

# Strategy: Create and Communicate a Vision

*If you don't know where you're going, you might end up somewhere else.* —CASEY STENGEL

*The dreamers of day are dangerous men,  
That they may act their dreams with open eyes to make it possible.*  
—T.E. LAWRENCE (OF ARABIA)

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### **Communicating a Vision**

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Literacy leaders share a vision of literacy and its teaching and learning. This vision is an essential characteristic of the successful leader and the effective organization. Whether we see that vision as “a realistic, credible, attractive future” (Nanus, 1992, p. 8) or a “purpose, mission, legacy, dream, goal, calling, or personal agenda” (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 94), a key ingredient to getting extraordinary things done is envisioning the future and imagining that greater things lie ahead for the stakeholders and organization.

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Because a vision is the bridge from present to future that permits an organization to grow toward that future, it is a key ingredient to the success of a leader. Without this bridge to the future, there is only the present no matter what is achieved, and after a while all days seem alike, and actions and interactions become repetitious and routine (Bennis & Nanus, 1985). The original sense of excitement and enterprise is reduced, and the organization slows down. Without a vision of the future, the present becomes very long and uneventful.

When leaders focus on a vision, they supply an emotional and spiritual center for the stakeholders, who now see themselves as involved in something that “confers status on them because they are involved in a worthwhile enterprise. They gain a sense of importance, as they are transformed from robots blindly following instructions to human beings engaged in a creative and purposeful venture” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 91). The vision is not just a bridge to the future; it is also a bridge from the material and physical aspects of the work to the emotional and spiritual aspects of it. This link gives all stakeholders satisfaction in one of the most fundamental of human needs—the need to be a useful and important part of a successful and worthwhile endeavor.

The centrality of vision to leaders and organizations needs two cautions. One caution is that the construction of a vision must involve not just the values and hopes of the leader but all those of all stakeholders. The vision has to be a multicreation, a participatory construction of all. As Bolman and Deal (1997) state, “No amount of charisma or rhetorical skill can sell a vision that reflects only a leader’s values and needs” (p. 315). A second caution is about three things that vision is not. Cook (1997) believes that a vision is not a mission statement because a mission statement describes current goals and the desire to reach those goals, while real vision looks to the future. A vision also is not a slogan because a slogan is a pep

talk about how to perform to the best possible ability here and now. Finally, a vision is not a policy manual because policy tells how to operate optimally day to day. Vision is a view of the future that is reasonable, believable, and interesting.

## A Three-Part Vision for Literacy Leaders

Once literacy leaders understand what vision is and is not, they must also understand that vision for literacy leaders is divided into three parts: (1) visions of literacy itself and its operations in our lives and world, (2) visions of the best classrooms for teaching literacy, and (3) visions of the wider profession of literacy teachers and teaching. So teacher leaders must learn to create a vision of literacy, their classroom, and themselves as professionals, and they must learn to communicate that vision to themselves, their students, their colleagues, the community, and the profession. This is no short order.

A vision of literacy itself would involve understanding and communicating its uses and its powers in the real world. Literacy leaders show students the variety of uses of literacy—in niche magazines; recipes; scientific reports; stand-up comedy routines; notes and minutes; laws and policies; diaries, love letters, and poems; and the *Magna Carta* and *Communist Manifesto*. Therefore, literacy leaders cannot continue to teach the same novel and stories—with the occasional poem or play. This limited range of literacy shows a limited vision of literacy and its operations in our lives.

Literacy leaders show students the diverse power of literacy to stimulate action in the real world. Consider, for example, letters of complaint, wedding vows, the U.S. Declaration of Independence, a therapy journal, or the manual for a new computer. Literacy and this stimulus to action in the real world are inherently related. For that reason, the literacy leader's vision of the uses and powers of literacy must be placed in political contexts that show students that all literacy actions are ideological and involve a set of values and viewpoints in terms of which readers and writers must speak, act, resist, or defy as they use literacy and its power. Literacy gives people the potential to create an attractive future that shows teachers and students what could be, and it is this potential that should be at the heart of the literacy leader's visions of literacy itself.

