Foundations in Skillful Team Leadership

Instructor: Author Elisa B. MacDonald

Virtual Course

**“Foundations in Skillful Team Leadership” is a 7-week virtual course that introduces the key concepts of a skillful intentional approach to team leadership for educators ready to improve student outcomes.**

This course explores: a culture of collaborative inquiry; essential understandings about group psychology, peer leadership and adult learners; effective teaming tools; the Ten STL primary intentions; and presents a novel approach to assessing collaboration.

Who will benefit from this course?

* Any educator who leads a team (i.e., teacher leader, coach or instructional partner, school or district administrator)
* Any person who is supporting one or more teacher team leaders.
* Any group of team leaders\* within a school.

\*Team leaders with any level of experience are welcome.

When is the course offered?

**This virtual course meets 2 hours\* a week on Thursdays:**

**10/6, 10/13, 10/20, 11/3, 11/17, 12/1, 12/15. (4:00 – 6:00 ET)**

\*Please note if you are taking this course for 1 graduate credit, **the first and last sessions will be 2.5 hours, 4:00 - 6:30pm ET**

Contact Elisa if you are interested in this course, but would like it offered at a different time. If there is enough interest, Elisa will run an additional course.

Core text:

[Intentional Moves: How Skillful Team Leaders Impact Learning](https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/intentional-moves/book258223) (Must be purchased separately.)

Additional text (optional): [The Skillful Team Leader: A Resource for Overcoming Hurdles in Professional Learning for Student Achievement](https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/the-skillful-team-leader/book237728#:~:text=Elisa%20MacDonald%20offers%20a%20skillful,rigorous%20discourse%2C%20and%20continuous%20improvement.)

Course Objectives and Outcomes:

At the end of this course you will be able to:

* Self-reflect on your own approach to leadership rooted in values, mindset, emotional intelligence and responsiveness to hurdles.
* View teams through a function and impact lens and apply to a team you lead or participate in.
* Explain at least 1 essential understanding about group psychology, peer leadership or adult learners and apply to a real situation.
* Explain why leading with intention results in better collaboration and better outcomes for all learners.
* Make a connection between leading both colleagues and students with intention. Draw from your expertise as a teacher.
* Identify the Ten STL Primary Intentions.
* Gain ten strategies and/or tools to use when leading a team. (E.g., Formulate an inquiry question, craft a 3 Question agenda, design a peer observation, select a shared text for learning, lead a vulnerability-based trust exercise, interrupt negative energy, maintain a healthy data culture, design team meeting feedback questions etc.)
* Apply all that you have learned by assessing one team meeting using the Team Function Impact Matrix and a written reflection.

Weekly course topics.

WEEK 1: LEADERSHIP & COLLABORATION

Key questions:

* What inspires you to lead your colleagues in learning?
* What happens when we view our team collaboration through two lenses?
* What is a skillful approach to team leadership?

Together participants will discover the importance of assessing collaboration through two lenses, explore the Team Function Impact Matrix, learn the 4 tenets of a skillful approach to team leadership and engage in thought-provoking activities that aim to uncover our own values, mindset, emotional intelligence and responsiveness to hurdles.

WEEK 2: COLLABORATIVE INQUIRY

Key questions:

* What are the STL Phases of Collaborative Inquiry?
* What is the purpose of each phase, what do you do when your team is in each phase, and what hurdles might you face?
* How do you foster a culture of collaborative inquiry?

Together, participants will learn the STL Phases of Collaborative Inquiry, define leadership intentions at each phase, examine a team’s action plan moving through the STL phases of collaborative inquiry and share ways to maintain the spirit of inquiry.

WEEK 3: STL ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

Key questions:

* In order to effectively lead teams of adult learners, what must we know about group psychology, adult learners and peer leadership?
* In what ways can group dynamics negatively influence the function and impact of a team?
* What knowledge and skill can we apply from effectively leading our students in the classroom?
* What are the upsides and downsides to being a peer leader?

Together participants will examine how group social influence, work styles, diversity influence a team’s collaboration. We will also explore Malcom Knowles principles about adult learners and Ellie Drago-Severson’s Ways of Knowing. Finally, we will delve into the advantages peer leaders have as change agents, debunk misconceptions about leadership and study key teacher leader attributes and Teacher Leader Standards.

