WHAT YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE SAYING . . .

Leader Credibility is a must-read for every educational leader. All too often, school improvement plans and initiatives fail, not on their merits but on the credibility of the leader. Educational leaders need to be strategic about how they contribute to or derail the success of these initiatives, and this book provides a framework for how to build leader credibility and opportunities for structured self-reflection.

Randy Clyde
Middle School Principal
San Bernardino City Unified School District
San Bernardino, CA

This book offers tangible ways to build your leadership credibility and concrete methods for building strong relationships that will cultivate a culture of trust and community.

Betty Zavala
Elementary School Principal, Klein ISD
Spring, TX

I highly recommend this book. Teachers are yearning for great leadership, and this book helps educational leaders analyze the skill set it takes to lead with credibility.

Dawn Massey
Principal, Okaloosa County School District
Fort Walton Beach, FL

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The authors share relevant research, illustrations, and tools for self-reflection that can be used to impact the daily work of school leaders. By reading *Leader Credibility*, leaders will be challenged to think more intentionally about how they build trust, competence, dynamism, and immediacy, and how they become more forward thinking.

Alisa Barrett
Director of Instruction, Greenfield Exempted Village Schools
Greenfield, OH

I cannot overstate the significance of leadership credibility. On a recent livestream, I spent 90 minutes discussing leadership credibility and could have very easily gone for hours more. In their newest collaboration, Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, Cathy Lassiter, and Dominique Smith have completed those hours for me. *Leadership Credibility* makes a compelling argument for the significance of school leadership credibility toward overall school leadership effectiveness. Fisher and Frey have written another winner that all school leaders and aspiring school leaders should add to their professional learning.

Baruti Kafele
Retired Principal, Education Consultant, Author

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LEADER credibility

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DOUGLAS FISHER
NANCY FREY
CATHY LASSITER
DOMINIQUE SMITH

LEADER credibility

The Essential Traits of Those Who *Engage, Inspire,* and *Transform*

FOREWORD BY
MICHAEL FULLAN

CORWIN
Fisher & Frey

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FOREWORD

by Michael Fullan

Being a devotee of learning from practice, I was pleased to see Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, Cathy Lassiter, and Dominique Smith build from establishing what works in fostering learning in the classroom and in school and move toward defining what kind of leadership would best support such learning. When I examine the authors' insights, I can see why certain leadership is geared to success, and I am doubly affirmed when I see the specific leadership traits associated with success. Fisher, Frey, Lassiter, and Smith's findings are totally congruent with our leadership research over the past four decades.

The authors reinforce another feature of our change findings, namely that we need to identify the smallest number of key factors that meet the following criteria: clarity, comprehensiveness, succinctness, and mutual exclusivity (nonoverlapping). The variables, of course, have to end up being crystal clear (understandable) and linked to practice (what effective leaders actually do). Fisher, Frey, Lassiter, and Smith's core components of credibility—trust, competence, dynamism, and immediacy—provide the foundation of effective leadership traits. These traits represent what effective teachers do in relation to their students; leaders, then, have a double responsibility, as they must first be able to recognize the core four components (trust, competence, dynamism, and immediacy) in their teachers, and second, to possess and model such factors in their relationship with teachers.

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Another key aspect of leadership we have discovered in our work is the capacity *to be specific* about the practices that make a difference. As with all seemingly clear insights, the leadership meaning is subtle, or, if you like, "nuanced" (Fullan, 2019). The full insight is that effective leaders must help teachers and others achieve *specificity without imposition*. Consider that if you mandate something without buy-in, it will fail. If you get teachers to agree with something in the absence of specific practices, it will also fail. The sophistication lies in the detailed working relationship between school leaders and teachers; it is the clarity and comprehensiveness of this relationship that counts. And therein lies the value of *Leader Credibility: The Essential Traits of Those Who Engage, Inspire, and Transform*.

As I mentioned, the book contains all the key concepts one needs to be a successful leader. The next requirement is that these concepts must be unpacked, both for clarity and for understanding and developing the ideas, and this is the real strength of the book. There are more than 20 instruments—rubrics, diagnostics, survey instruments, and checklists—across the five chapters, all geared to the concepts in the book and keyed to the task of developing leadership credibility and impact. The tools in the introduction, for example, compare factors that compromise leader credibility with those that enhance credibility (Sinha, 2020), provide sample indicators of immediacy with students, and compare instructional and transformational leaders.

It is the four core concepts that constitute the core value of leader credibility: trust, competence, dynamism, and immediacy. They operate as an integrated set. In action, they push the organization forward. They provide guidelines for how leaders should spend their time. As a set, as the authors argue in the last chapter, these concepts constitute "why forward-thinking leadership matters." Here is a book that puts the question of leader credibility in the hands of those who are willing to focus on a small number of interrelated factors, all the while fostering consistent practice in day-to-day implementation.

—Michael Fullan

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SETTING THE STAGE

From Teacher Credibility to Leader Credibility

Marco Caresquero was standing at the front of the room, having just explained that many of the students at their school reported feeling anonymous. According to the data from a recent survey, 48% of the students believed that their teachers did not know their names. Sixty-four percent said that the teachers did not make an effort to get to know them; 56% said that they were treated with respect by the teachers. More than 70% of the students indicated that they did not believe that anyone at school cared if they were absent, yet 82% of them reported feeling proud of their school and 93% said that their parents cared about their education. As Mr. Caresquero reviewed the data, he showed pictures of students, the slides showing face after face of a young person who attended the school.

Mr. Caresquero suggested that they develop a mentoring program, noting, "I know that the overall effect size of mentoring is not very strong. There are some studies, and one meta-analysis with 73 studies, that are more promising, but I understand that this may not impact academic achievement. But stay with me. In the past, we've talked a lot about students' sense of belonging and their well-being, and we know that when students have a strong sense of belonging, the effect size is good. What if we could create a mentoring

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program that improves belonging rather than focusing the mentoring sessions on tutoring or intervention?"

The principal continued: "Here's my challenge for the entire staff—classified, paraprofessionals, and certificated—as well as for administration. We each accept responsibility for eight students. We meet with them at least weekly, but maybe more often. We talk with them as caring adults. We ask them about their classes and how they are doing, but the focus is on getting to know each student beyond the surface. And when we do, we start to broker relationships with our mentees and other staff at our school."

Projecting the next slide, Mr. Caresquero said, "Here's my challenge. It's an 'ABC.'" The slide listed three goals:

A. **Accept** the challenge of getting to know a small group of students.

B. **Believe** in them. Help them believe they can excel in school.

C. **Commit** to focusing on these students throughout the school year.

"I have lists of students, randomly generated, for anyone who is willing to take on this challenge," Mr. Caresquero added. "I don't have all the logistics figured out, and I'm open to recommendations about the best way that we can make this happen for our students—I just believe that they need us. They need to know that we care and that we see them. If you accept the challenge, please pick up one of the lists at the back of the room as we say goodbye today."

