states: student learning depends first, last, and always on the quality of the teachers in their classrooms. Experts may disagree about what size the ideal class should be, or how the system can function best to support individual student learning, or whether there is adequate funding to meet the learning needs of all children. But, no one's list of educational priorities fails to place teacher commitment, effectiveness, and resiliency at—or very near—the top. However, we have also learned that if we want all children within a single school to find success we cannot have teachers

simply doing what they need to do to get through the day. What we need are teachers who are leaders for each and every child in the school.

The concept of teacher leadership has dominated the discourse of educational preparation for years. It is hard to find detractors; after all, who would be against such an idea? Teacher leadership is called for at every level of effective school functioning. School improvement is often tied to the concept of a strong teacher leadership presence. Building better school cultures means cultivating teacher leadership. It means distributed and/or shared forms of leadership that are focused on improving student outcomes school-wide. Teachers who clearly envision innovative school improvement initiatives related to instructional practices and student learning naturally desire teacher-leadership opportunities. Teachers identifying as teacher leaders need to take a broader perspective of the professional responsibility to effect change school-wide.

Learning about leadership is to some degree about the conceptualization of ideas, systems, and people. We must believe that a great deal of ideas about leadership can be learned abstractly; otherwise we would not see so many courses, seminars, academies, and workshops perpetuating the idea that important things about leadership can be learned outside of the job. Any responsible leadership preparation will include not only the positive, aspirational, hopeful side of leadership, but will expose learners to the challenges and dissonances inherent in leadership as well. It is imperative to give learners the opportunity to concretize or give form to complex leadership concepts.

Teacher educators preparing the next generation of teacher leaders often present an idealized picture of a school's actual climate, as if all schools are simply waiting for awesome teacher leaders to walk through the door. And sometimes there are schools that are indeed ready for anything an emerging teacher leader has to offer them. The reality of most schools, however, is a different story. We see teachers offering leadership with a particular focus in mind and being asked to refocus, teachers rethinking how a particular flow of information could be organized and then suddenly having to defend why they are against the person who invented the current system; in short, we see examples of a kind of micropolitical interpersonal dynamic that is anything but simple. Teacher leaders in the trenches of an actual job face many obstacles on a daily basis, but these interpersonal challenges between adults at schools are often not a part of the discourse during the teacher education process.

We see these obstacles particularly when teacher leadership entails improvements that would foster equity, ethics, or issues of justice. In



these cases, the path to success is complicated by a myriad of resistances to change. People mistakenly believe that changing our learned habits is fundamentally easy. We tend to assume people understand the concepts of justice and equity the same way we do and operate out of a misguided belief that we assume the same things to be true. To suggest a more *just* procedure for anything, whether it is building more diverse classes, getting English-language-learning students into courses they need, or some kind of improved shared governance structure, implies that the school's traditional methods might have been *unjust*. So the teacher leader is, on some levels, set up to create confrontation, even though that may be the last thing on his or her mind.

This book offers an opportunity to focus on some of the significant obstacles faced by teacher leaders and those who wish to be teacher leaders. It does so through the framework of dramatizations of stories of teacher leadership. In these dramatizations, written as vignettes within the chapters and stand-alone one-act plays in the last chapters of the book, the reader can begin to form his or her own understandings of the powerful interplay between various stakeholders in schools. This book aims to help emerging and practicing teacher leaders gain insights into the deep and emotionally complex context of their endeavors to lead change. It is hoped that by delving into the challenges faced by teacher leaders that educators across the spectrum—those who hold formal titles and also those who have informal leadership roles—can open up a space for critical conversations about their own unique initiatives and goals that would not otherwise be possible. We want to help teacher leaders and those who work with them to strategize better about what is truly at stake when a teacher identifies himself as a leader in anything. We believe a person becomes an effective performer/leader by familiarizing herself with all the facets involved in playing any role long before the curtain goes up and certainly well in advance of appearing before a critical audience.

### PREVIEW OF THE SHOW

Throughout this book you can expect to encounter:

- Vignettes intended to help you imagine how professional development efforts to guide teacher leaders can have mixed results;
- Metaphors drawn from the theatre arts that illustrate the dynamics of leadership;

- A transdisciplinary approach to understanding the theories of teacher leadership as a creative, performative act;
- Fictionalized scripts that highlight dramatic tensions inherent in the complex, social institution we call school, and guides to reflection for group discussion; and
- A work that has been written collaboratively and is intended to be used collaboratively.

## The Allure

**Abstract** In *The Allure*, the authors' researched methods of content delivery and exploration using ethnotheatre to creatively develop school leaders is introduced. This chapter also demonstrates how truly creative acts have to allow for some errors or missteps, to be genuine and to lead to real discovery. The philosophical allure of a graduate program that prepares teacher leaders is frequently used to attract graduate school applicants. The actual receptivity of a school site, when it comes to teacher leadership, is not a given, however.

**Keywords** Ethnotheatre • Assumptive world view

Penelope Ito walked out from behind the stage curtain. “Please do not get freaked out and work yourself up; at least not yet.” She smiled. She knew that this group was just like the attendees at almost every other workshop for educators she had facilitated; that is, she knew they were somewhat anxious. Except she knew that this was no “Learning Vine” workshop. And she was thankful for that fact.

“Probably,” she thought, “like the ‘Vine’ group, they signed up for ‘21st Century Teaching and Leading in Schools’ assuming that all of the learning was going to occur from the neck up.” Facilitating the required role-play activities of the *Learning Vine* leadership method had never gone well, yet she had made countless people follow the system of reading case

studies from their seats, pretending to be characters from real-world scenarios before she just could not take it anymore. Despite the Ivy League affiliation of her former job, she was now working for the “21st Century Group,” a lesser known entity but at least one that provided a modicum of authentic preparation for teacher leadership and high-quality Lapis Lazuli blue polo shirts for all of its workshop facilitators.

Inevitably, she knew that the natural nervousness and lack of orientation to drama with the “Vine” group had almost always detracted from the performance. But it had been a part of the pre-programmed workshop: “End of day two—have the workshop participants form groups of 5–6, no more and no fewer, and choose roles from the case to role-play,” the lesson notes stated. “Remind participants that adults love to make up a character and perform, especially after two long days! If you have done ice-breakers #1–3 then everyone should be excited and you can tell people to really go for it.”

“Nervousness is a normal part of performance,” Ito said in a relaxed manner to the group now assembled after she read the title of the first play, which was, “How to Fire a Teacher.” Yes, there had been some nervous laughter, but now she was delving into the embodied reality of performing anything in front of anybody, no matter how seasoned you are. “We all experience it to some degree. You may recognize it as butterflies in your gut, profuse sweating, dry mouth, frequent trotting off to the restroom, rapid short breaths, and a quickened heartbeat.” She wondered if any of them might use the restroom cue as an excuse to leave the room.

No one moved.

“You see it in others as the nervous chatter, giggling, or silliness that can occur when we step in front of others to perform. It’s actually fear bubbling up in the form of laughter. Shallow, uncomfortable, not really funny, laughter. We live in a world of judgment. In this case, judgment of: are we going to be seen as performing well or poorly? It heightens our anxiety. Everyone responds a bit differently but almost everyone experiences performance anxiety. Ninety percent of the time when we laugh it is not because something is funny but because we are uncomfortable. Acknowledging that fact, we try to redirect the desire for nervous laughter to focused attention. Try it and see if a quieter way of transitioning from one idea to the next works for you. This exercise is not about judging you or your acting but about letting you explore a different person’s angle on teacher leadership and letting us witness that, but we have to get past the

tendency to dismiss everything because we are uncomfortable. It is so easy to laugh to spare ourselves the awkwardness of truth.”

She looked around the room and saw the anxious looks on two of the participant’s faces still remained. She continued, “For some people, performance anxiety is a more serious problem. The jitters become debilitating. And it doesn’t just happen when you are *on stage* in a formal sense.”

She wanted to personalize this point. “One principal I know is a banjo-picker, and he belongs to a blue-grass band. I recently worked with him and he shared his experience of being so anxious about playing ‘in public’ that he couldn’t even play in front of his wife. He started to practice in the garage when she was sleeping!”

Although a few smiled, no one said a word. Penelope thought it best not to get into the researched documentation of social anxiety in musicians. No, not the time.

“Time to make the connection to the workshop,” she thought.

“This anxiety isn’t very different from taking on the role of being a teacher leader. Let me explain. Oftentimes, in the course of preparing for a performance a dancer will think: ‘I’m not ready for this next solo. Everyone will notice if I make a mistake and then I’ll look foolish. I’ll be out there on my own and feel humiliated.’ Without feeling prepared, and under that kind of pressure, who could do their best?”

It was losing her train of thought. She asked the participants to turn to the next writing prompt and tackle it for about five minutes. She could feel her mind wandering back to the time when she worked for “Learning Vine.” She had never felt very comfortable asking the workshop participants to role-play a case they had only studied from the comfort of their desks. No proper training. No ensemble building techniques. No warm-ups. Just grab a name in a case study and act. All too often in the aftermath of the role-plays she felt the performances had become marred by a litany of poor performers who over-acted or embellished parts or worse.

The “Learning Vine” had paid the workshop facilitators well. She had told her best friend: “So what if this is a bit of a sham? It’s clear that they do not really care about helping people learn how to act. I even heard some guy say that they do not regularly hire theatre people like me. ‘Too flaky,’ he said.”

It recalled how some people, okay a lot of people, used the role-play performances to act out some boorish behaviors they had always dreamed of doing once given the venue to display their clever impressions. She had seen people decide to suddenly invent an incompetent, rarely sober

principal, or a frustrated, straight-laced band-teacher, or an overly controlling but hilariously flirtatious librarian. And, all too often, these characters that didn't exist in the cases themselves, appeared during the performances, completely derailing the point of the case.

She paused and remembered that one of the current workshop participants had actually attended the "Vine" workshop a couple of years back, a middle-aged fellow sitting to the side of the room, squirming a little in his chair. She meant to tell him that she remembered him when he registered the first day but he got sidetracked looking for the coffee before she had a chance. On breaks he seemed to disappear and here they were on day two and she was wondering if she was saying too much about her previous gig. She wondered if he felt implicated in her critique.

It tried to calm herself by hoping that this participant would understand that she had evolved professionally by judiciously choosing whom she should work for.

"Robert Andover." She recalled his name while scanning the room to take note of how many people were still writing. As soon as most of the attendees had finished writing, and as some pencils were starting to be rolled back and forth, she took the stage again.

"How could anyone in a leadership position feel confident about her or his performance without having an opportunity to rehearse her or his parts?" she offered. "Why would we expect a leader to just make it all up on the spot without the benefit of coaching and guidance or the safety of practicing? True," she added, "that much of the work of school leaders, teacher leaders, and indeed teachers is a bit improvisational each day. But, surely we can learn much about ourselves if we work through some of the more common scenarios we might encounter."

"I'm not going to shout out: Let's get ready to do some role-play! And, then just abandon you to deal with a part you don't understand and have made no choices about while I sit in the back of the room enjoying my caramel macchiato. No, this workshop is different, quite different from what you may have experienced in other workshops I can assure you." She finally caught Robert's eye and they were both smiling for an instant, but only until he realized it. Then he quickly looked down as if his own work suddenly needed intense scrutiny, as if his workshop reflection time had produced some sort of legal document that needed going over. He assumed she didn't recognize him. "She's a real pro speaker and probably sees thousands of folks a year," he had said to himself when he first saw her at the registration table.

Penelope felt good about finally acknowledging this participant from back in her “Learning Vine” days through this exchange of recognition and continued. “I am going to expose you to methods drawn directly from the performing arts; our learning will happen through a systematic dramaturgical process of textual analysis for the purpose of understanding not only the character but the entire scene that you will be a part of. You will not be asked to perform a scene until you have received guidance, coaching, and direction about the whole context. Teacher leadership takes place in a contextualized space and we will recreate a variety of these with each one-act play that we study and enact. Afterwards, we will allow time to reflect on the experience of being participants, and at times, witnesses to these one-act plays on teacher leadership. I am not going to assume that you are comfortable with any of this yet, but I can assure you that you will be ready to perform when it is indeed time for that at the end of the workshop.”

### TEACHER LEADERSHIP ASSUMPTIONS

The two characters in the short scene above may be heading into tumultuous waters. Penelope Ito and Robert Andover appear to be operating from different worldviews. Their assumptions about what leadership development is and how it works simply do not match. Penelope has an assumption that all life-long learning is desirable. Robert has an assumption that interactive workshops are psychically painful. Penelope assumes she can move a group of strangers to a state of readiness so they can share and open up to each other, speak in impassioned ways and remember their stage directions, so much so that they might just temporarily resemble a real repertoire theatre company. Robert assumes if he just gets through this without being noticed, his Superintendent, who recommended the workshop, will be so impressed that if there is an opening at the District Office, Robert will be called first.

We all have assumptions, and anyone who protests that he or she holds none is probably not fooling you, and, truth be told, probably has not fooled him or herself. We all hold them and our assumptions, which derive from some composite of our personal beliefs, play a significant role in how we view our own life. They influence how we interact with others. Sometimes assumptions are made based on seemingly logical observations and deductions. In many other cases, our assumptions are connected to an emotional viewpoint that seems to be supported by logic even when it is

not. Through the window of these assumptions, we try to make sense out of the things going on around us. We also overly rely on our assumptions to predict future results.

Once established, assumptions are accepted as fact and are rarely subject to scrutiny. They become our “personal operating system.” Much like the operating system on your computer, our assumptions control how we sort and file every bit of data we input. Everything we see, experience, think, and feel is adjusted to fit with our assumptions. In other words, our version of reality is an outcome of our assumptive worldview. Our personal operating system disassembles and reassembles all of the data we input so it conforms to what we believe.

A network of personal assumptions forms an assumptive worldview. An assumptive worldview is a set of beliefs that includes limiting statements and assumptions regarding what exists and what does not—either in actuality or in principle—what objects or experiences are good or bad, and what objectives, behaviors, and relationships are desirable or undesirable even in the absence of proof. Without the need to consult the dictionary it seems fair to propose that an assumption is, generally speaking, something that we accept as true without question or proof. It is amazing, but not surprising, how many of us believe our assumptions are absolute truths.

We defend our assumptions as if they were inalienable truths. Don Miguel Ruiz, the author of *The Four Agreements*, a book that remained on the *New York Times’ Bestseller List* for almost a decade, proposed that, not only do we make assumptions, but we tend to believe we are right about the assumptions we make. We expend tremendous amounts of energy—physical and emotional—trying to prove someone else’s assumptions wrong in order to prove our own correct. All the while, our assumptions are framing how we perceive the world and the others we encounter in it.

How does this tendency to hold tightly to our own assumptive worldviews become a problem for teacher leaders when we consider shared or distributed leadership in a school? The commitments of people to their assumptive worldviews certainly creates tensions for teacher leaders because teacher leaders effect change by challenging their own and their colleagues’ assumptions about teaching and learning. One assumptive worldview of graduate programs preparing teacher educators seems to be that those in formal leadership positions, such as principals, will actually want what teacher leadership looks like. In reality, some of them may simply want to distribute tasks and duties, not leadership. They may actually desire followership from their teaching staffs, not distributed leadership.



New teachers may assume teacher leadership is supported fully by their fellow teachers too, when in fact, as we have shown, it may not be.

Another assumption we encounter in teacher preparation is that teacher leadership, as ill defined as it is, is universally good, is needed, and is welcomed with opened arms. However, it is not universally good if in fact a teacher who is only minimally competent in the classroom tries to effect more sectors of the school and does not have the skill set, insight, or support to complete projects successfully. In these cases, teacher leadership could be problematic. Similarly, just as deficit thinking leads a teacher to focus on a student's weaknesses, teacher leaders can adopt a medical model of school improvement which frames their leadership acts as antidotes for what ails the school. To further complicate matters, even when a school would really benefit from a new teacher's vision for change, sometimes the school climate is inhospitable to teacher leadership.

### THE IMPACT OF OUR ASSUMPTIONS

Malcolm Gladwell in *David and Goliath* refers to our assumptions as "giants." They are those beliefs that literally tower above us so we don't realize their monumental influence; we tend to assume they are universal truths. Tattoos are for outlaws; lawyers are cold and aloof; dancers surely don't read books; and only a teacher could possibly know what it feels like to put a student's interests first. Assumptions frame the challenges we face from a particular angle and inform and influence our decision-making. Assumptions often cause inertia of the imagination. It is as if we cannot imagine the things that do not fit our frame of reference, given what we have heard, read, and experienced. Self-reflexivity is not enough to eliminate the impact of our problematic assumptions. We need tools to help us develop a vision of the bigger picture, that is, the complex interactions between multiple assumptive worldviews as it plays out in the interpersonal dynamics in schools.

In the script that follows, we shall illustrate how Robert Andover, workshop attendee, actually behaves in his day-to-day job as Department Head at R. U. Reddy Middle School, and how he is unaware that he has left so little in the way of leadership opportunities for his teaching staff. His assumptive worldview is that he has it all covered, and that micromanaging is a safe bet.

Contrary to the prevailing assumptive worldviews about teacher leadership, as it is discussed in education programs, graduate school, and in the

tomes of educational research, the department head in the narrative that follows is not desiring the kind of teacher leadership that newly minted teacher Jenn Zedd is offering. In simple terms, he isn't interested in "buying" what Jenn Zedd is "selling."

In this scene the principal of the school is non-existent. Andover, the department head, is inviting a new teacher, Zedd, to partake in the execution of his ideas. Authors like Katzenmeyer and Moller, who wrote *Awakening the sleeping giant: Helping teachers develop as leaders*, argue convincingly that the reliance on the principalship alone to provide such things as curricular and instructional leadership and enact new reforms is, for a variety of reasons, no longer viable. Although excellent principal leadership will always be highly desirable, in today's more collaborative and diverse teaching staffs, the intense focus on teacher leaders as the means to contribute to the betterment of schools is both understandable and compelling.

"Teacher leadership," writes Anne Lieberman in the "Forward" of Linda Lambert's *Leadership Capacity for Lasting School Improvement*, "does not replace, but rather augments, principal leadership." The true litmus test of teacher leadership, Michael Fullan, the Canadian educational researcher and former Dean of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, suggests, is whether or not it mobilizes teachers' commitments to putting their energy into actions designed to improve things beyond their classrooms and the students they teach directly. Unfortunately, it appears that Andover is not familiar with awakening giants, or augmenting or mobilizing, and probably does not have any of these books on order.

Yes, teacher leadership is an individual commitment. But if we want it to work on the scale of a social organization the size of a school, it will require collective mobilization and collective efforts. Some of this seems dramatic, and indeed it is. Some people believe you can judge how a show is going to go by the first minute of the performance. Here, Jenn Zedd, new hire, surely has her assumptive worldview about teacher leadership toppled in just one friendly conversation.

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#### DR. GRADPRO

(from a podium at Jenn Zedd's graduation ceremony)

... and we hope when you graduate from Millennial University that you will become a leader in your field as so many alums of the M.U. have, and not just a *teacher*, content to merely look after your own classroom

and students, following the curriculum in a non-reflective manner. Be the change you want to see, as you become the teacher leader you are meant to be. As teacher leaders you need to confidently embrace all the best methods, researched-informed practices, and critical pedagogy, oh, and the whole technology thing you have been exposed to here, and create a more healthy, just and excellent school no matter where you are. And never forget, though occasionally you might face some colleagues who are less than joyful for you to interact with day in and day out, year after year even, it's always, always, always first and foremost about the kids.

(Three months later...)

ROBERT ANDOVER

(Department Head of R. U. Reddy Middle School)

It's nice to finally sit down with you again. I guess this is the first time we've seen each other and had a chance to chat since your job interview with us back in June.

JENN ZEDD

(Graduate of Millennial University's Credential Program)

I am so happy to be R. U. Reddy Middle's ninth grade General Science teacher. I am looking forward to learning from you as the Department Head, Mr. Andover; I can't thank you enough for this opportunity. I can't wait to get to work on some of the best methods, the research-informed practices, the critical pedagogies, and of course the whole new technology thing I studied so intensely in grad school.

I'm interested in the Sustainable Well-Being movement, anti-bullying programs, and fostering a professional learning community in our science department. I hope to share the latest Science Curricular Frameworks and Standards and Benchmarks that just went into effect yesterday, actually, yes, we were working with a draft of it for the last two years, with my new colleagues and maybe start a Fair Trade Coffee Exchange day in the Staff Room. Finally, if you need a tennis coach I did play in college pretty seriously and so just keep me in mind.

ROBERT ANDOVER

Well, Jenn, and please call me Robert, we are happy to have you on board, but we'll just have to wait a bit to discuss your good ideas because we are busy with two new student clubs, the Young Astronomers Guild and the Future Investors Alliance.

Our parent volunteers really cover the anti-bullying by reading books and giving worksheets to kids through a national program, and the

Vice-President for HortStrucks coffee has three of her children here at R. U. Reddy Middle School and provides free coffee for us at all staff meetings and PTA gatherings, and believe me, that is a tremendous savings, as long as we don't bring in any other brands.

We've eliminated long-handled implement sports due to the higher liability costs; though some kid did lose two teeth from a basketball gone astray last month. And the PLC? Well, you'll be happy to know that we were ahead of the curve on that one and I've got them in place. I oversee them in all areas except the modern language department, those people have kind of run off in a different direction you know, but that's ok.

JENN ZEDD

(Looking somewhat uncomfortable)

Oh, ok. Well maybe I should just focus on getting my classes up and running and talk about things in October?

(Long pause)

Or November...or sometime before Winter Break?

ROBERT ANDOVER

Let's see how everything goes, Jenn, and make some time to touch base in February March. That's a good time for meetings. I'm sure you'll see me every day on my "highly visible tour"—it's a big figure 8 that covers the entirety of the hallways. Don't ask me how it got to be called that. Oh, I almost forgot. You will learn all this at orientation, but we've got you in charge of supervising the class changeover between the portable classrooms so the neighbors over the fence don't have too much "noise pollution." And, you'll be managing the cafeteria lunch times that coincide with your prep period. I'd also like you to take a lead on reorganizing the teachers' cubbies in the copy room which have become tragically full of who knows what. Your supervising teacher said that you did an amazing job with her classroom library so I know you are an organizationally obsessed person like me. I will make you liaison to the technology support specialist for laptops and A/V equipment. Finally, I want to thank you in advance for your leadership. At R.U. Reddy Middle School we rely on our incredible family of teacher leaders to make everything work the way it does. By the way are you good with twitter, Facebook, blogging, Pinterest, and all that stuff?

JENN ZEDD

Well...yes, and actually Pinterest is just a...

## ROBERT ANDOVER

Perfect. And this is where your knowledge base is way beyond mine, I'll admit, even though I've got a scientific mind for sure. I might just switch you off the copy room job and onto social media for our school newsletter. We love it when our new teachers' skill sets can be used right away. Jenn, you've obviously had a fabulous educational experience at Millennial University and we welcome you to R. U. Reddy Middle School!

END

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The educational literature on teacher leadership, although not definitive, is fairly consistent with regard to the overall desirability of teacher leadership and the desire for teacher leaders. However, the critical characteristics of the conditions that would help teacher leaders flourish, as opposed to struggle, and the difference between real leadership and the completion of assigned tasks or responsibilities, has not been fully analyzed. In the vignette above, Jenn Zedd is offering the kind of organic, intuitive, generous leadership that she can bring to any school without knowing fully what the preexisting culture and conditions are. Andover, rather than recognizing this new teacher's initiative and being receptive to the possibilities and potentials, finds himself assigning duties and tasks. In this, he may be thinking that he is delegating leadership opportunities, but he is simply delegating or doling out some unclaimed chores like technology equipment monitor.

The highly participative teacher leader paradigm is so prevalent that most graduate level teacher preparation programs aim to prepare teacher leaders, as opposed to merely preparing "teachers." In fact, it is easy to find education programs that require that graduate cohorts explicitly study, research, and practice teacher leadership. This emphasis on preparing teacher leaders is timely for both the programs and the students who will gravitate toward them. Today's university students seem naturally attracted to programs that will help them successfully assume teacher leadership roles because they have been socialized to believe that everybody needs to lead and that every job will welcome this skill set. New teachers like Jenn Zedd need representations of the socio-emotional costs of leading in schools that bring the vulnerability, fragility, and, hopefully, the resiliency in teacher leadership to heightened prominence.