WEEK 4: PRIMARY INTENTIONS 1-5 (“Soft” leadership skills)

Key questions:

* What conditions are needed for equitable access to team learning?
* How do social norms impact team learning?
* What is vulnerability-based trust and how can leaders foster it on a team?
* What simple structures can improve the way a team functions?
* How do leaders engage colleagues in constructive dialogue that does not lead to unproductive conflict?

Together participants will be introduced to the first five STL intentions that target the “soft skills” of leadership. We will explore the importance of optimize learning conditions for all adult learners, establishing expectations and responsibilities, nurturing a group culture of community and trust, design and plan for learning and uncover ways to engage participants in learning.

WEEK 5: PRIMARY INTENTIONS 6-10 (“Hard” leadership skills)

Key questions:

* How do you find a specific learning challenge that everyone on your team is invested in?
* How does preparation impact group data analysis?
* How do we interrupt bias, assumptions and unsound reasoning?
* What is behind adult resistance to learning?
* How do we know our team is functioning well and having a positive impact on teacher and student learning?

Together participants will be introduced to the first five STL intentions that target the “hard skills” of leadership. We will explore the importance of leading collaborative inquiry with purpose and direction; using data to advance learning; engaging in analytical thinking, cultivating diverse perspectives in problem solving; implementing new learning; and assessing teams and leaders.

WEEK 6: ASSESS COLLABORATION

Key questions:

* How do we know a team is high functioning and high impact? What indicators can we look for?
* What can a leader do to improve how a team functions and its’ impact on teacher and student learning?

Together participants will view video/read a transcript of a team and identify evidence of high function and high impact using the Team Function Impact Matrix. Participants will note missed opportunities for greater function and impact and troubleshoot moments where the team struggled to function well or show indicators of impact.

**This course meets the following standards:**

Teacher Leadership Consortium standards:

* Domain I: Fostering a collaborative culture to promote educator development and student learning.
* Domain II: Accessing and using research to improve practice and student achievement.
* Domain III: Promoting professional learning for continuous improvement.

Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning:

* Equity Foundations, Culture of Collaborative Inquiry, Leadership, Resources

**Course Texts and Materials**

The primary text for this course is:

MacDonald, Elisa B. Intentional Moves: How Skillful Team Leaders Impact Learning. Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2022; ISBN 9781506392844.

Additional suggested readings include:

Bagozzi, R. P. (1992). The self-regulation of attitudes, intentions, and behavior. Social Psychology Quarterly, 55(2), 178–204.

Baumeister, R. F., & Hutton, D. G. (1987). Self- presentation theory: Self-construction and audi- ence pleasing. In B. Mullen & G. R. Goethals (Eds.), Theories of group behavior (pp. 71–87). Springer Verlag.

Bloomberg, P., & Pitchford, B. (2017). Leading impact teams: Building a culture of efficacy. Corwin. ISBN 9780801075681

Brown, B. (2020, November 9). Inclusivity at work: The heart of hard conversations with Aiko Bethea [Audio podcast episode]. In Dare to lead. Cutler Media LLC. https://brenebrown.com/podcast/ brene-with-aiko-bethea-on-inclusivity-at-work- the-heart-of-hard-conversations/

Cort, J. (2020, October 26). Creating space for a diversity of thought [Audio podcast epi- sode]. In Third space with Jen Cort. https:// www.spreaker.com/user/voicedradio/creating-space-for-a-diversity-of-though

Drago-Severson, E. (2009). Leading adult learning: Supporting adult development in our schools. Corwin. ISBN 9781412950725

Hammond, Z. (2015b, April 9). Four tools for inter- rupting implicit bias. Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain. https://crtandthebrain .com/four-tools-for-interrupting-implicit-bias/

Jhagroo, J. (2020). Review of L. Grudnoff, F. Ell, M. Haigh, M. Hill, & K. Tocker: Enhancing equity through inquiry. New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, 55, 275–278. https://doi .org/10.1007/s40841-020-00159-z

Karlgaard, R., & Malone, S. (2015). Team genius: The new science of high-performing organizations. HarperCollins. ISBN 9780062302540

MacDonald, E. (2013). The skillful team leader: A resource for overcoming hurdles to professional learning for student achievement. Corwin. ISBN 9781452218830

Schein, E. H. (2013). Humble inquiry: The gentle art of asking instead of telling. Berrett-Koehler. ISBN 9781523092628

