



Cultivating Virtues in Leadership

EMPOWERMENT

in Educational Leadership





Overview



- What is it?
- Why do you want it?
- How do I get it?
- How do I help others get it?
- Resources





What does it mean to Empower?



Empower means "give power or authority to." When you educate children and believe in them, you *empower* those kids to go after their dreams.

Empower might seem like a new word, but it's been around since the 17th century. Today, *empower* often refers to helping someone realize their abilities and potential, perhaps for the first time. For example, in the 1960s, when women felt like second-class citizens, the women's movement empowered them to stand up and demand their equal rights.



Definition



Empowering: Servant-leaders take an **active interest in the growth and well being of everyone** in the organization; they take concrete actions to stimulate the personal and professional development of their workers. a motivational concept focused on enabling people and encouraging personal development (Conger, 2000). Empowering leader behavior **supports self-directed decision making, and information sharing** (Konczak et al., 2000). The servant leader's **belief in the intrinsic value of each individual** is the central issue in empowerment; it is all about **recognition, acknowledgment, and the realization** of each person's ability to learn (Greenleaf, 1998). Empowerment is about the extent to which a leader gives priority to the interest of others first and **gives them the necessary support and credit.**





3 Ways to Empower Teachers and Transform Classrooms



- Often, teachers assume that some educators are more creative than others. The truth is that creativity is a skill and, like author [Sir Ken Robinson](#) says, “You can't just give someone a creativity injection. You have to create an environment for curiosity and a way to encourage people and get the best out of them.” No doubt most educators aspire to innovate, but they do not necessarily make radical changes in their classrooms. Why?
- Many teachers find it difficult to teach creativity and engage students in becoming the agents of their own learning, largely because they aren't experiencing it themselves.
- Following [Daniel Pink](#)'s attributes of autonomy, mastery, and purpose, we know that real change happens when motivation is intrinsic. Therefore, it's essential that the classroom practices we expect from teachers are the ones school leaders practice.





1. Great teaching starts with exploration.

- One essential element needed to empower teachers is to shift focus from teaching to learning -- teachers should immerse themselves in rediscovering the magic of learning, the necessity of making mistakes, and encouraging resiliency by constantly challenging their learning experiences.





2. Unlock creativity with collaboration.



- Teachers should remember that being creative is not about being talented -- it's about unlocking the skills that have been dormant or are as yet undiscovered. New learning experiences are a great way to either rediscover or awaken those skills. When we share our learning experiences and skills, teachers encourage classroom innovation, break down classroom borders, and facilitate meaningful collaboration.





3. Implement new ideas while focusing on reflection.



- One way to encourage collaboration and innovation is to create innovation plans. An innovation plan answers the question, "How might we ... ?" Working together, teachers identify and answer this question during a collaborative workshop, which becomes their pedagogical goal. The innovation plan is meant not only to engage teachers in pedagogy, but it also serves as a model that empowers teachers to set personal goals.
- New learning experiences are a great way to either rediscover or awaken creativity.



What does it mean to empower students?



Student empowerment is any attitudinal, structural, and cultural activity, process or outcome where students of any age gain the ability, authority and agency to make decisions and implement changes in their own schools, learning and education, and in the education of other people, including fellow students of any age and adults throughout education.

There are countless ways this can happen as well as many potential outcomes, all of which feature learning, teaching and leadership.

Student empowerment happens in schools;

Child empowerment and youth empowerment happen outside of schools.





The Shift from Engaging Students to Empowering Learners



Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYBJQ5rIFjA&feature=youtu.be>



5

Ways to Empower Students



What's the most powerful resource in your classroom? Is it the formidable stack of textbooks, the encyclopedia, the computer? The most powerful resource is something else entirely. It's something collective -- the diverse imaginations, observations, opinions, hopes and dreams of students. By empowering students, you can engage them further in learning and provide a more democratic learning experience.

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/empower-students-adora-svitak>





1) Give Your Students a Voice Through Forums for Student Feedback



- Setting up a forum for students to provide constructive and timely feedback -- criticism or praise -- through mediums like a group Google Doc, Twitter hashtag, Edmodo site, blog, etc., helps you improve your teaching.
- It also helps students, emphasizing that learning is about partnership and working together.
- Ultimately, empowering students is about a realization: teachers and students have a lot to learn from each other. After all, as the pioneering American librarian [John Cotton Dana](#) once said, "Who dares to teach must never cease to learn." Empowering students helps us all do just that.





2) Give Students Decision-Making Power in an Area of Curriculum



- Giving students the power to choose creates a sense of ownership over the learning.
- If the goal of a Communications/Language Arts unit is teaching students how to write an effective response to literature or a literary analysis essay, allow students to choose a book that interests them.
- How might you apply this idea to Math? Social Studies? Science?





3) Put Yourself in the Sandbox



- Get students to collaborate with you so that they are starting to work on their own but also getting the concept reinforced.
- Use collaborative writing (students throw out ideas while the teacher links them together) to explain concepts like figurative language or to demonstrate how to start writing different types of pieces.
- This helps provide a crucial link between the explanation of the topic and the "Go do this at home and turn it in"

4) Encourage Meaningful Technology Use in the Classroom



- Many teachers tell students to turn off their devices when they walk into the classroom. However, it can be incredibly empowering to do just the opposite.....
- When students use their devices during class time to access learning resources that they can also get at home or on the go, we see that learning doesn't just happen within the four walls of a classroom.
- By having your students bring their own devices, you open up a world of new learning opportunities (like the flipped classroom model, web quests, podcasts, virtual field trips via Skype, livestreaming with classes across the world, etc.), and you reaffirm that learning can happen anytime, anywhere.
- If you are not familiar with the technology, don't be scared to let your students teach you a thing or two about technology.



5) Involve Students in "Real" Issues



- **Rigor:** Have students **practice skills** they've learned or topics they've come to understand in service learning, debates, leadership/volunteerism/community service.
- **Relevance:** A big complaint a lot of students have about what we learn in class is that it doesn't seem applicable to the real world. Solicit their opinions on “**real**” issues such as the school, the community and their futures.
- **Relationships:** Have your students **make a difference** with what they've learned, and they'll be more motivated to learn further -- because they're seeing that it's having an impact. They're learning **to help others** .





Feed the Teachers so They Don't Eat the Kids



Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVW2wj8fl78&feature=youtu.be>





Question



How can you take what you are already doing to empower your students to the next level by empowering adults in your school?





Closing Activity

“Triangle-Square-Circle”



Reflection

1. Draw a **triangle** and next to it write down **three important points** from the module.
2. Draw a **square** and next to it write down anything that “**squares**” **with your thinking**.
3. Draw a **circle** and next to it write down anything that is still “**circling**” **in your head or questions** that you have.

Partially quoted from:

<http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/triangle-square-circle>





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