The Central5:
A Central European view on competencies for school leaders

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Skills

Knowledge

Attitudes

Preface to the Central5

Leadership is context-specific and we recognise that, in certain circumstances, the extent to which certain competencies may prevail over others may vary. We do, however, believe that the set of competencies within this framework does represent that which is required to lead and manage schools. There are many ways of analysing and representing the task of headship. This is one of them.

The framework demonstrates both the complexity and the simplicity of the role of the school leader. Simplicity is reflected in the definition of the five component areas of leadership and management upon which we had agreed: learning and teaching; change; self; others; the institution. These areas, however, are not completely distinct sets. The components then should be seen as representative of the interconnected complexity of the role of the school leader and of the attributes needed to perform this role.

When detailing knowledge, skills and attitudes, several overlaps might occur and the framework illustrates a complex system. In order to establish consistency, decisions were taken as to which area a certain element (knowledge, skill, attitude) should belong. Where a competency appeared in more than one area originally, it has been modified to occur in the one area where it appears to fit best and is not repeated. This does not lessen the importance of its impact on other domains, it merely enables the framework to be less convoluted and repetitive. Thus, for example, general, overarching, personal characteristics, such as honesty and creativity, were clustered in 'leading and managing self' even though in application these could well be related to several (or all of the) areas with specific references relating to the given area (for example, being creative in leading and managing the learning processes).

NB In all cases, we have tried to avoid ambiguity and to be as precise as possible in the language and terms used but recognise that alternative interpretation will, in some cases, be made.

The eight key competencies recognised by the European Commission – (EAC-2005-00005-00-00-EN-REV-00 (EN): communication in the mother tongue, communication in a foreign language, mathematical literacy and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning-to-learn, interpersonal and civic competences, entrepreneurship and cultural expression) – are assumed and have not been further amplified or exemplified here.

NB Please note that in the lists of competencies below under each domain, the numbers against the statements are merely for referencing purposes, for example, Learning and Teaching K4 where K stands for a knowledge statement. The observant reader will also note that there is some grouping of ideas in the statements. This, too, is for assistance in conceptualisation and for purposes of professional discussion with and among school leaders.

Each area has the same structure: a short description summarises the themes the area covers, it is followed by five key descriptors which highlight the corner stones of the competencies, which in turn are detailed in a table including the three elements: knowledge, skills and attitudes. The list of competencies is followed by vignettes to illustrate how certain competencies are put in action. The scenes and situations depicted by the vignettes show how competencies are interwoven in a specific professional context. Just like visual illustrations for a theoretical article, vignettes intend to help comprehend and take in this complex system, and thus – just like illustrations – their style and their number may differ for the five areas. In fact it is possible to complete the framework by more vignettes any time when one decides to adapt and use it.
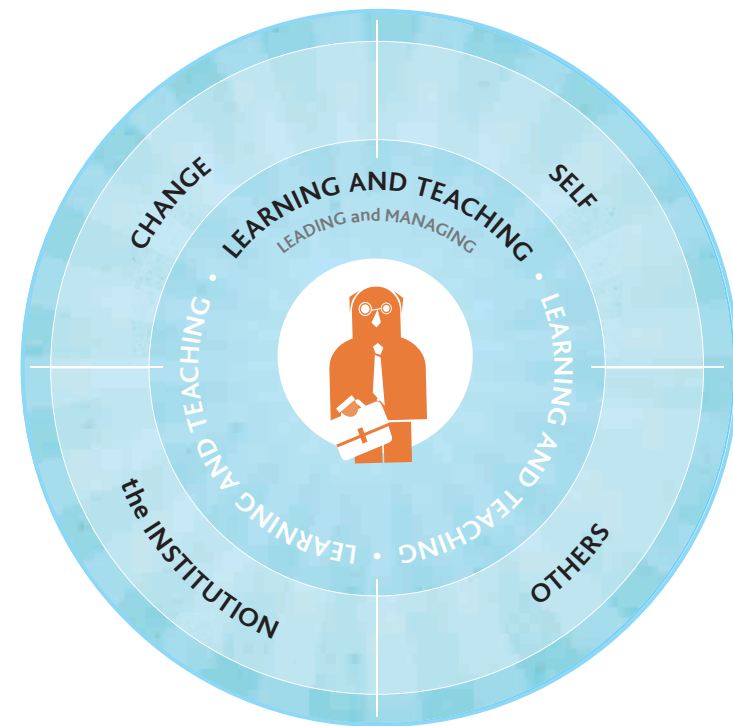
A | Leading and Managing Learning and Teaching

The core purpose of schools is learning. The role of the school leader is to create a supportive learning environment and to ensure that the resources of the school are directed to that purpose. The effective leadership and management of learning of all members of the school and the establishment, maintenance and the development of a learning organisation are thus primary functions of the school leader as the leading professional.

Thus, the school leader should carry out the activities as outlined in the ensuing sentences. S/he should lead the process of values-centred learning and teaching. While establishing a safe and effective learning climate and processes for learning where high expectations are set, s/he sets a culture of learning and a climate of achievement for all. The highest quality of learning and teaching needs to be established, maintained and developed together with a systematic

and rigorous system of monitoring, review and evaluation of the learning and teaching processes. The school leader needs to be active in ensuring that such exist and that reliable assessment systems are created/adopted and utilised. The school leader needs to model in her/his own practice the constant application of both established pedagogic and andragogic ideas and new trends and innovation in education. S/he should support and promote research and evidence-based approaches to teaching and learning (and, ideally, engage in such activity).