The teacher leader needs and deserves to understand how the dynamics of adult learning will play out between colleagues who hold diverse assumptive worldviews. The teacher leader needs to know how to contribute to

a culture of collective responsibility in the school given the demands of change management. The teacher leader, with the support and in collaboration with all of her superiors, needs to work in an environment of collegiality, trust, and respect that focuses on continuous improvement in instruction and student learning, without leaving their audiences of fellow staff and superiors in the dark.

There are obviously good reasons to inundate our schools with teachers who are self-reliant, forward thinking, and able to lead and manage changes for the betterment of student learning. Andy Hargreaves, the Chair of the Lynch School of Education at Boston College, has said that if educational improvement is going to last, it must depend on more than a few leaders. It must not depend solely on the passion and work of individual leaders but rather on powerful communities of teacher leaders that initiate and sustain change with, and alongside, administrators.

As you will discover in subsequent chapters, *the Drama in Teacher Leadership* learning approach provides fixed scripts that are ready to be directed and enacted. We are suggesting there is a need to fashion a creative and conversational space whereby assumptions can be challenged as individuals take on and play out roles different from the ones they enact on a daily basis. It is a communal text that makes possible a dynamic interaction between the participants who enact the dramas, which in turn leads to a deeply personal form of both individual meaning-making and collective learning. We hope that in studying these methods and experiencing the dramatized case studies the allure of teacher leadership will grow in proportion to the awareness of its pitfalls.

## The Lament

**Abstract** In *The Lament*, the micropolitical dynamics in schools and the potential socio-emotional costs of teacher leadership are explored. The authors consider how ethical decision-making and questions of justice and equity only intensify the challenges faced by emerging and practicing teacher leaders.

**Keywords** Micropolitics of schools • Micropolitical schools • Socio-emotional cost of leadership

Penelope Ito had moved from the front of the room and now stood by the chair Robert Andover was sitting in. “Mr. Andover?” Ito said with a tone of uncertainty, as she was not positive that “Dov” should be stressed, and not “And” instead. “I want to put you into the shoes of someone else. Do you think you can give that a go?”

“What?” asked Andover. He looked around the room to see if the other participants were looking at him being looked at by the facilitator. “I’m not sure I get what we are doing. Do we have to role-play a scene or not? I have to tell you straight up, I hate role-playing. I don’t find I get anything from doing it except maybe a slight feeling of nausea.”

“As I explained this morning, it’s not a role-play,” Ito said and smiled. “But you are going to have to act.”

“Really?” asked Andover. “I have to act?”

Even Andover himself thought that his resistance was pretty pathetic at this point because he suddenly did not mind the prospect of rehearsing something with Ito. It actually kind of intrigued him. He kind of felt bad he was possibly annoying her with a kind of adolescent bravado when she had actually explained things pretty well.

“Well, there is a lot of talk about the importance of developing empathy,” Ito said as she scanned a section of the room he was not sitting in, rotating her watch once around her wrist for no apparent reason.

“At least, I guess I should say there is a lot written in the educational literature about it, but very little is done to actually help teachers and principals develop a felt sense of what it is actually like to live inside the skin of someone else. You know, what does the world look like, sound like, and feel like from someone else’s perspective?”

She was now speaking directly to Robert Andover. “What happens to the world, Mr. Andover, at least as you would perceive it, when you take on the speech, breathing patterns, gestures, the whole spine in a way, of someone else? Not just think about how it might feel but actually feel how it might be to be another person?”

“I’m going to admit that I took Drama in Middle School and didn’t really like it,” Andover replied, trying out a warmer tone. “To be honest I hated it because all we did was stand around and memorize lines. We had to listen to a teacher, I can’t remember her name, tell us ‘there are no small parts, only small actors.’ I wasn’t very good at it and was always chosen to be something like a talking shrub,” Andover said, forcing a little bit of self-conscious laughter. “I used to goof off with my friend Jaimie and we would always get in trouble. Plus I was a late bloomer. You know, I didn’t hit my growing spurt until grade eleven.”

One workshop participant across the horseshoe formation of writing tables gave out a laugh. “Maybe he didn’t hit his growing spurt until grade eleven either,” thought Ito.

“I promise not to cast you as vegetation,” Ito said.

“My co-facilitator, Dr. Meere, who will be here this afternoon, and I developed this workshop approach,” Ito spoke so that everyone assembled could hear, “to try to give all of you the opportunity to experience some of what might be gained by fusing adult learning principles and theatrical methods.” Ito didn’t feel like she had answered Andover question so looked toward him and added, “It isn’t role-play, like you might have done before....trust me.”



“Is it like learning how to act for the theatre, like putting on a Broadway play or something?” asked Andover.

“Do you dance, Mr. Andover?” Ito asked.

“Dance?” replied Robert Andover.

“Yes, have you ever learned how to dance?”

“I’m kind of self-taught. I’m not too shabby if I say so myself,” replied Andover, moving around. “Is that what you mean? I’m sorry.”

Ito smiled. “Not really. Do me a favor, all of you, and close your eyes for a minute and imagine. Imagine an older couple, who might look a little feeble just sitting there in two chairs at some sort of party or reception or whatever. One of them asks the other to dance and upon accepting the offer they simply step into each other’s arms and just seem to open themselves to the music and begin moving around the dance floor with ease and grace. It is not possible, for the next few minutes, for either of them to carry their worries, issues, and even life’s aches and pains around. They let go of their anxieties or inadequacies of not being perfect. They just dance because this couple has been taught how to dance and found a rhythm that worked for them, probably long ago.”

“Are we learning how to dance?” asked Andover slightly more confused than before.

“Open your eyes, everyone. No, we aren’t going to learn how to dance,” Ito replied as she moved away from where Andover was seated. “It was just meant as an illustrative metaphor.”

“It’s not about training you to do something virtuosic in performance,” Ito added, “The intent is not to put on a production for anyone but those present and involved in the play itself. There are no spectators in the *DiTL* dramatizations. Everyone takes part and it is assumed that no one has formal training in the theatre or will turn any portion of the performance into a professional audition for a Broadway show.”

Andover countered, “So we just get to kind of fumble around and make believe we are someone else acting some strange way in a school setting?”

Ito responded. “Well, actually, no. It’s not about make believe in the way I assume you are using the term. To be honest, too often theatre is seen as something that is meant for the elite and in some people’s minds it becomes inaccessible because it is regarded as being outside the lives of ordinary people. It is seen as staged and perfect. Phony. Rather what we are doing is developing within you an awareness of how to act with just enough ease and confidence so that you are able to experience the journey of a performer like the elderly couple on the dance floor.

I want you to be able to let go and trust that the rest of your group and the text itself will carry you through, like music did for those dancers. Then, as each dilemma of each play becomes clear to the group, the most timeless ethical question can emerge, a question that haunts both theatre artist and citizen and helps develop our moral imagination, that is, we can ask ourselves: how shall I act? Your response to that question is found in the doing of the thing. It's in the playing. This kind of scripted, structured play can feel as natural as a conversation, or as easy as an old dance."

She looked back toward Andover. "We need space and time to not only tell our stories but enact them so that we—and others—can learn from lived experiences even if they are not our own."

"Everyone ready?" Ito asked.

## THE HIGH STAKES

Roland Barth, the founder of "The Principal's Center" at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, suggested that it should not be hard to conclude that right now—whatever day you are reading these words—is a promising time to consider the potential impact of developing leadership capacity in your school. Other scholars such as Anne Lieberman, a respected professor emeritus and senior scholar, have argued that the time for pressing ahead with developing teacher leadership capacity has never been more important than it is now. Given the abundance of support for teacher leadership in theory and in the literature, one can easily be led to picture great numbers of teachers assuming, sticking to, and succeeding with school-wide leadership opportunities.

While the effort to create a cadre of leaders within the teaching ranks is rhetorically supported by nearly everybody in the educational community writ-large, it is, in reality, supported by far fewer in the ways that schools are organized and operated. Roland Barth noted that something deep and powerful within school cultures seems to work against teacher leadership. In Chapter 2 we explored how people with different assumptive worldviews can perhaps agree on the importance of teacher leadership, while holding fundamentally different views on what is meant by the term "teacher leadership." Differing frames of reference are not the only dynamic present in the organization of a school. Just when a teacher might wish for and expect tolerance for change to be maximized, they may find it strangely minimized or non-existent.

The lament of teacher leadership is that it is not as easily enacted as one would think. Any stakeholder might choose to support or impede the success of any teacher leader. The principal of a school is one of those key relationships for any teacher leader. Principals and others in positions of power or vying for power may also be threatened by the initiative shown by well-intended teacher leaders. We like to refer to the micropolitics of schools because it reminds us that even though education is such a morally positivistic venture, school functioning is sometimes at the mercy of the small-scale political power plays happening between the adults at schools. We focus on social justice in this section as an arena that is particularly fraught with discord, surprisingly perhaps, in academic institutions. Teacher leaders working for justice have many extra hurdles and should know what those are. The stakes are higher than graduate programs are letting on. While navigating micropolitics and confronting players in positions of power with unknown levels of tolerance for real teacher leadership, tomorrow's teacher leaders should not have to lament that they did exactly what their good training is preparing them to do.

### ENTER THE PRINCIPAL

On the dramatic stage of every school, from rural to urban, from small to populous, from desperate to well-heeled, there is one leading role that, depending on how it is cast, has the potential to be either one of the greatest supports or one of the most limiting factors to great teacher leadership being enacted. In order to understand this better, let's take a brief look at the nature of the principalship in relation to teacher leadership.

When Roland Barth describes the looming barriers that impede teacher leadership he uses images of mysterious phenomena, such as a volcano or a sea serpent, or a villain hiding in the wings who is ready to undermine a valiant but vulnerable character. But perhaps, at times, the powerful and mysterious phenomena is just a person, a good person for the most part, a person who is omnipresent and whose job it is to be concerned with just about everything. Though we might know facilities workers, administrative staff, and fill-in teachers who fit this bill, here we are indeed speaking of the principal.

Let's take a quick tour of the tensions inherent in today's principalships. At precisely the same time that principals are being persistently bombarded with the rhetoric that there is a need for increased accountability lest the school face the possibility of being declared a "failing school" and be hit

with stringent sanctions for being negligent in meeting the accountability standards, they are also being encouraged to loosen their authority as the formal school leader. And this creates an incredible tension for anyone in that role. Imagine a principal distributing leadership capacity to a teacher leader and then having some project fall apart or utterly fail. The person who gets the call from the district office is bound to be the principal herself, not the teacher leader. Will the principal throw her weight behind supporting that teacher's learning curve? Will the principal face career consequences? Will she be reluctant when the next Jenn Zedd arrives, fresh and full of teacher leadership ideas, to say yes to any of them?

Principals influence how teachers act in schools, and they influence the way the characters in our one-act plays behave, think, and feel. Teachers have limited voice in workplace issues such as the choice of curriculum material, the types of high-stakes tests used to evaluate instruction, the scheduling of classes, and the allocation of instructional resources. As an outcome of the prevailing discourse of individual autonomy within classroom practices, teachers have not exerted much control over their profession collectively. Principals, thus, always figure prominently in the plot of our plays, even when their part is not specifically written into the play because the principalship, or rather the concept of a singular, powerful leader, is hard to shake.

### THREATENED BY THE UNDERSTUDY?

We have established that many new teachers graduate believing that their pre-service credentialing programs have prepared them to be leaders—teacher leaders. They arrive at the schools truly believing that they are welcome agents of change. But within a few months, if not weeks, many encounter more experienced teachers, the veterans, who have become disillusioned by the lack of progress they may have made in attempting to take collective responsibility for their profession. These veteran teachers have given up on new ideas. In some cases these prospective leaders encounter principals who are simply overwhelmed by the idea that they are legally and formally responsible for everything that transpires at the school. Handling burnt-out fellow teachers or navigating forward when the principal will not concede any responsibility or control is extremely difficult.

Fear is a powerful inhibiting force that hinders progress. And while it might seem hard for people in more vulnerable ranks to imagine, principals can feel fearful and threatened. We have suggested that principals can be reticent about taking the responsibility for what might turn out to

be failed efforts in teacher leadership. But perhaps those teacher leaders who are given permission to proceed and then achieve resounding success are even more threatening! What if a teacher leader is doing so well they make it impossible for a principal to take any credit for this teacher-driven success? Principals, like all other human beings, may suffer from self-doubt or lack of self-worth; they may fear that they will become obsolete as a result of teachers taking on new leadership roles. In such a context, teacher leadership cannot succeed.

It seems to pass without saying that a hallmark of leadership is the ability of leaders to collaborate with others. Teacher leaders are no different insofar as they must enlist colleagues to develop and support a new facet of the vision of a better-functioning school. To this end, they work to build consensus among a diverse group of colleagues who then, in turn, try to persuade others of the importance of what they are proposing. In doing this, communications begin that connect the success of the leadership initiative with the necessary commitment of time, effort, and energy on the part of everyone involved. The principal hears that four teachers are meeting for 12 hours this week to kick-off the new teacher-driven initiative, but these same teachers may not have taken the principal up on some other idea, like her long-term dream of a weekly staff book group, and the trouble, fueled by envy and self-doubt of the person in the position of actual power, begins.

A successful teacher leader is gaining respect and trust, commitments from colleagues, student interest, and maybe even community connections. In doing their job well, teacher leaders can be selfless and focused on the project's success, and they can easily offend a principal who wishes to, at once, know everything that is going on yet not be bothered with everything that is going on. It is a self-confident, perceptive leader who can say to a successful teacher leader, "Wow, your vision was spot on and I'm so glad the initiative you are leading is gaining traction. You are making an incredible contribution to the school. Thanks for keeping me in the loop and good work."

## THE MICROPOLITICS OF SCHOOLS

Let's face it: most people would agree with the statement that principals are, generally speaking, good people. But principals are still human beings, even if from time to time their decisions lead people to question that fact. While we are not proposing that principals resemble Dagny Taggart,

the self-absorbed protagonist in Ayn Rand's novel *Atlas Shrugged*, sometimes concern with one's own progress and promotion does seem to cloud the way for those in positions of power who seem to be vying for ever more power. Rand uses character and setting to depict an organization that exists in a context of growing chaos. She champions the notion that human nature is fundamentally selfish and that each man "exists for his own sake, and the achievement of his own happiness is his highest moral purpose." Dangerous if true, this extreme absorption with self bears little resemblance to most school settings and staffs, but there are certainly situations where either gracious interplay or civil collegiality seems to have fallen by the wayside.

Principals are not the only characters who act in schools and not the only political players in a school environment. They are surrounded by an array of diverse stakeholders who all have some level of power, authority, status, and collective clout that makes the principalship seem almost insignificant at times. Each site is unique and has its own micropolitical landscape.

Sometimes it is easier for everyone to just follow a strong, charismatic leader and not deal with the inherent complexities that distributed leadership models call for. Ayn Rand's Dagny Taggart knows what she wants, how she wants it, and most importantly, what she's willing to do to get it—she is a leader and plans to lead. This could be a good thing if the person in the position of Dagny Taggart is concerned with the common good and if her plans will help all stakeholders in a school flourish. Strong-minded leaders can be fabulous. Rand characters are not always so generous.

There is, however, a social taboo that exists in the teaching profession that works against those pesky, strong-minded characters in schools when they come from the teaching ranks, even if they are clearly focused on the community, on service, and on excellence. Teaching is a highly normative profession that operates with an unwritten but well-understood axiom that we could put this way: Thou shalt not elevate thyself above thine professional colleagues, lest thou suffer the wrath of the masses (and maybe a plague of locusts too). Many teachers who have taken on informal leadership roles in schools suffer the repercussions of transgressing this fundamental rule. Simply put, schools, like all social organizations, are highly micropolitical. The social and emotional costs of leading—or what Maxine Greene, American educational philosopher, author, social activist, and teacher, once described as "teaching against the grain"—in such normalized institutions as schools should not be underestimated.

Joseph Blase, professor of educational administration at the University of Georgia, suggested that micropolitics is about power and our tendency to use our influence to preserve our position and place. It can imply a conflictual stance as people compete with each other to get what they want. But it also relates to positives such as cooperation around a common good and the way that people build support among their colleagues to achieve their ends. Blase notes that people in all social settings privately entertain thoughts and have strong feelings about many things that are not easily spoken about or not easily witnessed by others. The imagined reality and the invisible action. The divisive or the inclusive intention. These intangibles, especially when they are felt to be causing any harm, are referred to as the micropolitics in a school. We agree with Blase's assertion that deepening our understandings of the often-overlooked micropolitical dimensions of schools in a context of enacting leadership is important, and see little space for dialogue around such phenomena.

Ethnotheatre is a form of performative arts-based representation that allows the human condition, in the form of scripted narratives, to be portrayed symbolically and aesthetically to facilitate spectator engagement, involvement, and reflection. One of the strengths of this process is that it allows witnesses to engage with the micropolitical reality of schools. It was Nicholas Ridout, a professor of theatre in the Department of Drama at the University of London, who in *Theatre & Ethics* theorized that theatre and ethical decision-making both require that we find a solution to one fundamental, shared question, namely: *how shall I act?* To Ridout, theatre is a precise practice through which we can experiment flexibly with potential courses of action.

### ENTER ISSUES OF JUSTICE

In actively working for positive change, teacher leaders can “justify,” that is, they can tackle inequities and the existing barriers to student success. They can make things better and they can make things right by leading learning for others, challenging their colleagues' ideas about teaching and learning, and taking responsibility for the success of every child in the school. Teacher leaders may champion causes having to do with equity or justice because they have made keen observations about exclusion, access, prejudice, assumptions, or other potential causes of inequity. Others around them may not even perceive the problem they are attempting to address, or might like the status quo because it works for them or benefits them. Therefore, teacher leadership that has as a goal to create more just

school communities often has the potential to alienate some of the people you would wish to engage: those already holding power.

Teacher leaders face varying degrees of support and resistance depending on their particular cause or project. For example, it is possible that some teacher leaders are able to find common ground even with colleagues and administrators holding conflicting assumptive worldviews. These teacher leaders may successfully avoid burnout, gain the support of the principal, and navigate any micropolitics with aplomb. To some degree, the amount of support or resistance offered to teacher leaders can ultimately reflect the degree of fear associated with the particular change the teacher leader is trying to effect.

However, teacher leaders who experience great success at interpersonal communication, follow policy, enact new, research-based instructional strategies, or do any of the other myriad activities of today's multi-faceted teacher leaders, often face a daunting reality that is rarely spelled out in the positivistic literature on teacher leadership—there often is a personal price paid for enacting change, particularly when it involves acting on behalf of the concept of justice. No matter how rational and effective the change might be, when it comes to fashioning a more just school, things get even trickier. Teacher leaders can face being ostracized or having their ideas relegated to the margins precisely because they are focused on justice issues. Other school leaders might think they are already a fair and equitable bunch. What happens when a teacher leader points out that there may be room for improvement in the ethical practices, the cultural sensitivity, or adaptive learning support, any of which might lead to greater justice? How can this not be perceived on some level as a critique of his colleagues? With competing ethical frameworks and differing ideas of the ultimate “good,” the teacher leader’s work on behalf of justice may simply not align with the principal’s or any other stakeholder. If a climate of complacency is the norm, or if others do not even perceive that anything needs improving, we are back to playing to a tough house. But that is why careful persistence must go hand in hand with working for justice, in any context.

### “THINKING ABOUT” VERSUS “ENACTING” TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Most people can admit, if they are honest with themselves, that it is much more difficult to actually do something than it is to merely think about doing that same thing. I think....I am going to eat better....I am going to



exercise more...I am going to get more sleep: I think, I think, I think. It should not be surprising to learn that thinking about something does not always coincide with the motivation to act on that very idea.

Psychologists suggest that we have two complementary motivation systems at work internally: a “thinking” system and a “doing” system. And, generally speaking, we are only capable of using one of these systems at a time. Oftentimes we think and then act. But sometimes, we act and then think. Neither approach is foolproof.

If thinking, however, is meant to be bound up with action—I think and then do—then figuratively and literally getting a grasp of: “how will this work in reality?” requires us to act on our thoughts. How many people think: “Well, this is what I would have done if I were in *that* situation.” It is easy to think we would act differently if we were in someone else’s shoes. It is really easy to think about anything when we are sitting at a desk, thumbing through visuals on our laptop, sipping a coffee, and owning the right to say or do nothing while an instructor asks us to think about a case study on the ethics of teacher leadership. This kind of thinking, unbound from context, situation, and action, is at best only a preliminary step toward understanding, and at it’s worst, wholly insufficient for investigating the high-stakes nature of teacher leadership in our micropolitical schools.

Our specific use of ethnodramas, or scripts drawn from non-fictitious concepts in school leadership, and ethnotheatre, the analytical processes used to prepare for and express non-fictitious ideas in performance, creates a suitable physical and psychological climate for adult learners to “enact” teacher leadership. This climate emerges from the deep preparation of the facilitators and the generosity and life experiences of the participants. “Enacting” will not be successful until the norms of mutual respect, trust, collaboration, and an openness to alternate and, at times, divergent points of view is established.

Enacting a character will take more than psychological and intellectual willingness and openness, however. In Chapter 4, Embodied Experience, the embodied component of learning in leadership is discussed. Ethnotheatre truly engages all learning domains; it fuses intellectual and socio-emotional understandings with psychomotor or kinesthetic learning modalities. Before we dive in to the critical content and creative process of working with scripts found in Chapters 5 and 6, we need to examine how social, professional and self-imposed barriers have served to devalue and impede our access to embodied learning and knowing.

## Embodied Experience

**Abstract** *Embodied Experience* serves as a primer on embodied knowing, since embodiment is an epistemological stance in ethnotheatre and since participants in these methods will be moving while enacting a role. The authors suggest a thoughtful, expansive approach to the creative, kinesthetic use of the body in professional development contexts for educators, while discussing how social norms diminish the potential of such holistic learning experiences.

**Keywords** Embodiment • Embodied learning • Kinesthetic learning

“Ladies and gentlemen,” Ito announced, “whether you believe it or not our emotions cannot be stirred directly, on command. That is, you cannot simply try to be angry or feel love and produce a believable performance. Empathy is not something to be thought about as if it exists somewhere out there.” She floated her hand around in the space for a moment. Just as she did this her co-facilitator, Ross Meere, slipped into the back of the room with his finger held in line with his nose and mouth.

“But rather, to be expressed with any authenticity, it has to be felt, in here,” and with that she pointed at her heart. “Moreover, feelings are not fixed, or sedentary. They shift, grow, transform as we move through a situation with our entire self, participating in order to feel, in order to think. It is said that the body experiences and even knows *first*. A school leader who says they empathize with their staff but who feels nothing of what the

staff feels cannot claim to be practicing authentic leadership. And a school leader who cannot tell the difference between someone who is emotionally suffering or in some desolate condition and one who is flourishing and genuinely engaged is probably not relying on the greatest tool at our disposal for understanding the desires, objectives, hopes, and fears of others, that is, perception. Gathering sensory data through face-to-face human interaction remains the supreme method of communication. If this were not true, all conferences would be online, airline travel would all but cease, and people could be divided from the ones they love with no problem, as long as they had Internet service.”

Ito strode across the slightly elevated platform at the front of the conference room and wheeled dramatically to face the group. “Constantin Stanislavski, the Russian stage actor and theatre director, in his book, *The Professional Training of an Actor*, said the elements of the human soul and the particles of a human body are indivisible.” She paused to let that land.

“Whether you ascribe to Stanislavski’s theory of the soul or not, what he was articulating for those in the theatre was that the intangible realities of human life, in the form of our moods, desires, feelings, intentions, and ambitions, can be expressed through physical actions which we can interpret in the same way we interpret anything we read. Astute actors and directors come to discover, through the rigors of script and character analysis, what motivates a person’s speech and actions, and they learn to make specific physical choices about a character’s gestures and movements that reveal and align with the character’s motivation. This helps them to become a sort of *embodied text* that the audience can decode or comprehend. It also helps the actors to feel *as if* they are the characters, temporarily.”