What do you think happened at the end of the meeting? Were the lists of names ignored and left on the back table? Did the staff enthusiastically add this additional job responsibility to their already busy week? Did they pick up a list of names, knowing that they wouldn't really do anything with it but because the principal might be watching? Did they speak out, saying that this was not their responsibility and that they wouldn't do it?

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Any of these results could have happened. And this range of responsiveness occurs all the time in reaction to initiative and ideas. The question is, why is it more likely that one school will take such a task on and another won't? Our answer is, in a large part, based on leader credibility: some leaders have developed credibility with teachers and staff members while others have not. Leader credibility influences the climate of the school and the ways in which work is accomplished. In some places, significant amounts of cynicism exist. In other places, fear and mistrust are prevalent. And in other places, there is a spirit of collaboration and a belief that leaders know what they are doing and have the best interests of educators, staff, and students at heart. In other words, the leader is credible and creates a climate in which staff members know that they can learn from this person.

We have to ask: if people choose not to follow you, are you a leader? People choose not to follow when they

- Do not trust the leader
- Question the competence of the leader
- Sense a lack of passion and confidence from the leader
- Do not feel close to, or relatedness with, the leader
- Are not sure where the organization is going and how they fit into the future

PAUSE AND PONDER

► Think about two leaders in your professional life, one with strong credibility and one without. Did you choose to follow the one without strong credibility? Were any of the factors on the bulleted list in play for you? What did you notice about the leader who was credible?

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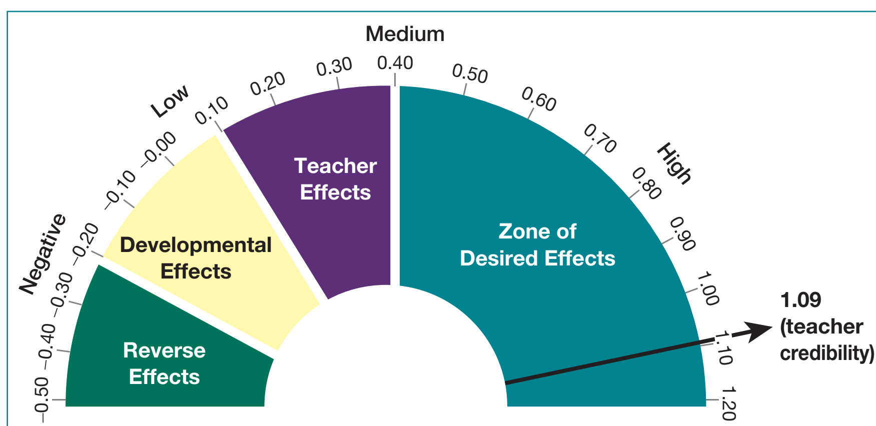
COMPONENTS OF CREDIBILITY

The bulleted list above provides a general overview of what we know about credibility. We'll start with a discussion of *teacher credibility*, as there are several studies that outline this idea (e.g., Won & Bong, 2017). The studies can be summed up with one question: do I believe that I can learn from you? The effect size of teacher credibility on student learning is powerful. The average effect size for over 300 influences on learning is 0.40 (www.visiblelearningmetax.com); teacher credibility has an effect size of 1.09. In other words, it is well above average and has the potential to positively impact student learning.



When students believe that they can learn from their teachers, they are much more likely to do so. Interestingly, the same instructional strategy or lesson, delivered in the same way by two different teachers, can have two different impacts if one of the classes of students believes that they can learn from the teacher and the other class does not. In other words, it's not about the specific strategies that are used, even though several strategies have the potential to impact learning—it's students believing that they can learn from their teachers. When they do, the tools that are used by the teacher are more likely to have an impact. Thus, some minimally effective approaches might ensure learning more than strategies with a greater likelihood of impact but delivered by teachers whose students do not think that they can learn from those teachers. In part,

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this is why we, and Visible Learning® in general, focus so much attention on determining impact and talking more about learning than about teaching.

As leaders, part of our role is to monitor teacher credibility and help those who struggle in this area to develop and grow. Far too often, however, leaders focus on instructional strategies and attempt to coach a teacher on getting better at using specific strategies. There is nothing wrong with building teachers' toolboxes and ensuring that the approaches they use have a strong likelihood of impact. But failing to attend to teacher credibility and the signs that the students do not believe that they can learn from a given teacher will result in students' lack of progress in their learning. Without attention to teacher credibility, learning is left to chance even in the presence of quality instruction. In our previous work (e.g., Fisher et al., 2020), we organized the teacher credibility construct into four areas: trust, competence, dynamism, and immediacy. We'll review each of those before moving into a discussion about leader credibility.

Trust

Honest and *reliable* come to mind when we talk about teachers establishing trust with students. As we will explore further in Chapter 1, there is more to trust in schools, but for now, we'll note the importance of students knowing that their teachers are honest and reliable. When trust is present, students are more likely to take risks in their learning and feel comfortable making mistakes. When trust is broken, students are wary of their teachers and they play it safe. Leaders notice the trusting, honest, and growth-producing relationships between teachers and students and coach them when trust needs to be established, maintained, or repaired.

Consider Susan Carter, a math teacher whose students were not performing well despite the fact that the lessons were generally good and the strategies used were appropriate. Her students rarely volunteered to answer questions in class, and they refrained from sitting in the front seats. When asked, students said that they didn't really know her or trust her.

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The principal suggested that she stand at the door and greet students by name as they entered the classroom. Ms. Carter's first reaction was to protest, "But I need to get my materials ready and take attendance." The principal suggested she try it for three weeks and see if it made a difference. It didn't even take that long. Within a week, several students were shaking her hand or giving her a high five or a fist bump when entering the room. By the end of the three weeks, the environment in Ms. Carter's class had changed. Students were volunteering, taking risks, and joking with her. About six weeks later, when a student acted out in class, several peers said, "Hey, we don't do that here. She's cool. Let her teach." When Ms. Carter shared this story with her principal, she noted, "I didn't really think about the power of students trusting me. I have a whole different relationship with my students now. I was thinking about quitting because I wasn't seeing results. It's so different now. Thank you."

PAUSE AND PONDER

- How can you identify teachers who need to focus on trust? How might you help them increase trust in their classroom?

Competence

Trusting relationships are important, but they are not enough to ensure that students learn at deep levels. Knowing that teachers care is important, but we all know caring educators who cannot teach. They mean well and do the best that they know how to do at the time, but their instructional repertoires are not strong enough to ensure that all students learn. And students know this. They spend hundreds of hours with their teachers and are acutely aware of those who engage them in meaningful learning tasks and those who cannot. Recall the situation with Ms. Carter and her work on trust: her classroom instruction was strong, but her students did not know her or trust her.

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When it comes to instruction, some basic moves make a difference. We have argued that the gradual release of responsibility is a way to categorize teacher moves that increase the likelihood of students learning (Fisher & Frey, 2021). Teacher clarity requires that students know the following:

- What am I learning today?
- Why am I learning this?
- How will I know that I learned it?

