



UnLeading invites us to challenge common-sense assumptions and center often-silenced approaches to leadership, allowing us to re/imagine possibilities for leading, learning, and being in relation to ourselves, each other, and the more than human world.

<https://www.yorku.ca/edu/unleading/>

Facilitator Guide

“UnLeading asks us to engage in the praxis of leadership, a continual interplay of action towards systemic change and deep, inner reflection. In this way, it is a process of becoming, with no predetermined destination or finite goal.” (The UnLeading Project, York University)

UnLeading also asks us to look for leadership in unfamiliar places and challenge the notion of the individual leader.

This podcast series will highlight voices of leaders in classrooms, communities, homes, schools, school districts, and beyond.

The series asks how might we:

- Trouble taken-for-granted assumptions about leadership and learning that reinforce the status quo?
- Engage conceptions of leadership that disrupt, challenge and work against the status quo?
- Center the experiences, knowledge systems, and leadership approaches of the global majority, including Indigenous people, Black and African diasporic people, and people of colour as well as people with multiple and intersecting marginalized identities?
- Redefine leadership to be responsive to the socio-political realities of local, regional, and global contexts in service to historically and systemically underserved students?
- Reclaim and imagine future possibilities for leadership that create radically different possibilities for schooling?

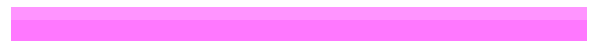
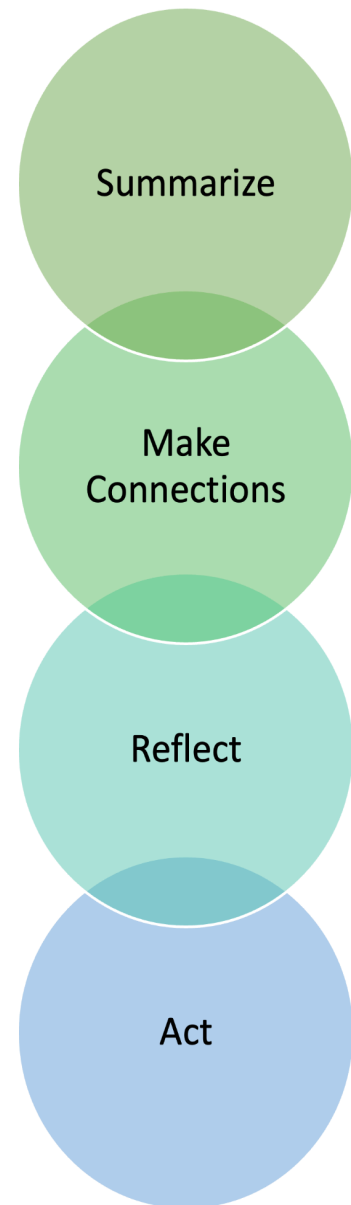
— **A**s you listen to the podcast, we ask that you actively engage in learning and unlearning with yourself and others to deepen your understandings. We offer the following format in support of your journey in unleading:

SUMMARIZE by identifying several themes/concepts that arise in this conversation with the guest speakers. Note similarities, differences, tensions, connections, and possible contradictions between and among them. Additionally, note the perspectives, ideas, and voices that might be missing as well in this conversation. You are also invited to draw out compelling quotes from the speakers and comment on them

MAKE CONNECTIONS to your experiences in/with communities and to larger socio-political and historic contexts. Think about and comment on how the thoughts and ideas presented by the speakers connect to similar themes/concepts in other contexts of leadership.

REFLECT on how the conversation with the speakers informs your understandings of leadership outside of familiar frameworks using the guided reflection questions posed below.

ACT by committing to possible actions (immediate and long-term) that you will engage in to disrupt the status quo, which will steadfastly guide you in actualizing the type of leader you hope to be in and with communities.



— The Four I's: From Thinking to Actions in the 4 Domains:

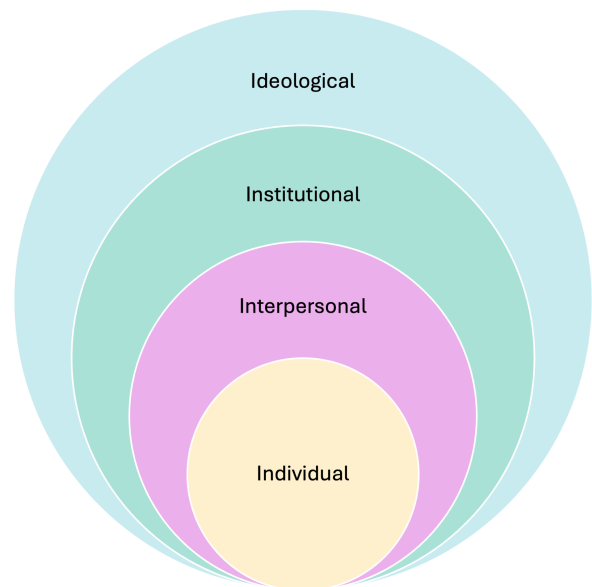
This is a journey towards building new insights and frames of reference while sitting with questions and wonderings that lead to changes in our thinking and meaningful actions in our practices. It is an invitation to recognize the limitations and biases we may have in our understanding of leadership across 4 domains

Individual Relates to the emotions, biases, perceptions, thoughts about ourselves.

Interpersonal Concerns relationships, how we treat one another as individuals and communities.

Institutional Applies to structures, policies, curriculum, professional learning, parent and family engagement, classroom and school climate, and larger policies.

Ideological Connection to ideas about each other and the world.



ABOLITIONIST LEADERSHIP

What if, instead of locating leadership in an individual, we locate it in the spaces between people, structures and ideas committed to racial and other forms of justice.