In addition to sharing a vision of the uses and powers of literacy itself, literacy leaders also simultaneously communicate a second focus of their vision, that of literacy classrooms—classrooms that are interactive communities of readers and writers. Literacy leaders help students, colleagues, and community members see what these classrooms are like as the class members respond to readings and to peers' writings; search for new things to read and write, draft, edit, and publish their writings and share their readings; stumble, miscue, and rest; and celebrate learning, take pride in good writing, and support one another through it all. The vision of the contemporary literacy classroom is new to many stakeholders, and literacy leaders must work to explain and demonstrate its reality, creating a credible present and an attractive future.

Finally, vision for literacy leaders involves a third focus, that of the wider profession of literacy teachers and teaching. Literacy leaders have a vision of what it means to be professional literacy educators, a vision that includes their ongoing professional development; their involvement with the wider profession through active participation in professional organizations; and their sharing of professional expertise with colleagues, school district personnel, and community members. Literacy leaders subscribe to professional and scholarly journals such as the International Reading Association's *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* or *The Reading Teacher* or the National Council of Teachers of English's *English Journal*, *Language Arts*, or *College English*. Literacy leaders attend national and regional professional conferences and even present workshops and reports at these gatherings. They accept invitations to speak or to give inservice workshops for their school district colleagues, and they look for opportunities to share their vision with the wider community through community organizations, libraries, or churches.

## Creating and Clarifying a Vision

To assist in creating and clarifying the above three-part vision of literacy and its teaching, Deep and Sussman (1995) suggest activities to involve stakeholders from the beginning because, as mentioned previously, a persuasive vision that has the potential to create a new future must include

the values and needs of all stakeholders; therefore, it is with those stakeholders that creating a vision must begin.

- ☛ Ask stakeholders for their visions and ask often. As a literacy leader, tap the rich ideas and issues of all stakeholders, which can be done both initially and during the process of developing your vision. Get constant feedback from stakeholders for developing either an oral or written draft of your vision.
- ☛ Ask stakeholders directly, either face to face or in writing, to share their sense of the ideal future. For example, at an English department meeting have everyone do a 15-minute writing on “My Dream of Our Department Five Years From Now” and then share the results in small groups or with the whole group. At parent conferences, ask parents what they would like to see for their children in the future and in the English or reading program generally. Or team up with the computer teacher or some other computer-savvy person and build a MOO (Multiple-Use Dimension, Object Oriented; a playful, game-like virtual environment in which stakeholders can connect to focus on literacy and schools) or a “Sim-City” (a commercially available game series where players build a city) English and reading program that is constantly accessible to stakeholders for expressing and sharing visions.
- ☛ Be accessible to those stakeholders who might want to share their visions personally and at their convenience. Plan your work time to encourage and facilitate chats with stakeholders before or after school; at break periods or at lunch; and before, during, or after any extracurricular activities or social occasions such as bowling league nights, after-school get-togethers, and dinners after inservice days.
- ☛ Thank stakeholders who take time to share their visions of the best future for the English and reading program. A quick e-mail or note that says “thank you” is a nice surprise for anyone.
- ☛ Take time to ask others, such as administrators, parents, and school board members, about their visions and to share yours with them. Be patient when you are asked questions or discussions are prolonged.
- ☛ Use e-mail as a way to share visions of the future. Create a chat room where people can talk to each other about their visions.

Make sure to include out-of-school stakeholders, such as retirees and community leaders. The idea is that everyone be able to join the discussion when and where it is convenient for them.

- ☛ Respond quickly to all requests for discussions and to other communications. If an administrator says, “Stop by and let’s talk about those new paperbacks for the library,” stop by during the next period. When you run into a parent who says, “My daughter only writes in English class,” get him on the phone that night to ask what he thinks could be done and to explain your vision for a writing-across-the-disciplines program.
- ☛ Listen carefully to those stakeholders who share their visions. Summarize their ideas back to them to make sure you have heard them correctly and to show them that you were listening carefully. In every thank-you e-mail or note, write two or three summary sentences to show the recipient your attention to his or her ideas and your comprehension of them.
- ☛ Hold your opinions as long as possible, and reject others’ ideas gently. Don’t lecture every time you meet stakeholders, or they’ll start avoiding you. Show that any differences of opinion are only different perspectives from people who really care about the teaching of literacy.
- ☛ Invite different constituencies to see how others live. Invite students to a faculty or department meeting or community leaders to a day at school and, of course, ask about their visions and share yours.