And the tasks that we ask students to complete should align with those responses. We see categories of teacher moves that can be presented in any order that allow students to learn (see Figure I.1). In reality, these moves are cyclical and recursive. A teacher may model for students at several points in the lesson, and students may engage in collaborative tasks many times. Note that there is a wide range of instructional strategies that can be used, and we should not hold any strategy in higher esteem than students' learning. We focus not on the specific strategies that a teacher is using, but rather guide their selection of tools while monitoring impact.

FIGURE I.1 ACCESS POINTS FOR THE GRADUAL RELEASE OF RESPONSIBILITY

ACCESS POINT	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE STRATEGIES
The first access point is teacher modeling of critical thinking.	This phase provides students access to the thinking of an "expert" that they will try on throughout the lesson.	• Shared reading • Read-aloud • Think-aloud • Direct instruction • Worked examples • Write-aloud • Interactive writing • Demonstration • Lecture

(Continued)

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(Continued)

ACCESS POINT	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE STRATEGIES
The second access point is achieved through guided instruction.	Using robust questions, prompts, and cues, teachers scaffold students' understanding and provide students with the teacher-supported experiences they need to learn.	• Scaffolded reading • Close reading • Cognitively guided instruction • Whole-class guided practice
The third access point is collaborative learning.	These tasks encourage students to interact with one another in order to develop a deeper understanding of what they are learning. Sometimes there is individual accountability within the task (such as jigsaw), and other times there is not (such as in think-pair-share).	• Literature circles or book clubs • Reciprocal teaching • ReQuest • Table topics • Listening stations • Jigsaw • Five-word summaries • Peer-assisted reflection
The fourth access point is independent learning.	Students practice and apply what they have learned on their own, either in class or after class.	• Independent reading • Daily writing (journals, essays, short stories, poetry, etc.) • Homework • Interactive videos • Notetaking

SOURCE: Adapted from Fisher, Frey, Amador, and Assof (2019).

Our point here is that teachers need to be seen as competent by their students, and the instructional tools teachers use help establish that competence. Of course, teachers also need to know their subject matter and recognize that errors are part of the learning process. And when teachers change their instructional strategies too frequently, students start to wonder if their teachers know how to teach. Competence is an

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area that most leaders focus on. We want to help teachers reach their potential through using evidence-based practices and monitoring impact. Having said that, an expert teacher who does not earn the trust of students, who does not have passion, and who is not relatable probably will not get very good outcomes.

PAUSE AND PONDER

- How can you identify teachers who need to focus on competence? How might you help them increase their skills?

Dynamism

Active, fast-paced learning environments in which students are challenged and supported characterize this third aspect of teacher credibility. We are not saying that you have to dress in a toga during the Greek-Roman unit or stand on a desk and bounce around excitedly (unless that is your personality)—we are saying that the learning environment should be dynamic and students should get caught up in the excitement of learning. In part, this is where teachers' passion comes through. When a teacher is passionate about what they are teaching *and* passionate about students' learning, the environment is likely to be dynamic.

There are many things that kill the vibe of a classroom, such as public humiliation of a student, terrible visuals and presentations, monotone presentations, boring tasks, and the like. Students appreciate a cognitive challenge and knowing that their teacher can support their learning. Students also appreciate learning experiences that the teacher is excited about and that are relevant to students. We are not suggesting that teachers simply say, "You'll need this in the real world"—isn't going to school the "real world"? And being told that you might be able to use this someday in the future is probably not that motivating. Instead, students want to know

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the answer to the second clarity question that we posed in the previous section: why am I learning this? Teachers who exhibit dynamism have no problem with students answering this question and seeing their learning as relevant.

Alec Jesperson's students, for instance, tended to do really well in English language arts but not so well in mathematics. In fact, his students performed significantly lower in mathematics compared with students in other classes at his school and well below the district average. Mr. Jesperson followed the pacing guide and curriculum that the school and district adopted, and when he was observed teaching, it was obvious that his students trusted him and that the strategies he used were similar to those in other classes. But there was a difference in the classes themselves. During English language arts, Mr. Jesperson was very animated and asked students follow-up questions. The texts he selected were interesting and relevant to the questions that the class had voted on, such as "Is fair always equal?" The class focused on new words and each student had a vocabulary self-collection journal; they talked about words and how to pronounce them and what they mean. When students were writing, soft music played in the background and Mr. Jesperson met with individual students and small groups. He was clearly passionate about their writing and remembered things that students had written in the past, even bringing them up during conferences.

Mathematics instruction, however, was very different. It was almost as if Mr. Jesperson was a different person. He seemed almost robotic. He explained the content using worked examples and guided instruction, just like his colleagues. He had students talk about their work and then had students complete their individual assignments. He walked around the room as students worked, correcting their mistakes and prompting students' thinking. But it was as if the joy of the English language arts classroom was gone and Mr. Jesperson was trying to get through the rest of the day.

The students noticed this as well. They said things like "Math is boring" and "Why do we have to learn this?" The lack of dynamism and passion during mathematics was noticeable and

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likely contributed to the lack of achievement in this area. This teacher with high credibility in English language arts had little credibility in mathematics. The principal asked if Mr. Jesperson thought that math should be moved to the morning, when he was fresher. Mr. Jesperson responded, "I don't think that's it. I just don't feel confident in mathematics. I don't have the same passion as I do for my students' literacy. I found math hard in school, and I can't remember ever having fun during math."

The principal, who was fairly new to the school, suggested that Mr. Jesperson attend an upcoming mathematics conference and that he partner with the special education teacher during his mathematics class. "I'm thinking that having Yasmine Lopez in your class every day during mathematics might help. You two could plan and talk about making the content more interesting, and maybe her passion for numeracy will help you," the principal said. "You have the content and strategies down. I think you are ready for a breakthrough in your students' mathematical understandings. And, if it doesn't work in a few weeks, we can try some other things. I'm totally open. I just want to help you see the potential."

The conference was an amazing experience for Mr. Jesperson. He met passionate mathematics educators who had so many ideas for inviting students into the world of mathematics. At the end of one session, Mr. Jesperson approached the presenter and said, "I wish you had been my teacher. I loved your examples and how you had us working. I learned a lot. Could we stay in touch?" The presenter agreed and Mr. Jesperson was very pleased to tell his principal about this.

Mr. Jesperson also partnered with Ms. Lopez, and they talked through the lessons. Mr. Jesperson saw the passion that Ms. Lopez had and stepped up his game, telling her, "I want our students to have a better experience. It's on me. I need to bring the passion I see in you to the students." And he did. The impact was almost immediate. A student said, "That was the coolest. We had to figure out when it was best to rent a boat. We learned about the price and how it changes because when it's too cold, why would you want a boat? It was really hard, but our group did the best."

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PAUSE AND PONDER

▶ How can you identify teachers who need to focus on dynamism? How might you help them find their passion and create an engaging learning environment?