Guiding Reflection Questions:

How can we challenge systems built on punishment and exclusion, and instead create spaces where healing, accountability and care have ample space and opportunity to take root?

Reflection Questions:

1. How can we reimagine and enact abolitionist leadership that dismantles oppressive systems and fosters communities rooted in care, accountability, and justice?
2. What is possible when we lead with love and care?
3. What if justice was not about punishment, but instead was about making sure that folks in the community have what they need to thrive?
4. If you could design a system for safety and justice in your community, what would it look like? How would it feel to live in a world where care is the foundation of justice?
5. What would justice look like in your community if it wasn't tied to punishment?

Individual Relates to the emotions, biases, perceptions, thoughts about ourselves.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“Abolitionist leaders do not hoard power; they share it. They seek to work alongside communities to build solutions, as we'll see in today's conversation. Abolitionist leaders invest in things that matter: education, mental health, housing. And relationships with folks and community. Abolitionist-oriented leaders seek to recognize that the first step in transforming these systems is transforming ourselves.” (Aurra Startup)

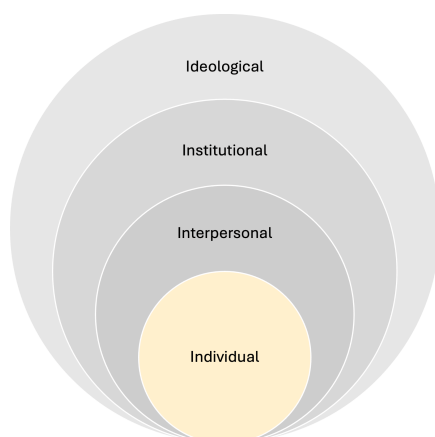
“I have to be able to serve. I have to be authentic. I have to be vulnerable. I have to be humble in my role. And deconstruct what it really means to be a school and system leader. And know that it's not about me, but it's about being in a position of being able to serve others.” (Skye Bowen)

“The pursuit of liberation begins with the liberation of ourselves. And that is a deep, meaningful relationship that drives our engagement with the land that we live on, the people that we live with, and the happenings that we engage with.” (Kamil Ahmed)

“If I am to journey towards abolition, which is collective transformation, then I need to interrogate where in that journey I offer resistance and barriers from my own being and where I am not honoring what I perceive to be the work of restoration, love, and liberation.” (Kamil Ahmed)

Reflection:

How do these statements resonate with you in terms of how you see yourself leading?
How might you reconsider what it means to be a leader from an abolitionist lens?



Action:

- Think about aspects of your life and thinking where you may find yourself “slipping” into colonial ideals or standards (Kamil Ahmed). How can you challenge these ideals or standards in your everyday practice?

Interpersonal Concerns relationships, how we treat one another as individuals and communities.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“Abolition is not only about tearing down oppressive systems, as many folks in the field often remind us. It's about dreaming together. It's about building something better together that's rooted in equity, that's rooted in care, and rooted in collective well-being.” (Aurra Startup)

“Humans cause each other harm, whether it's intentionally, or not. And so we spend so much time trying to avoid causing harm rather than growing the muscle that we need to repair when we do inevitably do it.” (Qui Alexander)

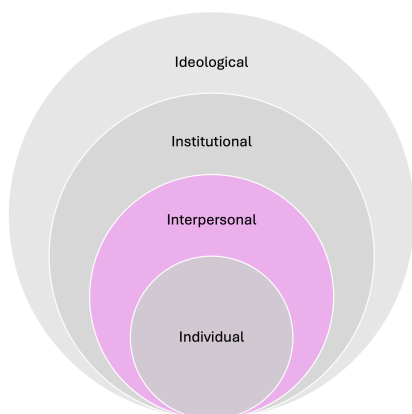
“It's really heart work. And we need to understand that we need to preserve ourselves but we also need to care for others in ways that transforms the system and decolonizes our current schooling systems.” (Skye Bowen)

“We don't have to like each other, but how are we going to build with each other?” (Subini Ancy Annamma)

“I want to rebuild, and I don't know exactly what that looks like, because it's not up to me to have that vision by myself. It is us in community that can dream something bigger, but we need to start by meeting people's needs, and we need to stop pretending education is going to do that on its own.” (Subini Ancy Annamma)

Reflection:

How can we work through tensions and conflict in order to build something rooted in restoration, love and liberation?



Action:

- When safe to do so, practice having and staying in conversations even when discomfort and disagreement may arise. How can you navigate these tensions with restoration, love and liberation in mind?
- Have regular conversations with students, families and members of your community about what kind of future they want to see in education.

Institutional Applies to structures, policies, curriculum, professional learning, parent and family engagement, classroom and school climate, and larger policies.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

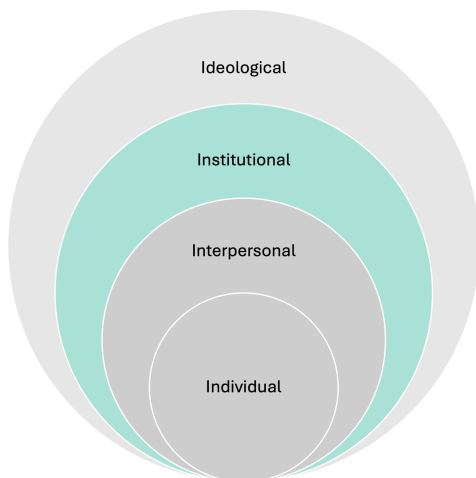
“Disciplinary practices and their outcomes criminalize student behaviour, and this leads to increased suspensions, expulsions, and eventually connections to incarceration, predominantly of BIPOC disabled and undocumented youth, which instead of supporting young people in schools, it is instead normalizes the experience for young people to have a life intertwined with punitive systems” (Aurra Startup)

“What does it mean to learn in the absence of fear?” (Dena Simmons)

“The expectation now and the rise of things that we are trying to do to build those connections as it relates to equity and connecting with community is wonderful, but we're doing it with the exact same infrastructure that we had in a traditional white supremacist colonized schooling system.” (Skye Bowen)

Reflection:

How do we create spaces where students can feel free, and where they can live and learn in the absence of fear?