Key descriptors:
- School leaders ensure that learning and teaching lead to the improvement of student achievement.
- School leaders establish a culture of feedback and evaluation with a view to improvement.
- School leaders ensure that curricular activities meet the demands of all learners.
- School leaders critically engage teachers with (research) literature to improve their teaching.
- School leaders work towards achieving an inclusive learning environment.

Competencies:

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
S/he knows (and understands)	S/he is able to	S/he
1. securely the concepts of both pedagogy and andragogy. 2. the concepts of school development and the learning organisation and relationship between them. 3. what a supportive learning environment is. 4. how to create a supportive learning environment. 5. the principles of individual, team and collaborative learning. 6. what is meant by quality learning processes. 7. models, methods and tools of quality assessment and development, and their cyclic relationship to each other. 8. system theory in the development of quality learning. 9. the models and techniques of monitoring and evaluation of learning on a regular basis. 10. the criteria for setting precise, achievable and measurable expectations for all. 11. the strategies needed to apply effective teaching and learning methods in practice. 12. what is meant by 'authentic teaching'. 13. which learning and teaching methods make the best contribution to staff and students' learning. 14. the principles of pedagogy and related legislation. 15. the context of the school and its members on learning and teaching. 16. the nature of an effective whole school core curriculum. 17. that each 'discipline' is socially constructed and has a particular function in helping humans make sense of the world in which they live. 18. that a theory of knowledge is highly effective in providing a rationale for curriculum development. 19. which are the key tools needed for curriculum development.	1. create a supportive learning environment. 2. communicate effectively her/his educational values regarding the importance of learning. 3. contribute to (and participate in) pedagogical training regularly. 4. teach effectively ensure that there is continuous school development to the development of the wider learning organisation. 5. identify teachers' learning needs. 6. evaluate the impact of teacher professional development. 7. set high expectations for self, teachers and students. 8. plan the processes of school development for learning. 9. develop a learning organisation through continuous school development. 10. inspire teachers and students to learn. 11. apply logic to the learning process, for example, plan/do/control/act/evaluate. 12. select quality measures from a 'form follows function' perspective. 13. apply the findings from quality measurement to improve learning and teaching. 14. find suitable assessment methods for the development of learning. 15. apply systemic knowledge in educational quality development. 16. monitor and evaluate the learning processes and outcomes on a regular basis. 17. develop a quality learning and teaching development plan with short, medium and long-term perspectives. 18. set up precise, achievable and measurable expectations for different levels of attainment. 19. connect the principles of pedagogy and legislation to the process of education.	1. believes in a supportive learning environment. 2. views the school as a learning organisation. 3. considers important to be updated on the latest developments through reading, visiting conferences etc. 4. believes in continuous teacher professional development. 5. is responsive towards the on-going development of teaching. 6. is a role model for learning. 7. considers quality assurance from an educative perspective. 8. is responsive towards the on-going educational processes in quality assurance and development. 9. considers a systematic approach to be important. 10. recognises quality assurance and development as a tool for medium- and long-term improvement of learning results. 11. values monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching. 12. expresses through her/his behaviour the importance of quality development of learning as an aspect of day-to-day management. 13. has and demonstrates a positive attitude towards learning. 14. has respect for the good work of teachers. 15. is authentic as a teacher, that is, "walks the talk". 16. values high ethical standards in teaching. 17. values education as a common good. 18. considers the legal context in which schools operate. 19. shows responsibility for the school curriculum. 20. conceives 'curriculum' as a means to nurture the talents of and among learners. 21. respects the unique characteristics of the learners (abilities, interests, learning preferences). 22. believes in outcome-oriented curriculum design.

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
S/he knows (and understands)	S/he is able to	S/he
	20. apply learning and teaching methods among staff and students. 21. diagnose latest trends in education and connect them to pedagogy and legislation. 22. implement the principles of pedagogy and related legislation in her/his school. 23. identify and exploit the specific contextual factors of his/her school for the benefit of learners. 24. establish a whole school curriculum. 25. raise awareness for the necessity of a coherent curriculum in school. 26. cater for meaningful collaboration in curriculum development. 27. ensure that the curriculum is flexible enough to tap the potential of all learners. 28. establish a school curriculum with learning (outcomes) in mind. 29. organise professional learning communities who work on the curricula in and across the subject areas. 30. monitor the quality of the curricula and give feedback for development. 31. use every staff member's capabilities to the fullest to achieve the best outcomes for the learners. 32. seek and offer feedback about ways to improve results.	23. sees the curriculum as a plan from which students can learn well. 24. believes in curricula which foster both cognitive and affective growth in learners. 25. shows concern for controversial issues, values and beliefs. 26. is committed to leadership for learning in the whole curriculum.

Vignettes:

» *Ensuring curricular coherence*

In order to align the school-based curricula in the subject areas, Mrs Matthews, the school leader, has asked the curriculum team leaders to discuss the principles of their subject curricula in the different classes. The foreign language team leader presents the spiral build-up of the curriculum along the progression of grammar items to be learnt. The one for maths explains why the maths teachers cover certain areas of the national curriculum in some way and other. After the presentations Mrs Matthews was wondering why all subject representatives had argued from the perspectives of what they had to teach in their subject areas.