“To make this very complex idea less complicated,” Ito added, “the reality is that there is an inseparability of the inner and outer bodily being, and the critical nature of that relationship allows for what we call *authentic enactment* in the theatre. And more importantly, anyone can learn to create an authentic enactment of a different person if they come to understand a great deal about that person. Sometimes we begin this process by analyzing and getting a feel for speech patterns and physical actions and everyday gestures that might best express those inner varieties of experience and make them more palpable.”

Ito loved the next part of her script. The part where she asks someone to say how he or she feels and then asks the participant to use his or her body to show that feeling. It is always so powerful to see a person express a feeling by moving their whole body.

“Mr. Andover,” Ito asked, “would you mind standing up, please?”

Robert Andover slid his chair backwards with a little effort over the carpeted floor of the conference room and was thankful for the chance to stand up since he could feel his rear end falling asleep with all the sitting still.

“Mr. Andover, can you tell me about joy? I mean, can you describe the joy you felt, for example, when you found something you lost, or when you watched a beautiful sunset, or when you first held the hand of someone you loved?”

Robert Andover looked down and thought. “It’s like great. It feels nice. It makes me happy.”

“Thanks, Mr. Andover,” Ito said. “If you don’t mind me asking, how did saying those words make you feel?”

Andover thought for a moment. “Great, I guess. I felt good, you know, happy.”

“Can I ask you one more thing?” For some reason, Ito suddenly wondered if she should have called on someone else.

“Yeah, okay, I guess.” Andover was starting to feel like he was on display.

“Can you show me what joy looks like? What it really does to your physical self when you are experiencing it? I mean, can you recall that feeling, imagine the situation, and create a moving shape with your body that demonstrates joy?”

Andover initially struck a non-committal pose with his hands held high above his head and a pasted-on smile. The way he did it read something like “this lady is a little different than us but I’ll be a good egg to entertain the group, humor her, act kind of cool, somehow, etc.”

“Oh yeah, you said a moving shape right?” Andover jumped up and down three times with a ridiculously non-committal expression. The keys and the other things he had rattling around in his pocket gave his landing some percussive flair.

The workshop participants let out a laugh. Andover suddenly felt angry at himself.

“Thank you, Mr. Andover,” Ito said, regretting she had called on him.

Ito walked slowly to the front of the conference room contemplating just how serious the study of acting really was, how hard it was to really get it right, and questioned for a moment whether she would really be able to get all of the participants to enter a state of mental and physical readiness that would allow them to authentically embody the characters

in the scripts she was about to hand out. She realized also that she was completely wrong about the last moment of her facilitation. She turned to face the participants. “So what does convincingly acting out a part really hinge upon? It’s about total focus. And total focus needs to be given a chance to flourish and needs to be learned through some system. Acting is about using your own self, your own body and working from what’s inside you to feel the emotions that accompany different ways of being. Acting is about trying to get to a state of being that conveys the human condition to others. It can’t be done when we are concerned with what others might think or our own need to look cool. It is not fair for Mr. Andover or anyone to be put on the spot and be asked to suddenly produce an emotional state with no warm-ups or focusing work with the group. So thank you, Mr. Andover, for putting up with my rather ridiculous request. It won’t happen again, I assure you.”

Ito regretted that her co-facilitator, Ross Meere, had not been more delayed in travel than he already was, because by slipping in during the morning segment, and trying not to interrupt it, he had obviously witnessed how she conducted their joint presentation. She felt less secure than usual about whether she had helped her very well-educated participants understand how everything in acting and in leadership, whether a thought or a gesture or an action, was potentially expressive, performative, and significant. That it was all connected. “I should have said that before break,” she thought as she circled her watch on her wrist and made her way toward him.

### ANYBODY READY?

While much time has passed since sixteenth-century French philosopher and mathematician Rene Descartes proposed the idea of the duality and separation of the mind and body, and while Stanislavski and others have certainly worked toward a more integrative theory, the concept of this duality or separation remains a well-established belief. And for some problems of philosophy or abstract mathematics, perhaps it is fair to say that embodied learning is not always the gateway to knowledge. But in the field of education, one might expect to find more integrated approaches, considering the entire being of a student, not just a disembodied mind, is with a teacher for the majority of the day. Yet most teachers are taught to teach as if there is a complete separation between the mind—the seat of intelligence—and the body—the physical body that experiences most of

school from a seat at a desk. They become teachers who believe that while the body senses, only the mind knows and they give up on the body. The strange idea that a managed classroom would contain long periods of alert stillness in the bodies of children belies this assumption that we cannot think while moving. In fact it is quite the opposite for developing minds.

According to movement analyst, notator, and theorist Rudolf Laban, our own movements and those we perceive around us are *basic experiences*. Ignoring the body means diminishing the potential for basic experiences to teach us something. Movement gives us access to experiences and movement *is* essentially experience. We stated earlier that we need to discover and recreate the basic movement experiences of another person's life or we are missing a huge part of the dynamism of their character. The audience needs that dynamic presence, that basic experience of the character as it is lived in the body, in order to understand the fuller meaning of what is happening and also to care about the story.

We think ethical leadership in schools involves such fine-tuned empathy and that the real empathetic response involves our whole being. Laban notes our long history, though, of thinking of the movement of the body as somehow suspect with regard to *real thinking*. He clarified that most people pay attention to movement, but not always because they admire it. Though some people's inherent trust of movement and kinesthetic sense compels them to appreciate and feel a kindred sense of motion when another person is dancing, running, or enacting anything interesting to watch, others pay attention to movement only because of a "pronounced distrust and aversion" to it. It is thought that, somehow, real thinking is supposed to happen just with our brains and since our brains are in our heads, decision-making, analysis, reflection, all of these processes must not really *need* the body at all. We are taught to ignore our bodies in order to think rationally and so we lose trust in movement as a basic experience and cannot, as Andover was asked to do, just produce embodied happiness on command.

Yet in a way we should all be experts in bodily knowing because we move every moment of the day. We are in constant flux on a cellular level and the automatic systems of the body carry on with all kinds of motions that make life alive. No matter what our capacities or limitations are, we have an experience of movement within us. We also have millions of mirror neurons firing every second allowing us to connect on a kinesthetic level with others when we sense movement around us; in perceiving the body language of friends or strangers, the process of reading others and

decoding non-verbal language is continual. We are even able to learn by what dancers often refer to as *osmosis*, the descriptor for the phenomena of being able to pick up movement because someone else is moving a certain way. This imitative process can allow people to grow into doing complex physical things in the absence of any verbal referents. So, though some may like to think there is no bodily dimension to thinking and feeling, the fact is that all experiences come to us through the senses, and the body is the conduit and the expressive instrument of all that we sense and perceive.

The physical dimension of learning deserves more attention than we give it in most learning settings. The body, like a school, is a whole, connected system. A giant ship needs its entire crew to relate information and navigate individual functions to make the whole system go. A school acts on this principle of distributed cognition. So too does the bodily experience of leadership relay information constantly that will produce our actions. Sensory information informs feelings that produce thought that precedes action. To concentrate just on the destination, the goal or just on the cargo, or contents of the vessel, such as our knowledge generated from thinking alone, is to ignore the fact that the state of readiness of the ship itself will determine whether any of that learning can set sail.

### OBSERVATIONS OR OBSTRUCTED VIEWS

Dancers understand that the physical instrument of the body needs to be *tuned* in order to be perceptive, receptive, and communicative in a performance. Inner and outer realms need to merge in order to execute the most complex movements, and these movements are learned in a holistic fashion, quite often without words of explanation. In some of his seminal work on behavioral theory, Albert Bandura, the David Starr Jordan Professor Emeritus of Social Science in Psychology at Stanford University, observed that most human behavior is learned observationally; others model it for us. It is through observing others that an observer forms an idea of how new behavior can be performed. This learning, in the form of “coded information” of language, gestures, proximity, and vocal and facial expressions serves as a guide for future action. Dancers are indeed taught to perceive movement and become expert at it. Though most people can move around to music, this fine-tuned perception of movement may be the difference between a dancer and a non-dancer. Like any skill, it is possible to learn more about it with practice.

Though most of us are not preparing for careers as professional dancers, we all have within us the potential to learn in a kinesthetic way, through imitation, with the help of the neural connections that mirror the models around us. We can learn to remember the movement qualities of someone who is not even present if we have previously perceived them, listened to them, and really noticed them. How many of us in education *adopt* some of the habits, figures of speech, and ways of interacting that we observed in our best teachers when we move into the professional life? Are we even mentally aware of this? Or does our body just know?

What if we were not able to observe precedents in behavior? What if we did not have this capacity to learn how social interactions function simply through noticing them? What if every new situation we encountered left us floundering as if we were constantly the first to experience everything? We would all prefer to avoid the mistakes and mishaps that come from having no idea of how to behave in new situations. We mentioned that we are constantly observing each other and perpetually reading non-verbal and verbal cues. It is important to note that this is happening whether or not we are conscious of these processes. The problem with being unconscious of these processes is that we easily discard information that would be helpful. We saw earlier that our assumptive worldviews can cause us to miss important details we are just not attuned to. A critical awareness of bodily sense, that is, the lived experience integrated with the work of the mind, gives us a great advantage in our learning process. Embodied dramatizations can help us bridge the gap between abstract knowledge, which is generally thought of as safe to acquire, and the life experiences that we wish we could have observed before we encountered them in the workplace. It is not always safe to learn through trial and error in real time with real colleagues and real bosses!

### EMBODIED KNOWING: A KIND OF LITERACY

Since these cues are ever-present, the effective leader deserves some practice in reading and understanding the physical codes that communicate more powerfully than words. Why is it that some people are never flustered by others' behavior? Ask a person who seems to have a good handle on human nature what they notice about the physical cues a person gives and they will likely share clues that reveal how perceptive they are of the embodied dimension of communication. They are not just relying on the information presented by the words that are spoken or written. They are



taking in the person's movements, posture, expressions, and gestures, and integrating this with what they know and are hearing. Deep listening and careful observation are invaluable skills and cannot be gained without some practice in attentive listening, where we have the self-control to withhold our own performances. We need to step back at times in order to carefully observe, in order to carefully listen. Reading others involves a kind of literacy around embodied knowing.

People who speak all the time (we may be one of those or know one) sometimes fail to pick up on visual and kinesthetic clues. That is why people who speak all the time cannot read your body language when, for example, you are in a hurry. Your body language might be clearly saying: "My arms are holding a chaotic assortment of notebooks and papers, my keys, cell phone and coffee mug could slip at any moment, my worried expression while I jam my door open with my shoe which is slipping every few seconds is indicative that I am preoccupied, and to anyone taking the time to perceive this, it is obvious I am either late or in a hurry. I really did not have time for an impromptu 30-minute meeting to talk about the color of post-its we should give out to freshmen." Perhaps the inability to read body language should be seen as a crime, a petty one, but a crime nonetheless.

Can movement lie? Famous modern dance choreographer Martha Graham said no, when she referred to unchecked or pure movement. Pure movement resembles childlike responsiveness, or it looks like an adult who is not thinking about how she is being perceived as she dances. Graham was referring to pure movement, pure expression, or natural movements that are not meant to manipulate or hide something else. The fact is everyday movement is used all the time to lie, to belie something we are not really feeling. For instance, we may smile and try to look happy in a meeting in which we are not really feeling happy at all. We may try to put on a kind of an act during an interview for a job we are not sure if we are qualified for. We can sustain the lie for a short period of time but Rudolf Laban showed that after about 40 minutes into any act, our real bodily movement/gesture patterns betray us. Therefore, all in-person interviews need to be longer than 40 minutes if we truly want to see the real person behind the resume and behind any false front of practiced gestures. The notion that movement may not always be trusted is important to keep in mind, but we are focused here on the particular instances when embodied knowing can be used to access truths.

Notwithstanding the fact that sometimes we try to hide what we are really feeling, generally we can all tune in to visual cues to better understand the fuller picture in a conversation. In fact, researchers in body politics have isolated the most common gestures people use regularly when lying, like the unnecessary nose wipe with one curved index finger. Drama takes advantage of the fact that visual cues found in our movements and our postures convey our inner state. Creating a believable character on stage requires that we create movement and gestures that convey the actual interior life of a person. We literally replicate what would be the unconscious gestures of a person other than ourselves. This happens in character and script analysis and character-building phases. This process takes professional actors weeks and weeks in rehearsal to complete. But there is a swift and intuitive version that can be employed in a workshop context when the motivation of the character is understood. Embodying a character adds so much more visual information to an observer, and in the methods used in the *Drama in Teacher Leadership, DiTL*, time to create a character, or a simple sketch of a character even, is a key part of the workshop process.

Why a whole chapter on embodiment? Why not just give a little nod to the fact that we must get up out of our chairs and do something if we are going to dramatize something convincingly? Perhaps some readers would prefer to bypass this subject, even preferring to think of educational training as already holistic enough. After all, as we progress through our education in teacher preparation we come to understand the intertwined processes of cognition, psychology, and socio-emotional learning and all of their related sub-fields—those dimensions seem encompassing enough for understanding human nature. Can't we just take the *embodiment bypass route* and get by on our current understandings of leadership? We have illustrated how teacher leaders often find more obstacles than they had expected when on the job. Since most interpersonal failures are on some level failures of communication, and since it is said that 90% of communication is non-verbal, the notion that embodied learning could help clue us in better interpersonally while we do the hard work of shaping better schools is appealing. Leadership itself is an embodied act. Neglecting this domain of knowledge generation, creation, and reception may be a real disservice to future leaders in schools. But how much work is needed to really retrain ourselves to be fully present to learning and leading, not just thinking of it as an act that happens from the neck up?

For theatrical work of any kind it makes sense to spend time training the body, as it is the instrument that conveys meaning. Bodily intelligence, sometimes referred to as bodily knowing, will infuse our imitations of others with relevancy and poignancy. Though it is clearly relevant in the context of performances such as enacting scripted stories, the acknowledgement of the embodied dimension of learning has profound implications for the teaching-learning continuum. It is a kind of literacy, which means it is a kind of knowing.

### EVERYBODY IN SCHOOL

Let's consider embodiment as a school-wide success issue. Year after year students drop out of school because of disengagement. Classrooms become hard or impossible to manage because the bodies of the students are showing they do not really want to be there, in that space. But these signals are not necessarily being formally read as information, just a behavior problem. Listless, distracted, or inappropriately focused students give signals that they feel disconnected from the subject matter presented in schools. Yes, year after year we see research that suggests that sedentary learning with no personal investment or discovery is not going to benefit most learners. But schooling tends to continue to operate on the "embodiment bypass" route, even as educators proclaim that we are in an era of twenty-first century holistic learning. Educators who are unwilling to consider what it means to learn via the body along with all other dimensions of the self are probably not going to take steps to question the sedentary paradigm and move whole person learning forward in a deep way.

Walk into most schools and you will see students still sitting awkwardly in desks for long periods of time for far too many hours each day. They squint at interactive whiteboards as teachers deliver lessons meant to entice their brains but ignore the rest of their bodies. It is not the teachers' fault that they ignore the body. It is part of how they have been prepared to teach—it is professional to not notice or, put differently, to ignore students' bodies. Obviously, dwelling on someone's physical appearance is not appropriate. But there is a respectful way to notice the physical states of your students.

An equestrian teacher understands that the body betrays the mind and the mind can betray the body. He or she will watch you sit on a horse and be able to analyze exactly what you are thinking and feeling based on your

posture. They must look at the position of your body because it affects the communication between you and your horse. They are not prying into your personal space or being offensive. They are not commenting on your physical looks, but talking about movement as a basic experience. The proof that the body-and-mind connection contributes to basic experience is that a giant animal will turn left or right in response to where you look because there is an imperceptible shift in one's weight when you begin thinking about something else, like not running into a fence.

We need to move beyond this archaic belief that we are being professional by ignoring bodily knowing and give ourselves permission to respectfully read the signals, expressions, frustrations, and hopes revealed by the body language of our students and colleagues. We need to move to a more fluid understanding of how the body and mind are interconnected. Minds, concludes Andy Clark in *Being There: Putting Mind, World, and Body Back Together*, are not for thinking, as we have been led to believe. They are, rather, for acting and acting in real time. Distributed, embodied cognition requires a felt understanding and recalls the natural way we learned as children. The concepts we created in our minds stemmed from our actions and interactions with others and the physical surroundings we were experiencing for the first time. Knowing was borne from doing and knowing how to do something well came from experiencing the successes and failures of our actions.

### JOURNEYS KICK-STARTED BY EMBODIMENT

Perhaps we too easily distance ourselves from the fact that our lived experience pulses in every cell of our being, from the ground up, beginning with our feet and is felt in all of our muscles, joints, nerves, fascia, and organs. In fact, when we presume to *tackle a new subject* or *delve into a new article* or try a new *hands-on technology* we are always using metaphors that denote a physical approach to learning. We begin, in fact, every learning process with an embodied or somewhat concrete orientation to what is new. Gradually our mental processes can be developed so that our imagination can recall the initial physical experience long after it is done. Body memories stay with us much longer than mere mental exercises. For good or for bad then, the body automatically stores and carries an incredibly rich array of life experiences, postures, gestures, and attitudes thanks to the mirror neurons and other complex systems that allow us to *read* each other. We are three-dimensional, ever unfolding, and somewhat malleable texts.

When we enact truly thorny ethical quagmires, like the ones in the scripts we developed for *DiTL* work, we are putting ourselves wholly into the world of the play and embodying the life of one unique stakeholder in a complex web of interrelations. We can draw on our own lifetime of experiences, perceptions, and observations and suddenly find an infinite array of *other characters* at the ready to be explored. This is a terrific mystery and is an attraction of the theatre arts for those compelled to work in them. That said, to venture into a different character's cognitive, psychological, affective, and kinesthetic reality may sound like a fun amusement park ride for some, and Dante's *Inferno* for others. Creativity ensues out of the tactics used in the arts, and one of the main tactics of the performing arts is to seem to put you somewhere that you are not in order to feel, know, and learn something new. Learning to embrace, not resist, a truly *otherly* point of view is critical for leaders.

Indeed, just as in Dante's *Purgatorio*, when Dante is in the circle of the wrathful and he is presented with scenes depicting all of his sins and virtues, the participants in *DiTL* have to observe, sense, feel, and move through some scenes they may not want to really think about. One participant in a *DiTL* workshop performed in a one-act play about how a perfectly good teacher is discriminated against when it comes to continuing contracts despite his principals' best efforts to retain him. She said, "I had always figured something like that was going on, had always hoped stuff like that really didn't go on, but now I have seen how things really do play out at times behind the scenes at a school." The physical choices of the actor playing the character of the superintendent had given the audience visual clues about things like superiority, status, a self-absorbed focus, and a dismissive attitude. None of this was transmitted with words, or solely with words.

She formed a literal picture of the body language from a scene about unethical (and illegal in some cases) favoritism. The embodied methods of inquiry in *DiTL* inevitably expose participants to many of the visceral, embodied experiences of some of the more anguished moments in school personnel management. This happens because participants are moving and speaking, listening and seeing, sensing and connecting with real, lived stories. From the embodied learning experience, they take away wisdom, cautions, inspiration, understandings, and a host of other experiences that will live with them throughout their professional life. Therefore, conducting this work and facilitating a group process takes a great deal of responsibility, knowledge, and care, so that it does not feel like a tour through *Purgatorio*!

The character of Dante wished that much of the sordid nature of humanity had remained hidden. He did not want to face the fact of these truths when they were embodied in the characters presented before his eyes. To be embodied is to be visible, and visibility is not something we are always prepared for. We sometimes prefer what we call *hiding* in the performing arts, and it does not have to mean literally not being seen. Sitting behind tables in meetings is comfortable because it keeps us from expressing too much. A great deal of what we really feel is truly hidden when we are stuck around a big meeting table fixed in one spot. We can sit in a desk and read a thorny case study and not really have to put ourselves on the line in the way we do when performing it. When we cross through space, whether we are walking or moving our wheelchair or other assistive props, we begin taking ownership for a character's actions, and we become visible.

We wonder about bodily knowing in all contexts of school culture. What if staff meetings were conducted as a group walked down the sidewalk together? What kind of pondering and reflection and even daydreaming would be allowed in this case? How could shifting physical proximities during the natural twists and turns of a walk down the street reform the conversations and interactions and make new thoughts possible? It seems more promising than teachers' texting under the meeting table about the boring agenda.

It is not as if teachers do not acknowledge that their teaching has a bodily dimension. They clearly use their own person and their capacities for movement instinctually, to illustrate their points, to elicit participation, to indicate listening, etc. But there are no rules for how this happens in a communal fashion and when asked to recreate any of this, we can easily lose our instinctual grasp. When it comes to any group interaction, such movement is almost always automatically stifled by architecture and furniture. Staff meetings pen people between the backs of their chairs and tables. Let's face it; rarely does someone other than the speaker get to pace around the room while they are thinking. The freedom to speak is tied in with the freedom to move, for one person in the class, the speaker/teacher. But many people think more easily when they are moving or doing something. In a *DiTL* setting, the ability to think, feel, and move simultaneously gives everyone the advantage to be potentially expressive to his or her fullest abilities. Movement is encouraged, valued, and needed in order to make the kinds of nuanced discoveries we intend to make in this multi-faceted approach.

### ALLOWABLE OR AWKWARD? SOCIAL NORMS FOR GESTURES

Intentionally moving as a group is a fairly uncommon experience in modern life. Group movement tends to be allowed only in semi- or fully ritualized situations. A common thread runs through those times when we are allowed or rather when we allow ourselves to move in proximity to a group of others. People frequently move with others in prescriptive situations: at a hockey game, in worship, at a dance, while doing manual labor, at the gym, while doing outdoor chores, or during a parade. Inside these ritualized spaces, we access a repertoire of acceptable and visible large body movements that fall within certain parameters dictated by the social norms of the activity.

Let's take as a quick example the gym: the site of much movement and lots of socially acceptable visibility. Everyone is moving and everyone can basically see everyone else. Here, movement and the use of the body is understood and expected. In this atmosphere, standing still or sitting in a chair doing nothing would be highly irregular. If you are not sure about this, try it! You will be avoided or escorted out. The social pressures in ritualized situations are enormous.

In this highly ritualized context, we allow for a community of strangers to move around and think their thoughts. However, the point of the gym is not to come to some simultaneous understanding of a workout, but generally to stay respectfully isolated from others enough to get one's workout done, to pretend, in a sense, that there are not people running on a treadmill two feet away from you on either side for miles and miles. Perhaps the gym should be considered, on some level, a place of make believe. Pretending not to be visible or near others in a place where everyone is visible and near others. A crowded subway car brings out the same ritualistic lack of acknowledgement of others. The gym is like a subway ride with cardiovascular benefits.

In the theatre arts, we pretend many things, but we do not pretend that people are not there. Obviously the function and goal are not as singular as a workout or a commute home. The process of communally sharing the same space and time with others is founded on everyone taking stock of everyone else. The anonymity of the gym might mean that no one misses you if you miss a workout, but you will surely be missed in a theatre rehearsal or at a good working school staff meeting. "You had to be there." This mantra is equally resounding for theatre artists as it is for school personnel. We may bristle at the treadmill analogy, but ironically

we are often unable to acknowledge others very near to us when engaged in the minute-to-minute demands of the teaching day. In fact, sometimes teaching is less like running side by side in a group and more like surviving a solo race.

Schools have their own cultures and thus have their own implicit set of rules about movement. A relaxed teacher may lean back in her or his chair and stretch both arms out to the side as a yawning stretch, but probably won't get into a yoga position, which is an equally good stretch. They are in a performative position and limit their movement repertoire to almost exactly what they would want a student to do at any given moment, and that is, generally, when it comes to the body, very little.