Action:

- Journal about the ways that carceral logics inform the everyday practices of your sector/institution/organization. How can we dream of some alternatives that center restoration, love and liberation instead of fear?

Ideological Connection to ideas about each other and the world.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“I don't work at the pace of white supremacy. We center love, rest, care in our work. And we invest and we unapologetically center, affirm and lift up Black Indigenous, people of color ways of knowing, being and doing because that is what we need to be lifting up.” (Dena Simmons)

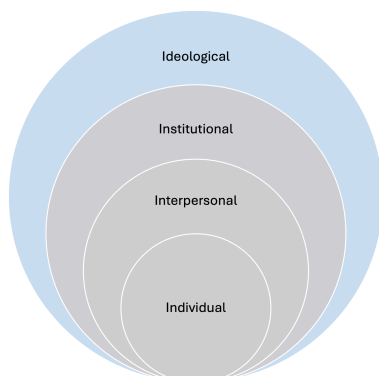
“Like we rage at the cops because we love Black people, right? We rage at the cops because we love queer people, right? Like there are these things that actually fuel why we resist against things. And that is a love of our people, of our communities, of our ways of knowing. So I really resonated with like, you know, an abolitionist practice that centers love.” (Qui Alexander)

“Restorative justice, what we're looking at, is a way of being and who we are, it's how we talk, how we communicate, how we still connect when harm has happened, and how we invest in our entire community and family to make sure we are creating safe spaces of joy and belonging.” (Skye Bowen)

“if we don't apply an abolitionist lens, a racial justice lens, into social-emotional learning, then it can very easily turn into white supremacy with a hug.” (Dena Simmons)

Reflection:

What might it mean to undo and unlearn leadership ideologies and practices through a justice-oriented lens rooted in fierce love, radical responsibility, and deep care for ourselves and others?



Action:

- How do you center love, rest and care in your work for your students, your community, and yourself?
- How can you support other leaders and educators doing this work, and how can you ask others to support you?

TECHNOLOGIES OF LEADERSHIP

What if, instead of locating leadership in an individual, we locate it in the spaces between people, structures and ideas committed to racial and other forms of justice.



Guiding Reflection Questions:

What does it mean to lead in a time of constant change, technological opportunities and innovative possibilities, but also in a time of unprecedented surveillance, an often-unregulated technology sector, racist algorithms, and neocolonial practices in the AI sector and beyond?

In this context, what do leaders need to be aware of? How might we need to rethink leadership in these times and through these times? How can we lead in ways that leverage possibilities of technology, while actively resisting the potential dangers? (sava saheli singh)

Reflection Questions:

1. How are you making truly ethical decisions about the technology you bring into people's lives?
2. How are you creating the space for resistance and rejection of these harms?
3. How are you responding to community members who might want to opt out of these harmful technologies?
4. How are you educating yourself and others about the past, present, and future dangers and harms of AI, education technology, and technology more broadly?

Individual Relates to the emotions, biases, perceptions, thoughts about ourselves.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“I would want to have our, I think, leaders embrace the possibilities that technology offers with optimism, while also leading with a critical, ethical, and human-centered approach to how these technologies might be taken up, and create, you know, sort of the culture in the spaces that they are taken up.” (Lisa Cole)

“Right now, we're in an education stage, but I think what we need to do is have real talk about the situation. We can't be BSing. We can't be whitewashing. We need to talk seriously about the serious situation that we're in right now. And we can start there. And that is going to mean sometimes as professionals, feeling a little bit uncomfortable about the things that you're saying.” (Michael Kwet)

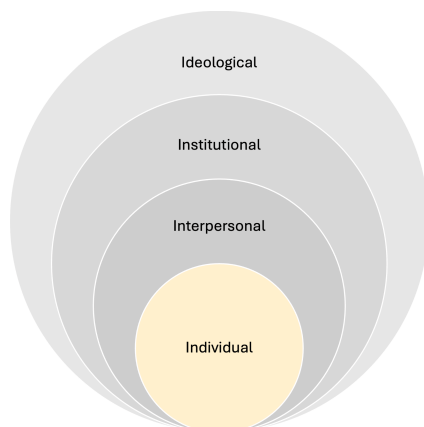
“In order to actually be a leader you need to make decisions for yourself first, but with your community in mind. You're never doing it because it's good for you, you're doing it because it's good for your community.” (Andrew McConnell)

Reflection:

What roles do technologies play in your leadership? How have you educated yourself on the impacts, both positive and negative, of technology?

Action:

- Reflect on your awareness of the impact of technology globally and environmentally. Read a book, watch a documentary, or engage in a form of learning about these topics. Recommend these sources of learning to a friend or colleague.