"This is what we are expected to do", argues one. "This is what we learnt at university", another one adds. "Honestly, I'm not surprised that quite a few of our students fail to pass the national exams where they have to grapple with complex and ambiguous issues and problems," the school head points out. "What would you suggest?" somebody asks. "We should help students encounter, accept, and ultimately embrace challenge in learning," Mrs Matthews responds. "And how do we get there?" another team leaders asks. "I think we should first start with ourselves and to guide each other in understanding the key information, ideas and the fundamental skills of the disciplines. As a consequence, if the students do not experience these fundamental ideas themselves they will not master the core of the subjects. Our curricula should prepare them for a world in which knowledge expands and changes at a stunning pace."

The school head perceives an atmosphere of curiosity in the room. "If we succeed in helping the young generation to understand the past in order to invent a future", she continues, "and with this particular conceptualisation we should find ways to think about crafting our curricula." "I never thought of the curriculum as the meeting point between the past and the future. I rather used it as an instrument to structure the learning packages for the students throughout their career in school...", the maths' teacher responds in surprise. "That means that the curriculum is a means to understand our heritage and we can use it as a springboard for constructing ways of thinking that are more contemporary and help the future generation to look more forward than the past allows...", another added.

Suddenly, the atmosphere in the room felt differently, as if it had changed somehow.

» Assuring quality development

The school steering group meets to discuss the report of the recent self-evaluation which comprises the results of questionnaires answered by teachers, students and parents. The findings show strengths and weaknesses, among the latter particularly about students' learning.

Mr Barren, the school head, shows great interest in this aspect and asks the teachers in the steering group what the reasons could be. The teachers argue that it was difficult to interpret the data. "We can't judge these findings from a general perspective", the English teacher points out, "since experiences in language acquisition are very different from learning maths". A heated discussion arises about whether the students themselves would be able at all to assess their own learning.

"You are right," Mr Barren interrupts, "learning is not visible, only its results are. To find out more about our students' learning, we have to find a more participatory approach. I recently learnt about an interesting method called photo-evaluation. The children have cameras and are asked, in groups, to take pictures of situations in school which are favourable for learning and which are not."

He engages the steering group in a lively discussion about the feasibility of the photographic approach to evaluation and they agree to try it out with one class to familiarise themselves with the new idea.

» Promoting innovation critically

Mrs Schwarz came back from a conference where she was impressed by an innovative approach to enhance learning in schools, called CWT – Classroom Walkthrough, which a speaker from the USA had presented. It is a method used a lot by principals in the States to get a quick overview of the state of the art in teaching and learning at school from a systemic perspective.

Before she talks to her teachers she googles for background information and orders several books on CWT. She familiarizes herself with the philosophy behind it and studies research results about its effectiveness in use. Although the findings are very favourable, Mrs Schwarz is aware of the cultural bias towards American schools and the difficulty of a cross-cultural transfer.

The most difficult part will be to convince her teachers to accept the necessary five to seven minutes visits in their classrooms without notice, she thinks. This would remind them of the old inspection system, which fortunately was abandoned because of its out-datedness. Her short classroom visits did, however, have another goal, the pursuit of a vision to enhance student learning. She, therefore, decided to start working with her staff towards that vision for the school.

▶ **B** | **Leading and Managing Change**

The school leader needs to ensure the establishment of agreed values within the school. Visioning, developing a strategy for its implementation and clarifying the mission are key components of the role and function of the school leader. S/he needs to be capable of directing and working collaboratively towards the establishment and achievement of the agreed vision and communicating it effectively. S/he needs to be constant in the maintenance of a future orientation during the implementation phase. Setting goals and targets for her/himself and others in order to achieve the vision is central to effectiveness of the school leader. Thus, the school leader needs to understand change agency and how to overcome barriers to change. S/he needs to establish and be active in systems of monitoring, reviewing and evaluating. School leaders need to know how to respond to internal self-evaluation and external forms of school evaluation. S/he needs to know how to deal with chaos and complexity. It is an essential requirement of school leaders that they keep themselves and others informed about new trends in education and in educational policies and practice. In order to determine direction and purpose and to maintain currency in action the school leader needs to engage in environmental scanning and sustainability (using a variety of analytic tools). School leaders need to be able to identify areas of potential improvement and school improvement and development possibilities. They need to ensure future orientation while developing and maintaining a transparent learning culture.

Key descriptors:
- School leaders communicate the vision for the school's future which is based on shared values and aimed at improving current practice and student achievement.
- School leaders pursue a strategic approach in their daily activities by offering manageable steps to everybody to fulfil the goals set by the school.
- School leaders act strategically in pursuing their school's goals and understand and are able to respond constructively to the challenges involved in the process of change.
- School leaders create an environment which is open to change and establish constructive relationships with the actors involved.
- School leaders share their leadership with other staff and build improvement on the deserved trust in their own and others' capabilities.

