

OPEN ACCESS

Manuscript ID:  
EDU-2025-13049301

Volume: 13

Issue: 4

Month: September

Year: 2025

P-ISSN: 2320-2653

E-ISSN: 2582-1334

Received: 25.07.2025

Accepted: 27.08.2025

Published Online: 01.09.2025

Citation:

Piatanom, P., &  
Thongkamhaeng, K. (2025).  
Creative Constructive  
Interactions for Educational  
Leaders in Contemporary  
Society. *Shanlax  
International Journal of  
Education*, 13(4), 78–84.

DOI:

[https://doi.org/10.34293/  
education.v13i4.9301](https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v13i4.9301)




This work is licensed  
under a Creative Commons  
Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0  
International License

# Creative Constructive Interactions for Educational Leaders in Contemporary Society


**Patumphorn Piatanom**

*Ramkhamhaeng University, Thailand*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6989-8280>

**Kamoltip Thongkamhaeng**

*Ramkhamhaeng University, Thailand*

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-8687-456X>

## Abstract

*This article, documentary research, and a synthesis of a conceptual framework as a foundational framework for adaptation and application in future in-depth research, examines the evolution of educational leadership, addressing the transition from traditional, authority-based models to more adaptive, relationship-centred approaches that are suitable for the contemporary, complex, and global environment. In a context influenced by rapid technological advancements and societal demands for equity, the effectiveness of hierarchical leadership is waning, necessitating new strategies for substantive transformation. Effective leadership now requires principals to function as “lead learners”, promoting diverse perspectives and engaging communities to develop innovative solutions. Drawing upon foundational theories such as transformational leadership, which emphasises inspiring followers; distributed leadership, which perceives leadership as a collective activity; and servant leadership, which prioritises the needs of others, this article introduces a multidimensional framework for creative and constructive interaction. This model synthesises insights from leadership, communication, and educational research to delineate four core interconnected components essential for contemporary leaders. The first component, dialogical openness, involves establishing safe spaces in which diverse viewpoints are acknowledged without judgment, thereby cultivating a culture of psychological safety and authentic enquiry. The second component, empathic engagement, is the capacity to profoundly understand and share the experiences of stakeholders, thus facilitating more responsive and equitable decision-making processes. The third component, collaborative problem solving, shifts the paradigm from top-down directives to the co-creation of shared solutions, thereby enhancing ownership and fostering more sustainable outcomes. The final component, reflective practice, requires leaders to continuously evaluate their actions and beliefs to ensure that they remain authentic and adaptable. The article further elaborates on practical strategies for implementing this framework, including targeted professional development, deliberate cultural change, and policy reform, while acknowledging potential barriers, such as resistance to change and resource limitations. Ultimately, it argues that embedding creative and constructive interactions is not merely advantageous but also integral to effective educational leadership, empowering leaders to navigate complexity, foster innovation, and cultivate resilient and equitable learning environments for all stakeholders.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, Creative Interaction, Constructive Communication, Educational Leadership, Collaboration, Professional Development

## Introduction

Contemporary educational leadership plays a crucial role in transforming traditional educational institutions into professional learning communities in an increasingly complex and volatile global environment (Alkrdem, 2020). Driven by rapid technological advancements and escalating societal demands for equity (Hossain et al., 2024), traditional hierarchical leadership models are becoming increasingly ineffective, impeding meaningful transformations (Mincu, 2022). This shift necessitates that leaders evolve from issuing

directives to acting as ‘lead learners’ (Fullan, 2014), who foster innovative solutions by actively engaging diverse perspectives (DeGraff & DeGraff, 2017). However, while the existing literature establishes what new leadership requires, a significant gap remains in providing a practical framework that explains how leaders can cultivate this collaborative environment daily. This study addresses this gap by proposing a framework for creative and constructive interaction—strategies designed to foster genuine collaboration, cultivate mutual respect, and enable shared problem-solving. This article offers a comprehensive examination of these essential interactions, elucidates their critical importance, and proposes actionable strategies for their integration into educational institutions.

This conceptual framework was developed through a systematic process of documentary research, which involved the following steps: data selection, a comprehensive review of authoritative literature, including major theories of educational leadership, communication, and organizational behaviour. The selection focused on seminal and contemporary works that addressed the changing landscape of educational leadership. Next, key concepts and principles from the selected literature were synthesised to identify emerging themes and interconnected ideas. This process includes comparing and contrasting different theoretical perspectives to create a unified framework. Finally, in developing the conceptual framework, the synthesised insights were used to delineate the four core, interdependent components of effective leadership. This framework for creative and constructive interaction was created to address the practical gap identified in the literature, providing a model for how leaders can foster collaborative environments.