Once stakeholders offer input, it should be reviewed regularly and incorporated as much as possible into your developing vision so that when you share the vision, more and more people will be comfortable accepting it.

## More Activities for Creating and Clarifying a Vision

Kouzes and Posner (1995) offer more vision creating and clarifying activities that would work well with literacy teachers and stakeholders.

## Draw a Personal Literacy Lifeline

The best vision of the future is grounded in the best understanding of the past. With this in mind, draw a personal literacy lifeline lengthwise on a sheet of paper 11" × 14". Draw a series of peaks and valleys for the highs and lows of your literacy development. For example, a peak might be the great reading teacher you had in second grade or the father who showed you how to read the newspaper. A valley might be the junior high English class in which writing meant filling out grammar exercises or the uncle who told you to stop wasting your time reading and go outside and play football. Label each peak and valley, and jot a few notes about why it was a peak or valley. Afterward, go back and review the peaks, and on a separate sheet write more detailed descriptions about each peak. Review these notes and try to answer the following questions in writing:

- ☛ What themes or patterns are suggested across the peaks of your literacy development?

For example, in a recent lifeline I did along with my students, my personal literacy peaks showed me as a person who grew the most in literacy when allowed to choose my own books or topics to write about and when freed of the pressure of immediate and heavy red-pen correction.

- ☛ What important personal strengths are revealed about you as a learner and a literate person?

Again, my recent lifeline showed me as an independent person who has a strong work ethic and requires minimal supervision.

- ☛ What do your patterns and strengths suggest that you may find compelling in the future?

Finally, my lifeline suggested that I will likely read and write in other areas of personal interest.

Next, recast the answers to these three questions in a written vision of your future work in literacy. In class I decided to share my lifeline with students even though lifelines are usually private. They saw right away that this book was an example of my future work in literacy—an area of personal interest (i.e., leadership), independently chosen, which has led me into several years of reading and writing.

The lifeline activity also could be done on the school, district, or community level. In this case, you would identify and describe the positives

and negatives in current literacy teaching practices and then write a vision statement of literacy teaching and learning for the organizations or groups that support or resist the quality teaching of literacy. In the process, you will create a better view of the future.

## **Create or Find a Visual Representation of Your Vision**

When creating a representation of your vision, sketch a realistic scene that captures the future, showing a major incident that, when it occurs, will convince you that your vision is coming to fruition, or find or create a graphic symbol or emblem for your class, school, district, or community that represents the future. As an example, many community flags and crests display graphics that depict the best features of the community, organized around a central value or issue. Create a graphic in the same way—make the central value of your vision the most important feature of your graphic and add secondary values.

Another option for nonartists is to find a photograph that captures your vision. Photograph collections of the best contemporary photographers can be found in libraries, in quality magazines, and on the Internet. (Remember to check the copyright on all these sources if you intend to use a photograph for anything other than private communication within your organization.)

In addition, a photograph collage, centered on the theme of the future of teaching and learning literacy, is also a good way to express your vision. The impact of a good photograph collage is immediate because it gives a sense of the whole, complete vision. In a collage, the photos are mounted on a flat or three-dimensional surface that shows viewers the central issue in all its complexity.

To express my vision of teaching literacy, there are two 5' × 5' bulletin boards in my office, covered with photographs. One that expresses my classroom vision is of three Mongolian boys clustered around a single book. When I see my students value reading like those three boys, I will know that my classroom vision has been realized. Another photograph shows me with several colleagues and doctoral students poring over papers of first-year college writers, which reminds me of my vision for stimulating collaborative professionalism. A third photograph is of my three children at ages 8, 10, and 12, sitting on the steps of the same public library that my father took me to when I was a child. This photograph reminds me of my

community vision—young people growing into literacy with the support of parents and public libraries. And once, when I showed this photograph at the community library's open house, many other people—parents, children, and generations of readers—were able to see my vision for literacy in the community.