Competencies:

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
S/he knows (and understands)	S/he is able to	S/he
1. the values of the organisation (and the community). 2. the principles, purposes and practice of environmental scanning to maintain good relationships with all partners of the organisation and for development of the community. 3. new trends in education. 4. the strengths and weaknesses (areas for development) of the school. 5. risk and risk management. 6. the consequences of change. 7. the principles and practices of effective management of change. 8. strategic development. 9. the need to develop specific goals (and to set clear targets). 10. the need to continue to evaluate and re-evaluate goals during implementation.	1. observe (and interpret) economic and social processes and trends, and is able to adapt the institutional strategy accordingly. 2. manage change (effectively at all stages: normative, strategic, tactical and operational). 3. plan and evaluate effectively the change process. 4. initiate the regular monitoring and evaluation of the strategy. 5. examine evaluations for validity and reliability. 6. review and evaluate development for continued improvement. 7. create and develop the school as an open organization, which is welcoming to the community in which it resides. 8. create an active (action-oriented) environment for accomplishment of the school vision. 9. initiate change and innovation. 10. articulate a clearly-defined vision identification and retain the essence of the vision in his/her decisions and actions. 11. create vision, setting goals and developmental strategy. 12. is able to lead people towards goals convincingly. 13. link the goals with the values of the organisation. 14. realise interest for implementing education policy and innovations.	1. always keeps the interests of the school in mind in his/her public activities. 2. considers it important to think in a long-term perspective and to act accordingly. 3. is responsive to perception(s). 4. believes in sustainability and demonstrates it with her/his sustainable thinking and works for sustainability (at both the school and the community level). 5. has confidence in the value of the agreed goals. 6. believes (and acts upon the belief) that her/his activities conducted for the colleagues should be, by and large, clearly visible and transparent. 7. advocates transparency in decision-making. 8. takes responsibility for creating and maintaining an open and encouraging school climate in relation to change. 9. is willing to try new things. 10. is tenacious and considers important that his/her objectives – regarding change and innovation – are clearly visible. 11. considers it important and endeavours to act responsibly in relation to all resources and goals.

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
S/he knows (and understands)	S/he is able to	S/he
	15. be actively involved in solving problems and in performing tasks. 16. create and maintain good relationships with all parties (even in difficult situations). 17. delegate and define appropriate tasks and activities for all stakeholders. 18. involve every interested party in creating the institutional strategy. 19. identify strengths and weaknesses (areas for school development). 20. present strategy of the school persuasively. 21. receive and give information responsibly and professionally.	

Vignettes:

» *Planning for a paradigm shift (with italicised competences)*

The school leader had read the latest research and international reports indicating trends in education and relative status of educational achievement of students within the state compared to other states. Recognising a need to change the paradigm from a focus on didactic teaching to one of facilitated learning, the school leader recognised the need for her own role to change from one of merely managing the resources of the school to that of becoming the school's pedagogic leading leader. She knew the change would be challenging in the short-term but following convincing research findings that the impact would be *long-term* gains for all concerned determined to follow that route. She was also *confident* in the change in the goals of a new set of *values* and was *willing to try new approaches* to achieve success for the students and a consequent growth in the *community's confidence in the school*.

She knew well that while the change needed to be executed with alacrity/speed, she would have to convince teachers and the community that such an innovation would be valuable to all. Students who were leaving her school and moving to the upper secondary school were a target group with whom she had carried out some primary research about the strengths (and areas for development) of the school. She talked the idea through with the founding body and representatives of the governing body and gained their approval in principle. They were most convinced by the idea that the school would potentially become the best in the city/region/state. At a meeting of all staff, she then introduced the idea to the whole staff as a long-term implementable project but with finite starting dates. She had wisely had some initial talks with her lead teachers and subject specialists and gained allies (and potential volunteers) for the initiative. She then asked for volunteers to pilot the scheme in six subjects and after one semester to evaluate the outcome in terms of student achievement and enjoyment. She had set

aside part of the budget (resources) to carry this out under an approved state-recognised item – innovation – which would also provide the necessary and teacher-oriented professional development.

By being scrupulous in her planning, *creating the climate for change* and investing her time in preparing the ground the school leader enabled the project to be successful. She was an active participant not only in *monitoring and evaluation* but also with regular development meetings which provided a strong cohort of committed teachers and a firm base for dissemination and institutionalisation of the initiative in which she, as school leader, *had openly demonstrated commitment and confidence*. The work continues to this day and the school's achievements are recognised as exemplary practice in the field of student-focused learning.

» Introducing practical mathematics to the elementary school. (without italicised competencies)
After attending with his deputy an international conference on teacher education being held in the capital and attending a seminar/workshop on raising achievement in mathematics through practical activity, the school leader was convinced by the arguments presented and by the knowledge and achievement of the students who presented with their teacher and with a university teacher at the workshop. The deputy was also the principal teacher of mathematics in the school and, while children learned things in a traditional way, their security when asked problems presented in a different way than in the textbooks had led to a lack of achievement in international comparative tests.

The school leader had always believed in the importance of practice and consequent learning from experience and here he saw a way of ensuring that the students in his school would be able to learn not only from the textbook, particularly in the early stages of concept development. He had himself when a young man taken apart a car engine and successfully put it together again without studying the theories around the internal combustion engine.
His own interest in ways of learning had led him to have studied as part of a doctoral study the latest trends from home and abroad for example, different forms of intelligences, neural networking, whole body learning.

During a four-hours long train journey as they returned to their town, he investigated with his deputy the opportunities to change practice in the school. He realised the need to gain additional resources and viewed potential sponsorship as an option as well as making the most of existing resources. He recognised, too, that many of his teachers would need support in reconceptualising mathematics' education. At that moment, he resolved to establish a mathematics' fund and to invite parents (and others as sponsors) to contribute and to explore the potential of funding from the European Social Fund. He would make use of the workshop activities as a lever for gaining parental support.