### IGNORING THE BODY

There is much written about the stress caused by not being *in one's body* or caused by living in *a disembodied way*. It can be physically exhausting to teach without a good night's sleep or decent meal at the top of the day. Teachers as a group in some ways also "ignore" the embodied component to their working day, yet they constantly move through time and space. They teach when sick, when upset, when stressed and worried. The signs and signals the body sends are absorbed in a professional veneer of affability and diminished by the prioritization of the classroom's needs over their personal needs. In some ways, a professional veneer forces teachers to become out of touch with the authentic expression of their bodily sense in schools.

The performing arts are so valued by our youth who are exposed to them, and by most parents who say they would wish their children a life that includes the arts. We do not turn to drama as an activity as adult professionals for the enrichment it might bring mainly because of its embodied nature. Most of us do not wish to imagine the consequences of breaking so many social norms mostly having to do with the movement of our body in proximity to others who are paying attention. Most people fear being thought of as strange. The prospect of a workshop using drama is only a welcome thought for a small percentage of adults, and those who welcome it have probably had the performing arts in their lives or are just, for whatever reason, simply the type of person who will try anything that looks harmless enough.

The greatest missing link for most educators expressing resistance to even the thought of a new approach to professional development is not a



lack of technique or experience in performance but a cultivation of a creative attitude about their profession and themselves in it. Not all educators see their job as drawing on all of their creative strengths. Some would not even describe themselves as creative at all. But we have found that when the whole person is engaged in learning, the creativity of an individual begins to flow and a group's inherent creativity is rendered visible and grows in a synergistic way.

So not only is the cultivation of a creative attitude involving the movement of one's whole self necessary to the foundation of a *DiTL* working group, but these groups require some simple exercises that warm up the body and warm everyone up to the idea that it is okay to move, at least in small ways, in front of others, when expressing a character's personality, which is, by definition, not one's own.

Chapter 7 clarifies how to approach this work by providing a conceptual orientation to *DiTL* and some practical, step-by-step exercises for *tuning up* a group of unique, differently abled humans to actually focus on creating and discovering together a complex world. This world within the play resembles a lived reality in their first or next leadership position. When everyone is ready to consider a shared narrative, temporarily suspending their disbelief that they are not the character they play, then some amazing things start to happen. Yes, it does take a modicum of belief to instigate this process, but once underway, the momentum of truth, truth shared, truth debated, truth regretted will carry everyone through.

The concept of *make believe* is too often associated with some developmental phase that we assume we should be beyond. *Nice for children, maybe, but I am an adult.* However in the theatre we take seriously the notion that we will literally *make belief*: the belief in the characters' temporary existence, and the belief that we will develop as human beings because we acted and reacted creatively in the theatre. To make believe then is to have accomplished one of the greatest feats of our own humanity: to understand the beliefs of someone different than ourselves. Theatre is wholly concerned with and expert at developing empathic communication.

Some things that happen between teacher leaders and the other stakeholders at a school are what we might call "unbelievable." They are so unforeseen, so unexpected, and seem so absurd that they are easily categorized as resembling fiction. Dramatic representations allow for the development of emotional sensitivity and empathy as a form of

perspective taking. And when things get *unbelievable* in the workplace, we need to see, hear, and feel from multiple perspectives.

Perhaps some of the plays in the *DiTL* series are not unlike scenes from Dante's Purgatorio, making visible certain weaknesses, fallibilities, and vulnerabilities that we have seen or might see in our lives as teacher leaders. Thankfully, the working group navigates this complexity together, and takes ownership of the process. They create and respond to the visceral images, which causes a myriad of evocative representations to become emblazoned in the consciousness of the participants. Individuals might begin to see the roots of problems, the real motivations behind behaviors, and the effects of good intentions that caused genuine strife and burnout for their colleagues. The teacher-leader phenomenon of burnout is real. The goal of this method is to build future teacher leaders' capacities to handle complex, ever-changing dynamics with more resiliency before they act it out *for real*. We believe that understanding the embodied nature of our complex workplace realities may assist with that endeavor.

## Creative Processes

**Abstract** In *Creative Processes*, the authors explore the notion of visibility and how, in all of its meanings, visibility provides a conceptual grounding for learning about teacher leadership. Through an explanation of observing that which is visible, to imitating promising practices of great teacher leaders, to forming various scenarios or outcomes within the vision of our imaginations, the creative process is discovered to be a more disciplined and specific set of behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge bases than the current discourse on art and creativity in education might suggest.

**Keywords** Creative processes • Visibility of teacher leadership • Imitation of teacher leadership • Observation of teacher leadership • Imagination in teacher leadership

Ito sat down next to her colleague on the break. Ross Meere was the educational leadership specialist on the facilitation team. Though arriving late, it appeared that he had been supporting this last segment of the presentation by taking some notes for Ito and more importantly, watching the group. But he was in some sort of dreamy state and simply continued typing on his laptop instead of beginning the sotto voce co-facilitator's *check-in* they had gotten used to at this point in the day.

“I just figured out why the legal issues in schools lectures were not landing the way I wanted them to,” Meere stammered. “Sorry, but it just came to me during that last part where the art school teacher, that former military officer sitting by the projector, was talking about his fear of trying new things. I just sort of spaced out but I got this great insight.”

Ito wondered if she really needed any feedback or could figure out for herself what had gone well and what could have gone better. She questioned whether her colleague had even been paying attention. For a brief moment she wondered if transdisciplinary work could even be called such when colleagues space out during a co-facilitated workshop.

“How could he have not seen that brilliant save I just made?” she thought.

“I think they are basically with you,” Meere said, sensing she was done hearing about his brilliant inspiration for another course. “But I sense a problem with the group’s perception of your use of examples.”

Ito was all prepared to defend her quick change of tack to salvage the moving-feeling-shape fiasco that had backfired, when Meere simply said, “You’ve got to open up your scope.”

Thrown a little, Ito said, “I don’t see what you mean.”

“You are calling on one person for everything, and it is not working for some of the members of the group who aren’t getting, well, equal attention I suppose.”

“I am not.” She felt the knee-jerk rebuttal was a stupid thing to say to an esteemed colleague.

“No, Penelope, you are. I can see the group on the right side of the room starting to coalesce, but in a negative way about the fact that they believe Andover has garnered almost all of your attention. An elbow jab here, a rolled eye there, I just wanted to say that is what I saw.”

“Okay, Ross,” Ito said with a pause. “I guess I can see that...now that I think about it.” Ito didn’t want to have to think about how others might perceive her actions.

“Did someone really roll his eyes, really? Was it that guy in the skinny pants? Actually don’t answer that question. It’s just that Andover was in a previous workshop I gave...it didn’t go so well. Maybe I was trying too hard to connect with him in this new context? Well, that is clearly not working,” Ito sighed.

She looked back at Meere after having looked away to cover her sudden self-consciousness over being spied on by the workshop’s participants.

“Do you want to show the group a *deeply felt moving shape* of tossing your colleague out the door right now?”

“No,” said Meere with a light-hearted laugh. “Let’s see if you can win back the half that you are losing. Want to call everyone back from break? It’s been eleven minutes.”

### BODILY CONNECTION TO IMAGINATION

The great Italian journalist and author Italo Calvino in *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* described six qualities that would characterize the ethos and the literary output of future generations. They are as follows:

1. Lightness
2. Quickness
3. Exactitude
4. Visibility
5. Multiplicity, and
6. Consistency.

In the *Drama in Teacher Leadership*, we are moved by these qualities, and what they might portend for the next generation of educational leaders. We have chosen to emphasize Calvino’s notion of visibility, putting it at the forefront of our thought about the creative process. Keenly developed visual perception of and by others becomes an epistemological orientation that renders reality, truth, and fiction as continually witnessed. Teacher leadership is observable, when it is made visible, highlighted when given focus. In both art and life we can make things visible by bringing our focus to them.

Performance theorist and dancer Daniel Nagrin was known for his intensely dramatic solos that became modern dance classics. Choreographer, teacher, performer, and writer, he was influenced by Laban’s theories of movement and Stanislavski’s systems for actors. In his *The Six Questions*, Nagrin wrote that observation, imitation, and imagination should be seen as the three pillars supporting the bridge that arcs from life into art. We see these three pillars of Nagrin’s as being different facets, different manifestations of Calvino’s notion of *visibility* and will explore each one in relationship to learning about teacher leadership.

We think Nagrin’s poignant ordering of these three concepts is relevant in art, in science, and in the art and science of learning about teacher

leadership. Honoring Nagrin's articulation of the three pillars, we have chosen to examine the role of observer first.

### OBSERVATION

Emerging teacher leaders need opportunities to feel and somehow experience the world as a teacher leader, while retaining an observer's eye for understanding, analysis, and explanation. To observe another great teacher leader is a start, but does not necessarily reveal the dynamics around that performance. Teacher leadership is not rendered visible in a single location or in a specific time. *DiTL* provides a space to simulate multiple contexts in which teacher leadership occurs so we can know it with our whole selves, a bit in advance of living it. But first, all aspiring teacher leaders should observe the world around them.

Observations that unearth true discoveries require a great deal of skill and commitment. During any observation process, success or failure will hinge on such factors as the ability to fit in with the people being studied and the ability to communicate with group members on their level and terms. It will also, at different times, require tact, clear and careful commitment, the ability to separate the role of participant from that of observer and so forth. Nagrin points out that we shouldn't expect artists to create without first being exposed to techniques in purposeful and disciplined observation.

### IMITATION

In our *DiTL* approach, exercises in observation are followed by a period of simple but disciplined exercises in imitation. Even when new teachers are given time, space, and support for observation, the profession socializes, and, arguably, normalizes them to balk at the notion of imitation. The collegium of practicing professionals shuns the notion of the kind of artistic internship that relies to some degree on imitation, in the form of guided-practice that would allow new teachers to mimic the masters. Teaching is a profession constructed on the assumption that somehow all are equally gifted as teachers by virtue of having graduated from a pre-service credentialing program. In helping graduates find their own voice, we sometimes shut down the possibility that they should study the voices of exemplary teacher leaders in their midst.

Therefore, few structures are in place to support the diligence of a student of teacher leadership who wishes to observe and perceive the subtleties of what teacher leadership looks like in practice and then actually

try those strategies out for himself. Absent from almost all teacher leadership programs are dedicated spaces for observation and imitation.

Theatre arts practitioners value and prize imitation as a learning tool. Imitation is not only a sincere form of flattery, but also a necessary step in honing key skills and attitudes. Perhaps it is not surprising to learn that many teacher educators and teachers shy away from the opportunity to have someone shape their beginning practice based on imitating masterful teachers. For some unspoken reason, educators, by and large, are afraid to admit that there might be some among the teaching ranks who are “giants” of the profession because it would violate the egalitarian spirit of the profession. Taking teaching as an art seriously however, might mean admitting that there is a spectrum of accomplishment, mastery, and artistry on the teaching continuum. Yes, teaching is complex and cannot be reduced to a list of 50 nifty tricks. However, even the most revered creative artists, like Nagrin, have no qualms naming, acknowledging, and emphasizing the masters they have humbly imitated along the way.

Nagrin recalls his own experience, his initial forays into dance and the performing arts, imitating the great dancers he had observed, trying and falling and getting up and trying again. Before he began to explore and create his own artistic solos, he would rehearse and practice for weeks trying to replicate the creative genius of others.

Even though imitation is regarded as an advanced behavior whereby an individual observes and replicates another’s successful behavior, teacher education programs seem to generally shun the idea. Instead, individual effort and being some awesome, unique, entrepreneurial individual right out of high school or college is expected. Marketing terms for graduate schools never include “being like” other great teachers, but are rather much more individualistic. Be a trailblazer! Be a visionary! Be a rebel! This is not a call to humbly observe the myriad of ways that wisdom has already been put into effective form and practice. It is not a call to see great things. It is self-focused and if anything, pulls a person apart from their mentors, their culture, and their valuable histories.

Imitation can provide the glue between an individual and the best facets of her own educational experiences. Imitation has other benefits, in that it is also a form of social learning that leads to the development of traditions. Selective imitation allows for the transfer of information, in the form of behaviors and customs between individuals, and creates a pathway for culture to be passed down to new generations without the need for genetic inheritance. Nagrin’s notion of disciplined imitation, not just of anything but of the work of the great artists—read “the great

teachers”—seems to warrant serious consideration in any understanding of the process of learning to become a teacher leader.

## IMAGINATION

Few seem to understand that even the most skilled and creative musicians practiced low-level skills, like playing scales, for years. They then transitioned into the high-level skills, like playing expressively and feeling the overall shape of a piece of music, as they progressed from novice to master. Observation and imitation feed the imagination and a well-developed imagination is paramount to becoming an excellent teacher leader. Leaders also need to develop low-level skills like awareness, understanding, time management, basic listening techniques, and organization before they can develop high-level skills like leading complex teams through complex problem-solving processes and managing changes. However, an active imagination without communication skills has the potential to produce teaching/art that no one but the teacher/artist understands. While undoubtedly this generative activity of simply imagining is an important first step, possessing the skills to observe and imitate and finally communicate will ultimately create more effective leadership acts and behaviors.

One only has to turn on YouTube to find a video of someone who will advocate for imagination and creativity in teaching without any basis on which to draw on. It is an attractive message—that we should all do our own thing and blaze our own trail. These video-clip sensations garner attention because they are not asking us to do the hard work of seeing what is actually there. This model of sustained observation of others, the same model that Nagrin suggests, seems to be presented as somehow limiting the free expression of teachers to revise, rethink, and reinvent schooling. Nagrin's methods are a perfect encapsulation of the real process of art and creativity because to be done well, these things take time, effort, disciplined practice, and coaching.

Italo Calvino, journalist and author, in writing about visibility connected what we saw in the world around us with the images visible to us in our minds. He emphasized the bodily connection to the imagination and felt the dreamy state of being carried off into an inner world of imagery was a wellspring to be investigated for profound insights and practical learning. In his uniquely eloquent literary style, Calvino understood what current neuroscience is surfacing, which is that a vividly imagined event can leave a memory trace in the brain that is very similar to that of



an experienced event. Whether memories are of perceived or imagined events, actually lived or simply experienced in dramatic scripts, some of the same areas of the brain are stimulated.

One of the aspects of the teacher's life that seems elusive once we set foot into the busy pace of schools is that space that we might set aside for imaginative and creative free-flowing idea generation. We do not have a lot of extra time, but we do need to do something to engage our imaginations in order to be fulfilled in our work and in our lives in general. We believe that immersive experiences in applied theatre can jumpstart the creative process and awaken the imaginative process for leaders when that imaginative process is stuck or not getting exercised regularly enough.

And the imagination should not be a luxury that we dream of using someday, when we have the time or the resources. Jean Starobinski's theories of the imagination as outlined in *La Relation Critique* propose the notion of the imagination as an instrument of knowledge that can coexist with scientific knowledge and even aid in the formulation of a hypothesis. Rather than relegating the scientific method to the external world and the imagination to the inner, the theatre arts break this dichotomy and allow us to keenly analyze and hypothesize about our inner state while imagining, with others, about the creation of new external forms.

Recent neuroscience research has revealed the dreamy or creative or free flow state is highly desirable for complex knowledge generation and complicated problem-solving. Allowing our subconscious to solve a problem is more effective than always approaching a problem in a linear way. Since we can only hold about five things simultaneously in our conscious mind, and even this number is debatable, complex problems do not actually get solved just because we work on them intentionally and dutifully. We need a holistic picture, a vision, and this requires the imagination. Think of the many committees that are created to address some problem, and how little problem-solving often results from committee meetings! What if a committee or a school's central dilemma could be transacted in a dramatic scene and made visible for others to see? Everyone could have a shared vision, at least momentarily, of the context of the problem and its nuances. A focused performance, whether amateur or not, can tap into truths of the subconscious and illustrate a complex situation in a few minutes for a community of people of any size. It becomes increasingly clear that to get a full sense of a situation so that we might effect real transformation, we need time to engage the imagination and our whole self in creative problem-solving. All this cannot be done merely from the *neck up*.

In all fields of study the imagination is necessary for knowledge generation and the construction of meaning. The process of imagining something, of forming images for it, can lead us to convenient, easy conclusions or hard-earned truths. In theatre, the hard-earned truths are the goal, and a well-acted story that sheds light on our profession will leave us with a host of understandings that will endure. Imagine every child thriving at a school. What does that look like? Imagine the adult relationships that need to be intact for this to happen. What does that look like? Ethnotheatre can bring out these questions and unearth dimensions of solutions by making solutions, even imagined ones, visible to us.

Sometimes we imagine things are one way in order not to think about them much at all. This is the flipside of imagination that leads to dangerously assumptive views. For example, many of us have heard and possibly even stated at some point in our careers that teaching is an art, among other things. Once we hear this, we are in danger of believing that just because we are in teaching jobs, and someone said teaching is an art, we are automatically doing something that has earned the status of artful. It may or may not be so.

### HIDING BEHIND ART

The vast majority of teachers liken teaching to an “art,” with some willing to admit it might slightly resemble a “craft.” That same majority, in turn, shudder when anyone suggests teaching be regarded as a science, even as copies of Robert Marzano’s text, *The Art and Science of Teaching*, fly off virtual bookstore shelves, indicating at least a curiosity for the references to both worlds.

Let us attempt to unpack the use of the word *art* in educational circles. Sometimes the word *art* in the context of teaching is used as a mere convenience. It can easily be used as a sort of cloak to cover a lack of specificity about what can be known and what can be analyzed in the work of teaching. *Art* becomes a safe haven for anything a teacher tries. If it is called an *art* then it gains certain conveniences such as being free of definition, beyond criticism, and up to each person to interpret. Questionable methods, process, outcomes? Call it an *art* and say you are living the dream, and critique is dismantled.

But is good teaching or the grounding for good teacher leadership really that vague? Is the art of leadership really that subjective? Should teachers or leaders use the term to give themselves license to do anything

they feel like doing in the name of some vague creative process which they probably cannot describe?

It is one thing to call what you are doing “art” to deflect attention. It is another to master teaching or teacher leadership as if it is an art. The former is easy; the latter involves a deeply focused process. If we examine teacher leadership with all the discipline and theory that the arts truly avail to us, we find that we can reveal something about the essence of the dynamics of teacher leadership. We can emulate models that are put before us or avoid situations because we have experienced them in a creative and safe context first. In arts-based practice there should be a method that provides order, allows for observation and analysis, gives time for experimentation which may lead to failures or successes. Art is not indiscriminate. Simply saying something *is artistic* does not mean that any and every utterance made or note played or brushstroke made counts as art. To really treat teaching as an art is to not hide behind anything but to fully expose this process to keen perceptions, analysis, evaluation, critique, and reflection.

### CREATIVITY

The essence of art is profound and humbling. We have shown that some would prefer to avoid the term *art* except when they need to wield it as a convenient shield against other kinds of potential scrutiny. Another amorphous term we frequently use to potentially attract accolades while simultaneously deflecting scrutiny is *creativity*. Teachers are “ga-ga” these days over creativity. It is the scream, the new currency of cutting-edge schooling. Calls for creative learning and leading have become a rallying cry to unleash the potential of students’ imaginations even though no one is sure who is doing the unleashing and what that actually looks like when it happens. Speaking of creativity in the absence of the structures and methods provided by deep learning in the arts or sciences may leave us not knowing how to achieve this elusive good.

On the other hand, some would say that nothing is truly original, but creativity puts things together in previously unfathomable ways. Nagrin suggests that imagination is a form of recombinant memory. Nagrin poignantly reminds us that it is impossible to really imagine anything beyond our own experiences. We can, however, take pieces of our experiences and put them together in ways that we have not ever imagined. Tossing a random sampling of teaching methods together and assuming that synergistic value-added outcomes may emerge is not creativity. It is flailing around,

and it is neither effective nor elegant. Nagrin is referring to hard-earned creativity that comes from imaginative play and practice that is structured to produce a desired outcome.

In both the education and business sectors, that is, in fields outside the arts that are bubbling with dialogue over creativity, it seems that people expect creativity to just happen if we will it, have a meeting about it, put it in our mission statement and send a staff member to a conference about it to “report back.” In actuality, exercises, tasks, systematic and well-articulated experiences that develop the artistic and aesthetic sensibilities are gateways to creativity. Creativity does not just show up one day without helpful frameworks, in the absence of models or guides, and without observations and imaginations having been jump-started by a real process. Now that we have suggested that the artistic process is anything but random, in what order should we proceed?

In Chapters 6 Script Reading and 7 Creative Enactments of Teacher Leadership, you will have the opportunity to experience the imaginative act of reading a scripted story and then we will cover the nuts and bolts of leading *Drama in Teacher Leadership* work groups. In both of these chapters the visibility of the methods will emerge. Recalling Calvino’s elements of lightness, quickness, exactitude, multiplicity, and consistency, we suggest lightness in the tone of the workshop; quickness in building trust, exactitude with the language of the scripts, a multiplicity of viewpoints and interpretations being allowed, and consistency in the kinds of coaching that participants may be offered. You will notice that the elements of time, effort, disciplined practice, and coaching will be necessary for your success in this endeavor. We hope you enjoy these new ways of observing, imitating, and unleashing the imagination.

## Script Reading

**Abstract** *Script Reading* transitions readers into the process of dramatic script reading, looks at how stage directions give hints about the movement and motivation of any character at any given time, and suggests how educators entering into a workshop using the plays might begin to build a character.

**Keywords** Script reading • Stage directions

The willingness to enter into a relationship with people who do not think like you, look like you, or make choices like you is imperative in any leadership endeavor, since all leadership endeavors require the support of others. This process of understanding other people's values, emotions, thoughts, and actions is an imaginative one and the *DiTL* method takes our ability to use our moral imaginations seriously. As a reader, you probably have already formed some images of Penelope Ito and Robert Andover, the characters you encountered earlier. We would like to invite you to go back and re-read any of the opening scenarios from the previous chapters to refresh your memory of these two characters and to determine if indeed you have already formed an image of them in your mind.

We guess that as you revisit or call to the imagination any portion of the story of Ito and Andover, you have already begun to perceive the

facial expressions, gestures, and body language of each character. Have you imagined how each one talks, walks, sits, and stands? Could you imagine their ages, their clothing, and their personalities? What habits, quirks or endearing qualities might each have? How do they make you feel as you see them in your mind?

Allow yourself to be transported into a scene with them as if you were there witnessing their interactions. This process of taking characters as seriously as actual people is critical for understanding how drama lets us substitute the fictitious for the real, in order to get closer to truths and mutual understanding. Our responses to works of fiction, even though it is fiction, are real. Our instincts for speech and action in any given situation are real as well.

When people read John Grisham's 1989 novel *A Time To Kill*, or view the 1996 film adaptation of the novel by the same title, the emotions that are triggered in the minds of the audience by the fictional characters, by what they say, how they look, and by how they act, are genuine and influence what we think of these characters and their choices. We are also able to imagine the choices we might make if we were to face similar circumstances. Though it is clear that the racist characters of James Louis "Pete" Willard and Billy Ray Cobb are not real, all the same, we automatically have an emotional reaction to them and their acts, because their thinking reminds us of racist mindsets. And when Carl Lee Hailey steps out seeking justice for the inhumane degradation forced on his ten-year-old daughter Tonya, we begin to think: how would I act if Tonya was my daughter?

This imaginative act of questioning how one would act is a foundational element of the *DiTL* approach to learning because, although the characters of Ito and Andover are fictitious, the scripts allow us to clearly picture their actions. We recognize their struggles as being inside the normative conditions of the lived experiences of teacher leaders. Each character in the *DiTL* scripts is fashioned from a sketch or composite of traits, attitudes, word choices, and ethical stances that we have witnessed in real people during our professional careers. How scenes and characters make you feel is very important, because feelings are real whether it is a character or a real person who inspires them. There is no denying the role that emotions play in cognition. Cognitive emotion, and emotional cognition are cutting-edge areas of body/brain research, and this breaking down of the dichotomy between cognition and emotion is precisely what we are trying to achieve in the *DiTL* process.