Immediacy

The final area of teacher credibility is immediacy, which is a term used to convey a sense of relatedness. Simply said, some teachers are more approachable than others. Some teachers clearly demonstrate to students a sense of connection. This is both physical and psychological. Some teachers never get physically close, within arm's reach, of some students. Some teachers only high-five or handshake some students and not others. Some teachers are emotionally distant and not relatable at all. And some teachers have differential treatment of students who are not achieving well.

In fact, there are specific behaviors that teachers display when they believe that students are low achieving (Good, 1987). Students who are perceived to be low achieving

- Are criticized more often for failure
- Are praised less frequently
- Receive less feedback
- Are called on less often
- Have less eye contact from the teacher
- Have fewer friendly interactions with the teacher
- Experience acceptance of their ideas less often

There is another term for this: a "chilly" classroom climate in which some students do not feel they are valued and instead feel that "their presence . . . is at best peripheral, and at worst

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an unwelcome intrusion" (Hall & Sandler, 1982, p. 3). Imagine that you're not currently achieving very well, for whatever reason. And then your teacher interacts with you in the ways described in the list above. How could you possibly achieve? When immediacy is not present in the class, otherwise amazing instructional strategies are not likely to impact learning.

Leaders are responsible for noticing the immediacy in the classroom. We have a brief checklist for some behaviors to notice that can suggest that teacher credibility is compromised in terms of immediacy (see Figure I.2). We suggest identifying three students who are not currently achieving well and observing the classroom from their perspective. If immediacy has been compromised, it's time to take action so that all students have an equitable chance at learning. Interestingly and importantly, the actions that constitute immediacy are generally subconscious and unconscious; it's not that the vast majority of teachers intend to do this. And when the issues are brought to their attention, teachers change. When they do, their credibility increases and student learning is more likely to improve.

FIGURE I.2 SAMPLE INDICATORS OF IMMEDIACY

INTERACTION	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
Was the student greeted by name when they entered the classroom?			
How many times did the teacher use their name (not as a correction) during the session?			
Did the teacher ask them a critical thinking question related to the content?			
Did the teacher ask them a personal question?			

(Continued)

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(Continued)

INTERACTION	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
Did the teacher pay them a compliment?			
How many times did the teacher provide them with praise for learning performance?			
Did the teacher get physically close (within arm's reach) to them?			

SOURCE: Adapted from Fisher et al. (2021).

PAUSE AND PONDER

► How can you identify teachers who need to focus on immediacy? How might you help them develop connections with students?

NOT JUST TEACHERS

We have focused considerable space on teacher credibility in this introduction because it can change and positively impact student learning. And teachers who have strong credibility with their students like their jobs better and are much more likely to remain in the profession. We believe that the same is true for leaders. We cannot point to any educational research on leader credibility, but the business literature is filled with studies and recommendations about leader credibility (e.g., Hill, 2018).

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For example, Williams et al. (2018) note that leader credibility is the antecedent of transformational leadership. In education, instructional leadership is more powerful than transformational leadership when it comes to student learning. The effect sizes are worth noting. The overall effect of transformational leaders is 0.11, whereas the overall effect of instructional leaders is 0.42. As Hattie (2015) notes, referencing the work of Robinson et al. (2008):

> *Transformational leaders* focus more on teachers. They set a vision, create common goals for the school, inspire and set direction, buffer staff from external demands, ensure fair and equitable staffing, and give teachers a high degree of autonomy.
>
> In contrast, *instructional leaders* focus more on students. They're concerned with the teachers' and the school's impact on student learning and instructional issues, conducting classroom observations, ensuring professional development that enhances student learning, communicating high academic standards, and ensuring that all school environments are conducive to learning. (p. 37)

Others have argued that an integrated approach to transformational and instructional leadership is necessary. For example, Marks and Printy (2003) note that "when transformational and shared instructional leadership coexist in an integrated form of leadership, the influence on school performance, measured by the quality of its pedagogy and the achievement of its students, is substantial" (p. 370). Figure I.3 provides an overview of instructional and transformational leadership and how they are complementary to each other.

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FIGURE I.3 COMPARING INSTRUCTIONAL AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP	BOTH	TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP
EXPECTATIONS		
• Focuses on articulating and communicating clear school goals • Positions principal to seek to limit uncertainty	• Create a school culture focused on the improvement of teaching and learning • Are goal oriented	• Promotes clear vision, creating shared school goals • Seeks to envision and create the future by synthesizing and extending the aspirations of the members of the organization • Requires a higher tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty from the principal
FOCUS		
• Focuses on coordinating curriculum, supervising and evaluating instruction, monitoring student progress, and protecting instructional time • Focuses on curriculum and instruction	• Focus on organizing and providing a wide range of activities aimed at the development of the staff • Include high expectations	• Focuses on developing the organization's capacity to innovate • Focuses on intellectual stimulation • Positions principal to create conditions conducive to everyone taking a leadership role • Influences people by building from the bottom up rather than from the top down
LEADERSHIP STYLE		
• Transactional • Features strong, directive leadership • Focuses on first-order change	• Feature skillful leadership • Focus on being a visible presence in the school	• Transformational • Features distributed leadership

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INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP	BOTH	TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP
LEADERSHIP STYLE		
• Positions principal as the center of expertise and authority • Focuses on improvement of student academic outcomes • Features hands-on principals, hip-deep in curriculum and instruction		• Generates second-order effects, increases the capacity of others to produce first-order effects on learning • Produces changes in people rather than promoting specific instructional strategies

SOURCE: Slade and Gallagher (2021).

PAUSE AND PONDER

► After reviewing the information in Figure I.3, what are your strengths? Are you balancing transformational and instructional leadership?

Our point here is to suggest that leader credibility is an important construct that has been missing from conversations in education. Drawing from the business and other professional literature, Sinha (2020) suggests that leaders ask themselves questions and reflect on their responses. Modified for education, these questions might include the following:

- Do the people in your school or district view you as being believable?
- Do the people in your school or district have confidence that you will do the right thing?

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- Do the people in your school or district believe that you have the overall organization's interests and employees' interests in mind while making strategic decisions?
- Do people view you as being trustworthy?

Sinha also notes actions that detract from leader credibility as well as actions that enhance credibility (see Figure I.4).

FIGURE I.4 ENHANCING AND COMPROMISING LEADER CREDIBILITY

FACTORS THAT ENHANCE LEADER CREDIBILITY	FACTORS THAT COMPROMISE LEADER CREDIBILITY
• Focusing on long-term success	• Inaction
• Developing foresight	• Indecisiveness
• Streamlining operations	• Inconsistency
• Being consistent	• Incoherent communication
• Modeling the way	• Self-serving actions
	• Treating people poorly

SOURCE: Sinha (2020).

And Sinha sums it up by suggesting that leaders should "keep your promises, do what you say you will, give credit where it is due, acknowledge mistakes, don't talk about others behind their back, don't withhold information, don't belittle others, be consistent and be accountable" (Sinha, 2020).