▶ **C | Leading and Managing Self**

The school leader needs to be able to maintain her/his motivation for professional action. S/he needs to be able to understand the ethical and moral dimensions of the role and act accordingly. Knowledge of the personal characteristics of successful leaders may assist school leaders in their own development. S/he needs to be effective in communicating via all media. Such characteristics as optimism, responsibility, reliability, a clear understanding of accountability, (evidence-based) decision-making skills, entrepreneurship, determination, responsiveness, being consistent in one's work with others; autonomy, consciousness, authenticity, creativity; political awareness have been found in successful school leadership. Personal self-evaluation, knowing oneself – one's strengths and areas for personal and professional development (together with a capacity for critical self-reflection) enables school leaders to use appropriate means of managing delegation and distribution of leadership. School leaders also need to be able to manage their own stress.

Key descriptors:
- School leaders critically reflect upon their personality, behaviour and actions, and (when necessary) revise their decisions. (*Self-reflection and self-evaluation*)
- School leaders continuously improve their interpersonal strengths and seek to overcome weaknesses. (*Interpersonal development*)
- School leaders keep up-to-date professional knowledge and strengths to be able to set up and reach the vision and goals of the school. (*Professional – leadership and managerial development*)
- School leaders recognise moral and ethical stances in relation to education, keep professional ethics and accept their responsibility. (Ethical and moral development)
- School leaders communicate effectively and show deep commitment to the education and development of students, teachers and themselves. (*Effective communication and commitment*)

Competencies:

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
S/he knows (and understands)	S/he is able to	S/he
1. and keeps abreast of the latest pedagogical and methodological developments. 2. at least one foreign language. 3. ICT technologies. 4. own personal, interpersonal and professional strengths. 5. own areas for personal professional development. 6. own areas for interpersonal development. 7. what causes her/his own disequilibrium. 8. strengths and limitations of own style of leadership. 9. own moral and ethical stances in relation to education. 10. models and tools of professional self-evaluation. 11. different models, styles of leadership. 12. the importance of being and up-to-date in professional issues when teaching and teacher/school leader development.	1. keep her/himself up-to-date with pedagogic practice. 2. manage and lead her/himself well to achieve professional goals. 3. manage own success in a sustainable way. 4. advocate and present his ideas and values. 5. exercise the interests of the school in an assertive way. 6. make responsible, deliberate, far-sighted and consistent decisions. 7. acknowledge errors and correct or amend her/his own decisions. 8. acknowledge errors as part of own learning. 9. reflect on the work of and learn from different actors in the educational arena. 10. react flexibly to a changing situation. 11. recognise whether issues are convergent or divergent. 12. manage his/her own energy. 13. can deal with personal stress and not be occupied with working problems in his/her own free time. 14. keep up-to-date with phenomena happening outside education. 15. take personal initiative. 16. be creative. 17. work as part of the team. 18. listen objectively to the views of others. 19. distinguish between benefits and dis-benefits. 20. think analytically. 21. reconcile the given, the desirable and the possible. 22. accept appreciation from others. 23. perceive a problem as a challenge. 24. keep to the rules of etiquette. 25. take responsibility for her/his own actions. 26. differentiate between leadership and teaching abilities. 27. constantly develop her/his own leadership competences. 28. carry out self-evaluation. 29. elaborate goals for her/himself aiming to improve her/his leadership capacities. 30. analyse her/his actions and the realised outcomes from an ethical and moral point of view. 31. establish consonance between her/his principles and practice.	1. represents the values of the institution in an exemplary way. 2. is a good role model. 3. models diligence. 4. takes responsibility for professional development of self. 5. maintains physical and mental endurance. 6. is benevolent. 7. is capable of generosity. 8. is authentic. 9. believes in trust. 10. is coherent and consistent in her/his actions and statements. 11. likes his/her profession, his/her role. 12. thinks carefully about personal professional direction. 13. is prepared to examine personal and professional values when challenged. 14. is honest. 15. treats other people in accord with 'human' values. 16. has a stable and transparent Code of Ethics. 17. is trustworthy. 18. presents loyalty to school where managing. 19. recognises the value of professional interaction. 20. has a pragmatic stance. 21. considers it important to use her/his positional authority in an appropriate way. 22. recognises and accepts her/his accountability. 23. is open-minded with a positive approach. 24. is optimistic, knowing from practical experience that things are possible. 25. considers positive outcome problem resolution important. 26. endeavours to perform her/his tasks without excuses. 27. is compassionate. 28. behaves empathically. 29. is not ambitious at all costs. 30. shows courage. 31. considers risks as a challenge. 32. takes an unbiased stance. 33. is entrepreneurial. 34. has a sense of the situation. 35. views difference as an opportunity. 36. endeavours to be optimistic.

» Self-reflection and development

After one year in service, as school leader John asks himself what he has learned and what progress he has made in his teaching and management competencies. He has learned a lot about all the administrative matters concerning the management of the school. Together, with the school's deputies and administration staff, they had formed a team that was able to react to day-to-day situations. The national school legislation still expects school leaders to take part in compulsory management education and training therefore he had applied and had attended several lessons. There were many topics in the programme list but, for him, the most interesting one was 'How to plan and realise self-development when being in the position of a school director'. He listened carefully and minute by minute he was losing confidence in those who presented ideas and recommendations as executable in real school life.

He had limited experience in personal diagnostic that is given to company managers in selection processes. Until the moment of this lesson, nobody has asked him to realise self-reflection on the job and all related activities. Quite surprisingly, the first assignment he had obtained was to create a very simple SWOT analysis, based on self-reflection in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. This situation was completely new for him. But, after several days of thinking, he was able to complete a simple SWOT analysis sheet. The first product surprised him in many ways. There were too many notes about his strengths and threats, but only a few notes concerning his weaknesses and opportunities. Discussion of school leaders in the training session about their SWOTs indicated him that he was partially wrong. Many of them, especially the older ones, balance their strengths and weaknesses and also opportunities and threats. He had obtained the feedback that he was too optimistic and was asked to make his SWOT more realistic. Some colleagues advised him to ask teachers in school on their view of his competencies to manage the school and to lead people. John got answers that surprised him and were simple, clear and suited him too much.

