

Activity 2: Leadership styles

Read the descriptions of school leaders in Table 2. Think of the school leaders you have known since you were a student, as well as those in your peer group. Which box in Table 2 would they go in, based on the description that fits them best according to your perspective? Think about which box you would go in too. Write your reflections of what you noticed in your Learning Diary.

Table 2 Leadership styles.

		Relationship-oriented leader	
		High	Low
Task-oriented leader	High	The leader is very interested in the growth and development of their staff and students. They are often in class, leading teaching and learning, modelling good practice, and supporting the students. They take a deep interest in their work, do it well and in time, and ensure that staff and students are involved in the decision making. Everyone feels that the leader knows and supports them to get better.	The leader is very focused on getting the work done to perfection and well in time. They feel that it is a waste of time to check whether their decisions are acceptable to staff and students, and see it as their job. If they enter a class, the leader is more interested in the time spent on a task than on supporting the teachers to get better; they often take over from the teacher, since they can teach better than the teacher can. Everyone feels that they have to prove they are better than the others.
	Low	The leader is most interested in spending time socially with the staff and students. They are very sympathetic to the difficulties they face but prefer to discuss tasks that need to be done with staff. They work with a view to getting a task completed, without much attention to detail. Everyone feels that the leader likes them.	The leader keeps to themselves, and may get the work done so that it is submitted, without any interest in the work or in the growth and development of the teachers and students. There is limited social interaction and work is done in a minimal way. Everyone feels that the leader does not know their capabilities.

Of course, this activity provides a very rudimentary understanding of different styles of leadership. In real life, the task- and relationship-oriented axes represent a spectrum, with very few people demonstrating all of the characteristics described of one zone of Table 2. However, it is useful to reflect on what implicit messages these four 'styles' of leader might give about the school's culture, as illustrated by the examples in Case Study 1.