Note that the factors we discussed regarding teacher credibility come into play for leaders. Trust, competence, dynamism, and immediacy contribute to the credibility you have as a leader. When you have credibility, employee confidence is high, people work hard because they believe in the organization and its mission, and they demonstrate acceptance of the leader. In fact, school improvement hinges on the leader's credibility because the leader cannot teach all the children in the school. The leader's role is about creating the conditions that foster each educator's ability to be their best. As Manna (2015) reminds us, leaders can be magnifiers and multipliers

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of effective instruction. When we are credible, we can realize that potential.

But it's more than effective instruction and student learning. Educator and student well-being are also important. Again, leader credibility comes into play in this area as well. Credible leaders create conditions that are safe for people to be vulnerable—safe for people to take risks and have pride in what they do, and safe when mistakes are made. In fact, as business professor Anderson (cited in Alt, 2019) notes, "It all hinges on the leader's credibility."

Anderson's research, again, not specific to education, suggests that competent leaders

- Emphasize the future
- Prioritize employees
- Take action and initiative
- Communicate effectively
- Gain knowledge and experience

And Anderson notes that trustworthy leaders

- Communicate and act in a consistent manner
- Protect the organization and employees
- Embody the organization's vision and values
- Consult with and listen to key educational partners
- Communicate openly with others
- Value employees

Thus, when we apply the credibility lens to leaders, we need to add a forward focus. Yes, leaders need to be trustworthy, competent, and dynamic and display immediacy. In addition, leaders must have a vision for the future, keep the team moving forward, and help each employee see their role in creating that future.

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CONCLUSION

Leader credibility is an important topic that has been investigated widely in a number of professions. In education, we know that credible leaders are important, but there isn't evidence about the power of this impact. To our thinking, credibility is required if leaders are going to support teachers and students to reach their fullest potential.

When you hear a term like *school leader*, it's understandable to immediately think about principals and administrators with formal titles. But leaders take quite a few forms. In addition to site leaders, there are those who lead district departments and units, from curriculum to student services. And there are lots of teacher-leaders who serve as grade-level or department chairs, as well as instructional coaches with leadership responsibilities. If any of these describe your role, this book is for you.

In the chapters that follow, we will invite you to reflect on your current self in terms of each aspect of leader credibility.

- Chapter 1 focuses on **trust**
- Chapter 2 focuses on **competence**
- Chapter 3 focuses on **dynamism**
- Chapter 4 focuses on **immediacy**
- Chapter 5 focuses on **forward thinking**

We recognize that it takes time to build or rebuild credibility. People form their opinions of you and your credibility through their direct interactions with you, as well as from their indirect observations of your actions and reactions. Join us in exploring this critical aspect of leadership—one that opens doors for leaders to accomplish their goals and create the schools our staff and students deserve.

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CHAPTER 1

TRUSTWORTHINESS IN LEADERSHIP

Are you trustworthy in the eyes of others? The ability to trust in a leader—whether a leader of teams, schools, or units—is crucial for an organization to work. Distrust is like sand in the gears, as it becomes the unplanned effort that saps the collective strength of the team. Our human need to determine whether we trust is fundamental to our survival. Early humans had to decide whose model to follow in order to find shelter, avoid poisonous plants, and elude predators. Staff have to decide whose model to follow in order to invest in a healthy school climate, avoid legal missteps, and build learners who can reach their aspirations. Leaders convey their trustworthiness through actions that authentically convey caring for others in the school environment, by being consistent and ethical in interactions, and by demonstrating a level of competence in the matters at hand.

Before going further, we invite you to self-assess your credibility as a leader. It can be tempting to run through these items quickly, marking off *Always* for each statement. We encourage you to reflect on actions you have taken *in the last 30 days* to invest in your trustworthiness as a leader (see Figure 1.1).

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FIGURE 1.1 TRUSTWORTHINESS SELF-ASSESSMENT

TRUSTWORTHINESS					
ITEM #	SURVEY ITEM	3 ALWAYS	2 SOMETIMES	1 RARELY	0 NEVER
1.	I make intentional efforts to empathize with teachers and staff by asking how they are feeling and showing care and concern for them as individuals.				
2.	I ensure staff and other key team members know that I became a school leader to learn with and from them and that I enjoy my job most when they achieve.				
3.	I believe in the abilities and motivations of the staff and students.				
4.	I follow through on promises and statements I make to teachers, students, and parents.				
5.	I ensure that I provide accurate, credible information to all educational partners in the school community.				

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TRUSTWORTHINESS					
ITEM #	SURVEY ITEM	3 ALWAYS	2 SOMETIMES	1 RARELY	0 NEVER
6.	I create a risk-free climate where teachers and students can learn from mistakes and respect each other in learning.				
Mean for Trustworthiness ***(Total divided by 6)***					

In this chapter, as well as those that follow, we'll start off with a self-assessment, followed by a REAL (Realistic, Effortful, Authentic, and Learning-focused) Reflection. Notice that we didn't say "learn*er*-focused." These thought exercises are for you to support your own learning.

REAL REFLECTION

Which of the indicators of trustworthiness are strengths for you?

Which of the indicators present growth opportunities?

What conclusions are you drawing about your trustworthiness?

Whom can you enlist to support you in strengthening your trustworthiness and thus building your credibility?

THE RESEARCH ON TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trust is the currency of leadership. Without trusting relationships within the organization, forward motion grinds to a halt. The groundbreaking work conducted by the Consortium on Chicago School Research demonstrated nearly two decades

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ago that social trust is necessary for any school improvement effort to thrive. Researchers spent four years with 400 elementary schools observing the ways principals, teachers, students, and community members resolved problems and implemented reforms. To do so, the researchers conducted interviews, observed classrooms, and analyzed meeting notes. They compared their analyses of relational trust (trust between individuals and groups of individuals) to the reading and mathematics test scores over a five-year period. It should come as no surprise that those school communities with high degrees of relational trust made significant progress. Comparatively, "a school with a low score on relational trust at the end of our study had only a one-in-seven chance of demonstrating improved academic productivity" (Bryk & Schneider, 2004, p. 43). In the educational space, note Bryk and Schneider, relational trust occurs as a result of the following:

- **Mutual respect** between parties, especially when there is disagreement or conflict
- **Personal regard,** demonstrated through warmth and caring about others; openness, sharing personal stories, and gentle humor are ways in which we show our personal regard for others
- **Competence in core responsibilities,** as each member of the school community has specific role responsibilities, and all are in turn dependent on one another's competent execution of those duties (what does it mean to be a great teacher/student/leader/family at our school?)
- **Personal integrity,** the final component of relational trust and a function of a person's honesty and reliability; the fundamental measure of how we determine whether a person deserves our trust (in an educational setting, this is perceiving that colleagues have the welfare of students in mind)

Their description of relational trust as "the connective tissue that holds improving schools together" is evidenced in more recent research on trust's role in school innovation (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p. 144). A 2020 study of 79 schools found that

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there were three preconditions for innovation: collective teacher efficacy, academic press (a school's emphasis on learning and academic excellence), and relational trust. Further, relational trust had a direct impact on whether collective teacher efficacy and academic press existed (Schwabsky et al., 2020). In other words, a school organization's openness to new ideas and experimentation is predicated on whether there is a network of trust among faculty, students, leaders, and families.