Interpersonal Concerns relationships, how we treat one another as individuals and communities.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“Leadership is never about telling people what to do. It's the other way around. For us, leadership is a sense of service to the people you're in community with. And so therefore, any tool that allows you to learn from your community, that allows you to connect with your community in a good way, and then carry that voice forward, that is the technology of leadership.” (Andrew McConnell)

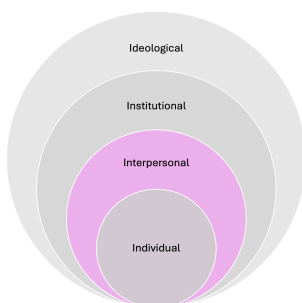
“I really remembered um you know somebody then saying, ‘well if these spaces are so bad, then why are we still there?’ And I remember responding, ‘I'm like, we're there for each other’ you know, these communities of support, building solidarities, building like the connections,...and those connections are the, are a stronger bond than the weak connections that we might have then with, like, the technology.” (Kishonna L. Gray)

“The tools in that space change. And, you know, sure, they can be good or bad at any moment in time. But it's the people in that space that brings richness to the learning.” (Lisa Cole)

“We need to be in solidarity with our students and resist the technology-enabled carceral systems that schools and institutions, more often than not, tend to be” (sava saheli singh)

Reflection:

How might we use technologies to build solidarities and communities of connection in our sectors/institutions/organizations?



Action:

- Consider how technology is currently being used in your sector/institution/organization. What are the challenges and possibilities of using technologies to build solidarities with the people in your community?

Institutional Applies to structures, policies, curriculum, professional learning, parent and family engagement, classroom and school climate, and larger policies.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“unfortunately, in the Global South, the issues are so severe that people are focused on things like getting access to water, to electricity, alleviating severe poverty, inequality, and the basic needs, healthcare etc. so that when a big tech corporation shows up and decides they're gonna push their technology into your schools, that they're going to open cloud centers in your cities, there's limited activist capacity to resist these encroachments.” (Michael Kwet)

“But the fact of the matter is that people within the system are trying to avoid the problems and just say, 'We've got to keep the train on the tracks.' And meanwhile, they're completely ignoring the fact that the tracks don't meet all neighborhoods. They go past some completely and don't stop at others.” (Andrew McConnell)

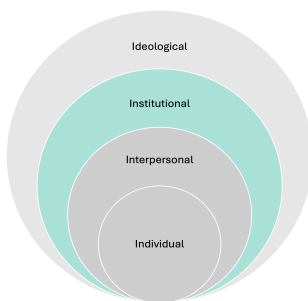
“We have a system where we have siloed, put things all in compartments, right? This is actually our colonial system that we've created, right? ...and our current systems has you know gone so far as to putting everything in compartments that now we're realizing it's not working and then we're saying what are we going to do about it?” (Lisa Cole)

Reflection:

How can educational institutions create more and deeper interdisciplinary connections between computational thinking and other non-STEM subjects of study?

Action:

- Collaborate with different departments on professional learning opportunities that consider a more holistic view of technology and across different subject areas.



Ideological Connection to ideas about each other and the world.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“Being a leader is an opportunity to work towards a more equitable approach to technology adoption and calibrating our relationship with the complex networks of impact that technology can have to create a strong foundation for choosing when to work with and without technology.” (sava saheli singh)

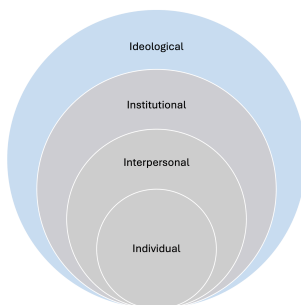
“I really would like for us to continue to push that conversation so then we could think about having, instead of universal design, to move more into, like, an intersectional design and just acknowledge that, like, a single thing does not have to be created for everybody.” (Kishonna L. Gray)

“This idea of technologies kind of disrupting our thinking about experts and expertise I think gives us an interesting opportunity for us to reconnect to the human nature of what teaching and learning was supposed to be about.” (Lisa Cole)

“Fire is a technology. It's a tool. And if you use it properly, you can help create community. And if you use it improperly or you pay it no heed, it'll burn it down. But without fire, there's also no community because we rely upon heat to live...the technology of leadership is creating that balance and finding the tools that will help your community to grow and connect wisely with those around it” (Andrew McConnell)

Reflection:

How has technology shifted our thinking about what leadership is and how to lead others?



Action:

- How can you balance an equitable approach to using technology while also raising awareness of the harmful global and environmental impacts of technology? How can you work within this tension?

LEADING FOR LINGUISTIC JUSTICE AND LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

What if, instead of locating leadership in an individual, we locate it in the spaces between people, structures and ideas committed to racial and other forms of justice.



Guiding Reflection Questions:

What does it mean to challenge linguistic racism and hegemony, and lead for linguistic justice and language revitalization?

Reflection Questions:

1. What needs to happen for educational leaders to integrate and support Indigenous language resurgence and broader language revitalization efforts?
2. What are the benefits and challenges of fostering multi/plurilingualism and embracing multi-accent in institutions?
3. (How) can educational leaders advocate for plurilingual pedagogies when standardized language is both the medium of instruction and the expected outcome of learning?
4. What shifts can be made to support community-building that validates and prioritizes linguistic diversity?
5. How can educational leaders support the use of technology for ease of communication across languages even while popular language tech tools perpetuate oppressive language standards?

