

TEAL is not just a colour

Rethinking twenty-first century leadership in FEDAC schools



by David Bernal López

School leadership has evolved significantly throughout the first quarter of the twenty-first century in response to the changes and challenges that have arisen in the educational environment. With the onset of technology, globalisation and changes in society and societal expectations, school leadership has had to rethink itself to address current needs and demands. The following is a detailed description of the model promoted by FEDAC schools in recent years regarding the management of the idea of horizontal leadership that is being promoted among the different groups of teachers in this educational institution. One of the key ideas is the creation of two management teams that work to promote a paradigm based on the common good and leadership that facilitates transformation processes. FEDAC schools are in the midst in a process of change, improvement and innovation in terms of school leadership.

#AVUIXDEMÀ, THE DETONATOR

The educational practice in FEDAC schools is based on #avuixdemà (today for tomorrow). Not only is this project a pedagogical scaffolding for the 25 schools, but it also entails a structural, organisational and managerial rethinking.

Redistributing and rethinking the leadership model is a process that takes time. Therefore, the #avuixdemà tries to meet this need for change detected in schools that has been shaping the educational realities and singularities for almost a decade after a participatory process among the different stakeholders. Change, improvement and innovation must arise from a need so that everything proposed is sustained over time and allows for progress in each school's prospects.

This strategic plan includes a distributed and horizontal leadership model. This means that each person, regardless of their position and role, can contribute to the collective mission by changing each school's organisational culture. This idea comes from Frederic Laloux in his book "Reinventing Organisations" (2014), where the author defines the concept of TEAL. This model reflects the paradigm of creating shared purpose among

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the people in each organisation, developing their personal fulfilment and offering structures that promote team self-management. Thus, TEAL is not just a blue-green colour but is also an innovative perspective on management and leadership in organisations that proposes a new paradigm for the way organisations can be organised and operated.

Specifically, in a “TEAL” organisation, personal fulfilment and growth are sought, diversity and creativity are valued and collaboration and innovation are encouraged. This leadership and management perspective, linked to the idea of having a decentralised structure, signals a radical change from the traditional hierarchical models which are often found in schools' operating structures.

At FEDAC, different initiatives are underway to promote leadership skills that allow groups to be viewed as communities, in which each member contributes to and sustains the collective. It promotes the individual capacity to become shuttles that connect each of the teachers who can shape any school project from a more humanistic and effective team management perspective.

BLUE TEAM AND GREEN TEAM

A management model that promotes decision-making based on trust, shared responsibility and a sense of collective purpose begins with the creation of two working teams within each group: blue and green. The choice of colours is in accordance with the official FEDAC colours and the hexadecimal colour code #008080, Teal.

Blue encompasses tasks related to people, school and project management. It is made up of the general administration, the head of pedagogy, the head of studies and research and meaning (a figure based on bringing together the interreligious nature of the schools and the spirituality of both educators and children).

The green team, on the other hand, is a structure in which horizontal leadership can be articulated. The people who are part of it are responsible for promoting different areas in FEDAC schools. These are the figures Lem,¹ Shaker, DecoArt, Comunicación, Participación Promotion Agent (PPA) and Mentor. The green team entails a reconfiguration and distribution of different roles in schools. The green team is viewed as a structure capable of facilitating different improvement, change and innovation processes among the teachers, both academic

and operational.

One of the main objectives of the green team is to encourage all teachers to participate by creating collaboration and cooperation networks: creating synergies. Therefore, the green team is an important agent in promoting transformation in schools and rethinking educational models together based on detecting the needs of the entire teaching staff. These educational models should accompany FEDAC schools of the twenty-first century. The ideation of the green team is also embedded in the essence of leadership today, which, as Otto Scharmer (2015) points out, lies in the ability of organisations' team leaders to enable people and the team itself to fulfil their purpose.