For the first time in his life he heard that he communicated ineffectively with people, especially teachers and spent more time in discussions that do not lead to a decision. Furthermore, he prefers some teachers and staff members in daily communication. He also learned that teachers are expected to have more and deeper specific discussions about actual school problems but they wanted to work and learn more co-operatively. Some people reflected on his inability to solve a conflict situation in time, sensitively and effectively. Deputies and subject leaders suggested that he should delegate more power and authority to be able to make flexible decisions on time and without delay. His leadership style was seen as autocratic with very little space for the ideas of others. Moreover, the support given to individuals and teams was not ranked high. All other information he received was valuable and, under such pressure, he decided to change something in his managerial and leadership style. His motivation to manage the school and lead people was low. He also considered resignation as school leader.

At the next lesson of his managerial training he was asked to prepare his personal development plan with emphasis on his managerial and leadership competencies in relation to school development. To do this he needed to return to his self-reflection, SWOT and feedback. His first idea was to plan further training in special managerial courses, but the school budget was not sufficient enough to do it. He needed to find other ways to realise self-development in order to be a competent manager and leader. He decided to ask his management trainer for help. He recommended various possibilities to develop missing competencies. The first was to exploit more management education and training which he attended and in which he participated more actively. The next was self-education in selected areas of management and leadership. He recommended John to visit other schools and to have discussion and consultancy with school leader colleagues. A pursuant suggestion was to study informally in selected areas of his interest. When solving problems at school, he saw co-operative learning as efficient and effective. The trainer suggested that he ask for coaching by a senior teacher, deputy or school leader from other schools. Best practice, it was suggested, is to write self-reflection reports, especially after critical incidents and conflict situations related to school management and leadership. He also recommended him to use the competency framework described in professional standards for school leaders for self-analysis and planning his personal development. Taking into account his available time, he decided to plan regular meetings with senior colleagues at school and to use the services of a professional school coach to improve his communication skills, especially early identification of conflict and problem-solving. This plan was set up for the period of the next half-year and consisted of monthly meetings with teachers which were followed by coaching sessions to support his self-reflection and competency development.

D | Leading and Managing Others

The school leader needs to know how to inspire others to high achievement (to be the best they can be with reflection and reflexivity), and how to use school self-evaluation. Knowledge of human resource development and management (selection, recruitment, induction, monitoring and appraisal/evaluation) is essential for school leaders. To attain the goals of the school they need to know how to use teams and how to build them. They need to maintain the highest ethical and moral approaches in the management of others. Knowledge and application of social justice will assist school leaders in building personal and professional relationships. S/he must act within the principles of equality and equality of opportunity. In managing others, school leaders need to communicate effectively with others, give timely

feedback and be able to initiate and promote discussion and good practice. To ameliorate the potential for community and political support the school leader needs to be able to establish and maintain effective partnership. Schools which are active in the community gain more support. The school leader needs to know and understand how to establish conditions to reduce the stress of others. S/he needs to know how to manage conflict situations and how to reduce their occurrence. S/he needs to know what and how to delegate and needs to understand and know how to implement the concept of distributed leadership.

Key descriptors:
- School leaders inspire, motivate and encourage school staff and students and promote their positive approach to challenges in education. (*Inspirational leadership*)
- School leaders create, co-ordinate and participate on effective team working based on various form of shared/distributed leadership. (*Team-building and distributed leadership*)
- School leaders ensure professional development of people based on recognition of needs and requirements of the staff, school and stakeholders. (*Professional development*)
- School leaders make decisions, solve problems and manage conflicts (recognising others' considerations and different social and cultural (diversity) viewpoints. (*Communication and shared decision making*)
- School leaders develop a positive climate and culture supportive of knowledge-sharing and reaching common goals keeping moral and ethical stances in leading others. (*School climate and moral aspects*)

Competencies:

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
S/he knows (and understands)	S/he is able to	S/he
1. the meaning of 'best practice' and the ways to share it with others. 2. motivation theories and techniques. 3. the importance of motivation and commitment among her/his colleagues in achieving goals. 4. Human Resource (HR) models, selection and recruitment procedures, techniques for monitoring performance and staff evaluation. 5. team roles; is familiar with various structures of division of tasks and responsibilities within a team. 6. the legislation related to labour and the school. 7. the relationship to and the impact of HRM on the school climate. 8. the characteristics of social stratification. 9. the profiles of the school graduate. 10. the needs and interest of different stakeholders. 11. personnel Review & Management theories and techniques. 12. models and techniques of problem resolution and conflict management 13. the legal and ethical rights and responsibilities of the staff, pupils/students and specific stakeholder groups. 14. the importance of principles in relation to specific stakeholders' groups and working of school. 15. principles of management of differences. 16. communication models and techniques. 17. how to lead discussions and meetings. 18. the principles of time management. 19. different leadership models and styles. 20. various structures of dividing rights and duties. 21. what skills and abilities are needed for specific roles and positional performance. 22. structure of school climate and culture, and the ways for their development.	1. choose, adapt, apply and share techniques of 'best practice'. 2. identify the motivation bases of co-workers, and apply relevant methods to inspire them in achieving both personal and organisational goals. 3. provide support for the personal development of her/his colleagues. 4. make workable complex HR processes – from selection to the retirement. 5. establish an inspiring work climate. 6. assess the potential and performance of staff members, and set them realistic tasks. 7. create an effective team(s), and act either as a member or a leader of a team. 8. demonstrate respect for the personality and views of each staff member. 9. notice and have consideration for the physical and mental welfare of colleagues. 10. recognise the needs of stakeholders and uphold them. 11. adjust her/his communication, ways of behaviour to different audiences. 12. communicate and lead discussion effectively. 13. establish and maintain good relations in- and outside of the school. 14. select and apply appropriate problem and conflict management models and tools. 15. take a logical and critical view on the issues discussed. 16. deal with differences, and be just and fair to different groups. 17. apply communication models, tools and techniques 18. create opportunities and conditions for effective discussions. 19. delegate power and responsibility. 20. promote individual responsibility and personal involvement in school leadership. 21. is able to inspire people and promote their positive approach to challenges.	1. is committed to develop the personal capability of the co-workers. 2. considers important the existence of the motivation and inspiring work environment. 3. considers decisions predominantly from the point of view of common goals and benefits. 4. is open to share his/her knowledge and experience with others. 5. is socially sensitive. 6. is committed to represent the interest of the school. 7. considers very important high level partnerships with the stakeholders. 8. respects the labour market for which the school prepares the pupils/students. 9. considers it important to identify and to solve problems and to resolve conflicts. 10. considers both professional and moral aspects in solving problems and resolving conflicts. 11. keeps a professional distance (remains objective) from the evaluated/solved conflict situations. 12. considers the importance of values in the life of human beings and organisations. 13. accepts others as equal partners. 14. accepts the right of others to express different opinions. 15. respects and supports decisions made by the authorised staff members. 16. believes in human potential. 17. is open to critique and different opinions. 18. is oriented to strengths and positivity.

» Is Mrs Smith leading Mr Taylor or is she led by the school leader? – An example of different ways of leading

Mrs Smith was really upset. It cannot go on like this. What does Taylor think! He always disregards recommendations from meetings, he does what he pleases, ignores activities and efforts of others. Mrs Smith was really tired of it. It is true that she was the person responsible for organising the Christmas party for parents, but nobody can work like this. Let the school leader deal with this. Either he should make Taylor get his act together or he should make him responsible for organising and arranging the entire event instead of her. He should be the one carrying the responsibility and blame if the entire Christmas party ends up being a disaster.

In this state of mind, Mrs Smith was resolutely approaching the school leader's office. She imagined standing in front of him and dishing it all on his table. She knocked purposefully, did not even wait for the answer and entered immediately. On top of entering without waiting, she also launched on the school leader without any greeting or introduction: "Mister director, I cannot work like this. If you don't do anything with Taylor, the party will be a huge disaster. It's impossible to work with him! He doesn't do things that we agree on, and brings chaos to everything. I cannot even imagine how the party will turn out. We have agreed on what needs to be rehearsed with the kids for the performance so that it has the proper atmosphere. But you should see his crazy ideas and things he does with the kids. It's all one big disaster and if I tell him anything, it might just as well be spitting into the wind."

Mrs Smith was unstoppable in her speech. But she noticed that the school leader stopped fumbling with the papers on the table right after her first sentence. He leaned against the chair backrest and watched very attentively as she was marching up and down in his office and complaining about Taylor and the whole situation. He did not interrupt nor ask anything. It was clear to her that he was aware that had to intervene and handle the situation with Taylor. So when she was done, she stood facing him and as she was awaiting his decision regarding the solution in the matter, she fixed her gaze on him. And then the headmaster uttered his verdict: "You have made yourself amazingly upset but your energy is volcanic. Such exuberance! Phenomenal!"

It was only a fraction of a second during which she stared at him and could not believe what she had just heard. Right after that she burst into laughter and the director smiled as well. She cooled down. She understood, you shouldn't deal with everything right away. Every situation should be approached with a calm mind. Of course, she will deal with Taylor and the organisation of the Christmas party calmly and on her own. They will sit down together, avoid unnecessary emotions, and discuss everything point by point. She does not need anybody else to deal with this. Just as the school leader had to deal with her and her anger, she must deal in the same way with Taylor and his insubordination in assigned tasks. Let him also speak his mind and they will take it from there. She will respond based on what she hears

from him. Under her leadership, they should work together and organise a pleasant evening for parents in the time before Christmas.

▶ E | Leading and Managing the Institution

In order to further the goals of the school, key functions and responsibilities of the role of school leader are: to ensure that all operations within the legal competence of the school leader are carried out effectively and efficiently and that all school-related administrative matters are managed to effective (and efficient) completion. The school leader needs to manage effectively her/his professional time and to monitor the efficiency of others engaged in the day-to-day management of the school. The management of the plant (buildings and land) in order that the school functions effectively is a key competence of the school leader. The school leader has to ensure the efficient and effective management of school finances to achieve the goals of the school. S/he has to manage the effective deployment and management of personnel. S/he has to manage meetings and the flow of information effectively. The school leader has to manage her/his diary to be able to prioritise (and maintain her/his sanity). S/he needs to establish and maintain efficient, economical and effective administrative systems and to know how to delegate authority and how to analyse tasks. It is essential that the school leader interacts effectively with external partners and is able to work with systems within the community, region, inspection services and the ministry of education.