With that in mind, let us revisit one part of the Ito and Andover interaction from Chapter 3, The Lament. This time, however, we will present it in the format of a dramatic script; it is no longer just a case study or dialogue. The addition of stage directions adds a new layer of meaning to the scene and allows the reader to get closer to the truth of the characters, to go beyond just what words they are using. See if the stage directions, given in parenthesis and never spoken, help you imagine what the speakers actually mean and feel. Notice how the dialogue takes off in a new direction once the fuller picture of communication is illustrated and felt.

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PENELOPE ITO

(addressing everyone else without looking at him directly, arms crossed, looking down with utter focus)

Do you dance, Mr. Andover?

ROBERT ANDOVER

(checking in with his neighbors, hoping to exchange an ironic glance but finding no one looking at him at the moment, kind of lost)

Dance?

PENELOPE ITO

(releasing one arm to prop herself a bit against the front table, and now pretending to need to look at the back of her hand of her still crossed arm).

Yes, have you ever learned how to dance?

ROBERT ANDOVER

(slowly flipping his hands so his palms face up to the ceiling and looking directly at Ito wondering how far putting him on the spot would go.

I'm kind of self-taught... I'm not too shabby if I say so myself.

(He does some kind of indescribable dance floor move, kind of like marching legs and tango arms in a seated position so for a moment his seat is the only thing anchoring him to his chair.)

Is that what you mean? I'm sorry

(laughing to the group)

PENELOPE ITO

(smiling, and very intent on making her point)

Not really. Do me a favor, all of you, and close your eyes for a minute and imagine...

(Penelope closes her eyes too, trusting that everyone is doing this, and for the most part, they are. One participant is attempting to sip a foamy latte she just acquired on break but realizes she will have to squint a bit to find where the lid is pointed at. Penelope presses down in space as if striking a chord on an upright piano in slow motion. Her fingers point and draw circular shapes first one way then the other and act out a bit of the sense of a couple dancing easily together.)

Imagine an older couple. A couple who might look a little feeble just sitting there in two chairs at some sort of party or reception or whatever. One of them asks the other to dance and upon accepting the offer they simply step into each other's arms and just seem to open themselves to the music and begin moving around the dance floor with ease and grace. It is not possible, for the next few minutes, for either of them to carry their worries, issues, and even life's aches and pains around. They let go of their anxieties or inadequacies of not being perfect. They just dance...

(Penelope inevitably gestures toward Robert.)

...because this couple has been taught how to dance and found a rhythm that worked for them, probably long ago.

(The group remains with their eyes closed, except for Robert who has decided it's time to open his eyes without needing permission. He looks around, a little uncomfortable that everyone is so comfortable sitting there with their eyes closed. Closing his eyes again with an audible, judgmental exhale, in order to ask his question.

ROBERT ANDOVER

(With the feigned confusion of a young college student upon learning about the workload for a course)

Are we learning how to dance?

PENELOPE ITO

Open your eyes, everyone.

(Emphasizing the "we" even though he clearly did not)

No, *we*, aren't going to learn how to dance.

(Moving back to her place in the center of the speaking area, very warmly now, to cover any edginess that might



have crept in her tone due to a sudden decrease in confidence about her digression. She thought he might actually just be a very funny nice guy, but she was at this moment, unsure.)

It was just meant as an illustrative metaphor. It's not about training you to do something virtuosic in performance, the intent is not to put on a production for anyone but those present and involved in the play itself. There are no spectators in the DiTTL dramatizations. Everyone takes part and it is assumed that no one has formal training in the theatre or will turn any portion of the performance into a professional audition for a Broadway show.

ROBERT ANDOVER

(With good humor and turning on a bit of charm)

So we just get to kind of fumble around and make believe we are someone else acting some strange way in a school setting?

PENELOPE ITO

(Realizing that he actually gets it but still having to answer his question)

Well, actually no. It's not about "make believe" in the way I assume you are using the term. To be honest, too often theatre is seen as something that is meant for the elite and in some people's minds it becomes inaccessible because it is regarded as being outside the lives of ordinary people. It is seen as staged and perfect.

(Relaxing and feeling connected with the group as a whole as she remembers Meere's advice not to play it to one student)

Rather what we are doing is developing within you an awareness of how to act with just enough ease and confidence that you have a journey as a performer that is like that elderly couple on the dance floor—you are able to let go and trust that the rest of your group and the text itself will carry you through, like music from a big band. Then the most timeless ethical question can emerge, a question that haunts both theatre artist and citizen and helps develop our moral imagination, that is, how shall I act? Your response to that question is found in the doing of the thing. In the playing. This kind of scripted, structured play can feel as natural as a conversation, as easy as an old dance.

END

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It is not too hard to see how the script, though it is not the same as a live play, begins to bridge the gap between the words people use and what they really feel and mean. When the scripts are fixed, that is, not open to be improvised upon, the actors must use those words and be faithful to the stage directions. This protects the integrity of the content, its pedagogical value, and ensures that the ethical dilemma embedded in each play is preserved. Sticking to the script forces us to use the language someone else would use, not our own, and keeps the story on track. Using the given words, actors are free to interpret how they would say them and what they would do for actions while saying them or in between their lines. This, as we have noted, requires thoughtfulness to create as honest and authentic a portrayal as possible. So, to conclude this introduction to script reading, let us imagine Robert Andover and Penelope Ito were even more honest about their feelings than they had been in Chapter 3 *The Lament*, at this point, and had continued, perhaps over the next break:

ROBERT ANDOVER

(Warmly because her metaphor of dancing hit home with him. He recalls his frail-looking grandparents who could always get up on the dance floor and look utterly graceful.)

Yeah, Ms. Ito, you say it's all as easy as an old dance. Ok. Oh, thank goodness we don't have to do that twirly stuff because I really can't stand those waltzers. They look phony to me, like they are just posing as something they are not.

PENELOPE ITO

Like it or not, the fact is, they are trained to respond harmoniously with the music and to each other and to face any circumstances that the variables of live performance might present—wrong music, trash on floor, broken high heel, they know how to get through it all. Don't you think that way too often in our careers...

(She makes a gesture back and forth from her to him.)

...we are not trained in any intentional way to respond to the complexities of lived leadership in schools? I think you could see this work as ultimately building teacher leader resiliency. You know, helping to keep good people from quitting education due to being beyond perplexed at the micropolitical stuff that really hurts if you never saw it coming. You let me know after

we do the plays if you have gained some awareness of how one might act and move through challenges, not as some image of perfection, but in a truly functional and seemingly natural way.

(She motions to him that the break is over and he hurries back to his seat.)

PENELOPE ITO

So I think it is just about time for all of us to move to the theatre space and begin making these plays come to life.

(The participants make their way out of the conference room. Andover helps Ito with one of the boxes of scripts.)

ROBERT ANDOVER

(Wishing now to be helpful)

Wow. There sure are a lot of words here I bet.

PENELOPE ITO

Yes, you could say you are holding the combined wisdom of many teacher leaders in that cardboard box.

(Smiling and holding the door for him)

Don't drop it.

ROBERT ANDOVER

Don't worry, I am actually pretty game to try this. I mean it seems like everyone else is and I was once interested in acting long ago.

PENELOPE ITO

I kind of figured you would enjoy yourself. At least that is my hope. It's kind of rare...having space and time to tell the stories of our profession, to emulate what deserves emulation, to scrutinize those things that should not be perpetuated and we need the group's life experience and combined wisdom and experience to do this most successfully. We can learn from lived experiences even if they are not our own...yet.

ROBERT ANDOVER

(Slowly and with great curiosity)

Yet?

END

## Creative Enactments of Teacher Leadership

**Abstract** *Creative Enactments of Teacher Leadership* is a “How To” manual for Drama in Teacher Leadership workshops. The authors share the spectrum of interdisciplinary possibilities inherent in education that are arts-based and cover the importance of facilitation team transdisciplinary skills and participant diversity. Considerations and constraints related to space, time, and resources are addressed. Flexible frameworks for itineraries and strategies for managing a working group centered on these methods are delineated.

**Keywords** Transdisciplinary workshops facilitation • Transdisciplinarity • Teacher leadership workshop itinerary

Philosopher Paul Woodruff in *The necessity of theater: The art of watching and being watched* explicitly describes how the preparation process of readying a performance may be in itself educational. Background context is not always supplied by a text, but has to be imagined or researched or discovered in relation to others. Woodruff felt that this was good practice for real-world understanding and for noticing when we are trying to elicit an emotion from someone else. He described theatre as a “laboratory for empathy.” He felt that the participatory act of theatre helps us develop sympathies even more deeply than mere spectatorship of drama.

## WORKSHOPPING THE WORKSHOPS

We will assume, at this point, that you too are ready to embark on leading a completely participatory venture with no spectators. This chapter serves as a “How To” manual for *Drama in Teacher Leadership* workshops. We share the spectrum of interdisciplinary possibilities inherent in education that are arts-based, take an in-depth look at the selection of a balanced team of facilitators, and share some reflections on participant diversity. We acknowledge considerations that influence the outcomes of any workshop like spaces available to work in, the time allotted to the process, and even give some basic guidelines for sets, props, or costumes. We cover the need for complete group participation to the fullest extent of each individual’s potential. A template for potential itineraries is given, as are ideas about participant journals, long-range planning for regularly meeting *DiTL* groups, and how to manage the scripts. All of this workshoping around the workshops will set you up for a successful and transformative experience that will be unique to your school setting and group dynamic.

We begin with some contextualizing about what people tend to expect, and what we have tended to experience, in many other professional development workshops. In contrast, we then illustrate piece by piece the intention of each part of our approach.

### THE SAME OLD SHOW?

Workshop intensives are a fairly commonplace means of professional development for emerging or practicing school administrators and teacher leaders. They often involve PowerPoint presentations, agendas, pads of paper, and other manipulatives like post-it notes, index cards, or name tags. They contain activities that are called interactive or hands-on and sometimes, but not always, they are actually interactive or hands-on. Many things done as icebreakers might shave off little bits from the communal iceberg of self-consciousness but most icebreakers do not melt away the typical communal reticence to do things that might be construed as wrong or foolish looking. In fact, most workshops are designed to require little investment of the self and to be what can only be termed participant-proof. That is, participants in most workshops can fake their way through icebreakers, or take them seriously, can be checked in or kind of checked out mentally, and the progress of the workshop appears to move along

about the same either way. So some participants of a *DiTL* workshop might be surprised simply with the fact that it is not the same old show.

There are portions of the *DiTL* experience that resemble other seminars, discussions, and professional development lectures, and there are portions that involve the entire person moving and speaking and interacting in trusting ways with potential strangers. Such a whole-person involvement obviously involves a much larger investment of one's self than might be the professional norm. Experiencing these methods has taught us and our colleague participants that much more is possible than what is normally asked of participants; people really do welcome the opportunity to delve into poignant topics that are relevant to their well-being and to their success as teachers and leaders in schools. Because participants really have to step up to the challenge, they leave with increased confidence, courage, and a sense of real accomplishment.

### THE THIRD SPACE OF TRANSDISCIPLINARY WORK

Professional development workshops tend to be offered from one distinct disciplinary perspective. The advantage of this, besides practicality, is that it tends to make clear in the minds of the participants how the workshop will, generally, unfold. In the rare cases when more than one disciplinary perspective is at work, participants may begin to wonder such things as: "Is this workshop really about teacher leadership or is it an acting class? Or, what if I feel uncomfortable about learning about teacher leadership from a space that isn't protected by a desk?" When the *DiTL* participants enter the third space that is neither just a theatre workshop nor a traditional teacher leadership seminar, creativity is percolating and they find that they are able to do everything that is asked of them and do it brilliantly. They just might not know that at the beginning of the day.

There is an emerging understanding of just what happens when disciplines join together in some way and to what degree they retain autonomy or in some way merge with each other. Three categories, multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary learning constitute a continuum from higher conservation of autonomy to increased overlap in methods, content, and perspectives. The multi-disciplinary approach has different disciplines contributing their unique methods and framing devices to some common issue, problem, or circumstance. The products of a multi-disciplinary approach belong to the discipline they originated from. The learning occurs as people are exposed to the outcomes in different disciplines and

can compare and contrast the nature of those findings and the content of them as well. The interdisciplinary approach starts to blend ideas from one discipline with another, so the two disciplines are *working together* within a unified problem-solving framework. You will notice one discipline begins to influence another discipline at the level of interdisciplinary work.

*Drama in Teacher Leadership* workshops are *transdisciplinary* by design and in delivery, whereby the fusion of two fields actually become seamless, with no retreat into individual silos. The transdisciplinary approach engages participants in the artistic process that becomes the central site for meaning-making but synthesizes this with the knowledge base that usually is the purvey of educational leadership programs. It helps when both of the facilitators can articulate norms, framing devices, processes and value the research outcomes achieved in both of their disciplinary fields equally, but coverage of each area of expertise, a more interdisciplinary starting point, can also serve as a perfect place from which to embark.

When all is said and done, everybody can do this work. *DiTL* takes seriously the intentional and compassionate preparation for the relational trust that will be required between participants, and the warming up of the body, mind, and voice for such work. Fortunately, the very exercises developed in the dramatic arts to warm up the muscles, joints, vocal chords, mind, and perceptive abilities also build trust and establish good and safe norms for a group of strangers to be able to tap into their creative instincts without much reservation. Setting the conditions for success is important.

We have been amazed at how much educators—from graduate students who aspire to be teacher leaders, right through to veteran principals—hunger for this approach to learn. We have marveled at how teachers and administrators gravitate to opportunities to use their creative and intellectual abilities simultaneously.

The following is a summary of the main considerations to take into account as you prepare a group of participants for a one- or two-day intensive workshop that includes performances of one or more plays.

### SELECTING THE WORKSHOP CO-FACILITATORS

Throughout this book you may have noticed that there is no “I” used whenever the workshop or methods are referred to with respect to the facilitators. It is truly a co-facilitated process and involves the disciplinary backgrounds of these two fields: that of the teacher educator and that of the performing-arts educator.

The teacher educator co-facilitator represents an important and grounding tie to the profession. Hopefully this person has had her or his turn in multiple school settings as teacher, or administrator or both, and can relate directly to the experiences of all of the attendees. The teacher educator should be someone who has devoted much thought to understanding the nature of the adult-to-adult relationships that permeate the human interactions that transpire in schools and is someone who thinks deeply about the ethics of leadership. A co-facilitator who can share anecdotes, stories, and accounts drawn from the lived experience of trying to be a teacher leader or support teacher leadership is critical to the success of the workshop. Equally important, this person needs to know how to draw on various theoretical frames of reference about teacher leadership that can be brought into the workshop in an intentional way and connect formally to the knowledge base of the participants.

The theatre educator co-facilitator is a performing artist, most likely from theatre or dance. This person has directed actors, worked with beginning-to-advanced students, learned how to coach the reluctant, the skeptical, and the over-confident into a more nuanced understanding of how to develop a character for performance in a one-act play. This co-facilitator takes on the task of bringing the group to a place of psychological and physical readiness. He or she easily offers an array of vocal warm-ups, trust exercises, physical stretches and balances, cognitive and conceptual group games and slowly allows each participant to have a somatic experience of knowing what it is to be thinking and dwelling in another person's frame of mind and to find the spine of a character, as it were, to be *walking in their shoes* for a while. This person rehearses the participants, helps them through the character analysis process and script analysis, makes any confusing theatre terms more palpable, and directs the actors not to change the script, but to make believable choices in vocal tone, intention, gesture, and posture for each moment of the scene.

This distinction between functions as delineated so far is meant to help the right team converge for your own unique *DiTL* work. There is no need to worry about locating a team with an exact replication of these skill sets described above, but you should be confident that questions posed about educational leadership or the artistic process can be answered. The fact is, in transdisciplinary work, each researcher is reading and processing at a deep level in his or her collaborator's field of study to ensure the fluid exchange of ideas. The facilitators' shared knowledge means the roles and



tasks of the facilitators can be fluid. It doesn't have to be that one person leads all the creative exercises while the other facilitator frames all of the discussions about the plays, but this can be a starting point.

What is most important is that your facilitators' skill sets complement one another and that your dialogue models critical questioning, paraphrasing, and brings multiple perspectives forward. Good facilitation teams must be willing to push their own boundaries of learning and comprehension as well. Diversity is a big plus in co-facilitation; it is ideal to represent a variety of gender/orientations, ethnic backgrounds, and actual school positions so as to be able to speak from across categories as much as possible.

### THE PARTICIPANTS

We have emphasized the role of the co-facilitation model in this transdisciplinary context because it is critically important to choose people who can set the stage for the workshop's success. It is also important to consider the participants who might gather and attend a *DiTL* workshop to discuss these plays on teacher leadership and fully embody one or more characters for performance. Before the workshops begin, the facilitators can get to know the participants by having them fill out a simple questionnaire with the basic facts of their school and current position and perhaps relevant demographic questions that help achieve multiple diversities in the group. Facilitators can correspond with each potential participant via phone or email to check in about their expectations for the workshop and even general issues in teacher leadership they have experienced in any of their school sites. In this way, the facilitators can note issues that will align with workshop content and also keep track of the composite of the group to achieve the best and broadest balance of viewpoints.

As is the case with the increasingly diverse nature of the students who attend schools, it is also important to gather a group of diverse participants for *DiTL* work. *DiTL* workshops are richer when the participants represent a wide breadth of cultural and experiential backgrounds, are differently abled, have different school experiences and fields of expertise, and have unique interests and attitudes about teacher leadership. A blend of both teachers and administrators provides some rich opportunities for breaking down the barriers that set in between these two defined groups and allows participants to take on professional roles quite different from the ones they occupy on a daily basis. On the other hand, teachers may

wish for a space that is dedicated solely to them and not a combination of teachers and administrators. This shall be the facilitators' vision to create.

Participants will likely include people dedicated to teacher leadership or other educational sectors with possibly no training or interest in the theatre arts, per se, and they will be asked to do any (or perhaps all) of the following:

- Embark on unfamiliar ensemble-building techniques;
- Undertake character and script analysis;
- Fine-tune observations and understandings of behavior;
- Embody a character after analyzing the motivations and obstacles for that character;
- Make vocal and physical choices regarding representation and expression in rehearsal;
- Realize how the character they are playing is perceived by others and interacts with others;
- Perform and witness the performances of one-act plays that highlight the critical junctures and challenges in contemporary schools; and
- Reflect on the simultaneously embodied, felt, and cognitive understandings that ensue.

When we reflect on our *DiTL* work, the workshops that included participants who represented the various diversities and hierarchies in the school system provoked more transformative learning. In one of our US-based workshops, two cohorts, both entering and exiting graduate students, mingled with professors and university academic administrators who also attended the workshop. This democratization is something that the arts are well poised for. Even if temporary, and it always is, the shared experience of witnesses helps the difficulties infused in teacher leadership to become concrete and visible to multiple actors in the education system.

## THE SPACE

Peter Brook wrote *The Empty Space*, a foundational work on the art of the actor. Brook talks about how an actor can transform an empty space and imbue it with an entire constellation of meaning and significance just in how he or she enters and speaks the first line in the scene. Before you begin, consider the architecture. It does not have to be fancy, but

it has to help, not hinder your efforts. For a *DiTL* workshop, a different sort of space other than where regular meetings or high-stress conversations already are happening is needed. We have tended to work in an indoor, flexible, open space with some privacy, with or without a view, and some soundproofing! Rehearsing involves repetition of the same phrases over and over; one experiments with how to best convey the meaning by playing in this way. The actors should not be limited in thinking they are bothering someone at work down the hall while they are trying to get into character. The last thing we want is for participants to self-censor the full use of their voices, as we usually have to do in the workplace. Certain times of day may allow for such focus and freedom to speak up.

Getting into a character requires concentration and necessitates a certain amount of vulnerability, so a safe-feeling space is great. A real theatre space can be used, because for most people it is different and therefore, more neutral. Any flexible classroom with the possibility of some cleared-out space can be arranged to create a *stage* space for the day. It is important to note that rooms can carry with them a history for the participants and either have a character conducive to contemplation or not. If you think holding the workshop in the room that people normally go to when venting about the administration is a good idea, think again!

We believe it is important to consider the aesthetics of the workshop space—but who has the luxury of thinking about that in a typical school? The fact is that the architecture of a building does influence our thinking and our ability to retreat from the pressures of daily life and work-related tasks. If there is a space that is particularly inspiring to be in or off the beaten path from regular staff meetings that will help support creativity, see if you can book it.

Some privacy is called for in the *DiTL* work for the purposes of achieving focus, so sometimes a place off-site will be ideal. Check out your local universities, public library community rooms, or county office meeting rooms. Even going to another school site you have checked out can do the trick. The precious state of focus that develops from hard work and hard thinking, for hours sometimes, deserves to be guarded from interruption whenever possible. Hardworking teachers and administrators deserve to be refreshed by such professional development and ideally should not feel divided in their attention while attempting this.

## SETS, PROPS, AND COSTUMES

If a small variety of typical school furniture is available, props help to form the basic set for a scene: chairs, tables, a wall, a doorway, or a couple of agreed-upon entrances. Those items tend to be the standbys for anything that might be needed to indicate, not fully illustrate by any means, where the plays take place. A meeting room, classroom, hallway, restaurant, and so on can be indicated by how we use these simple found objects. Props that people might hold like pens, folders, books, glasses are helpful for the participants to use as they get to know the character's needs. Costumes are fun to add if they do not detract from the time needed to work on a scene.

In one of our workshops in Canada, we happened to have access to a single costume storage closet. Before performing, everyone grabbed a suit coat, or hat, or scarf or purse that might indicate something about their character. Some redid their hair to play a different age or personality. The workshop participants tried to create an image in their own and the audiences' eyes of what their characters might look like. Whether the costumes were accurate or not, the reality is that almost everyone enjoys being someone else without self-consciousness and sometimes a simple, single costume element gives us permission to do that more freely and completely.

## TOTAL GROUP INVOLVEMENT

No one is permitted to sit out at the edge of the room and just watch, as Andover had fantasized about momentarily. It is a well-known fact in theatre and psychology that an onlooker who remains outside of any session where people are going out of their comfort zone in any way completely affects everyone's ability to let his or her guard down. It is critical that all who are present participate. All of us are differently abled and have different kinds of bodies, so each participant has unique contributions to make in terms of movement and vocal skills to bring to the team. Everyone should be absolutely in the midst of everything, to the extent that it is possible. If a person is tired, we use this in a scene and make choices that accommodate, but keep them involved. If people have any kind of temporary or ongoing limitation to how they can effectively speak the text or enact a character's pathway or gestures, we work with it and include this new interpretation in the performance, but we keep

going. A person's choices in response to their physical limitations, abilities, or health can add rich dimensionality to characters as soon as they utter their first lines.

## TIME

Time is a factor that bears mentioning. This work is not ideal for the hurried 30-minute "lunch and learn" format. In fact, eating and rehearsing at the same time are just not done because they never go well together. Instead, this work can be thought of as an evening seminar or a daylong workshop. The advantages gained by having real-life events literally play out before one's eyes, and of giving time to perform some meaningful, in-depth analysis, to really engage in the rehearsal, performance and reflection processes, is invaluable. We highly recommend at least a three-hour window, with snacks or a meal provided before or after depending on the time.

We tend to move from one task to the next in our day-to-day lives in schools and rarely have prolonged periods of sustained study in one area. Even on a staff retreat, the agenda is usually so multifarious that each item garners only a small portion of the morning or afternoon. We are used to moving on, to abandoning each topic as we move to a new one—though we all know the residual feelings, whether joys or pains or otherwise, hover long after the topic is closed. With *DiTL* workshops, participants are allowed to go deeper into the subject matter via the stories in the scripts and all the discourse that is instigated by the work. To understand a script is to understand an entire phenomenon of micropolitical action and reaction among a group of adult professionals in schools. It is not advisable to squeeze this into a free period used for teacher development or professional learning communities. The longer the workshop, as long as participants are fully aware of what they are signing on to, the more creative have been the results. Team building or staff building is a fantastic byproduct of this endeavor and makes such a commitment doubly valuable.

## FRAMEWORK FOR AN ITINERARY

We designed the *Drama in Teacher Leadership* as a two-day intensive workshop. Two days are ideal for a well-rounded experience that includes multiple plays, rehearsals, and a performance rotation. However, an abridged format can still be accomplished successfully in a one-day format.