Whether you sketch a scene, create an emblem, select a photo, or create a photo collage, both the product and the creative process are valuable because you will have to reexamine, refine, and further clarify your understanding of your vision of your class, school, community, or profession. It is this process of examination and reflection that allows the most persuasive version of your vision to evolve.

## Write a Future Magazine Article

Another way to uncover and begin to share your deeper professional and personal goals and visions is to write a future news magazine article.

Write an article for a major news magazine, dated 10 years in the future, about the fact that you have been selected to receive an award as one of 50 people who have made a difference for students, schools, and communities during the decade. Write about what you did and why. Be specific and describe how things would be if they worked out as you would like. You might mention the results of activities from this chapter that you have used and that have helped you create and clarify your vision. Ask yourself the following questions while writing and revising:

- ☛ What are you most proud of in your teaching, school, community, and career?

Project these ideas into the future.

- ☛ What are your greatest contributions to your class, school, district, community, or profession?

Project these ideas into the future.

- ☛ What accomplishments and characteristics would you, your school, or community be most known for if things worked your way?

Project these ideas into the future.

The more comfortable you are with what you write, the less valuable it will be as material for a future vision because it will be too much like today. Take a risk and write about yourself in the future you want to create. Don't

censor yourself as you write; rather, allow yourself to say things that might border on being embarrassingly positive. For example, you might base your article on the following ideas:

- ☛ You are the best reading teacher in the district.
- ☛ You have been nominated for Teacher of the Year for your state, after accepting the unanimous vote of your colleagues to be department chair.
- ☛ The awards were nice, but so was publishing articles in *English Journal* on conferring with writers and in *The Reading Teacher* on reading workshops.
- ☛ You would certainly write more professional articles if it wasn't for all the time you were giving to the library's after-dinner reading program for kids, the poetry writing project with the prisoners at the county jail, and the workshops at the domestic violence shelter on using journals for therapeutic purposes.
- ☛ You have a wall in your kitchen labeled "The Writing on the Wall," where you've just hung your 4-year-old daughter's newest poem.

To give yourself a real audience for the magazine article, read the final version to several trusted colleagues. In this way, you will clarify what you believe and value, and you will be better able to see the potential in yourself, your class, your school, and your community. In effect, you will create the legacy you want to leave, placing it in clear focus for sharing with other stakeholders.

## List Projected Accomplishments

Under the title "What I Want to Accomplish in or with Reading and Writing," list all the things you want to accomplish as a reader, writer, teacher, and professional educator. List books you want to read or subjects you want to explore. List things you want to write, such as a letter to your former college roommate to whom you haven't written for a year, a letter to the editor about an environmental problem developing at your favorite trout stream, or a professional journal article on the successful peer tutoring strategy you developed last year. List projected professional accomplishments such as the

course revisions for teaching Shakespeare or the proposal for the new grade 7 interdisciplinary team project, which you have been planning.

Then ask yourself, Why do I want this? And write down all the answers that come to mind. By listing what you want to accomplish and trying to record all the reasons, you are likely to discover important things you want to accomplish and why they are important to you. This information can be incorporated into your vision for the future of yourself and your profession.

You also might ask any of the following questions to discover your thoughts on issues that are likely to be important in creating and clarifying your vision of teaching literacy, issues from within and outside the world of teaching literacy and literature:

- ☛ How would I like to change the world for myself and my class, school, community, and profession?
- ☛ What future would I invent as a literacy teacher?
- ☛ What is my professional mission in life?
- ☛ What are my dreams in regard to my teaching of reading and writing?
- ☛ What work do I find most absorbing, involving, and enthralling?
- ☛ What is the unique skill or role of my class, school, district, or community?
- ☛ What is my burning professional passion?
- ☛ What will happen in 10 years if I focus tightly on that passion?
- ☛ What does my ideal class, school, district, or community look like?
- ☛ What is my personal agenda for literacy teaching?

Ultimately, the listing and questioning process will create and clarify your literacy agenda for the next few years. You will know more clearly what unique suggestions you want to incorporate into your vision of the future shared with stakeholders.