Key descriptors:
- School leaders analyse and handle effectively the school's institutional resources including financial, human, technological, physical etc. in compliance with legal requirements.
- School leaders care about the public image of the school and act to maintain a positive public image.
- School leaders ensure effective management of time and other resources.
- School leaders channel and manage processes in a transparent way ensuring they stay within the guidelines of the system.
- School leaders establish communication that engages internal and external partners.

Competencies:

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
S/he knows (and understands)	S/he is able to	S/he
1. different techniques of disseminating information.	1. transfer information in a clear way.	1. open to flexible solutions concerning institutional leadership and management.
2. financial conditions (the available budget).	2. manage the flow of information – promptly.	2. is committed to rules and regulations.
3. legislation concerning budgetary use and its impact.	3. address relevant information in a targeted way (to the right people).	3. accepts that not all control is in her/his hands nor is it necessary.
4. the institutional resource needs (equipment, renovation etc.).	4. make the organisational structure visible and transparent.	4. has a responsible approach in all aspects of institutional management.
5. a variety of funding sources.	5. access funding through networking proactively, generate income.	5. endeavours to be resilient.
6. techniques of time-management (e.g. scheduling).	6. analyse the financial situation: recognise needs (financial) and identify where resources have to be spent to achieve the school's goals.	6. endeavours to be systematic.
7. the administrative system/ guidelines.	7. access and use a variety of funding routes/resources.	7. is committed to school's goals and is goal-oriented.
8. the direction and structural components of the institution.	8. handle a budget effectively, that is to stay in credit or break even and to allocate according to agreed priorities.	8. endeavours to be precise.
9. all the actors, persons who are involved in the management of the institution.	9. deal with numbers, figures, statistics etc.	9. considers responsiveness important and acts considerately.
10. what the responsibilities and scope/power of each actor are according to the legislation.	10. organise and distribute the tasks relating to the institution effectively.	10. considers maintaining a relationship important.
11. the impact of community involvement and the social context.	11. estimate the duration of tasks.	11. open to involving social partners.
12. the structure and the potential of the local community.	12. channel and manage processes.	12. considers the school as a service provider.
13. to whom s/he is accountable and for what.	13. assess how long tasks take.	13. is committed to community development.
14. who the target 'customers' are/what is the institution's target group	14. organise tasks in importance and priority.	14. considers the institution's public image to be important.
15. various communication tools/channels (printed, electronic media, social media etc.).	15. organise meetings in timeslots.	15. is committed to the institution.
16. the impact of effective marketing.	16. assess and react promptly to situations.	16. is open to what new technologies offer regarding communication and more effective management systems.
	17. see/recognise potential connections and assess related risks.	
	18. recognise/see the resources a certain partner might bring.	
	19. see the institution within its social context.	
	20. establish positive relationships easily.	
	21. recognise potential partners.	
	22. select relevant information for a certain target group.	
	23. identify the appropriate communication tool for a given target group.	
	24. use communication tools/channels (ICT) effectively to achieve school goals.	
	25. identify what is in the interest of the school.	

» Parental involvement

The staff of the primary school of a small village with a lot of disadvantaged children are discussing how harmony could be established between the two main educational arenas: the school and the family.

Principal: "Education of the children is a common goal of the school and of the family, what could be done to ensure harmony between these two elements?"

Teacher 1: "The relationship between teachers and parents should be based on mutual trust, honesty, respect and understanding."

Teacher 2: "Actually, there are three actors here: pupil, parent and teacher. This triangle should co-exist in harmony."

Principal: "Could this co-existence become co-operation?"

Teacher 3: "Do you mean that parents could also play an active role somehow?"

Teacher 2: "Well, we provide a service for them, so they have the right to shape it."

Teacher 1: "Well, if our school was open for parents and they could support actively the learning process then mutual trust and understanding would certainly be reinforced. But in what way can they contribute to the learning process?"

Principal: "So, you say that parents use our service, can be facilitators of the teaching and learning process and could actually be actors in the school's public life. That makes three important roles parents appear in."

Starting from the above-established principles, the staff developed their "Programme for Dialogue Between Generations" – a complex programme for involving the parents in the school's life which contained (among others) the following elements:

- open days when parents are invited to observe the lessons and afternoon school activities;
- "Dialogue Between Generations" day when parents and pupils work and learn together; collecting information about the world together (co-operative techniques to improve social competencies);
- parents can show/present their own profession/trade/knowledge to the class (in the framework of a common learning activity).

» Ensuring good flow of information

In primary school ‚A', the school leader wanted to make sure that parents always get the latest news about school events, schedules etc. so that they could follow them and plan accordingly. This is how a parent explains the idea: "Adequate and up-to-date. There is a homepage we can use with a plan for the school year. We are informed about planned events, about holidays and parent conference days. Parents who don´t use the internet get the information via reporting/ message book. One week before the event takes place we get notification."

The same school leader established very simple but effective tools to gather and share information between teachers. One of the teachers explains, "We have a book called 'Runner' in our conference room in which we – the teachers – write all the important information that concern everyone. We regularly check this book and if needed inform our students. There is also a calendar and daily agenda included in the Runner where the school leader marks the important dates, which is very helpful for disorganised teachers like me. We also get information in staff meetings or sometimes in urgent cases there is a 'messenger' who brings a note to the classroom."

Details from:

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The Art and Science of Leading a School –
Central5: Central European view
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