TWO TEAMS AND THE COMMON GOOD

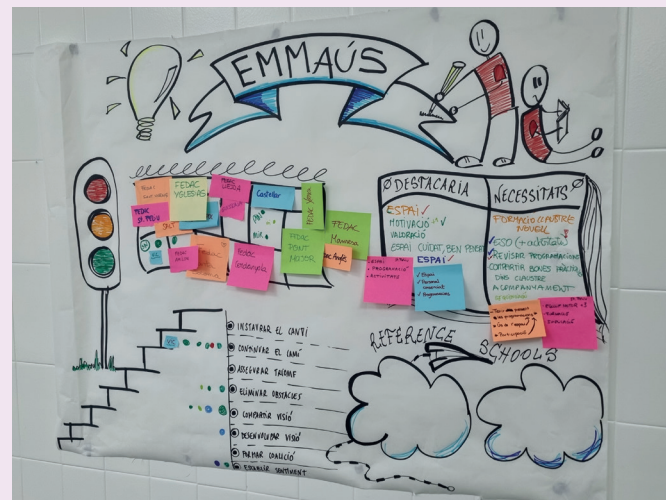
A cross-cutting idea that helps to explain the coexistence of two teams in the same school is the concept of the Common Good (Felber, 2015). This is a core concept of the #avuxidemà project that seeks to achieve the well-being of the people who are part of the institution, and of society as a whole, instead of only focusing on monetary profit. Operating with a clear social and ecological purpose, where economic indicators are redefined to include factors such as social justice, sustainability, democratic participation and ethics, is part of the shared ideology of both teams.

It may seem counterproductive to set up two parallel structures in schools, but the green team becomes a process of transparency and agility in collective decision-making in all schools. The green team aims to promote entrepreneurs and idea-generators, competent and innovative teams following criteria of self-regulation, coordination, commitment and rotation. The green team has to create the conditions needed to promote school, extracurricular and inter-school teaching initiatives. The successes of one team directly and indirectly benefit the other.

In order to achieve this model with the leadership organised in two teams (green and blue), a range of actions are being promoted in the 25 schools that make up FEDAC. However, these actions are being framed within different internal and external training programmes that give meaning and sense to any implementation of organisational change.

TRAINING PATHWAY

Internally, a supportive, empowering training programme has been developed in FEDAC's teacher training pathway, the Socrator programme. The proposal for continuous teacher training in the schools fosters a distributed leadership model capable of ascertaining and helping



to promote people's concerns and energies. It is understood that this opportunity to involve each teacher in the collective project will gradually make it possible to generate more solid structures in terms of credibility and group trust. Externally, different programmes have been carried out in this process of transforming teacher roles through continuous training, such as with the University of Mondragon and TeamLabs, which are helping to bolster the leadership ideology with theoretical and practical arguments. Horizontal leadership is the transformative idea behind rethinking the current structures: encouraging participation and collaboration through the questioning prompted by the training received and promoted in FEDAC by internal and external stakeholders.

Both the internal and external programmes seek to empower teachers to implement their leadership, management and team facilitation competencies in order

The proposal for continuous teacher training fosters a distributed model of leadership that is capable of helping to promote people's concerns

to achieve the aforementioned paradigm based on self-management, personal fulfilment and shared purpose.

Different junctures and gatherings during the school year facilitate teaching connections aimed at developing the 24 challenges that make up #avuixdemà. In each FEDAC school, the blue team and the green team participate in designing the different strategies in order to bring them to fruition by achieving the 248 attractor objectives of the challenges (AOCS). The leadership role on either team must be active and participative, keeping a curious, inquiring attitude for sustained improvement. Finally, the fundamental idea of distributed leadership is to emphasise that everyone is part of the whole. Thanks to the autonomy structures that exist in schools and the continuous learning offered, it is essential that a leader serves the people and the group. As Marcet (2018) notes, to lead is to serve with vision, and in the case of school innovation, to lead is also to understand risk. Leaders can rethink new approaches to the group away from vertical ideas and promote a horizontal aspect of creative leadership inside and outside the school.

In recent years in FEDAC, I have experienced the promotion of the personal leadership project viewed as the prelude to collective leadership. And I like the idea that school leadership, whether in a teaching or other role, can facilitate the transmission of emotions and convictions

about the mission, vision and character of an educational project. As FEDAC's general director, Modest Jou, points out, "without people who do not believe in the common good, there is no leadership. Leadership must bring out the best in people (educators and learners) to make our schools resonant spaces in their environment."

David Bernal López is an educator at FEDAC schools, the pedagogical director at the FEDAC Canet school (Canet de Mar) and a participant in developing innovation and improvement programmes within the institution. He combines his work as an educator with teacher training, one of his specialties being Game-Based Learning.

School leadership can encourage people to adopt the convictions about the mission, vision and character of an educational project





Notes

¹ FEDAC schools promote the Leader In Me (LEM) programme based on the best-seller "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" by Stephen Covey.

² Chunking is the process of grouping things into larger, more meaningful "chunks" so that they are easier to remember. The concept originates from a famous article by cognitive psychologist George Miller.

³ Lemov, D., Lewis, H., Williams, D. and Frazier, D. (2022). "Reconnect: Building School Culture for Meaning, Purpose, and Belonging". Jossey-Bass Inc., U.S.

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