### Leadership Theories in Educational Contexts

Educational leadership theories have undergone substantial evolution, reflecting a paradigm shift from rigid, authority-driven models to more adaptable, relationship-centred practices (Bush, 2003; Fullan, 2014; Northouse, 2022). Early frameworks such as transformational leadership (Bass, 1985) established foundational principles by emphasising the

leader’s role in motivating and inspiring followers. Transformational leaders are characterised by their ability to motivate followers to exceed their initial expectations, often by inspiring them and appealing to higher ideals, encompassing components such as idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration. Notably, inspirational motivation directly pertains to a leader’s role in inspiring and motivating followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006). It consistently underscores the leader’s responsibility to inspire, motivate, and empower followers to achieve collective objectives that extend beyond their self-interests (Northouse, 2022). Recent theoretical developments, including distributed leadership, constitute a conceptual and practical approach that views leadership as a shared activity rather than the exclusive responsibility of a single individual within an organisation or hierarchy. This perspective emphasises that leadership emerges from interactions among multiple individuals within an organisation, leveraging their diverse expertise and capabilities to achieve common goals (Spillane, 2006; Gronn, 2002). Fundamentally, distributed leadership involves allocating responsibilities and decision-making authority throughout an organisation, fostering collaboration, cooperation, and effective utilisation of collective potential to accomplish shared objectives. This approach recognises that, in complex environments, collective wisdom and coordinated action are often more effective than top-down directives. Servant leadership, another prominent philosophy, prioritises serving others and fulfilling their needs (staff, students, and stakeholders) above the leader’s interests (Greenleaf 1977). Essentially, a servant leader shares power, emphasises the growth and development of others, and helps individuals reach their highest potential. Instead of people working to serve the leader, the leader serves the people. This approach fosters increased staff engagement and performance, ultimately contributing to organizational growth and success (Greenleaf, 1977; Tran and Spears, 2019), which further underscores the significance of shared responsibility, empowerment, and a service-oriented mindset. These contemporary theories suggest that effective educational leadership is primarily about

creating an environment in which all stakeholders can contribute meaningfully rather than merely exercising command and control.

### **Constructive Communication**

The core of effective leadership resides in constructive communication, which extends beyond mere information exchange. It encompasses active listening, deep listening, and co-construction of meaning. Active listening, which is not merely remaining silent to permit another to speak, is a comprehensive process that requires full concentration to understand the conveyed message, including its content, emotional undertones, and underlying intent. This form of listening makes team members feel that their opinions are valued and respected, serving as a fundamental cornerstone of trust-building ([Rogers & Farson, 1988](#)). Empathic communication involves deep empathy, which is the capacity to perceive and comprehend another individual's perspective, feelings, and experiences as if they were in their situation while maintaining one's sense of self. An empathetic leader in an organisation ([Muss et al., 2025](#)) affects innovative behaviour ([Ma et al., 2024](#)), anticipates the repercussions of decisions, and understands that a new policy or change might affect team morale and emotions. Such leaders can provide targeted support because they understand the genuine needs and challenges of each individual, fostering psychological safety that enables team members to feel secure in expressing their ideas and admitting mistakes without fear of retribution ([Goleman 1995](#)). Co-construction of meaning, the most vital concept at the heart of constructive communication, rejects the notion that a "sender" transmits a pre-packaged "meaning" to a "receiver." Instead, it posits that meaning is generated during conversation through exchange, negotiation, and shared interpretation. For a leader, this entails not imposing a vision but inviting the team to co-create their vision and goals, thereby fostering a sense of shared ownership. Embracing diverse perspectives involves viewing conflicts and disagreements as opportunities to develop deeper and more comprehensive understanding. Building shared understanding ensures that all team members comprehend the 'why' behind their work, not just

the 'how.' This process yields a robust, shared understanding that unites the team and propels the organisation forward with a clear purpose ([Weick, 1995](#)). For educational leaders, practising constructive communication is crucial for building trust, resolving conflict, and creating environments that foster individual and collective growth ([Bryk & Schneider, 2002](#)). This approach guarantees that diverse perspectives are heard, valued, and incorporated into decision-making processes, thereby strengthening organizational cohesion and effectiveness.