## Write a Vision Statement

Use the results of one or all of the previous four activities, or start anew to write a one-page, single-spaced vision statement of the ideal future for you and your students, school, and profession. Unlike the results of the previous four activities, the written vision statement will be the first public statement

A vision statement should open with a concise overview of your vision for the teaching and learning of literacy.

of your vision for literacy teaching. The one-page requirement is to keep the vision statement brief because you will be reading it aloud to students, colleagues, and community members. One single-spaced page is about five minutes of reading time. If the vision statement is shorter than one page, it probably won't be detailed enough, and if it is longer, it will be difficult to maintain audience interest.

A vision statement should open with a concise overview of your vision for the teaching and learning of literacy. To capture your vision in a concise way and to create a memorable opening image, it is often useful to begin with an analogy so that your vision is seen in its entirety and is immediately tied to something that stakeholders already know. Throughout the text try to be as concrete as possible using examples, stories, and similes. Remember that while you want to explain your vision, you also want to have others connect to it. Don't be afraid to involve their senses with sights and sounds, and reach for their emotions too—emotions play a big part in gaining stakeholders' commitment to your vision. Close by re-presenting your opening vision so that it may now be experienced more richly and completely.

Because the audience members are stakeholders, make your vision statement meaningful to them so they will understand and, you hope, be persuaded that it fits with their sense of the school's future. The ultimate test of a vision statement is not only its comprehensibility but its persuasiveness. Remember, the vision statement must lead not only you but others as well, whether students, colleagues, or community members. A persuasive vision can be the engine that drives all stakeholders into the future of the school and community.

## Create a Slogan

Finally, once your vision is clarified, create a slogan for it using five to nine words. Remember, however, that while a slogan can quickly become a pep talk for the present, it is not a vision of the future, so be ready to create slogans regularly to keep the focus on the future. Again, it is the inherent examination of and reflection on your vision that makes the process doubly valuable in communicating your vision to people and persuading them to accept your vision of the future.

Searching for just the right words in just the right order is a powerful way to discover the precision necessary to create both a persuasive vision

statement and a memorable slogan. A great advantage of a memorable slogan is that it can spark students, colleagues, and community members to action and can spread quickly as more and more people see your vision as valuable and important. The following examples show a situation and corresponding slogan:

- ☛ A school library with a vision of increasing students reading for pleasure: *A book for every backpack.*
- ☛ An adult literacy program: *Starting with us is starting your engine.*
- ☛ A writing-to-learn program: *Write for right.*

## Communicating a Vision

Once you have defined and clarified your vision through one or more of the previous activities, you might try the following activities (Kouzes & Posner, 1995) to communicate your vision and gain stakeholders' commitment to it. No matter which of the following activities you select, it is important to use and reuse the first activity because it prepares you to explain your vision persuasively at any time.

### Rehearse With Visualizations

Visualization is frequently used in athletics to improve performance, for example, visualizing a flying arrow pulling out of the center of your chest to encourage your forward progress as you sprint, or visualizing a photo being snapped as you raise a record-setting weight over your head. You can use visualization to rehearse for and improve the presentation of your vision statement in both informal and formal situations. By visualizing yourself explaining your vision clearly and persuasively, you increase your chances of turning imagination into reality. Visualize yourself in front of a faculty meeting or school board, persuasively explaining your vision. Picture your vision as a detailed future reality. Visualize future events; interactions of people; words spoken; how your class, school, district, community, or profession will be improved; and how these improvements will positively affect the lives of the stakeholders. View it all, and view it often. Imagine yourself explaining your vision and watching people becoming persuaded by it and taking action. See the big picture of the future.

These visual scenarios also can be created in writing by laying out detailed scenes. Become a playwright for your vision by adding a scene each day until you have a clear portrait of your vision. Then reread and revise your scenarios regularly. Soon you will have a large collection of scenarios as you continue to script your vision of the future. Eventually, all the characters, events, and words will become examples that can be used easily in conversations, more formal presentations, or pieces of writing when explaining your vision of the future of teaching literacy to stakeholders.