Individual Relates to the emotions, biases, perceptions, thoughts about ourselves.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“When I became an English language teacher, if I had been told that I was teaching white mainstream English, I would have chosen a different career.” (Sonia Martin)

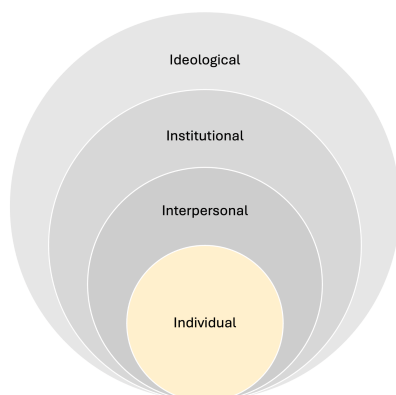
“I work on the idea of developing plurilingual allyship. And for me, that means that we actively are trying to disrupt monolingualism as the norm, that we recognize our own linguistic privilege because we all have it in different spheres at different times and for different purposes.” (Gail Prasad)

“Creating the next generation of Mohawk language speakers, in my own home, feels so damn urgent and so damn serious every single day, and yet with a complete lack of support, complete lack of infrastructure, and resources to be able to do so, and so to create a Mohawk language speaker in my home I need to confront my own shame and sense of shortcomings and sense of less than, that I'm less than a Mohawk woman because you know my ancestral language doesn't just roll off my tongue. It's deeply uncomfortable, and confronting tons of mistakes.” (Kiera Brant-Birioukov)

“Understanding my own identity, my own linguistic identities, my own histories, and how colonialism, racism, and even like the transatlantic slave trade have impacted my own languages is another huge part of something that I continue to struggle with and understand as an English first language speaker” (Marika Kunas)

Reflection:

How do our linguistic identities and privileges shape our leadership practices?



Action:

- Journal about your relationship to the language(s) you speak, or don't speak, or wish you spoke.
- Reflect on the linguistic privileges you may hold and how these privileges, or lack thereof, may have shaped your opportunities in education.

Interpersonal Concerns relationships, how we treat one another as individuals and communities.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“When a community comes together to embrace the idea that it's possible to become multilingual listeners, to support multilingual speakers, that what we are doing is not just building an inclusive classroom; we're building an expansive one.” (Gail Prasad)

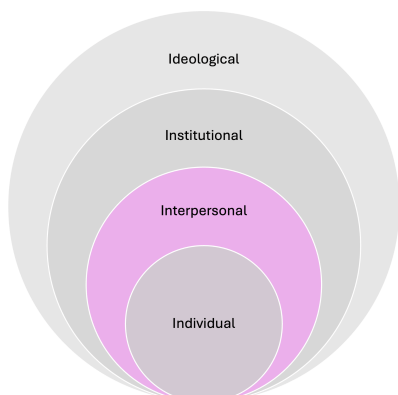
“I think if we had a choice, I think everything will look like a kindergarten classroom when everybody has the means and the ways to communicate with each other without hierarchies, and they just have a beautiful way to communicate with one another when they are in a space.” (Atala Andratis)

“So for leaders, I think it's really important you know to sort of embrace this idea that you know it's okay not to know, you know, while communicating it's okay, it's okay to sort of step back and let others take the lead in terms of like making themselves understood, finding different ways to communicate without having any one person change you know the entirety of their linguistic repertoire.” (Vijay Ramjattan)

“I really emphasize this idea that to be understood is really a collective process, right? It requires the speaker and listener to work together.” (Vijay Ramjattan)

Reflection:

How can we create supportive spaces and communities that validate multi/plurilingualism and embrace multi-accents?



Action:

- Consider the challenges and possibilities in fostering multi/plurilingualism and embracing multi-accents in institutions.
- How technology can support the building of multi/plurilingual classrooms, institutions, or organizations?

Institutional Applies to structures, policies, curriculum, professional learning, parent and family engagement, classroom and school climate, and larger policies.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“The institutionally imposed learning objective was always something along the lines of 'speak English and speak it properly.' What I am describing is an example of linguistic hegemony: the dominance and imposition of one variety of one language at the expense of all other languages.” (Sonia Martin)

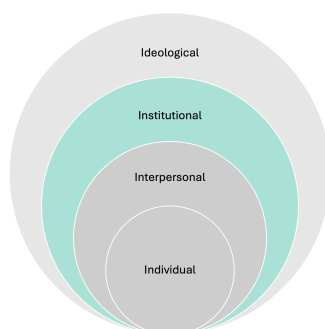
“One of the biggest challenges is even just confronting the relationship and the historical relationship between Indigenous languages and schooling and the Canadian schooling system, wherein the residential schooling legacy has been the biggest culprit of the complete erasure of Indigenous languages.” (Kiera Brant-Birioukov)

“So who has the right to teach and in turn who has the right to teach and who has the right to learn an indigenous language? We're not always seeing that strong correlation that it is Indigenous people who have the right to learn our indigenous language.” (Kiera Brant-Birioukov)

“There is very powerful language in some of the [curriculum] documents when it comes to including culturally relevant responsive pedagogy, universal design for learning frameworks, you know, embedding Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Like it is explicitly stated. and it's how we interpret those messages. And I think there is a lot of power in how can we really rethink and disrupt some of the traditional methods of teaching” (Atala Andratis)

Reflection:

How can educational institutions better support Indigenous and other language revitalization efforts in ways that prioritize those who have the right to learn and reclaim their language?



Action:

- Look through the Ontario curriculum or documents related to your organization's work. How is linguistic hegemony reinforced in these documents? How can these documents change to allow for multi/plurilingual learning? How can your classroom and school practices and policies better respond to linguistic hegemony?

Ideological Connection to ideas about each other and the world.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“It is important to pay attention to which language practices feel normal and why. When we raise our awareness and challenge supposedly common-sense notions about our language practices, we can understand how linguistic justice supports all forms of liberation.” (Sonia Martin)

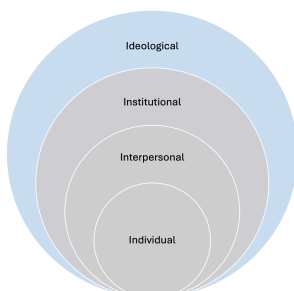
“students own opinions or blocks around language and not being able to kind of raise their own critical consciousness, so in my particular context, thinking about French as a second language, a lot of people still really value Parisian French...and really, it really is very much embedded in a lot of teachers' and students' thinkings and preferences when it comes to language learning.” (Marika Kunas)

“I think oftentimes we think of language as sort of a technical skill to master right, for job for future academic success, etc but we don't really think about you know once again language as embodiment, language as a tool to reproduce social relations, language as a tool to reproduce oppression, and so on.” (Vijay Ramjattan)

“Building language awareness depends on three components: criticality, creativity, and collaboration. And, you know after Marika spoke shared earlier, she mentioned curiosity, and that's the fourth C. I think it, you know curiosity gives us this disposition of humility, that puts us in that position of becoming a listener” (Gail Prasad)

Reflection:

How do these statements challenge notions about our language practices as both speakers and listeners?