### **Creativity in Leadership**

Creative leadership involves more than just the generation of novel ideas. It encompasses the ability to think adaptively, inspire innovation within teams, and guide the development of unique solutions to complex problems ([Strobel et al. 2024](#)). The ability to think adaptively and the capacity to adjust one's paradigms, thought processes, and working methods in response to new information, unexpected situations, or changing obstacles. It is more than just ad-hoc problem-solving; in a volatile and uncertain world (the VUCA World), leaders who cling to outdated methods cannot guide their organisations to success. Therefore, adaptive thinking is a critical skill in navigating uncertainty ([Senge, 2006](#)). Inspiring innovation within teams, the role of a creative leader is not to be the "genius" who thinks of everything alone, but to be the "catalyst" who inspires and unlocks the creative potential of every team member ([Amabile, 1996](#)). Moreover, the ability to guide the development of unique solutions to complex problems and creativity without execution is a daydream. A creative leader must therefore possess the skills to guide the process of transforming an abstract "idea" into a tangible "innovation" ([Puccio et al., 2011](#)). In educational settings, this translates into the capacity to spearhead curricular innovation, develop responsive policymaking, and encourage experimental approaches to pedagogy and school management. Creative leaders are not afraid to challenge the status quo; they foster a culture in which experimentation and learning from failure are embraced as pathways to improvement.

## Creative Constructive Interactions: Core Components

Building upon these theoretical foundations, creative constructive interactions in educational leadership can be delineated into four core, interdependent components:

**Dialogical Openness:** Leaders must actively create and safeguard spaces where diverse viewpoints are heard without judgment or preconceived notions (Bohm, 1996). This involves fostering a culture of psychological safety (Kyambade et al., 2024), in which individuals feel comfortable expressing dissenting opinions, asking challenging questions, and engaging in genuine enquiry. Dialogical openness is essential for fostering innovation, uncovering blind spots, and strengthening community bonds in educational institutions. Teams with high psychological safety exhibit more learning behaviours, which, in turn, improve team performance (Edmondson, 1999), thereby fostering an open and trusting environment. It uses positive, generative questions to unlock potential, which requires a climate of dialogical openness, and proper understanding arises from a “fusion of horizons,” where individuals in a dialogue genuinely open themselves to the perspectives of others to arrive at a new, shared understanding (Gadamer, 1989).

**Empathic Engagement:** The capacity of leaders to profoundly comprehend and share the emotions and experiences of their stakeholders (Goleman 2006). By genuinely adopting the perspectives of staff, students, stakeholders, and organizational members, leaders can make more responsive, equitable, and effective decisions. Empathetic engagement fosters stronger relationships and ensures that leadership initiatives are aligned with the organisation’s authentic needs and aspirations. Empathy comprises two primary components (Goleman, 2006): cognitive empathy, the ability to understand another’s viewpoint, and emotional empathy, the capacity to resonate with another individual’s experiences. Leaders who employ these skills (Weng et al., 2013) in their interactions (engagement) can establish deeper connections, foster trust, and guide their organisation to align with the authentic needs of individuals. This functioned as a foundational link between empathy and engagement. Empathy plays a crucial role in the

workplace and is associated with positive outcomes, including helping behaviours and task performance (Osia & Meier, 2024).

Collaborative Problem-solving exemplifies a hallmark of creative and constructive interaction, characterised by the deliberate promotion of collective enquiry and the co-creation of shared solutions (Fullan, 2001). This process involves transitioning from top-down directives to methodologies that facilitate active engagement of all relevant stakeholders in identifying challenges, developing solutions, and implementing initiatives. This approach enhances ownership, amplifies engagement, and often results in more resilient and sustainable outcomes. Achieving sustainable change within educational organisations cannot be accomplished solely through top-down directives; rather, it necessitates the cultivation of a “culture of change” wherein leaders serve as change agents. Central to this endeavour is the development of relationships, sharing of knowledge, and collaboration to devise solutions tailored to specific contexts. Consequently, collaborative problem solving is not merely a tool, but constitutes the principal mechanism for fostering meaningful development within complex organisations (Fullan, 2001). The Professional Learning Community (PLC) model transforms organizational culture from individual, isolated practices towards a shared, collective responsibility for student outcomes, representing one of the most tangible examples of collaborative problem-solving within an educational setting (Hudson, 2024; DuFour et al., 2010). Therefore, addressing today’s complex challenges necessitates moving beyond individual expertise to leverage the collective intelligence of groups, which is achievable only through robust collaborative processes underpinned by leadership that promotes a culture of genuine participation.