## **Prepare With Affirmations**

Affirmations are another way to mentally prepare for explaining, persuading, and realizing your vision. Affirmations require that you regularly state to yourself that what you desire is already so. They should be stated in the present tense as if they already exist, and they need to be repeated often. Affirmations can be made silently to yourself as a kind of pep talk, or they can be spoken aloud so that you can hear them.

Affirmations also can be written down—even on a scrap of paper that you throw away later. However, it is much more powerful to keep a paper or electronic journal in which you regularly record positive statements about your vision for your class, school, district, community, or profession. You can record statements in your journal at the same time every day for just five minutes, before class, before or after lunch, or before leaving for home. You should phrase your affirmations in a positive way. Repeat the ones that are most important or the ones for which you feel the least prepared or confident. On weekends, you can make a summative entry—taking no more than 10 minutes—after reviewing the five entries for the preceding week. At this time, you can highlight the most important issues, along with the areas on which you need to concentrate, so you can review them during the subsequent week.

## **Talk About Your Vision**

As a general and constant strategy, you should talk about your vision to students, colleagues, and community members. Talk to individuals in relaxed conversation and talk to small groups and the whole class or faculty, colleagues, and community members. Always enthusiastically stress your

commitment to your vision of literacy and its teaching through dramatic images, humor, metaphors, and stories. Show your passion and personal conviction, and show how your vision can help all stakeholders. Live your vision, and invite stakeholders to do so too because organizations tend to take on the characteristics of their leaders.

The simplest and often the most effective kind of talk is dialogue. Pursue opportunities to sit one-on-one with stakeholders to share your vision. Find opportunities during the day for informal conversations with others: coffee breaks, lunches, carpooling, before or after faculty meetings, during neighborhood events, in restaurants, or at professional conferences. Show how the teaching and learning of literacy could improve, and remind stakeholders of the benefits to everyone. Show your passion for the future of English and reading classrooms and of district and community literacy initiatives so that stakeholders will begin to catch your enthusiasm and value better teaching and learning in the school, district, and community. When your stakeholders leave, they should understand your vision and feel encouraged and supported in becoming a believer.

Of course, there are also opportunities for large-group talk. Never pass up a chance to meet with groups of whatever size, such as the Parent Teacher Organization, the district administrative council, the teachers' union, the community library board, or a standing committee of a professional organization. As with other kinds of talk, speak in ways that conjure up dramatic images and scenes of your vision for the future. Show your enthusiasm for your vision and the group's place in it. Use stories, metaphors, and humor to capture the stakeholders' imagination and engage them. Above all, keep the focus of your talk on the stakeholders' part in the future of your class, school, district, or community because that will connect them most closely to your vision.

## **Write About Your Vision**

One of the most traditional ways to communicate your vision is to write about it. Some people who are not comfortable with speaking, especially to large groups, may find writing easier and more valuable because it can be done in private and revised until perfect. You could try some of the types of writing previously mentioned, or you could write a memo to colleagues or an open letter to students, administrators, school board members, or community members. You might write longer pieces such as a proposal for

change or a brochure that describes your vision, as if it were the future and your vision already existed, incorporating any graphics you may have made or found while creating or clarifying your vision.

In whatever you write, show how your vision will help each audience, and try to be as specific as possible. Consider the following examples:

- ☛ When writing to parents, don't write, "Your children will read more"; instead write, "You'll see your children bringing books home to read."
- ☛ When writing to the community library, don't write, "Circulation will increase"; instead write, "Right after school, you should have two people at the circulation desk, ready to check out books."

Expand writing projects to include other useful communication forms such as posters, bulletin boards, videotapes, and websites.

- ☛ **Posters** proclaim the benefits of literacy or announce literacy-related events and should be placed strategically where people congregate or pass by: the faculty room, the main office, the outsides of doors, and kiosks. Posters take little effort to make, especially given today's desktop publishing programs. Posters are a nice project to showcase student art or poetry and can lead to valuable collaboration with vocational printing classes.
- ☛ **Bulletin boards** are a ubiquitous part of schools and often are found at key locations in a building. With a bulletin board, your vision of the future can be captured and created through words and multimedia such as photos and artwork. A bulletin board would be a good project for students in future teacher organizations or clubs.
- ☛ **Videotapes** can be thought of as visual writing and often involve scripts and narrations. Although they involve complex technology, most schools have staff well versed in production. Videotapes are easy to copy and easily transportable to other sites or even home. Before advancing a proposal for a portfolio evaluation project, for instance, a video could be made about portfolios in general. Picture the school board president or a superintendent watching and learning about issues in portfolio evaluation.