It is difficult to imagine how a school can improve without a willingness to innovate. Trust, it seems, is the keystone of the arch of reform. Yet most school innovation efforts fail to acknowledge the instrumental role that relational trust plays in any initiative. Instead, there is an outsized emphasis on the content and the logistics of the effort and how it will be monitored and so on. These are vital concerns, to be sure. But the elephant in the room—whether there is a sufficient level of trust to sustain the effort—is rarely examined. If the innovation fails, the fault is attributed to the content, and then a new initiative begins. But consider those findings from Chicago: organizations with low levels of relational trust had a 14% chance of achieving success in their reading and math initiatives. There is little doubt that educators worked hard on those failed efforts. But without a sufficient level of resource—trust—the likelihood that their work would deliver desired results was significantly diminished. Connective tissue, indeed.

TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY

Much has been written about what constitutes a trustworthy individual. For us, Tschannen-Moran's (2004) five facets of trustworthiness in educators—benevolence, honesty, reliability, openness, and competence—work well as an explanation of how we convey to others that we are deserving of their trust. Whether leading a team as a department or grade-level chair, acting as an instructional coach, or holding more formal leadership positions at the site and district levels, educators will find that these five facets act upon and enhance one another.

Let's take the first one, which is benevolence. Being on guard is a protective factor that is baked into our very nature as humans.

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We need to be reasonably sure that another has our best interests in mind. In leadership, benevolence is expressed through actions that demonstrate care and concern for others over the long term. There is an ethical component to benevolence, expressed in the form of honesty. This is perhaps the dimension most people think of when they consider trust. It is natural to distrust someone who is deceitful and seeks to obscure the truth from others. We measure a person's track record of honesty to make judgments about their character and integrity.

The third facet of trustworthiness is reliability, which is related to honesty. A reliable person is true to their word and follows through. If they can't deliver on a promise, they own it and take responsibility. In addition, they are consistent and steady in their actions and reactions. Openness is the fourth dimension. This is the extent to which information is shared and disclosed, with discretion applied in what is shared. A person who overshares or violates the confidentiality of another person (even when it's not you) is not viewed as trustworthy. One is likely to think, "If they told me that information about Brad, what are they saying about me?" On the other hand, appropriate levels of disclosure and information sharing signal reciprocal trust between individuals.

The final factor, and one we will explore more thoroughly in the next chapter, is competence. No matter how benevolent, honest, reliable, and open a person is, if we do not perceive them as being competent at the task at hand, we are unlikely to trust them to get the job done. We rely on the expertise of others to make decisions about our personal and professional lives. When faced with a dilemma, we turn to those we see as being competent to seek advice and guidance.

PAUSE AND PONDER

- Relational trust begins with you as a leader. Why is trust in the leader so crucial? What current strengths regarding relational trust exist at your site?

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WHAT HUMANS NEED: AUTONOMY

School organizations are composed of people experiencing a wide range of stages in their identity. Take a typical elementary school as an example: there are likely to be four-year-olds in the transitional kindergarten classroom, 17-year-olds on campus doing work related to their career and technical education (CTE) course in their education pathway, a few young adults from the university completing their practicum, and members of the staff in their late twenties and in the early stages of their career working alongside middle- and late-career colleagues. Yet all of them have an important challenge in common: they seek autonomy.

Autonomy is the ability to make choices and decisions, which contributes to motivation and goal-directed behavior. It is an integral part of self-determination theory, which relies on three dimensions: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Ryan and Deci note that "human beings can be proactive and engaged or, alternatively, passive and alienated, largely as a function of the social conditions in which they develop and function" (2000, p. 68). In other words, when these conditions are present, motivation increases. Consider what we know about what works for ourselves, our students, and our organization:

- **Autonomy** to make choices and decisions, which contributes to a sense of agency to achieve goals
- **Competence** to demonstrate skills and develop new ones
- **Relatedness** to others through social bonding such that one doesn't feel alone

Trustworthy leaders create a climate such that the people in them can achieve a sufficient level of autonomy in their lives. We'll focus specifically on teacher autonomy as a function of leadership by first discussing what it *isn't*. Teacher autonomy is not a free-for-all in an environment that says it's fine to close your classroom door and do whatever. We have legal and professional obligations regarding curriculum, expectations for how children are treated, and requirements about the structure of the school day and school year. It matters

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that we all agree that school starts at 7:30 a.m., that we have supervision responsibilities to keep students safe, and that we adhere to contractual and licensure regulations.

Teacher autonomy touches on four crucial elements that, in turn, contribute to a trusting school climate. Drawing from a review of the literature on teacher autonomy, Gwaltney (2012) highlighted these factors (quoted in Grant et al., 2020):

- Classroom control over student teaching and assessment
- Schoolwide influence over organizational and staff development
- Classroom control over curriculum development
- Schoolwide influence over school mode of operation

But there are two types of errors leaders can make that undermine one's perceived trustworthiness as it relates to a climate of teacher autonomy. One is that we can veer too far in the direction of control. There are practices that crush teacher autonomy, and many of them are a direct result of leadership that is not trustworthy. Ruling by decree rather than seeking consensus is a sure recipe for disaster. It is demoralizing for educators when they feel they have no voice in decisions that directly impact their teaching. Teacher turnover and attrition are linked to teacher autonomy. Those feeling a loss of autonomy may move to another school where they have more (Torres, 2014) or leave the profession altogether (Glazer, 2018).

A climate of supportive teacher autonomy is also not one that veers in the opposite direction. A laissez-faire approach where team and site leaders are rarely involved in classroom operations is not going to do anyone much good, either. One of the interesting things about teacher autonomy is that it is developmental in nature, just like autonomy with young people. The amount of autonomy granted to the four-year-olds in the building is going to be different from that of the 17-year-olds working on their CTE pathway requirements, even though they are in the same building. It turns out that

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the adults in the building require different levels of autonomy depending on their proficiency.

A graduated teacher autonomy framework provides guidance for team leaders, instructional coaches, and site leaders in considering the varied needs of the staff they support and supervise (Grant et al., 2020). Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, which is likely to alienate highly proficient educators while leaving novices with less support than they need, this framework considers proficiency across four dimensions: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities. Importantly, proficiency should not be conflated with experience, with broad assumptions that a teacher with 20 years of experience automatically is more capable than one with 10 years of experience. This framework draws from the language of the Danielson teacher evaluation system, a widely used measure in many districts (see Figure 1.2).