**Reflective Practice:** Leaders are required to consistently dedicate themselves to introspection regarding their actions, decisions, and foundational beliefs (Schon 1983). This perpetual process of self-evaluation enables leaders to recognise areas needing development, modify their strategies in response to novel circumstances, and ensure that their leadership remains genuine and transparent.

Experts do not merely implement predetermined theories; instead, they partake in an “artistry” of practice amid complex and uncertain scenarios. Two essential forms of reflection are reflection-in-action, which involves contemplating and adjusting actions during an ongoing situation, and reflection-on-action, which entails retrospectively reviewing an event to derive lessons and enhance future practice. Schon’s contributions ([Schon, 1983](#)) are regarded as a fundamental starting point for any examination of this subject. Reflective practice serves as a vital link ([Gebremariam & Sisay, 2024](#)) that converts raw experience into knowledge and concepts, which can subsequently be validated through practice ([Kolb, 1984](#)). This underscores the importance of reflective practice in upholding integrity, cultivating trust, and exemplifying dedication to continuous learning within the organisation.

## Findings

This study identifies four interdependent components of leadership that are essential in contemporary educational environments. These findings are synthesised from the existing literature and form the core of the proposed framework:

**Dialogical Openness:** This involves creating psychologically safe spaces where diverse viewpoints are heard and acknowledged without judgment.

**Empathic engagement:** This is the capacity to profoundly understand and share the experiences of stakeholders, enabling more responsive and equitable decision making.

**Collaborative Problem Solving:** This component emphasises shifting from top-down directives to the co-creation of shared solutions.

**Reflective practice:** This requires leaders to continuously evaluate their actions and beliefs to ensure that their leadership remains authentic and adaptable.

## Implementation in Educational Settings

Integrating creative and constructive interactions into the fabric of educational institutions requires significant cultural shift and deliberate strategic efforts. Educational leaders must actively value dialogue and embed principles of open dialogue and respectful discourse in all meetings, decision-

making processes, and informal interactions. Provide training, offer ongoing professional development in advanced communication skills, active listening, conflict resolution, and empathy-building for all levels of leadership and staff. Reward innovation by establishing mechanisms that recognize and celebrate innovative approaches, risk-taking, and successful collaborative initiatives, even those that emerge from initial failures. Moreover, leaders must consistently model the behaviors they wish to see, demonstrating dialogical openness, empathic engagement, collaborative problem-solving, and reflective practice in their daily interactions.

## Challenges and Barriers

Although the advantages of creative and constructive interactions are apparent, leaders may face numerous challenges and obstacles in their implementation. These include entrenched organizational cultures and resistance to change from established norms, especially in institutions accustomed to hierarchical structures. Additionally, a lack of resources, insufficient time, funding, or personnel may hinder training programs and facilitate dialogue and systemic reforms. Fear of vulnerability can also cause leaders and staff to hesitate in embracing openness and empathy because of concerns about judgment or perceived loss of authority. Furthermore, time constraints may render the participatory nature of these interactions more time-consuming than top-down directives do. Overcoming these barriers requires the development of emotional intelligence among leaders, fostering a culture of psychological safety and establishing robust institutional support mechanisms that champion and resource these new approaches.

## Conclusion

In an era where the educational landscape faces increasing complexity and volatility, this article has argued that leadership effectiveness no longer resides in traditional hierarchical models, but depends on the deliberate cultivation of Creative Constructive Interactions. The proposed framework synthesises four interdependent pillars: Dialogical Openness to create psychologically safe spaces, Empathic Engagement for responsive decision-



making, Collaborative Problem-solving to co-create sustainable solutions, and Reflective Practice for continuous learning and adaptation; however, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this work. As a conceptual framework, this model is built upon the existing theory and awaits empirical validation. Furthermore, practical implementation faces considerable challenges, as previously discussed, including institutional resistance to change, resource constraints, and the vulnerability required for genuine dialogue. Therefore, future research is essential to build upon this foundation. The next critical step is the empirical validation of the framework. This could involve quantitative studies correlating the four components with leadership effectiveness and team innovation as well as qualitative case studies examining the lived experiences of leaders implementing these practices. Further research could also explore the framework's application across diverse educational contexts—such as primary versus higher education or different national cultures—and evaluate the long-term impact of professional development programs designed to cultivate these interactive skills. Ultimately, embedding creative and constructive interactions is not merely a strategic advantage but an ethical imperative for modern educational leaders. By prioritising the quality of human connections and dialogue, leaders can move beyond mere management to cultivate resilient, innovative, and equitable learning communities that are prepared to thrive in contemporary society.