Action:

- Reflect on the ways that language reproduces social inequities and oppression. In what big and small ways can you uphold linguistic justice as a leader?

HOSPICING LEADERSHIP

What if, instead of locating leadership in an individual, we locate it in the spaces between people, structures and ideas committed to racial and other forms of justice.



Guiding Reflection Questions:

“We as educational leaders and leaders in general are forced to ask ourselves where and how do we make room in the institutions we work within for the birthing of emotions within personal and collective grief?” (Myrtle Sodhi)

Reflection Questions:

1. How do leaders create a vision for hospicing grief in the midst of crisis? How do Indigenous ways of knowing and being support alternate ways of understanding, relating to, hospicing, and learning from grief?
2. Ongoing crises often place educators and educational leaders in the position as “first responders” (Rose & Bimm, 2021). What do early responders need to be equipped with to support themselves and their work?
3. What do leaders need to unlearn (let go of) and (re)learn (remember) that being with grief can offer?
4. How might stuck and overwhelming grief over ecologic losses and change that actually (re)inscribe violence and destruction over and over again?
5. How do schools and educational systems support students and staff in acknowledging and responding to what may at times feel like overwhelming and all-encompassing loss?

Individual Relates to the emotions, biases, perceptions, thoughts about ourselves.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“I think that on an everyday practice level, this means focusing on process, not product, focusing on slowing down so that this work can be done.” (Sarah Jacquette Ray)

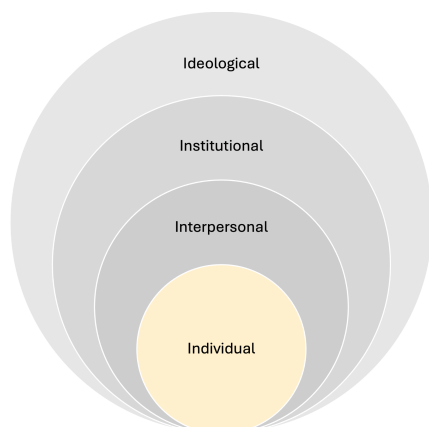
“So when I think of hospicing leadership, I imagine the constant work of hospicing myself, of cultivating a sense of awareness, and of, through cultivating awareness, taking accountability for my own grief; and in taking accountability for my own grief, I can then show up and be responsible to others.” (Breeshia Wade)

“What does it take for me to freedom dream? And how do I sustain that? And it's not, I'm not trying to sell false goods, but I'm also trying to engage the mind and the imagination to see beyond what is, because at some point my ancestors, Harriet, Sojourner, Frederick, some of our ancestors here, they had to see beyond what was in order to get us to where we are now.” (Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz)

“Let me find the courage to heal myself. Let me find the courage to be honest about who I am, how I've been raised to think, how that impacts the decisions I make, including my leadership. And to have the courage, right, to say, okay, I'm willing to die to this so that I can, to use that same metaphor, be reborn in this way. And then, to have the courage to lead with love.” (Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz)

Reflection:

How do these statements resonate with you in terms of how you see yourself leading and dreaming different futures?



Action:

- Journal about the ways that grief shows up in your life. Is there space in your institution/organization for grief to be experienced and expressed? How can you hospice your grief and support others through their grief?
- Engage in a physical and emotional practice of slowing down and commit to engaging in a practice regularly.

Interpersonal Concerns relationships, how we treat one another as individuals and communities.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

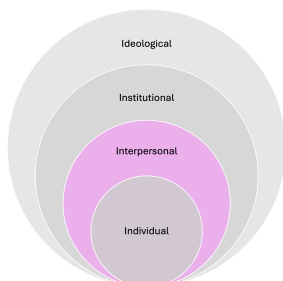
“It is necessary for us to be able to support students in knowing and loving and imagining so that they can continue to show up to mitigate the perpetuation of that suffering and of that grief, so that we can all stay within right relationship with ourselves and each other.”
(Breeshia Wade)

“Knowing can happen in the intimacy of a moment; you know this intimacy of being and sitting together, or the intimacy of sitting with an auntie or a grandmother who is teaching us something important about plants or medicine, or the beautiful tenderness of sitting with someone who's ready to leave this earth. And in that intimacy, you can feel a presence that goes beyond identity, beyond our own individual wills of what we want to happen, into an intimacy that I think is the individual, unique experience of love dreaming us into being.”
(Jennifer England)

“That sort of responsibility to each other, the vulnerability it takes, the nervous systems being fully regulated that it takes to put your own survival and self-interest aside to be able to be in community, to find resourceness from that is the medicine for this. And it is also the means through which we will do this. And so I think that the main thing I'd like leaders to think about is prioritizing building relationship trust before any of the other outcomes that one thinks one as a leader is supposed to do.” (Sarah Jacquette Ray)

Reflection:

“What can you do in your radical classroom given [the constraints] of this institutional context?” (Sarah Jacquette Ray)



Action:

- What practices are you doing in your classroom/institution/organization that are liberatory? Practices that involve unlearning or reinventing? What liberatory practices can you do in your space to be in better relationship with the people in your community?