**Table 7.1** *Drama in Teacher Leadership* proposed schedules

<i>One-day Sample agenda</i>		<i>Two-day Sample agenda</i>	
<i>Time</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Focus</i>
Session 1: Morning	Welcoming, introductions, orientation/framing Writing activity & introductions Mini-lecture Individual explorations	Session 1: Morning See one-day Agenda + break + Session 1.5: Bodily knowing, ensemble-building, kinesthetic awareness, relationships	
Break		See Day 1 Working lunch	
Session 2: Morning	List of characters/roles Choosing roles Character analysis & creation Script analysis Ensemble explorations Status/power/voice	After working lunch Session 2: Afternoon Same as one-day agenda + Session 2.5 Session on leadership values, attitudes, beliefs, and how those are embodied in everyday life	
Working lunch	Read individual parts and mark lines Ask the six questions of the character Walk in the character's spine		
Session 3: Afternoon	Articulation exercises Blocking and direction	Day 2 Session 3: Morning Same as one-day agenda + break + Session 3.5 Session on voice, inflection, emphasis, blocking, and advanced staging Working lunch with scripts	
Break			
Session 4: Afternoon	Rehearsals Performances Short post-performance debriefing	Session 4: Afternoon Same as one-day Afternoon agenda + Session 4.5 In-depth post-performance debriefing and ensemble brainstorming on site-specific applications of the drama in teacher leadership	

Depending on the depth of the work desired, the more hours in that one-day format, the better (Table 7.1).

The performing-artist educator and the teacher-leadership educator design the methods, facilitate warm-ups, lead relaxation exercises, take people through aural and kinesthetic experiences, and develop ways of

gauging the trust level as it grows between the facilitators and participants. They take time to work with the participants to explain the plays, cast the parts, and then begin the character analysis process. The analysis process is facilitated as project-based learning where participants work in small groups and with the rest of the cast. These warm-ups, visualization, body and vocal activities, along with short lectures and discussions on the landscape of teacher leadership today comprise the morning portion of the workshop or first third of the shared time.

The middle portion of any *DiTL* workshop is devoted to the study of scripts and discussions about the scenes with scene partners as well as performances and reflections. The facilitators help the actors rehearse, and give specific coaching to each person to get them ready for performance. The final third of the workshop consists of the performances shared by small groups for the rest of the larger group, the facilitation of a group reflection, further analysis, a review of the day, and closure activities. A wrap-up time is required to reflect on each person's experience and immersion into the teacher-leadership scenarios, issues, and challenges. Sometimes the ethnotheatre methods, because they draw on realistic but fictionalized accounts of incidents in schools, have a poignancy and power that takes some participants by surprise. By the end of the workshop, strong feelings about the systemic and structural inequities working against teacher leadership are shared in brilliant and emotional ways that draw open the curtain to reveal the full and rich lives of each unique teacher leader. It cannot be emphasized enough: no matter the actual workshop length, a sense of unhurried time while working collaboratively will elicit the best results.

### THE JOURNALS

Though much is shared overtly in discussions, rehearsals, and performance, much of our understandings of arts-based work is internalized and may not easily find expression in conversation or discussion. In our researched workshops, we provided breaks in which each person can take a few minutes to complete an *Ink Your Thinking exercise*. Writing prompts are projected or shared on paper, either before or after the workshop and periodically throughout the process. The *Ink Your Thinking* moments help capture and shape the percolating thoughts and

developing images that participants cultivate during their own processes of meaning-making. Journaling ensured the reflections are given some form. The writings could remain private if desired but sometimes the participants volunteer to use their reflections to enrich small and large group discussions. Quiet writing moments allow participants to record and prioritize pivotal learning from the workshop. We strongly recommend that workshop co-facilitators prepare a set of well-thought-out prompts to elicit ideas and musings that are specific to their group's unique needs and interests.

### ONGOING GROUP DEVELOPMENT

A successful workshop is worth all the effort. There is much joy in seeing people tap into their innate creativity and engage in creative problem-solving, but as we have emphasized, this nuanced and relational work requires and deserves time to unfold. There is a way to develop a group over time. Once a group has galvanized during a *DiTL* experience, it is important for the group to commit to some follow-up meetings. For example, groups could meet quarterly during the academic year to process the *DiTL* workshop discoveries. Follow-up meetings that focus on the issues discovered in a play can dramatically and positively impact the ongoing work of teacher leaders in schools. Furthermore, a group can continue to meet to explore an additional script in perhaps a two-hour period. This is a way of acknowledging that this groundwork, once laid, can be built upon. A play-reading group can meet every two months to touch base and perform a new play.

### FIVE MINUTES TO PLACES

How ready are you? If all of the theatre exercises do not make sense or sound doable, and the phrase “vocal warm-up” sends you running, you need to find a theatre co-facilitator with a large background in education, to do the theatre work. If you fear the participants will have a lot of questions about the way schools work, are organized, or structured, you need to find an educational leadership co-facilitator. When you discover your skill sets are indeed complementary and complete, then do not be afraid to embark!



## SCRIPTS

In the next chapter, we offer three original one-act plays on teacher leadership with corresponding framing summaries, and a list of characters. We suggest finding the one that is most applicable to your current context and begin building your workshop day around it. Copies of the plays are available with permission from the authors. A talkback section including suggested questions to frame reflection and discussion follow each play. Allowing each person two to three minutes to share his or her core emotional experience of a play is a nice way to transition from the play to the discussion that might ensue.

## The Scripts

**Abstract** In *The Scripts*, the authors offer something like an opening night speech for the reader and a final checklist that recapitulates the phases covered in the previous chapters that will help launch a successful teacher leadership working group. Three diverse one-act scripts, each dealing with a common challenge to teacher leadership, are given in their entirety, complete with character lists, settings, stage directions, and post-performance discussion guides for group reflection and dialogue.

**Keywords** Scripts on teacher leadership • One-act plays on teacher leadership • Ethnotheatre and teacher leadership

### PRIOR TO THE CURTAIN-RISING

There is a little bit of time before the performance. *The stage* is concealed from the audience. The curtains hang without any movement and drape the upcoming performance in darkness. This common piece of textile, however, is not hung by chance.

While excitement grows in the almost-full auditorium, the curtain creates a space into which the audience cannot see. It divides two different spaces: one where everything is common and usual, and a second one, that the audience cannot see, at least not yet, that is different from the first.

You may have reservations about the character that you chose or were assigned to play. In fact, you might be downright afraid to act. In many cases, this apprehension is quite typical and the anxiety is a normal emotion. Playing someone else is not easy and requires focus and rehearsal, but it is possible.

By acting out the scripted scenarios you are exploring how another person is likely to act, react, and feel as she or he experiences an event and/or relationship that is mired in ethical tensions.

With these factors in mind, let us offer some reminders:

1. It is vitally important to do your best to stay in character and to attempt to realistically take on the role. We have seen people come in and out of character as they become nervous. Staying in character involves trying to understand your character's perspective, motivations, and feelings, and honoring these as you enact the role. You are not just attempting to *walk a mile* in her or his shoes but to live inside her or his skin and get a felt understanding of what that means.
2. Practice enacting the role in the voice you will actually use. Do not stay at the same volume throughout, of course. Increase or decrease your volume, and change your pitch to emphasize important words and phrases.
3. Focus on your posture and movement. Enact the role as directed. The scenes are for the living, so live them out. Try not to exaggerate gestures and facial expressions. Keep them as natural as the character would.
4. Speak to the faces of your ensemble as you rehearse and perform. Make real eye contact. Look at one face for as long as it takes to say a phrase and then move to one of the other faces in another part of the room.
5. Vary the pace/tempo of your dialogue. Emphasize important points with dramatic pauses. Perfecting the tempo will help you breathe naturally and decrease any anxiety you may be feeling.

CHECKLIST FOR FACILITATING *DiTL* WORKSHOPS**Table 8.1** Checklist for Facilitating a *DiTL* Workshop

<input type="checkbox"/>	FACILITATION TEAM
<input type="checkbox"/>	PARTICIPANTS
<input type="checkbox"/>	SPACE
<input type="checkbox"/>	SETS-PROPS-COSTUMES
<input type="checkbox"/>	EXERCISES FOR TOTAL GROUP INVOLVEMENT
<input type="checkbox"/>	TIME/DATE
<input type="checkbox"/>	ITINERARY
<input type="checkbox"/>	JOURNALS/PROMPTS
<input type="checkbox"/>	PLANS FOR ONGOING DEVELOPMENT
<input type="checkbox"/>	SCRIPTS

After reviewing the checklist for facilitating a *DiTL* workshop (see Table 8.1), you are ready to begin. After one last arranged nod, the curtain rises and the performance begins. Lights illuminate a stage full of pictures, scenes, characters and their stories. The tone of the performance spreads out to the audience and they take in the drama, breathe out, and then settle back for the show.

There is no longer a curtain between the audience and the stage. When the curtain rises, barriers disappear. Audience and performers begin to merge into a common experience of the *Drama in Teacher Leadership*. At the start, the witnesses and performers are unknown to each other, but theatre provides for a common experience of the dramatic world of schools in which there is a double meeting—real people hoping to be or support real teacher leaders and the characters they might discover they are happy they met—here in this space that illuminates the highlights and shadows of human behavior and potential. You do not need a curtain or lights or folding seats to have a profoundly creative journey into creativity, education, and art. How much more helpful that all of this happens before the teacher faces the embodied micropolitics in school staffrooms!

Enjoy the show.

CESAR AND CECILE

Clearing a conscience or netting a credential?

A Play in One-Act

By

Jerome Cranston and Kristin Kusanovich

“Cesar and Cecile” is one of several one-act ethnodramas developed for the Drama in Teacher Leadership Workshops that explores the emotional toll of teacher leadership

## SIX CHARACTERS

- CESAR WATSON: A graduate student and promising future teacher leader in his practicum years, on the verge of clearing his credential. Attributes his familial and cultural background to guiding him constantly to do what is right. Is in an ethnic minority at the school where he is working to clear his credential.
- DR. CECIL MARQUETTE: A professor and advisor of Cesar's at Municipal University who insists that students call her Cecil.
- MR. SCOREGAIN: A problematic teacher disciplinarian, who wields the power of his position over students in private, but knows how to look good in the eyes of the higher-ups.
- PRINCIPAL: A conflicted individual with a background in liberal arts and humanities who is desperately trying to maintain federal funding for his low-performing school.
- NARRATOR: / COOK Frames the action. Also reads lines of COOK in different voice.
- NEBRASKAN COLLEAGUE: A character who has seen it all in terms of disastrous interpersonal political power plays in schools.

### SETTING

A taqueria that is the frequent meeting place for professor Cecile Marquette and student Cesar Watson to conduct a monthly check-in about his placement. Principal is also there, at a separate table. Mr. Scoregain, the English teacher, shows up in the imagination of Cesar, to the side of the stage and later joins the principal at his table.

### TIME

Evening. January

## NARRATOR

Cesar was in the midst of his final year in the Educational Leadership graduate program at Municipal University earning his teaching credential and working several odd jobs to get by. He had chosen a practicum placement where he thought he could truly make a difference; a local girls' school known as a community school, which in his town, was a euphemism for where the kids who can't make it in regular high school go. He was teaching girls from mostly low-income homes almost all of whom were bilingual, as he was. The school had requested a reading and writing specialist, and not long after he arrived Cesar was also given an array of other courses and tasks to fulfill. Duties as assigned meant everything from teaching social studies, running the choir, and offering visual arts on Fridays to a few school maintenance jobs. Such is the plight of some schools nationwide in impoverished communities where the teaching staff pitch in to keep the venture called schooling financially afloat.

Cesar and his faculty mentor from his university program, Cecile, stood in line at the neighborhood taqueria where they met weekly to discuss his practicum placement. His principal happens to be in the taqueria as well, but his conversation takes place in a completely different space.

(CESAR and CECILE come to stand side-by-side behind a table as if they are being helped at a take-out food place, facing the audience)

## CESAR

(Not looking very interested in food)

I have had a really rough afternoon.

## PRINCIPAL

(On cell phone in corner)

You mean to tell me I drove all the way to this taqueria to meet you and now you can't come because you are stuck in the district office advocating for our funding because our API scores are lower than the other three elementary schools? How did that happen?

(pause)

That makes no sense. I suggested that—you know some special families—should have a family-centered sharing English day

(pause)

Yes, of course, so those special kids would stay home during the testing period

Yeah, I did what you said. I personally delivered the test to those children's houses; the ones who were sick but good scorers.



(pause)

At the schools? Well, to make sure everyone had time to finish I had them cancel Science, PE, all of the arts and dropped recess.

We should have done better on those tests.

(pause)

Of course, it's all legal [slight laugh]. Above the law? Sure. Remember I took that educational law class. But maybe just barely, though.

(Louder laugh)

DR. CECILE MARQUETTE

(Concerned)

Are you still in the mood for tacos?

NARRATOR

Cecile could tell that this supper meeting was not going to be a light-hearted check-in with Cesar about his progress in becoming a teacher.

CESAR

(Fluently)

Buenas noches. ¿Podemos por favor cada uno tiene dos tacos? No, no soda para mi. Gracias. Solamente agua por favor.

DR. CECILE MARQUETTE

(Handing some money to the cashier as if handing money to audience)

Gracias.

CESAR

(Looking straight out and speaking to himself)

I'm done with that placement.

(He is biting his lip and nodding intently at Cecile with the empty soda cup in his hand. She indicates that they should make their way to an imaginary soda machine and try to find the water button; they finally do and fill their cups.)

NARRATOR

Cecile had time to wonder about all the possibilities while they got their water, fixed small paper cups of salsa, and took a bright orange booth. Did Cesar just walk out in January, in the middle of the year, and not only leave the school without a teacher but in making a statement burn a bridge that might never let him return? He didn't seem the type. Or perhaps, she thought,

DR. CECILE MARQUETTE

(To herself only)

Maybe he doesn't know any better that that is not something graduate students do, even if they are mad.

NARRATOR

Cecile deliberately let go of the lightning-fast judgment of Cesar that had momentarily swept over her. Cecile wasn't sure what could have happened. She assumed the best of Cesar again, like she usually did. Could his mentor teacher, the one that she had set him up to work with, have done something or said something to him that was so offensive and hurtful that it might send him packing? Did he get an unfair evaluation and have no one to turn to?

(CESAR and CECILE seated, facing each other)

DR. CECILE MARQUETTE

When did this start?

CESAR

Oh, like November or maybe October.

DR. CECILE MARQUETTE

(With mixed feelings, intonations)

Ahhh!

NARRATOR

She felt surprised that he had not told her anything during all of their previous weekly meetings. She had notes and notes on his lesson plans and tutoring work with the girls who had pretty complicated lives. She wondered if her status as one of the best advisors in the graduate program would be affected in a negative way if one of her students caused any kind of scene. Then she felt bad about thinking of her career and upcoming evaluation for tenure, corrected herself, and listened carefully.

CESAR

I didn't want to tell you this, Professor, because I thought I could handle it on my own. I really truly thought I had just hit a rough spot and could solve it myself. I know what's right and wrong. And, what I saw was wrong. I had no choice but to act. Actions speak louder than words, right?

DR. CECILE MARQUETTE

So what was it, Cesar, what happened? Did you quit or, well, did they tell you leave?

CESAR

I can't go back. They told me my last day was today. They told me at the end of the day, told me not to show up at the choir festival scheduled for Thursday night. (pause) I guess they already found a substitute for me, and now my kids will have that guy conduct them. I can't go back, even to the choir event. My kids won't understand and they'll think I abandoned them. I can't even talk to them, apparently, and just say goodbye. Sad thing though is they are not even thinking about the kids.

DR. CECILE MARQUETTE

They?

PRINCIPAL

(Still on the phone)

I told that grad student, Caesar I think that was his name: C A E S A R [pronounced slowly]. That young guy who all the kids clung to. I told him that he had to pack up his things and head back to university and take a few courses on respecting teachers. Especially the ones at my school. Can you imagine? He wanted to come back for the choir concert in the evening. I told him: No way! You aren't welcome on the premises. He didn't get that's what happens when you are fired—even from a practicum placement.

DR. CECILE MARQUETTE

(Obviously upset)

But you were doing awesome things with literacy, the reading projects, the writing groups, and the choir on top of that. Your students really appreciated your lessons and your extra help in the tutoring clinic and everything, Cesar. Why could they or would they ever want to lose you?

NARRATOR AS COOK

(With back to audience, up to the ceiling, very loudly)

SHRIMP TACOS!

NARRATOR

The amazing vocal projection of the cook always impressed the regulars at this family establishment and just then their order was called out loud and

clear. Cesar jumped up to get the plastic baskets from the counter and slid back into the booth with the smile of someone who has been hurt.

CESAR

(Gaining intensity and clarity about this story)

You see, Professor, this teacher I was assigned to shadow, this exemplary award-winning teacher is actually really not a good person. He yells at the students all day long, humiliates them regarding their grasp of the English language, chides them for not having heard of certain poets and they feel scared and intimidated. The mind games going on in that classroom are pretty intense. The girls already have enough on their plate.

MR. SCOREGAIN

(Swept up in oratory style and pacing dramatically back and forth as if teaching)

Someone asked me why we were reading this text.

(Waves a hard cover book around)

And I said, because it is a classic. And that, my dear students, should be the end of the conversation. And if you aren't succeeding in this high school, which is partially funded by really important computer inventors, you might as well just go get a job washing cars. Let the Asian kids take over everything, at least everything having to do with math and science since you can't handle them, and what am I saying, you probably don't want to study math, girls, I mean, come on. But back to English, I can't understand why all teachers aren't using the word lists that are most likely to show up on the high stakes tests? I mean those tests determine whether this school even exists next year and it's your job to make sure you have a school next year. Did you know the common core requires depth of thinking, analysis, evaluation, and all sorts of other higher order thinking? And if you haven't read the classics how can you really call yourself a fully formed human being? Okay, get out your notebooks and copy everything that I've written on the board, and no talking!

DR. CECILE MARQUETTE

How much does the principal know about this teacher's antics?

NARRATOR

Cecile was unable to eat now; she had a feeling a person gets when she knows she is about to hear a story of someone standing up to an injustice, speaking truth to power, so to speak, and getting the boot for it.

CESAR

I requested to meet with the principal to talk about what I saw happening in the classroom, I mean, I figured the principal probably didn't know what was happening. It's hard to observe everything. But, when I said that the full-time teacher I was working under was yelling all the time and really creating a toxic atmosphere, the principal just told me it was just a matter of teaching style.

PRINCIPAL

(Turning to audience imploringly to influence them from his chair)

Oh yeah, we have some hard cases here and the tough-love principle is the only way to get them engaged. It's important to look at the whole picture, Caesar; it's Caesar, correct? Mr. Scoregain is really making the school's API look good and the results don't lie. His kids get the best numbers for us in his English classes and many of those kids come in knowing barely anything.

CESAR

I thought we could have a professional conversation as educators so I mentioned that I didn't think that those English scores were really attributable to Mr. Scoregain because that group of kids came into the year already strong from the previous year. I tried to explain that it wasn't really Mr. Scoregain who was responsible for much change at all, especially not much over this half a year.

NARRATOR

Both Cesar and Cecile sat there smelling their still untouched food. Cecile contemplated the moral integrity of this quiet student of hers. Then she felt disheartened as she saw that it was precisely his right action which left him somehow blind to what others would sometimes refer to as the way things work.

DR. CECILE MARQUETTE

Well, I guess that explains how you got here. I guess you're paying the price for that just action which we as teacher educators constantly refer to as real leadership for change; teacher leadership; leadership from within, even without the formal title or label of leader. We teach you to think about school improvement and to care about every student.

CESAR

(Respectfully, apologetically, worried)

Oh, I'm not saying that any of that is bad, Professor, I like that part of our program and it...

## DR. CECILE MARQUETTE

(Interrupting him but to criticize herself and her program)

No, I know you are good with this but I've been giving it a lot of thought and I am not so good with it. I mean, Cesar, we market our pre-service programs with the glib enticement that you can be the change you want to see. Then you're asked to clean out your desk and return your keys when everything you are doing is right. It is spot on. Yep, after it's all said and done you're asked to leave because you chose to defend the defenseless, correct misperception, and not allow someone to accept credit where it wasn't earned.

## NARRATOR

Days later Cecile shared this heartbreaking story with a colleague out in Nebraska whom she thought would never know either of these people, and he said,

## NEBRASKA COLLEAGUE

Well, didn't he know that's a good way to lose his job? What a C.E.M.!

## NARRATOR

Cecile did not know what a C.E.M. was and worried it was some sort of ethnic slight and that her colleague was about to reveal to her some uncouth thoughts that he had heretofore kept under wraps.

## NEBRASKA COLLEAGUE

Cecile, it stands for a career-ending move. What did that kid think would happen? Do we have to tell them everything, now? Yup, he sure stumbled right into a C.E.M. with that bright idea of his to go up against that kind of power-hungry jerk of a teacher.

## NARRATOR

It was as if everyone knows you can't really touch certain subjects, like damaging, under the radar, in-class, power-trip behavior, even if children are being affected negatively. When it comes to a poorly performing teacher who is favored by the principal, your leadership in defending the children is anything but welcome.

(Under the next portion of narration Cecile gets up slowly and moves away from the table a few steps, toward the principal. Mr. Scoregain has stepped into the picture and is sitting next to the principal.)

Cesar was not totally naïve. He was aware that someday if he had a family to provide for he could not always act with such boldness. He might not be able to make that decision to speak up later. But he could make it now when he was just a grad student.

(Cecile is seated in the principal's office across the desk with the principal and Mr. Scoregain is seated on the other side.)

DR. CECILE MARQUETTE

Thanks for meeting with me. I wanted to discuss what happened with my student. I am speaking of Cesar? Do you remember Cesar? I am sorry it took so long for me to request this meeting. I was overseeing 40 placements this year and trying to get a book published so when June rolled around I just realized, I mean, I felt I needed to check in.

PRINCIPAL

I thought his name was Caesar? Someone said they thought he was Italian?

DR. CECILE MARQUETTE

(Speaking directly to the principal and slightly surprised)

I wasn't expecting Mr. Scoregain to be at this meeting. I mean I'm fine with him being here, of course. I guess I'm just a little surprised you didn't mention it.

MR. SCOREGAIN

Well, Professor Marquette, our Professional Code of Ethics, clearly states that concerns about anyone's teaching practice must be discussed firstly with the teacher at the center.

(Holding up and waving the code of professional practice)

And, since we're talking about my former student teacher, well, I'd certainly be at the center of anything you might want to discuss with the principal. Don't you think?.

(Exchanging a wink with the principal)

DR. CECILE MARQUETTE

(Noticing the wink, pausing, shifting uncomfortably)

Well, Mr. Scoregain, let us three work on sorting out what happened.

PRINCIPAL

(Mainly to Mr. Scoregain, with ease, showy, for approval)

I thought you folks over at Municipal University taught ethics and all that stuff? Or did you folks drop that in favor of some new politically correct

course? That's probably why that poor Caesar fellow got in trouble. He probably wasn't taught about the things that really matter in school. They need to learn that there's a way to do things around schools: it's called learning a school's culture.

DR. CECILE MARQUETTE

(Pretending to be impressed)

Hmmm.

(Pressing onward, direct)

I thought we could start by discussing your observations and assessment of Cesar in his duties in the classroom and school so that we both, we all, could establish, could come to a basic consensus about the high quality of his work in this placement. Then we could look at whether the student broke any policies, protocols or was anything but respectful in his interactions with you....even though he did raise some criticisms and questions that you might not have been comfortable with...you see, everything in his life....

(All three in the meeting look down and freeze)

NARRATOR

Life—family, culture, and experience—had taught Cesar to do what was right and just, to stand up for the young and the vulnerable. He had thought that any school's culture would be similar.