FIGURE 1.2 ANCHORS OF THE GRADUATED TEACHER AUTONOMY FRAMEWORK

EXAMPLE COMPONENTS (DANIELSON, 2007)	BEGINNING PROFICIENCY → LESS AUTONOMY	MASTERED PROFICIENCY → MORE AUTONOMY
PLANNING AND PREPARATION		
• Knowledge of content and pedagogy • Setting instructional outcomes • Designing instruction and assessment	• Lesson plan templates provided by administration and/or specialists • Lesson plan submissions and weekly planning sessions for feedback and review with administrators and/or specialists	• Choice of lesson plan template • No submission or meeting requirements

(Continued)

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(Continued)

EXAMPLE COMPONENTS (DANIELSON, 2007)	BEGINNING PROFICIENCY → LESS AUTONOMY	MASTERED PROFICIENCY → MORE AUTONOMY
CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT		
• Establishing a culture of learning • Managing student behavior • Managing classroom procedures	• Prescribed behavior management system (e.g., PBIS) • Mandated standard procedures and norms • Blackboard configuration	• Choice of behavior management system • Choice of procedures and norms • Choice of blackboard configuration
INSTRUCTION		
• Engaging students in learning • Using questioning and discussion techniques	• Prescribed scripted curriculum • Mandated professional development • Administrator walkthroughs and feedback sessions	• Choice of methodology and approach based on content standards • Administrator walkthroughs optional
PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES		
• Participating in professional development • Participating in professional communities • Communicating with families and the school community	• Prescribed professional community involvement (e.g., PLCs) • Prescribed professional development modules • Family communication logs, oversight by a peer mentor	• Opportunity for leadership roles within professional communities (PLCs, grade-level chairs, school and district committees, etc.) • Opportunity for peer mentoring roles for other teachers

NOTE: PBIS = positive behavior incentive system; PLC = professional learning committee or community. Scales are according to each of the four domains of teaching: planning and preparation, classroom environment, instruction, and professional responsibilities (Danielson, 2007).

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Lisa Willis was the science department chair of her large high school and was released part time to serve as an instructional coach. During the school year, Ms. Willis adopted a graduated autonomy framework as a lens for her support of teachers. "My colleagues have quite a range of expertise in what they bring to the classroom," she explained. "One of my colleagues is a National Board Certified teacher and has so much knowledge about curriculum planning. I encouraged her to serve on the new science adoption committee for the district. Having said that, she feels that she needs more support on our school's restorative practices initiative, so that's where I'm focusing my support."

Ms. Willis contrasted this kind of support with another colleague who was new to the school district but not to the profession. "I've been meeting with him to establish a trusting relationship. I guess he felt kind of burned from his last job," she said. "I got him to open up about his challenges by sharing some of my own professional struggles. He's more recently been seeking support about instruction, which is great. We do quite a bit at this school with teacher clarity, which is a new practice for him." Ms. Willis's use of a more tailored approach to providing differentiated coaching supports to colleagues is building her trustworthiness. "I'm noticing that people are feeling 'seen' in terms of who they are and what they need. I read a blog recently that said that things humans need at work: 'I matter. I belong. I'm enabled. I contribute. I'm respected' [Wai, n.d.]. I'm keeping those in mind as I interact as a coach."

PAUSE AND PONDER

- How might a graduated autonomy framework enhance trustworthiness at your site? Whom might you enlist?

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES THAT CONVEY AND DERAIL TRUST

Ms. Willis's reminder about the common needs of people in the workplace transcends the role and responsibilities of the adults in the building. We remember an interaction at a

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middle school between Ryan Watkins, the dean of students, and the lunch monitors. There had been a series of incidents in the lunchroom, and Mr. Watkins was charged with responding. The lunch monitors were frustrated, too, but Mr. Watkins failed to acknowledge that. Instead, he launched into a diatribe: "I don't know what's been going on down here, but the kids are out of control and you're not managing them the way you should." You can imagine the lunch monitors' reactions—stone-faced silence and crossed arms. What Mr. Watkins failed to find out was that the lunch monitors had met to discuss what had occurred, and they had prepared a list of possible ideas to improve the conditions in the cafeteria. Abigail Henson, the senior staff present, quietly folded the notes and put them back in her pocket, and they let the dean rant for a few minutes until he left. However, the damage was done. Ms. Henson voiced what the others were feeling: "I feel so disrespected."

We have all had times when our emotions got the best of us. One action that is vital is acknowledging when you're wrong. This is a demonstration of honesty. It doesn't necessarily wipe away what was said, but it does signal the start of rebuilding a bridge. Let's take each of these five facets of trust and look at common leadership behaviors that build or decrease trust (Figure 1.3).

FIGURE 1.3 CONVEYING AND DERAILING OUR TRUST

FACET OF TRUST	ACTIONS THAT CONVEY TRUST	ACTIONS THAT DERAIL TRUST
Benevolence	• Asking about another's well-being • Offering help when it is needed • Being patient with others and presuming positive intentions • Paying attention to the emotions of others • Exhibiting respect for every individual	• Ignoring difficulties people are experiencing (personal challenges don't belong in the workplace) • When someone challenges the wisdom of a decision, taking it as a personal affront; they're undermining your authority

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FACET OF TRUST	ACTIONS THAT CONVEY TRUST	ACTIONS THAT DERAIL TRUST
Benevolence (continued)	• Being of service to others, even when there's no direct benefit to you • Celebrating the achievements of others	• Playing favorites • Always thinking about your own career first; being a leader is about gaining and holding on to power
Honesty	• Proving accurate data, even when it isn't favorable for you • Acknowledging when you are wrong • Admitting when you don't have the answer and vowing to find out more	• Taking credit for other people's work • Blaming others when something doesn't go well • Shading the truth so that you come out looking like a hero • Faking it when you don't know something
Reliability	• Honoring the commitments you have made • Following up with others about decisions that impact them • Following through with actions, not just words	• Making excuses when you don't deliver on commitments; you're busy, and everyone knows that • Keeping everyone guessing about what you'll do or say next
Openness	• Communicating with others to keep them informed • Disclosing your own concerns and uncertainties • Asking for the opinions and insights of others • Building personal connections with others	• Dominating the conversation; everyone needs to hear your ideas first • Asking for advice, but not actually using it • Scoffing at or dismissing other people's ideas • Gossiping
Competence	• Being clear and consistent on the purpose of the decisions and actions taken • Explaining your thought processes • Linking decisions and actions to the values and mission of the organization	• Making decisions alone; that's why you're the leader • Telling others what to do; you don't owe them an explanation

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PAUSE AND PONDER

► Now imagine you are Mr. Watkins's supervisor. As dean of students, he requires mentoring, too. How might you advise him to repair his trust with the lunch staff?

BUILDING TRUST WHEN YOU'RE THE NEW PRINCIPAL

Trust is hard-won and easily lost. This is especially true when a principal is new to a school. The circumstances that led to the change in leadership are varied, to be sure. Perhaps you succeeded a principal who took on a new role within or outside of the district. Or perhaps the previous principal retired or left under a cloud of difficulties. The previous principal may have been a beloved figure (we worked with a school that had only four principals in 60 years—that's a tough act to follow). In any of those circumstances, building trust is at the top of the to-do list.