Institutional Applies to structures, policies, curriculum, professional learning, parent and family engagement, classroom and school climate, and larger policies.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“I think about it means to operate with honesty, and to operate with an honesty that, you know, about where does leadership hurt people? Where does leadership neglect? And where does leadership pretend to bring joy when it really is just compliance?” (Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz)

“If leaders, deans, teacher leaders, chairs of departments, business leaders are not willing to talk about some of the suffering that is surely to come from the administration's plans that are to come for us here in America, how will we heal?” (Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz)

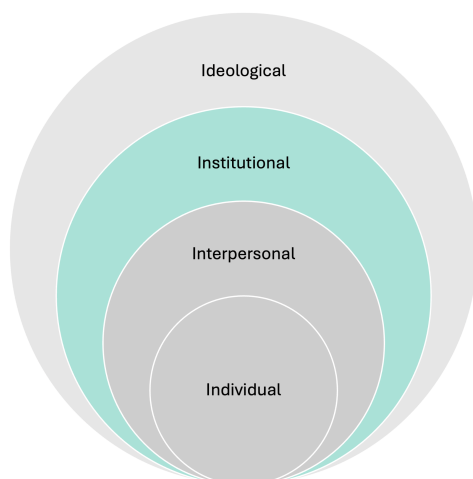
“In order for institutions to run, there has to be some amount of dehumanization and depersonalization such that when there is suffering perpetuated, no individual or people can't be held accountable, it is the institution.” (Breeshia Wade)

Reflection:

“How does leading through and with crisis, loss, and grief disrupt our ideas of schooling and leadership?” (Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz)

Action:

- How can we create space to talk about suffering in order to heal? How can we be honest with our students, our community and ourselves about harm, accountability, and grief?



Ideological Connection to ideas about each other and the world.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“Currently, we are living in times where genocide and willful acts of oppression struggle to pierce screens. These times ask that grief meet us in the in-between, between our comfort with what we have been told to forget about ongoing suffering, and what we are now forced to remember about apartheid, genocide, and ecological disasters.” (Myrtle Sodhi)

“I think in terms of a concrete everyday practice, it is that move of slowing down physically in the body as a remembering to the more full intelligence that we all have access to.” (Jennifer England)

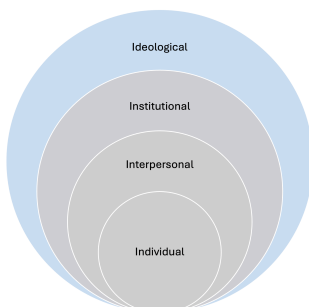
“So I'm just doing a lot of thinking about love being central, particularly in education, this critical kind of love that we need, and to love ourselves enough to be willing to die to certain things and to die to certain beliefs so that we can be born anew and best serve our students. And that type of grieving of the dying and then becoming anew is a beautiful form of love and of service to humans.” (Yolanda Sealey-Ruiz)

“We have intellectualized the process of healing where when people think of therapy, it, or the way that we are taught to go about therapy is often very mental when healing is embodied and healing is about knowing.” (Breeshia Wade)

Reflection:

What might it mean to lead with and through critical love that witnesses our grief?

What needs to die so that the new can emerge?



Action:

- How can you discuss or foster radical imagination with the students you work with?
- Introduce discussions and questions about radical love and embodied grief in your educational spaces. What different versions of these terms emerge?

LEADING AGAINST NEOLIBERALISM AND PRIVATIZATION

What if, instead of locating leadership in an individual, we locate it in the spaces between people, structures and ideas committed to racial and other forms of justice.



Guiding Reflection Questions:

What does it mean to lead for equity and justice against neoliberalism and privatization in public systems?

Reflection Questions:

1. How do neoliberal ideas show up in different parts of your life?
2. In what ways do your beliefs about society, success, and yourself align with those of neoliberalism?
3. What changes have you observed in health, education, higher education, and other public sectors? Have they made these systems more like the private sector? If so, how?
4. What are some big or small ways you can resist neoliberalism and privatization in your life?

Individual Relates to the emotions, biases, perceptions, thoughts about ourselves.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“I felt caught between doing what I could do to enable my sons to have rich school experiences and knowing that in doing so, I was contributing to inequities between schools and neighborhoods.” (Sue Winton)

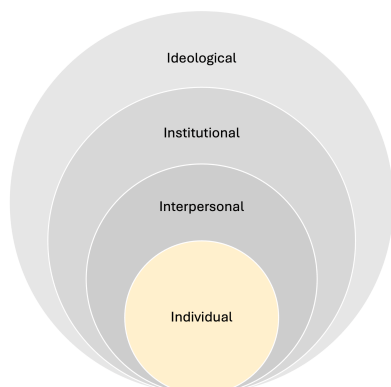
“Education was my way out, right? That was instilled in me, and I kind of followed that path, and it worked for me. And I made the assumption that that would work for everyone. And I think that one of the things we have to remember as well is that for many people, many children, many families, this is not it. It does not work for them.” (Kearie Daniel)

“How do we find ways to unlearn the ways in which we are seeing everyone with suspicion, and we’re about to sort of like, throw this person under the bus or that community under the bus, and you know we have all of these sort of you know, a lot of people. We’ve all had to unlearn this right in terms of, you know, unpacking our own racism and prejudice.” (Deena Ladd)

“It’s impossible to understand, to critique, and then fight back against something we don’t recognize or knowledge or acknowledge, and neoliberalism and privatization in these forms are attempting to make us as humans and leaders, completely disconnected from one another, from our values, unaware and incapable of fighting back.” (Yvonne Kelly)

Reflection:

How might your own beliefs about society and success align with neoliberal notions of meritocracy, productivity, and hyper-individualism?