## References

- Alkrdem, M. (2020). Contemporary educational leadership and its role in converting traditional schools into professional learning communities. *International Journal of Educational Leadership and Management*, 8(1), 144-171.
- Amabile, T. M. (1996). *Creativity in context: Update to the social psychology of creativity*. Westview Press.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. The Free Press.
- Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Bohm, D. (1996). *On dialogue*. Routledge.
- Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. (2002). *Trust in schools: A core resource for improvement*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Bush, T. (2003). *Theories of educational leadership and management* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- DeGraff, J., & DeGraff, S. (2017). *The innovation code: The creative power of constructive conflict*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & Many, T. W. (2010). *Learning by doing: A handbook for professional learning communities at work* (2nd ed.). Solution Tree.
- Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350-383.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2014). *The principal: Three keys to maximizing impact*. Jossey-Bass.
- Gadamer, H. G. (1989). *Truth and method* (2nd ed.). Continuum.
- Gebremariam, H. T., & Sisay, A. B. (2024). Reflective practice in higher education institutions: Exploring teachers' reflective experiences and challenges in Ethiopian public universities. *Interchange*, 55, 405-428.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ for character, health and lifelong achievement*. Bantam Books.
- Goleman, D. (2006). *Social intelligence: The new science of human relationships*. Bantam.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power & greatness*. Paulist Press.
- Gronn, P. (2002). Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis. *Leadership Quarterly*, 13(4), 423-451.
- Hossain, M. A., Mizan, M. S., Ahmed, A., & Islam, M. S. (2024). Effective contemporary leadership in the tertiary education: Global stakeholders' viewpoint. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 14(1), 220-234.

- Hudson, C. (2024). A conceptual framework for understanding effective professional learning community (PLC) operation in schools. *Journal of Education*, 204(3), 649-659.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice-Hall.
- Kyambade, M., Nkurunziza, G., Sewante, L., Namatovu, A., & Tushabe, M. (2024). Servant leadership and healthy work relationships in university context: A moderated mediation analysis of psychological safety and socially responsible leadership. *Cogent Education*, 11(1).
- Ma, G., Wu, W., Liu, C., Ji, J., & Gao, X. (2024). Empathetic leadership and employees' innovative behavior: Examining the roles of career adaptability and uncertainty avoidance. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15.
- Mincu, M. E. (2022). Why is school leadership key to transforming education? Structural and cultural assumptions for quality education in diverse contexts. *Prospects*, 51(3-4), 363-380.
- Muss, C., Tuxen, D., & Furstenau, B. (2025). Empathy in leadership: A systematic literature review on the effects of empathetic leaders in organizations. *Management Review Quarterly*.
- Northouse, P. G. (2022). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (9th ed.). SAGE.
- Osia, A. V., & Meier, L. L. (2024). Empathy in the workplace: Disentangling affective from cognitive empathy. *Occupational Health Science*, 8, 883-904.
- Puccio, G. J., Mance, M., & Murdock, M. C. (2011). *Creative leadership: Skills that drive change* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Rogers, C. R., & Farson, R. E. (1987). Active listening. In P. B. Dubose (Ed.), *Readings in management*, pp. 184-195. Prentice-Hall.
- Schon, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Basic Books.
- Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art & practice of the learning organization*. Doubleday.
- Spillane, J. P. (2006). *Distributed leadership*. Jossey-Bass.
- Strobel, L. T., Strobel, M., Welp, I. M., & Korsgaard, M. A. (2024). The role of creative leadership manifestations in creativity and innovation. *Creativity Research Journal*, 37(1), 1-19.
- Tran, D. Q., & Spears, L. C. (2019). The common good and servant-leadership: Rocks upon which good societies, organizations, and leaders are built. *International Journal of Servant-Leadership*, 13(6), 66-103.
- Weick, K. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Sage Publications.
- Weng, H. Y., Fox, A. S., Shackman, A. J., Stodola, D. E., Caldwell, J. Z. K., Olson, M. C., Rogers, G. M., & Davidson, R. J. (2013). Compassion training alters altruism and neural responses to suffering. *Psychological Science*, 24(7), 1171-1180.

### Author Details

**Patumphorn Piatanom**, Ramkhamhaeng University, Thailand, **Email ID:** p.piatanom@gmail.com

**Kamoltip Thongkamhaeng**, Ramkhamhaeng University, Thailand, **Email ID:** kruko@hotmail.com