This takes time and effort, which is why most new leaders write 30-, 60-, and 90-day plans that include relational trust, among other tasks. It is useful to think about building trust at a new school as a series of stages, where trust becomes "thicker" and therefore less fragile over time (Bottery, 2005). For new and succeeding principals, these stages can be essential for building the kind of trust that is crucial among constituents. Northfield (2014) states that it begins with *role trust*, which is the expectation by a school community that the new leader has the credentials needed, and therefore knowledge, to ensure that the organization follows needed legal mandates, regulations, and governance requirements. Moreover, this first level of tacit trust assumes that the principal will act like a principal and the teacher will act like a teacher, with understood boundaries that keep the parties within the legal confines of their job descriptions. Should a situation arise that falls within the legal boundaries, teachers would be confident

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about how the new principal would respond. This is closely related to elements of competence, an important dimension of trustworthiness.

The second stage, *practice trust*, builds on the first. Not all situations that occur fall strictly within legal boundaries, so staff are also keeping an eye on how the new principal operates in action. As a simple example, how does the principal greet students and families? Is she out at the car drop-off area every morning to say hello? Or is he rarely out and about, spending more time in his office than in the hallways? There's no legal requirement that governs a principal's comportment. However, much of the practice trust gained (or not) is based on multiple observations over time as team members witness the actions of the new principal. There is a lot of impression making that is occurring. In order to reach this stage, staff members need to feel confident that they can predict how a principal will react in a given situation. Reliability, therefore, plays a role in practice trust.

This stage poses a potential pitfall. All four of us have worked or currently work in the field of university principal preparation, and too often we hear candidates say that they would devote the first six months of their new job to "listening" but not taking any action. But imagine the impatience of a staff who sees the new principal as passive and inactive. The opposite is equally problematic; the new principal who rushes in eager to adopt whatever (block scheduling, teacher clarity, integrated math, you name it) without bothering to learn about the organization's history risks trampling over team members' knowledge, skills, and beliefs. Development of practice trust requires a balance of making time to immerse oneself in learning about the school while ensuring that administrative tasks are completed and organizational learning continues.

Integrative trust is the third stage of trust development and is derived in part from the first two stages. The staff of the school are assured of the principal's ability to function within the legal guidelines and have witnessed a consistent level of action. Further, the principal's values and ethics are apparent. There is an intersection between integrative trust

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and benevolence, the belief that the leader has the long-term well-being of others in the organization in mind. For some principals, this is the stage is where trust stagnates. A lack of consistency and transparency and the conveyance of benevolence can prevent integrative trust from emerging.

The fourth stage, not reached by all, is *correlative trust*. This is evidenced when the principal and the staff have shared goals and values and work in tandem to realize ongoing and new initiatives. Is it possible that those Chicago schools that were successful in positively impacting reading and mathematics achievement had a higher degree of correlative trust? While Northfield presented these as stages, it is important to note that these are not static. The degree of trust can be gained and lost due to a single extraordinary event, or because of patterns over time (see Figure 1.4 for a summary).

FIGURE 1.4 STAGES OF TRUST

STAGES OF TRUST	DESCRIPTION OF THE LEVEL
Role trust	Staff members expect the principal to function according to the prescribed role and within the legal mandate of the position, including abiding by the laws, policies, and regulations that govern education and the position.
Practice trust	After observing the principal's practice and actions, staff members can predict how a principal will respond/act in a given situation.
Integrative trust	After observing/experiencing the actions of the principal in a multitude of situations, staff members are able to identify the underlying principles, values, and beliefs on which the principal chooses to act.
Correlative trust	Staff members understand and share the principal's values and beliefs such that they are able to function in a mutually respectful and supportive manner.

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Ana Escobedo was appointed as the new principal of an elementary school in the district where she currently worked. Ms. Escobedo had been the principal of a smaller school for four years before receiving this assignment, when the principal she was succeeding, a beloved figure, announced her retirement. She began her appointment on July 1, where she had the opportunity to work with a few staff members over the summer. Teachers returned in late August, and Ms. Escobedo led a number of events, sometimes with other staff members, during the planning week. During small- and large-group conversations, she had a chance to share her vision and find out from others what their concerns were, as well as strengths. "I asked each person I spoke to if they could share one thing they are known for," Ms. Escobedo said. "It gave me some good insight into their personalities." She recognized that she was on her way to establishing initial role trust with her staff and now needed to do the same with students and families.

PAUSE AND PONDER

- What advice do you have for Ms. Escobedo about what she will want to accomplish during the first month of school? Keep practice trust in mind, as this is the next stage she is aspiring to reach.

PRACTICES TO STRENGTHEN TRUSTWORTHINESS

Your credibility as a leader of teams, departments, and schools begins and ends with your perceived trustworthiness. We don't get to say that we are trustworthy; it is determined by those around us. Trust is something that is always in play and, as such, is fluid. It is shaped by every interaction but gets thicker as you assemble a track record of benevolence, honesty, reliability, openness, and competence. Consider making these actions a part of your professional plan for developing and deepening your leadership skills:

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Invest with intention. Trustworthiness isn't a static construct; therefore, you benefit from continuous investment. When in the role of a new leader, we're often quite conscious of how we establish trust. But it can be easy to let some of those practices fall away as we get busy with the tasks at hand. Keep in mind that trust evolves in phases, and role and practice trust shouldn't be seen as the final destination. Move your trustworthiness forward to build relational trust within your group. And if you've been a leader of a team for a while, reflect on what you did at the beginning of your tenure. Have you done anything like that in the last 30 days? If not, it's time to bring back some of those practices.

Notice when you are building and diminishing your own trust. Keep a log for a week to tally the times when you are building trust (e.g., following up, holding a confidence, keeping your emotions in check) and when you are diminishing trust (e.g., being late, not replying to a request, canceling plans, passing judgment on someone else). Your intention is to grow your own self-awareness.

Have the courage to ask others about trust. Identify a colleague who is credible to you and discuss the role of trustworthiness as an influence on your own credibility. Then ask the person if they would be willing to watch your interactions over the course of a week to note incidents when you appeared to build trust with others. If the person is willing, ask for feedback from them about your areas of strength and need as they relate to trust.

CONCLUSION

As humans, we rely on our ability to determine who is trustworthy and who isn't as a means of survival. While we aren't on the lookout for saber-toothed tigers anymore, we do tend to put our guard back up when we believe someone is not being truthful or is unreliable. We will return to the place this chapter began, which was the research conducted in Chicago Public Schools. Without question, all the educators, students, and family members were working hard to elevate learning. But there were some schools that were more advantaged than

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others because they had a higher degree of relational trust. They stood out because of four factors: mutual respect, personal regard, competence in core responsibilities, and personal integrity. These don't somehow just emerge in a school community. They are cultivated with intention. And a central tenet of leadership is this: walk the talk. It begins with us.

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