CESAR

(Looking at the audience)

I'm good with my decision. Yeah, I'm at peace with it even if it left me personally and financially a little scarred. I made it through the year. Dr. Marquette found me a much better school to finish up in. At least I know what it costs to lead. Yeah, I learned about the school's culture, and I had never thought about *culture* as this negative thing, but school culture, it can totally go either way. And I know she talked to the principal, which I didn't ask her to do, but I don't know if anything happened so those kids won't be with that teacher next year. Someday when I am back in another school or running a school I am going to do what I can to prevent that kind of culture from taking hold, if it is at all possible to do that.

END



## CESAR AND CECILE

Clearing a conscience or netting a credential?

*PLAYWRIGHT TALK BACK*

When we sat down and created the character of Cesar, he was conceived as a representation of a graduate student who had been schooled in teacher leadership by his well-intentioned advisor, Cecile. We have tried to make it obvious in the interactions that Cecile cares for Cesar's success as a teacher and for his overall well-being. Though perhaps, like far too many college or university professors who profess to know what it is really like "out there," Cecile was caught off guard by the lack of seamless transition between the concepts she passionately lectures about and the gritty reality that her students soak in as they learn what are called "the hard facts" of adult-life inside the confine of school that exists as a social reality of competing interests.

The principal—like so many administrators these days—is under unrelenting public pressure to leverage improvement: to improve students' test scores, increase student engagement, garner community support, and oversee the professionalization of teaching. Plus a principal must improve a myriad of other factors that everyone expects the principal can influence. True enough, we have exaggerated some dimensions of the principal's traits for dramatic effect, but from our collective experience, those exaggerations are not of some grotesque magnitude that would render the character unrecognizable from those who have held or do hold office, or we have worked with.

We did not conjure up Scoregain to be presented as a "archetype" of a teacher, but he is, rather, a composite of so many of the dominant teacher discourses that can inflict the educational system—"if only those kids had better parents then they would do better at school"; "if only the kids parents really cared then the students would be engaged"; "if it were not for the way new immigrants cling to their old cultural traditions we would be such a more cohesive nation"; "back in the day, when we concentrated on the basics, kids did so much better"; and the common dirge—"obviously the colleges of education are not preparing teachers for real teaching anymore."

When we have witnessed this one-act play being performed we have noticed that most of the participants have felt that the core emotional

experience threaded throughout the play was one of injustice—toward the children and toward the student teacher who was trying to defend the students. We have, however, also encountered audience members who have more easily found fault in Cesar before finding faults with other characters—whether in their actions, motivations, or competencies.

This has reminded us of how hard it is to honor multiple perspectives especially when those perspectives have the tendency to victimize those who speak up as victims or on behalf of victims. Some of our actors and audience members expressed a level of what is best described as disdain about Cesar’s naïve idealism. While the play points to a variety of possibilities of where to focus responsibility in a situation like this, such as official classroom teacher Mr. Scoregain, the principal, the university advisor, Cesar, or what can be referred to as the systemic problems that seem intractable to education, it is still surprising to hear where fingers are pointed.

**Table 8.2** Reflection and discussion prompts for Cesar and Cecile

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Prompt #1:	What is your group’s reaction? Give each person a chance to speak for two to three minutes on the core emotional experience of the play, whether as actor or witness. Then invite each participant to write or pair-share on each of the following prompts, reporting back to the group after each or after all have shared their initial thoughts.
Prompt #2:	Cesar’s assumptive worldview was that change for the better is welcomed in schools. How could Cesar’s graduate program or school leadership team have prepared him better for what is referred to as “the way things are” at the same time as it was instilling in him a commitment to teacher leadership, justice for students, and other worthy values?
Prompt #3:	How are the different characters in this play, whether on stage or off, experiencing suffering?
Prompt #4:	What prior conditions in this pre-service teacher’s school site/culture created an environment where a well-meaning graduate student could lose his or her placement or job for trying to right a fundamental wrong or flaw that was directly affecting the well-being of children?
Prompt #5:	Which character are you most likely to play in the future and how could you, in playing that part in your professional life a different way than was done here, help diminish the emotional toll on a promising teacher leader like Cesar if he were to encounter the same problematic classroom?

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STEFAN AND VICKY

Passive-aggressive mentoring or workplace harassment?

A Play in One-Act

By

Jerome Cranston and Kristin Kusanovich

“Stefan and Vicky” is one of several one-act ethnodramas developed for the Drama in Teacher Leadership Workshops that explores the emotional toll of teacher leadership

## SIX CHARACTERS

- STEFAN  
Early career teacher. Had graduated in the top of his class and been involved in school governance in college and community outreach programs. Dresses with a sense of sophistication and some flair.
- VICKY  
Early career teacher at another school. Often asked to mentor new teachers even though she was relatively new herself. Never seen without a beautifully wrapped scarf.
- RALPH  
A veteran teacher at Stefan's school who conveys a sense of being "busy all the time." His messy office is living proof of how hardworking he is. He enjoys mentoring younger colleagues. Wears pressed chinos and a polo shirt.
- NARRATOR/YOUNGER TEACHER  
Can also play Tim/Lisa.
- TIM (THE OLD GUARD)  
Gulf war veteran. Connected to group that holds to traditions and views held only by small number. Willing to speak about his real feelings about immigrants.
- LISA  
Vice-Principal. Prides herself on never adding fuel to a flame. Supposes everything is subjective, a construct. Feels like she understands equity issues.

SETTING

A locally owned coffee shop.

TIME

Afternoon. April.

(VICKY is sitting on the side of a little round table for two, facing an empty chair. She already has her drink and is grading some student's papers.

At the other table, is a patron minding his own business, who will be the voice of RALPH and will only address the audience directly. RALPH is not really there.

At the same table sits the NARRATOR [if NARRATOR is all parts, if not TIM can sit with RALPH and the NARRATOR and LISA can be at another table]

NARRATOR

This is Victoria. Also known as Vicky.

(Enter STEFAN, with coffee, taking the empty seat at VICKY's table. Looking around quickly to ensure he didn't recognize anyone.)

And this is Stefan. He chose this coffee shop because it is far enough away that he doesn't have to worry about running into a colleague from the school he works at. He often feels every coffee shop within a mile radius of the school is filled with disgruntled educators bashing their administrations, or the parents of the students. He wanted to believe he wasn't the type to go on and on in hushed tones. Or at least that he had more of a reason than the other coffee-drinking educators grabbing a macchiato at 3:30 pm.

STEFAN

I see you got your...

VICKY

Oh yeah, I'm all set. Hey, Stef, this is a nice place. I'd never heard of it.

STEFAN

Oh...thanks. Yeah, it's locally owned. By a Brazilian Philipino guy. I found it a few months ago.

VICKY

So, how have you been? How's the year going?

STEFAN

Getting by. I know it's going to take some time. So I'm going slowly and taking care of myself. I started doing yoga. Plus the meds also help.

NARRATOR

Vicky and Stefan graduated from the same multiple-subject urban teaching program a few years back. They became close after graduation when they had run into each other at a beginning teachers workshop. Since then they always try to stay in touch.

VICKY

I read your Facebook post. Are you doing better sleeping?

STEFAN

Yeah, most nights are pretty decent. I wake up and toss around a little. Usually can fall back to sleep, but probably once or twice a week I just can't sleep. It just won't happen and then I start to replay it over and over again. I usually take something and sometimes it helps... but not always.

VICKY

Is that guy still in your department?

STEFAN

Oh yeah. Yeah. Yes he's not going anywhere. He couldn't go anywhere, you know? I'm sorry. I wasn't going to talk about him. I mean, I'm trying not to as much lately.

VICKY

(With empathy)

You look tired.

STEFAN

Yeah, I guess I am. Did I ever really tell you what happened? I mean, you know how excited I was when I got the job.

VICKY

Yes, I wish I had known you better back then. I saw you had an Edward Gorey-themed bash to celebrate the start of your new job. It looked pretty fun. I saw the photos from it on your Facebook.

(Pausing because he says nothing, trying to lighten the mood)

And I actually have a great outfit for that theme.

STEFAN

(Oblivious, beginning to sink into the memory)

It all started with the time that I sat in the department meeting paralyzed by shock as Ralph, my new department head, railed about what he called a...

RALPH

(Turning to audience with upper body, overlapping STEFAN always)

a new administrative crackdown.

STEFAN and RALPH

(In unison)

...on non-conformist teachers.

STEFAN

And I remember that look. Glaring across the room at me. He said...

RALPH

We all need to be teaching the same thing at the same time. It's about being a team player, and people who don't like it need to get out. We operate by the FIFO principle around here. Fit in or fuck off!

VICKY

Wow, what a jerk.

STEFAN

I should have seen what was ahead. First of all, I hate it when people use the F-word in a school meeting. Second, Ralph was a pretty mediocre teacher and students let me know that right away. And that was just the first attack on my teaching that Ralph made. It was this weird colleague-to-colleague bullying that apparently no one is aware of. I mean he went out of his way to make me feel incompetent as a beginning teacher, I mean in September of my first year. I was already so scared of not getting a permanent contract,

(Leaning in a little, checking the room once more, quieter)

Vicky, he would sit down next to me in the lunchroom and tell me that...

STEFAN and RALPH

(In unison)

just between us colleagues...



## RALPH

Your practice of shutting your classroom door and doing what you believed was in the best interests of your students without considering how it made the rest of us look has earned you a reputation for not being “a team player.” I heard someone even call you a prima donna. I just wanted to do you a professional favor of letting you know that you are being perceived as someone who seems to be above it all. I’ve heard you have little meetings in the lunchroom to talk about your pedagogical ideas with other teachers in our program. That is undermining to our department. It’s not that you aren’t a good beginning teacher and all, you are, but you know we are really into transparency and clear communication around here.

## VICKY

(With energy)

Oh, that bloody transparency crap. At a well-run school it’s about sharing ideas. When a school is falling apart is when everybody starts talking about transparency. No, not everybody. Usually just the most incompetent ones who don’t understand why they are not effective. They imagine something the other teachers are doing is deliberately being hidden from them and all they need to do is draw back this imaginary curtain. They want that mysterious thing to be well, more, transparent so they can get a piece of it.

## STEFAN

I was just finding my friends at lunchtime and talking shop—those were great discussions. It was kind of like an organically forming professional learning community. Remember our course on PLCs in college? Yeah, but this was a real one happening. I wasn’t trying to run a meeting or vote on new secret curricular changes.

## VICKY

You are good, Stefan, that is the problem. You are just good at what you do. Man! Why is that such a threat?

## STEFAN

Exactly! I mean Ralph would say things like...

RALPH  
(Overlapping)

When the graduates gave you a standing ovation did you stop to think how that made all of the other teachers feel? I mean, I know it was out of your control and you didn't put them up to that. It just seems you don't understand the effect it will have on the whole team. You don't want to be seen as being too good for the rest of us, do you?

VICKY

Wow, Stefan, that's rough.

STEFAN

I stopped feeling comfortable just meeting colleagues for lunch because of the misperception about it. I mean, sure my teaching approach was different from most of the other teachers in my department. But whenever I attended department meetings and suggested that we use arts-based projects in our classes or that we start to use more diverse, relevant articles and new novels, literature coming out of Africa or South America, either my ideas were ignored or I was told they just wouldn't work. "Might sound nice in a university text book," Ralph would say.

RALPH

But it won't work in the real world. I gotta hand it to this new generation of teachers coming out of Millennial University. I mean, book smarts, yeah, ok, but no understanding of what it's really like in the classroom. Culturally sensitive pedagogy, I mean, come on, we've got other fish to fry.

STEFAN

Very quickly I learned to keep my mouth shut. I continued to do what I thought was best for the students: innovative and culturally responsive teaching, but I did it behind my closed classroom door.

VICKY

That sounds tough. You know, as a new teacher with some innovative ideas, really, you are a leader in the new ways to access literature. Taking into

account the students' actual lived experiences, and actually making them create something. That is big important stuff. But receiving the professional isolation from that must have been hard.

STEFAN

It wasn't exactly the isolation that was hard. I mean, in the classroom things were pretty awesome. The students were getting it and totally into it. They made me so happy. When the bell would ring and on a good day, we didn't want to let the spirit of what was happening go. It was what happened out of my classroom. It felt like I was being attacked. By the time I would get home I'd feel exhausted, depressed, and after a while started to feel physically sick with anxiety before the day even began.

VICKY

No wonder you were having trouble sleeping. Did the situation get any better?

STEFAN

No, it got way worse. One day when I walked into the lunchroom one of the veteran teachers, Tim, part of the group that called themselves the old guard, was spouting off about some of the families whose kids attended our school.

TIM

We've got to toughen up our immigration laws and start tossing out all these criminals. Refugees, my ass! They could be a bunch of terrorists, for all we know. They come here without jobs, don't pay taxes, want to keep their religion, and speak their language, and then want to send their kids to our schools demanding special accommodations because they claim to be refugees. I can't believe the Department of Education keeps pushing that idiotic inclusion philosophy. That is what's screwing up the education system.

STEFAN

(To VICKY)

I couldn't help myself. I tried, but I couldn't bite my tongue any longer.

(Stands to faces TIM)

But a lot of those refugee kids are our students! Don't you think we owe them something?

(Sits back down, to VICKY)

...The room went silent. I didn't know it then but I soon learned that the social convention among the teachers was to simply tolerate the Old Guard, especially Tim. He was after all, a Veteran of the Gulf War.

RALPH

(As if playing to the teacher lunchroom and emphasizing "him")

So what's the harm if Tim is prone to the occasional profane outburst? Everyone's entitled to his or her opinion. And he served his country, didn't he? Don't we owe him something? Plus, he's got a point.

NARRATOR

Stefan had no idea that Ralph had been a rush hire of the principal's. And that the VP's husband was in the same civic men's group as Ralph and Tim. All of their kids were in football for years together.

STEFAN

I didn't know what to do after that episode. I made an appointment with Lisa, the vice-principal, asking if we could chat about some things. When I tried to tell her about what had happened with Tim she told me that there are multiple perspectives that need to be honored. After all, we live in a postmodern world, don't we?

LISA

Sure it looks pretty simple to you, Stefan. You're fresh out of college. You're idealistic. But in a few years you'll see the world isn't so black and white. It's not our place to judge others. We are all professionals here, and we're all entitled to our own style provided it fits the program.

(Holding a smile, LISA slowly begins an exit that cues simultaneously timed exits of TIM/NARRATOR AND RALPH to different off-stage corners.)

STEFAN

Based on that I decided not tell her anything about my experiences of Ralph. I tried to speak to some of my colleagues about Ralph. The younger teachers

I work with simply advised me to ignore Ralph. One person even suggested I try to find a way to connect with him on an emotional level.

YOUNGER TEACHER

(NARRATOR reappears as YOUNGER TEACHER)

Hey, man, it's all good. Just ignore him and concentrate on your teaching. The students treat surviving his class as sort of rite of passage. Just let it all bounce off you.

(YOUNGER TEACHER EXITS STAGE)

STEFAN

I told them, ok, you try to focus on work, knowing there's an invisible cobra loose somewhere in your school just waiting for a chance to strike.

(Sigh)

I found that most of the other new teachers started to avoid me as the year went on. I was seen as a troublemaker, the non-team player, just like Ralph said.

VICKY

You can't let him get to you.

STEFAN

Every weekday morning, I would pull into the parking lot at the school building and repeatedly listen to the Boomtown Rats *I don't like Mondays* until I could slow my breathing and pretend I was unperturbed. When another colleague who had been bullied confided in me one day that she had been Ralph's target the year before I arrived, well, I knew I couldn't last or wait for someone else to replace me as the "it" guy. I submitted my form for a transfer.

VICKY

No.

STEPHAN

I know, I was told I could have one but that the only opening was a half-time position in a school about 30 miles down the highway. As if that wasn't bad enough, the Human Resources Assistant told me that I was being placed on intensive supervision for the next year because Ralph, being my Department Head, had informed Lisa that I had demonstrated insufficient professional growth as a first year teacher. Does not

collaborate with colleagues well, is what she wrote on my annual performance review. I still feel ashamed that I wasn't tough enough to handle the stress.

VICKY

You did your best, and your students got a great teacher for a while.

STEPHAN

I put all my energy into my teaching and did well despite all this, but that couldn't solve my problem. I just believe I should have been better prepared.

VICKY

Yeah, but who would have believed something like this could happen?

END

## STEFAN AND VICKY

## Passive-aggressive mentoring or workplace harassment?

*PLAYWRIGHT TALK BACK*

Both of us have met Stefan. Sometimes Stefan has arrived at our office doors, clutching a latte with a look of utter shock on his face. While at other times we have found him retreated into his classroom, hunkered down, focused only on what he can be sure of in his own classroom, being the best teacher he can.

We have encountered early career teachers who wanted to be leaders—they genuinely did—and were attempting to demonstrate school-wide leadership in a variety of ways. These beginning teachers understood that being a leader meant taking exemplary but, perhaps, unrefined practices beyond the boundaries of their own classrooms to engage with colleagues both formally but also informally in conversations about what seems to make a difference in the dynamic interface of teaching and learning. Teacher leaders of this ilk seek to improve situations that they believe affect more than the immediacy of their students. They believe in the notion of a college of professionals who are committed to improve each other's practice so that students have a better chance of finding success in school and dedicate themselves to be part of a professional cadre similarly committed.

Vicky is, like many teachers, a thoughtful and kind colleague who is concerned with Stefan's welfare. She has had her own struggles as a beginning teacher—just as almost all novices do—but is surprised that teaching could have taken such an exacting toll on Stefan. Why would you let it get to you so much? The Vicky's wonder.

The cacophony of the careerists, the ones who admonish their colleagues for being too creative, too outside-the-box, is embodied in Ralph and Lisa. From Ralph's stiffly pressed teacher uniform of polo shirt and khaki pants—apologies to those who have been offended by this wardrobe malfunction reference—to his intolerable desire to maintain the status quo of the profession, Ralph's character was crafted to represent the very conservative nature of education.

Lisa is the wisdom of administrative experience that incessantly drones on with clichés such as “let's not just jump on yet another education bandwagon”; or “no need to fix it if it is not broken”; or “once you get some more experience you'll understand” that stifle the imaginative possibility of what schooling could become.

This one-act play resonates with many of the people who have performed in or witnessed it. There has never been a time when we have not had someone in one of our workshops disclose that they have themselves either been subjected to or witnessed some form of bullying in the workplace. To date, none has admitted to being the bully, though.

Interestingly though, at least to us, some of the participants have a hard time finding fault with those in power and seem to want to justify the reactions of those who hold power, the Ralphs and Lisas of schools. We were struck with one participant who left a mark on our memories while wondering out loud if Stefan was actually “lying.” “Stefan just needs to toughen up,” he said. “No one wants a cry-baby as a teacher. Especially not a guy! He can make it, if he can learn to take it.” It should be said that in one-act plays like these, it can be taken as a given that none of the characters who express suffering are trying to deceive the audience. Each one speaks his or her truth as best as he or she can.

**Table 8.3** Reflection and discussion prompts for Stephan and Vicky

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Prompt #1:	What is your group’s reaction? Give each person a chance to speak for two to three minutes on the core emotional experience of the play, whether as actor or witness. Then invite each participant to write or pair-share on each of the following prompts, reporting back to the group after each or after all have shared their initial thoughts.
Prompt #2:	Stefan’s assumptive worldviews were that change for the better is welcomed in schools and innovation that was researched-based and produced excellent results would make the program look good so would be welcomed. How could Stefan’s graduate program or school leadership team have prepared him better for the micropolitics of schools and potentially difficult, some would say “toxic,” personalities, at the same time as it was instilling in him a commitment to teacher leadership, justice for students, and other worthy values?
Prompt #3:	How are the different characters in this play, whether on stage or off, experiencing suffering?
Prompt #4:	What prior conditions in this school site/culture created an environment where a well-meaning teacher leader could end up unprotected from workplace bullying, leaving his job and suffering from a sleeping disorder?
Prompt # 5:	Which character are you most likely to play in the future and how could you, in playing that part in your professional life a different way than was done here, help diminish the emotional toll on a promising teacher leader like Stefan if he were to encounter the same problematic workplace-bullying scenario?

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ASHLEY AND LENA

Diversity dialogues or the marginalization Olympics?

A Play in One-Act

By

Jerome Cranston and Kristin Kusanovich

“Ashley and Lena” is one of several one-act ethnodramas developed for the Drama in Teacher Leadership Workshops that explores the emotional toll of teacher leadership

## SEVEN CHARACTERS

- DARYL PEYTON High School Science teacher. Noticeably uncomfortable with whole GSA idea. Self-described as friendly to LGBTQ community. Against clubs solving any bullying problems at schools. Quick to praise teacher leadership evident in BURNBRIDGE.
- ASHLEY BURNBRIDGE New teacher leader signed up to advise new Gay-Straight Alliance at Mandela High School. Looks young and is sometimes mistaken for a student.
- LENA SITTE High School Language teacher and liaison to the PTA. Worried same sex couples will change school culture. Denier of early identity formation.
- BENEDICTO EDBO High School English Teacher. Ready for change. Progressive. Believes research and intuitions that GSA lessens bullying. Comfortable arguing.
- BERNADETTE SPEARS High School Geography Teacher and club advisor of many groups. Prioritizes ethnic and racially based bullying issues. Upset that new teacher leader's GSA is in focus.
- PETER WALKER High School Math Teacher. Pro-GSA and non-plussed by PEYTON, SITTE, and SPEARS.
- GREG CARTER Veteran teacher with strong opinions. Spends most of the time buried in his book. Doesn't like change. Obsessed with power of pink money.

SETTING

Teacher's Break room.

TIME

Lunchtime.  
Third week of September.  
Present year.

(A teacher's break room:  
 Rectangular table and seven chairs. One at each end and four on upstage side of table facing audience, and one chair is off to the side. Coffee cups and papers on the table. Throughout the play teachers can sit or stand. Sign saying "Please help keep the staffroom clean. Your mother doesn't work here" taped on to the table and hanging facing the audience.

EDBO, WALKER, SITTER are sitting at the table, CARTER sits in the chair off to the side reading. PEYTON enters)

DARYL PEYTON

(Checking Pedometer)

Good...2440 steps already today.

(Fellow faculty member SPEARS briskly enters from off SR, flipping through papers in a folder and trying to read and walk and drink a coffee.)

BERNADETTE SPEARS

Hey, Daryl. What was that singing in the hallway? It didn't sound like the choir.

BENEDICTO EDBO

I think that's the new GSA club. Not sure why they're singing, but good for them.

LENA SITTER

(To EDBO)

Look, I know we voted to have a student-led GSA. But I don't think Ashley Burnbridge should have been the one to start it. She's brand-new.

DARYL PEYTON

Last week I ran into her in the hall and asked where she was going. I seriously thought she was a student, then tried to compliment her on her youthful looks. It was just awful. I felt so embarrassed.

LENA SITTER

It's not just that she's new, I mean, who told her to start it now? It's the third week of September. It's way too early in the year to launch this group.

We haven't even had football homecoming yet. I bet they cause a fuss when it comes to picking homecoming king and queen. I can see it already.

BENEDICTO EDBO

Lena, you sound like one of those right-wing conservatives that claims to be all about equality, but still opposes equal rights. We can't wait for people to be ready for change. If we do, then we will never make any progress. If the kids want a Gay-Straight Alliance, great, and if the homecoming queen turns out to be a guy, then that's their choice. If they want to have two Cinderellas and no Prince Charming, what the heck, it's about damn time things start to change around here.

GREG CARTER

We're not talking about allowing same-sexed couples at the prom? Tell me we are not talking about that.

BENEDICTO EDBO

Lena, Greg, it's a bloody GSA. It's about protecting young people from bullying. And giving them the freedom to develop a sense of who they are, in a safe environment.

(Trying to get PEYTON to weigh in)

Right, Daryl?

(SPEARS enters during CARTER's next lines)

GREG CARTER

Well, I just want to know how come they have all these resources all of a sudden. I hear a donor stepped forward to fund a club outing, some kind of weekend trip to the city for an art crawl. Our key club, choir, and spirit week commission still don't have any teachers to lead them, and we started school weeks ago. Now they make a new club and gave it to a brand-new teacher, she doesn't know what she's said yes to.

BERNADETTE SPEARS

(Busy with collating)

I think I know what everyone's all talking about.