Action:

- Journal about the ways that neoliberalism and privatization may have benefited or disadvantaged you in terms of educational opportunities. Reflect on the inequities that came as a result of these experiences.

Interpersonal Concerns relationships, how we treat one another as individuals and communities.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“I think what we see on a daily basis is, you know, the system creates that kind of suspicion and lack of solidarity between us. Right? And it creates scapegoating. It deflects blame from the root causes of the economic system onto individuals.” (Deena Ladd)

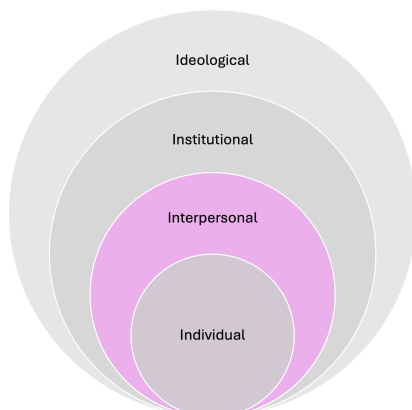
“As individuals working in education, we talk about solidarity, but we often lose sight of what it means to be part of the collective, the broader community, and to be able to recognize and challenge injustice, in spite of what we're told is possible. So, as we see neoliberalism normalizing the survival of the fittest, this gives us permission to ignore the struggles of those around us and just stay focused on our own.” (Yvonne Kelly)

“There are these moments where we can build solidarity. We have to seek them out. And we have to protect them and celebrate them and find more. Because there are opportunities.” (Erika Shaker)

“Building solidarity. Creating opportunities and seeking the opportunities where they already exist, to build and to promote compassion and solidarity...we need to talk across our differences and have difficult conversations and community to find new ways, to talk to some of the same people, and also some different people as well as another way.” (Sue Winton)

Reflection:

How do we build solidarity in neoliberal systems that are designed to position us in competition with one another?



Action:

- Reflect on where you have seen acts or communities of solidarity in your life. How are you involved in these collectives? How are you seeking these opportunities and nurturing them as a leader?

Institutional Applies to structures, policies, curriculum, professional learning, parent and family engagement, classroom and school climate, and larger policies.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“It actually costs money to get a public education today. That should not be a thing.” (Yvonne Kelly)

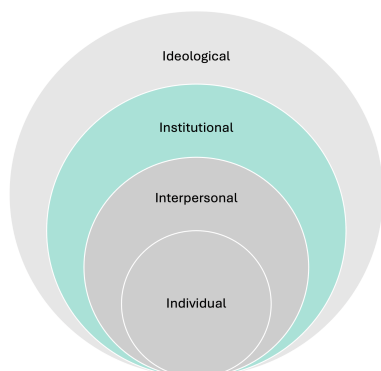
“So we see this [in public education]. It's at the root of standardization and the need to measure, right? With the intention to rank best and worst schools, best and worst students, best and worst educators, a system that's less about meeting students where they're at and more about what gives them a leg up on others.” (Erika Shaker)

“This is another reminder that we're up against something bigger than individual people's biases, And so we need a response that's bigger than let's learn about each other's cultures, you know let me pour the content of my privilege knapsack on the floor and riffle through it. That we need some sort of bigger response. We need some sort of stronger, more institutional, more structural response, you know than that.” (Paul Gorski)

“But we can't only advocate for education when we're in the education sector. Advocating only for public education, without advocating for living wages, without advocating for status, for all, for adequate social assistance and disability, benefits for affordable housing, well-funded healthcare. All of that is not, we have to do it in tandem. They're all intrinsically connected and unequivocally under assault.” (Yvonne Kelly)

Reflection:

How can educational institutions challenge neoliberalism and privatization in a climate where the metrics of “success” are connected to funding, awards, etc.?



Action:

- Make a list of the expenses and costs families are asked to pay for in order to attend your school/institution/organization. What can you do to support the removal of these barriers?
- Reflect on your educational journey and how neoliberalism and standardization may have influenced your choices of which school or institution to attend. How can we challenge the practice of ranking in education?

Ideological Connection to ideas about each other and the world.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

“Giving people kind of the tools and the ways of looking at things, to wiggle free of this notion that my function is, that the function of schools is the function of everything else in society which is to kind of maintain this power structure, and this hierarchy, and that sort of thing.” (Paul Gorski)

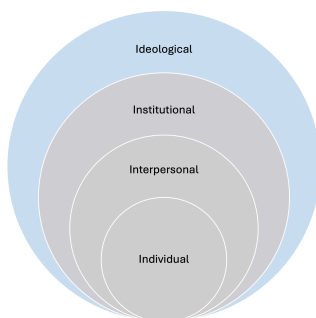
“Neoliberalism and privatization is coached in a false language of austerity, and it convinces us somehow there's not enough to go around to make things equitable or even fair, and that we really don't have a choice.” (Yvonne Kelly)

“I fundamentally believe that people who go into education, who go into child welfare or health care, they do so because they want to serve. They want to do well. They want to, you know, bring forward the next generation...and I think in order to do that fully, my challenge back to them would be really to strive to eliminate the limits that they feel the system has placed on them, and often that they place on themselves.” (Kearie Daniel)

“There's a different way of doing this work, and that, we're also showing that, you know, leadership can come from the bottom up, not top down. That doesn't matter what bloody position you're in, it matters about how you're exercising your leadership and challenging the system.” (Deena Ladd)

Reflection:

How do these statements challenge your ideas of leadership, hierarchy, and control?



Action:

- Make a list of people working within your institution to challenge neoliberalism and privatization practices. What positions do they occupy? Are there restrictions to how they can act? Do you notice if anti-neoliberalism is coming from the bottom up or the top down?