- ☛ **Websites** involve complex technology, but usually you can find a colleague, staff person, or student who has experience in constructing them. The advantage is that websites can incorporate all types of writing, graphics, video, and sound, which creates a powerful presentation. However, the biggest advantage is that websites can be accessed online and recorded on CD-ROM and opened when and where needed.

In any case, always show your personal enthusiasm and passion in your writing, which allows readers to see their place and their important role in your view of the future so that that enthusiasm and passion can be theirs if they choose.

## Use Common Interests, Trust, and Rewards

Common interests, trust, and rewards are very useful ways to communicate your vision. For example, using common interests might involve approaching a science teacher who uses a lot of writing in class and offering to trade your knowledge about writing-to-learn activities to support her use of writing in science. Using trust to communicate your vision might involve honoring commitments to join the school board committee on academic improvement and showing the committee your vision for teaching literacy not only in words but by the fact that your energy can be a trusted part of literacy improvement. Finally, you can reward people by celebrating events that are supportive of your vision, which might involve publicly congratulating the year's literary magazine staff for an excellent issue on students who care about writing.

Begin progress toward your vision with the least disruptive step, for example, by having students read stories in class before reading novels at home. Showcase pioneers who move toward your vision so others can see the value and develop acceptance of it. For example, write a profile for the school or community newspaper of a colleague who has started literacy workshops in her class. Select the best measures for your vision (e.g., number of books read) not necessarily the measures most frequently used (e.g., standardized tests). Shape the social context by bringing groups together who will showcase your vision at its best. For example, form a group of parents who are readers and/or writers to be advocates for literacy across the district and community. Finally, delegate as much of your routine

daily work as possible to stakeholders so that you have time to be a visionary leader.

In all the activities in this chapter, stakeholders will watch what you say and do because they will begin to see you as a model advocate for an improved literacy environment. You will become a model of one who is committed to the best in literacy teaching and learning. Becoming the best model is discussed in chapter 4.

# Literacy leaders aren't born— they're made.

## Literacy Leadership Six Strategies for Peoplework

*Donald A. McAndrew*

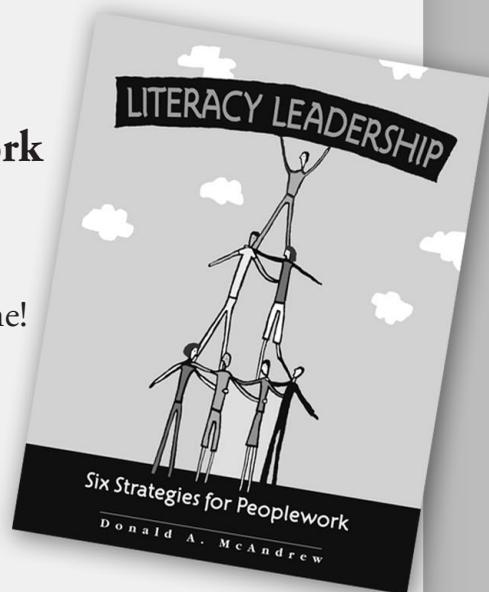
Okay, so maybe you weren't born a literacy leader...but here's your guide to becoming one!

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- Create and communicate a vision.
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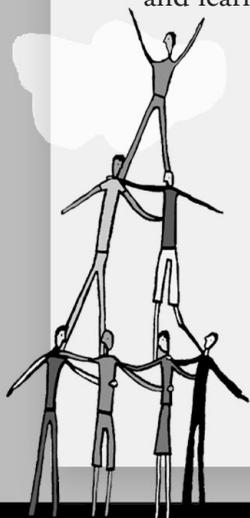
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