TEDx Talks. (2014, May 4). Building a psycho- logically safe workplace: Amy Edmondson: TEDxHGSE [Video]. YouTube. https://www .youtube.com/watch?v=LhoLuui9gX8

Timperley, H. (2008). Evidence-informed conversa- tions making a difference to student achievement. In L. M. Earl & H. Timperley (Eds.), Professional learning conversations: Challenges in using evi- dence for improvement (pp. 69–79). Professional Learning and Development in Schools and Higher Education (Vol. 1). Springer, Dordrecht. https:// doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-6917-8\_6

Tuckman, B. (1965). Developmental sequence in small groups. Psychological Bulletin, 63(6), 384–399.

**Virtual learning expectations for all participants:**

* Set up a workspace free from distractions. Use headphones when helpful.
* Close all tabs and keep full attention on the course at all times during the session.
* Check that your video and audio work in advance of our online class.
* Log into the online platform on time. Demonstrate patience with technical difficulties.
* Be on time.
* Keep camera on if possible.
* Mute when not speaking.
* Thoughtfully use online features such as “raise hand” or chat.
* Return from break out sessions, independent work time, and stretch breaks on time.

**If taking this course for 1 graduate credit… Course Expectations:**

* Attendance is mandatory. In the event of an unplanned absence, it is the responsibility of the student at the discretion of the instructor to complete all missed work and to email the instructor at [skillfulteamleader@gmail.com](mailto:skillfulteamleader@gmail.com) with the subject line “Absence” and the date of said absence. E.g., “Absence 9/27”. More than one missed class will result in an “Incomplete” grade.
* Demonstrate learning with completion of all assignments. Rewrites are acceptable for assignments receiving a C or lower.
* Every participant is expected to virtually collaborate beyond the online course times every week until the last day of the course: Participants may post learning to any one or more of the following: our facebook group page, our STL padlet at [www.elisamacdonald.com](http://www.elisamacdonald.com) or on twitter with #skillfulteamleader or @elisaBmacdonald and #TeacherLeader
* Every student is expected to come to class prepared with pre-reading and pre-work completed. Every student is expected to actively participate in whole group, chats, and small group break outs.
* Provide constructive feedback to other participants. We are an authentic community of learners here to push one another’s practice respectfully.

**If taking this course for 1 graduate credit, Course Requirements**

3 hours of collaboration a week in between sessions and after the last session:

* Read designated chapters from Intentional Moves (IM).
* Post\* to social media at least one standout line from the chapter you read or a quote from something you heard in the virtual session group conversation. Include the page number, if from the book, and a comment about why this line/quote stands out to you. Some sessions, participants will also be asked to post a response to a question posed by the instructor.
* Write/Sketch the required assignment and submit via email to [skillfulteamleader@gmail.com](mailto:skillfulteamleader@gmail.com) SUBJECT LINE: Course assignment #.
* Regularly log in to [www.elisamacdonald.com](http://www.elisamacdonald.com) for additional readings and resources.

Final project, if taking this course for graduate credit:

* Participants will record a team meeting or ask someone in their team meeting to observe them facilitate a meeting. Participants will view the recorded meeting or reflect upon one they have led. They will fill out all sections of the Team Meeting Reflection Tool (Move 10.5) cite specific evidence from the observed meeting in one primary intention section. Decide on one overarching area of great strength for the team and one specific area for growth. Participants will explain their assessment with evidence from the meeting. Lastly, participants will read the chapter associated with the primary intention they selected as an area for growth. They will select one move that might help their team, implement the move (or explain how they plan to implement that move), and reflect on the impact they had and why. Participants will submit to the instructor the following:
  + Student-designed agenda (1 page) from the meeting and any supporting documents
  + Video of team meeting if you were able to record it
  + Completed Team Reflection Tool with evidence supporting the assessment (4 pages)
  + Write a 2-3 page paper naming 1 evidence-based strength and 1 evidence-based growth area with reference to a specific move from Part 3 of Intentional Moves that you would or did implement.

For all assignments:

* Participants are encouraged to complete assignments in real time, applying learning to their current leadership work with colleagues.
* Written assignments and projects must be well-written with attention to good conventions in writing. Participants should avoid jargon and write with specific examples.
* Participants will follow the virtual guidelines for all posts to social media. These are posted on the facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/skillfulteamleader>