DARYL PEYTON

Look, I'm not against gay people. I've got lots of gay friends. But do you seriously think we can create a clear line between what constitutes bullying versus hurt feelings? Come on, they're kids and they are going to say and do mean things. It's unfortunate but isn't that part of growing up? If we make a club every time a group of kids get their feelings hurt, there'd be no time for teaching.

LENA SITTER

Look, people, we are giving the 16-year-olds way too much credit. Most of them have no self-awareness. ...

DARYL PEYTON

Yeah, half of them probably don't even know the difference between LGBTQ and a BLT. You know, the sandwich?

LENA SITTER

They really have no clue if they are gay, lesbian, or whatever. Most of them don't even shower after Phys. Ed. class. Just walk into any grade ten class near the end of the day, and you'll know what I mean. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual...or heterosexual, they're all just high-schoolers. Show me a regular, I mean, heterosexual kid who is not just as lost regarding relationships, identity, and sex, especially at this age.

BENEDICTO EDBO

Well, yeah, that's why it's an alliance. G.S.A., Gay-Straight Alliance, it's for everyone. It's not a gay only exclusive club. It's meant to be a safe space for everyone.

LENA SITTER

Name one straight kid who would be caught dead in that meeting. Besides aren't we ignoring other groups? What about all of the racial incidents we've had to deal with, they're still being ignored.

BERNADETTE SPEARS

That's what I've been saying! The culture wars and color bashing should be our first priority. Students know if they are Black, Latino or Asian, or whatever there's no questioning. They know if they don't have a proper address because they live in a reconverted garage. Everyone knows if they have a heap of junk for a family car waiting for them after school. And the color of your skin, you can't question that. So we really should have thought about which group needed this kind of support the most.

DARYL PEYTON

I wonder if a GSA does anything to really address bullying. One article I read said it was great for better health and sexual behavior choices, but didn't necessarily affect bullying. I agree with Bernadette and Lena, most of the kids at Mandela are bullied based on their physical appearance. Anyone ever ask if the Sikh kids who get taunted all day about being called rag-heads might want someone to establish an afterschool club where they could share their hurt feelings?

BERNADETTE SPEARS

And with the amount of anti-Islamic rhetoric in the media these days you might think the school would set up some sort of Muslim-Christian Alliance. Why isn't anyone concerned with making a club for them?

GREG CARTER

Don't kid yourself, Spears. It's not really about an anti-bullying approach. It's all about the power of pink money. The majority of advertisers see the LGBTQ community as a huge untapped source of discretionary income. Politicians aren't all that concerned with the Brown vote, especially if they've locked up the Black vote. Most of the new immigrant families in this community are from the Middle East and from the Arab Spring countries. Those and our Latino families lack the purchasing power to affect the business leaders who influence the policy-makers in the legislature.

(ASHLEY BURNBRIDGE enters staff room)

GREG CARTER

This GSA movement has mobilized all over the nation. It has the capacity to move in to every school and I'm not sure that's a good thing.

ASHLEY BURNBRIDGE

(Composing herself and taking the chair bravely)

Oh, you guys talking about....

PETER WALKER

(To CARTER)

What are you drinking? Why is everything always such a conspiracy to you? The club is not about raking in big bucks from supposedly all-wealthy LGBTQ people. The GSA is meant to insure that kids feel safe and welcome at school, right, Ashley?

ASHLEY BURNBRIDGE

Yes, in fact it's unique because we actually know what works. The research says the best way to lessen the devastating results of hurtful remarks and actions is having a GSA. Some recent research shows that when schools have a GSA, bullying directed at LGBTQ students goes way down. The suicide rate also drastically decreases.

DARYL PEYTON

Suicide? Being accepted as gay or lesbian in high school can be hard. But that seems a bit extreme.

## ASHLEY BURNBRIDGE

Suicide in LGBTQ youth is a very serious problem, and the fact is that they seem to be a little less inclined to get to that extreme feeling of hopelessness if the school has a GSA in place.

(Warmly but with an edge)

Interesting, isn't it? The facts.

## BERNADETTE SPEARS

A girl was bullied for months because she said she liked Elvis music and Buster Keaton movies better than Taylor Swift and Twilight. She became afraid to go to school because the girls in her grade would force her to lie to them, saying she liked their movies, forcing her to say it every day. It was awful. She missed a ton of school. We can't compare one awful to another or give one priority. All marginalized identities should be equal priority.

## GREG CARTER

Can we get back to the prom? My life will not exactly be safe if I have to report to the PTA we've somehow voted for two men to ride around in a convertible this year. If only the whole thing could be not quite so...

(Breaks off and begins rubbing his temples with both hands)

## PETER WALKER

Gay? Not quite so gay, Greg? I for one think it's great that she volunteered to be the teacher moderator for the GSA. Didn't the vice-principal tell us that things like this are great for early career teachers? I mean, she's really stepping up. Good job, Ashley.

## ASHLEY BURNBRIDGE

Thanks. We're really just getting started. We had like 12 kids attend today. But they're very excited, and well, it's about insuring everyone feels welcome at Mandela.

## GREG CARTER

(Finally puts his book away and really engages in the conversation)

I read in Forbes magazine that LGBTQ Americans are twice as likely to have graduated from college, twice as likely to have an individual income over \$60,000, and twice as likely to have a household income of \$250,000 or more. So let's not kid ourselves about why these issues have come to the forefront of most political discussions and now are found in almost all of our schools, our public schools anyway. It's all about power.



BENEDICTO EDBO

Get off it already. Not everything is about money. The LGBTQ community represents an important part of the global community... I feel like I'm one of the few teachers actually following the bills like FAIR and School Success Opportunity Act by making my English literature curriculum inclusive of queer history. It's tough when the parents call up asking why I told their children that Walt Whitman is revered as one of the earliest progressive philosophers of the gay movement, that he lived at a time when being out would have meant the end of his life. But I tell them that you can trace his politics and his personal identity in his poetry. As a heterosexual ally, I fully support the GSA.

PETER WALKER

Well said, Benedicto. Hey, Ashley, how did the first meeting of the GSA go? Apparently they were singing?

ASHLEY BURNBRIDGE

(Smiles and nods affirmatively)

They really got into the song *Same Love* by Macklemore and Ryan Lewis. The song really seemed to be significant for the students.

PETER WALKER

You know, Ashley, we could look into exposing our students to songs sung by actual LGBTQ artists. I appreciate that Macklemore and Lewis helped spread acceptance to the mainstream, but they may not be the best spokesmen for the cause. But I could bring you some great stuff by Melissa Etheridge, K.D. Lang, RuPaul, Elton John, and George Michael doing Live Aid in the 80s, Bronski Beat, Tegan and Sara...

(Sees the time)

Oh, shoot, I've really got to get going.

(WALKER exits)

BERNADETTE SPEARS

(To EDBO)

So real quick, I know the bell is going to ring soon, but I wanted to go back to what we were talking about earlier. About the various student groups that have no representation at Mandela. I was wondering if you and Ashley and I would like to set up a meeting with the principal to talk about how other groups need something like a GSA.

BENEDICTO EDBO

Slow down, Bernadette, she's only been here a few weeks!

BERNADETTE SPEARS

No, I'm serious. We don't have anything in place for our Jewish students, our migrant farm kids, and what about the Muslim-Christian alliance idea? What teacher is staying after school to work with the few War-Affected Refugee students we have who are having trouble acclimating to life here?

DARYL PEYTON

I can't believe we are talking about more clubs for more groups of hurt people! Where do you work, Daryl? Oh, over at Hurt Feelings High. Look, I think what Ashton is spearheading...

BERNADETTE SPEARS

It's Ashley.

DARYL PEYTON

Yeah, Ashley is really going to be. Really something. I'm going to be late. Gotta run!

(PEYTON runs out, EDBO and SPEARS exit)

GREG CARTER

(Gets up starting to leave)

Just you wait, I predict that this group will be helping us someday with their generous financial donations to Mandela High. They'll want to thank the school that had the foresight to bring in a real teacher leader who could champion their cause, even if they will likely do so much better than our other students according to the statistics, right, Ms. Burnbridge?

ASHLEY BURNBRIDGE

With all due respect, Mr. Carter, I am not thinking about donors but about quality of life for our students. No, actually, just life itself for our students. Future donations are not as important as improving the school in all areas of diversity. My ethic is for promoting a more inclusive atmosphere, and this GSA contributes to a positive school climate. It's what I can do as part of a greater effort. For example, I am thinking about our *heterosexual* male students who are twice as likely to commit suicide when they go to a school *without* a GSA in place.

GREG CARTER

Sure. Keep up the good work.

(CARTER exits; SITTER stays, intrigued)

LENA SITTER

(Hesitates)

Oh well. Go on.

ASHLEY BURNBRIDGE

The fact is, the very presence of a GSA sends a powerful message of tolerance. Not just of different sexual orientations, but of all different kinds of people. That's why I am doing it. This is concrete school improvement and it needs to be supported. I am going to work on it my whole career no matter what anyone else has to say. It's my ethic as a teacher leader, and with all due respect, I know I'm doing what's right.

LENA SITTER

You know, Ashley, one of my children is extremely autistic. I know what it means to feel the school is doing nothing to address the needs of my child or help support his identity. I worked hard on making an inclusive climate, but met with great resistance and awful remarks. I made arguments then that are very similar to what you're saying now. I think I need to accept the research about these GSAs just as I expected everyone to get with it on autism, and see that what you are doing for our LGBTQ students will benefit them, as well as the rest of the school. Back then I knew I was doing the right thing and people came after me. Your actions are coming from that place. I appreciate that.

(With an honest smile)

You'll let me know if perhaps we need to get a second tiara by Thanksgiving?  
Good luck, Ashley.

(SITTER exits. Sound of buzzer/bell ringing.)

ASHLEY BURNBRIDGE

(To self)

Yeah, I think we should have two tiaras ready, just in case.

END

## ASHLEY AND LENA

Diversity dialogues or the marginalization Olympics?

*PLAYWRIGHT TALK BACK*

Like so many beginning and enthusiastic teachers, Ashley is a fusion of the traits that many early career teachers possess as they embark on trying to make a positive difference in the lives of not only their students but also in the lives of all of the students in the school. Throughout her pre-service teaching program Ashley has been told that being a teacher leader means demonstrating leadership by saying “yes” to life beyond the classroom, including making the most of opportunities to impact students that come with extracurricular activities like advising a student club. She—like most graduates—has been educated about the effects of marginalization and stigmatization on students, and of the particular benefits to schools, students, and teachers of having a GSA on high school campuses and was up on the research. She also represents a generation who are more comfortable with their own sexuality and that of others, and the idea of a Gay-Straight Alliance does not threaten her. Yet, still Ashley finds herself in a complex web of mixed feelings, between vehement detractors and friendly supporters of not only GSAs but of the very concept of what it means to embrace the rainbow of diversity.

While Ashley is seeking to improve the conditions of schooling that she believes are affecting more than just one individual and more than just one class of students, she is confronted not only by the stereotype of bigotry but also by competing ideas and agendas. Who are the marginalized and are some more marginalized than others? This might be translated into, who suffers the most in school? And given that it is clear that some students suffer more marginalization than others, discussing who advocates for them and how to deal with the concept of prioritization, which is inevitable, given limited teacher leadership power, time, and interest, generates a powerful, perhaps surprising conversation.

This play, like many of the one-acts in the *Drama in Teacher Leadership* workshops, tends to generate two levels of conversations: an easy banter about the harmlessness of the whole GSA idea is often heard, with perhaps a few brave confessions of discomfort with non-hetero normativity thrown in, depending on the group. However, when the substance of the issues embedded in it are delved into, the competing interests of whom schools are for, and who gets to decide what values are not only represented but

reified, have been more contentious and complicated. These kinds of honest, multi-dimensional conversations often become the most productive ones. Thinking that the good in what you are doing is so plainly obvious to everyone else, but then learning that it is perceived in a whole range of ways instead of how you intended it to be seen seems to be familiar territory for teacher leaders, and one fraught with paradox in today's diverse schools.

**Table 8.4** Reflection and discussion prompts for Ashley and Lena

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Prompt #1:	What is your group's reaction? Give each person a chance to speak for two to three minutes on the core emotional experience of the play, whether as actor or witness. Then invite each participant to write or pair-share on each of the following prompts, reporting back to the group after each or after all have shared their initial thoughts.
Prompt #2:	Ashley's assumptive worldview was that change for the better is welcomed in schools and teacher leadership in advising students across grades and classrooms in extracurricular activities is one way to show that. How could Vicky's graduate program or school leadership team have prepared her better for the criticism levied at her willingness to serve in this way at the same time as it was instilling in her a commitment to teacher leadership, justice for students, and other worthy values?
Prompt #3:	How are the different characters in this play, whether on stage or off, experiencing suffering?
Prompt #4:	What prior conditions in this school site/culture created an environment where a well-meaning teacher leader volunteering for essentially more work would be potentially made to feel vulnerable and unwelcome by some?
Prompt #5:	Which character are you most likely to play in the future and how could you, in playing that part in your professional life a different way than was done here, help diminish the emotional toll on a promising teacher leader like Ashley if she were to encounter the same problematic school-diversity scenario?

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## As the Curtain Closes

**Abstract** In *As the Curtain Closes* the reader transitions from the emotionally charged world of the plays, and deep discussion topics they may have stirred, to the bigger question of how we are preparing teacher leaders to remain resilient in the face of these real obstacles.

**Keywords** Teacher resiliency • Teacher leader resiliency • Teacher leader development

It seems like a commonsense idea to want to develop a cadre of teacher leaders who are focused not only on the success of the students they teach directly but who are also concerned with the educational achievement of each and every child in the school. Despite its seeming promise of creating a different kind of teacher workforce that collaborates and is resilient in the wake of waves of top-down reform initiatives, developing teacher leaders who have a grasp of not only the opportunities but also the challenges that come with leading is no easy feat.

Teacher leadership does not exist in the professional ether of the staff room, floating around like radical electrons waiting to attach themselves to the positively charged ones. Learning to be a teacher leader is going to take effort, commitment, and trust on the part of teachers and those who help nurture it within them. It can be achieved but requires a different

approach to learning than what is typically offered in a graduate program or during a leadership development workshop. We have to admit that we both have heard some well-intentioned folks support this proposal, but from behind the comfort of their desks.

Developing the creative capacities of adults requires creative approaches to learning. Learning is itself a creative act. In today's knowledge society, creativity is more important than ever. But many organizations, including a whole host of leadership preparation programs, unwittingly employ learning approaches that stifle and in some cases kill creative thinking. How? We will try to be clear with this point: teacher educators do not kill creativity on purpose. Yet in the pursuit of established learning outcomes, organizational efficiency, and control—all parts of the provision of an educational service—they undermine creativity. They employ in-the-box approaches believing they can develop out-of-the-box thinking. It makes no sense, really.

It doesn't have to be that way, though. First we need to admit that change does not come easily. Teacher educators will have to change their thinking about preparing teacher leaders. Experiencing a creative process, one that leads to learning through imagination, needs and takes time. Even more daunting, perhaps, is the fact that transforming the ability to think creatively into the ability to act creatively requires even more time; time to observe, time to imitate, and time to practice, all of which requires enormous patience and trust in the learning process. Time is something that we seem to have little of these days. We, therefore, ignore the fact that creative success requires persistence and declare every random act as creative by confusing imagination with creativity. Creativity is borne from persisting through difficult processes and plodding through long hours of rehearsal and practice. It is disciplined commitment that increases the likelihood of having truly creative breakthroughs.

It ought to be clear that creativity also takes effort, and a lot of it. We grow as humans by expending energy beyond our normal limits and then recovering and growing. Anyone who has exercised as an adult can probably attest to the fact that exposing a muscle to ordinary demand does not lead to improvements. No matter what you have convinced yourself, you will not become more fit by doing what you ordinarily do. True enough you may maintain some level of fitness by walking your dog each and every morning but you will not improve your level of fitness above what it is

without increased effort. Sauntering along with Fido makes you reasonably decent at sauntering. The limiting factor in building any muscle and seeing improvement is that most of us back off when we feel the slightest hint of discomfort. This phenomenon does not only occur when we exercise. Even when we learn we don't want to feel discomfort. We want our educational experiences offered in ways that do not expose our vulnerability. What we are offering in *DiTL* will certainly push people into discomfort as they attempt to take on a role very different from their own. And to be honest, we live in times that eschew the slightest hint of discomfort.

Finally, at least historically speaking, creativity was viewed as mystery. Creative action was credited to the visitation of the Muse or the divine force; creative geniuses were serendipitously inspired by divine intervention. Plato, for example, argued this inspiration was the gift of Gods. The notion of creativity under the umbrella of the divine entity was dominant in the Western mindset for centuries. In the Age of Enlightenment, the concept of creativity shifted from the divine to the individual, as emphasis shifted to the achievement of science and technology. Now, as we progress further into times dominated by scientific reductionism and feed our insatiable appetite that comes with the "need to know," we lose out when we try to delve into the science of creativity as both thought and action and, thus, remove it from the very fiber of what it is—mystery.

Teachers despise the bureaucratic edicts yet clamor for accountability and transparency in their own learning. If I cannot see the effects, if we cannot demonstrate them to you in a manner that satisfies your liking—"what grade did I get?"—well, then there must not be any measurable learning going on. *DiTL* is not mysterious but it offers only so much certainty in terms of its promise. However, American journalist, playwright, and educator Julia Cameron in *Finding Water: The Art of Perseverance* elegantly noted that "mystery" is at the heart of creativity. Surprise, in the form of the mystery of not knowing what happens next, unlocks our creative capacities as we learn how to trust the darkness of the unknown and ourselves as we fumble around in our minds to grasp what may not exist at this precise moment in time.

Rarely do we as adults allow ourselves to do something badly even though we might—in time—become quite good at it as we learn from the experience. Teachers are not immune from this fact. Far too many



teachers are consumed with the image of being the perfect teacher. And perfectionism is a serious matter and not playful. So there you go, you face a conundrum. Some people, even teachers who handle thousands of variables everyday in their classes, want certainty, or checklists, or a rubric for school improvement and will never trust the darkness, the unknown, or the mystery of performance, so for them *DiTL* will never meet the standard. And while we are content with knowing this approach may not be for everybody, we also know that this work can be accessed by anyone who suspends their disbelief long enough to see it through to the final curtain.

## EPILOGUE: AFTER THE CAST PARTY

**Abstract** In *Epilogue: After the Cast Party* the authors share their experiences with the Drama in Teacher Leadership methods and advocate for a culture of meaning construction in teacher education that not only accounts for the various intellectual, psychological, embodied, emotional, and social dimensions of lived experiences in teacher leadership, but allows some integrated form of these to be most readily communicated. The authors hope that the experience of building trust and working through the complexities and creative intent of the *Drama in Teacher Leadership* methods delineated in *Ethnotheatre and Creative Methods for Teacher Leadership* will build resiliency in the teacher-leadership ranks and in the many stakeholders who support them.

**Keywords** Dialogic; Dialogical process

We are concerned about the largely unspoken, often hidden, social-emotional toll of teacher leadership, which, according to authors like Daniel Goleman, is often taken for granted or ignored. There is a growing interest in developing healthier workplaces and this seems to stem from the fact that we all ought to be interested in developing more resilient adults who are better equipped to manage themselves and their professional relationships. Unfortunately, we have observed that there is indeed a socio-emotional cost associated with acting ethically within the framework of teacher leadership across multiple institutions in *P-16 education*, from pre-school through university. This observation led us to consider a form of

meaning construction that would allow for the intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social dimensions of lived experiences in teacher leadership to be most readily communicated. The pedagogical value of the scripts is that they both clarify and problematize the roles emerging teachers adopt as they do just what teacher-preparation programs are leading them to do, that is, self-define as “teacher leaders.”

We proposed that a truly embodied experience of playing a role might provide just the insight a school leader needs. Our research showed that it is easier to ponder the various possible outcomes of our decisions if we see the consequences *performed*. It is our experience that getting concepts up on their feet by using dramatized scripts performed live instead of studying them from behind a desk allows workshop participants to access the felt-sense of teacher leadership. Enacting dramatic scenarios reconnects the mind and body and draws on the wisdom and experience of each participant, in order to tell a whole story. And whole stories certainly help us understand how interconnected all of the moving parts at a school really are.

Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of the “dialogic” is applicable here. Any approach to learning about teacher leadership should be regarded as dialogic, that is, dynamic, relational, and ensconced in a process of endless re-descriptions and contemporary discoveries of the world of schooling. Ethnotheatre moves swiftly and allows for a flexibility of purpose, content, and presentation of diverse circumstances and viewpoints. Within the ever-changing interpersonal context of teacher leadership, there exist patterns that we can recognize, articulate, and learn to navigate, once we have some grasp of them. It takes some investment on the learner’s part, some desire for empathy, to understand the lived experiences of teacher leaders. By engaging with the concepts and narratives, tools and tales, strategies and scripts shared in this book, we think teacher leaders will be better poised for brilliant performances that will better serve children, their fellow staff, their schools, and as we say in the theatre, leave their audiences wanting more.

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#### TIME

One year after the last workshop Ito facilitated that Andover attended.

## SETTING

School district staffroom

(Robert Andover walks into the staffroom of the school district's board office and finds Penelope Ito sitting in a green faux-leather armchair sipping on a latte and reading the newspaper. Andover is now the district's new Leadership by Design Consultant. Ito has taken on a position with the district as "artist-in-residence," which Andover had read about but does not want to admit to Ito. He wants to act surprised to find her there, which is sort of true but not entirely.)

ROBERT ANDOVER

(Beginning with an air of certainty but fading to uncertainty by the end)

Hi, Penelope. I'm right, it's Penelope, isn't it?

PENELOPE ITO

(Genuinely surprised to see him there)

Yes, it's Penelope. And what a pleasant surprise to run into you again for a third time, Robert.

ROBERT ANDOVER

Yeah, me too, I mean I'm surprised to find you sitting in here.

PENELOPE ITO

Oh, well, I heard you were in a new position here at the district too. I am this year's artist-in-residence. I am here to meet with the Assistant Superintendent of Curricular Innovation to get some sense of how she wants to use me this year. Did you see that Ross Meere got his Ed. Doc. and is a principal in Omaha now?

ROBERT ANDOVER

(Overplaying it and stretching his arms to seem more confident than he feels)

Oh yeah, I thought I recognized that name. I think I read something in the June district announcements that we had contracted someone new for arts for the year. So that's you, is it?

PENELOPE ITO

Yep, it's me.

(Pausing briefly)

I thought they said they announced my name in that newsletter.

(Pausing awkwardly to take in the obvious fact that he is pretending not to have known she was here)

ROBERT ANDOVER

(Sitting down in the chair next to her, ready to confess)

PENELOPE ITO

(Saving him by interrupting)

I'm not looking to be a classroom teacher right now, but when I saw the chance to do this work and bring the performing arts to "at-risk" high school students I couldn't turn down the opportunity. I'll be doing less workshop facilitation this year but I think I'll be okay with that since I get to work with students who might need the arts more. What do you think, Robert?

ROBERT ANDOVER

I think it is a perfect fit. Well, this might make you laugh but I am the district's newest Leadership by Design consultant and I am now taking an acting improvisation class every Monday.

PENELOPE ITO

(Laughs fully)

Oh, that is funny, Robert.

ROBERT ANDOVER

Yes, and if you ever tell anyone how badly I performed my happy shape in your workshop I shall be ridiculed beyond compare.

PENELOPE ITO

Well, I'll always have the memory of that, Robert, but that's ok, I don't need to share that with anyone. I just hope you get someone in your workshops who was as ornery as you were.

ROBERT ANDOVER

Oh, Penelope, I do deserve that, and to tell you the truth I am prepared to have 100 teachers and administrators scoff at my ideas of leadership development. And while I am suffering through all that, perhaps I could seek your advice on how to deal with workshop misfits over a nice latte sometime?

PENELOPE ITO

Yes, but only if you promise to come visit the dedicated art space and see the work of the kids once I start up the program.

ROBERT ANDOVER

(Strangely moved)

I will do that.

END

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