

Creative Leader: A Creative & Reflective Leadership Self Assessment

This exercise is perfect for you to complete independently. If desired, you can share your results with the department and have them complete it during a retreat or to start a meeting.

The principle, how individuals perceive themselves impacts how they lead their lives and lead in their lives, serves as the basis for this tool.



1. To begin, sketch your portrait.
2. Next, divide it in half with the intent of one half featuring your outer self or what others see.
3. The other half visually illustrates your inner leadership qualities in addition to things that are essential to your overall health and well-being. They are part of who you are.
4. Consider your personal and professional identity, your strengths, what makes you unique, and how others have described you.
5. Think about adjectives describing your leadership style and adverbs that bring those qualities to life.
6. Finally, make your thinking visible by using colors, lines, shapes, and symbols to express what is on your mind.

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Time for Creative Quiet

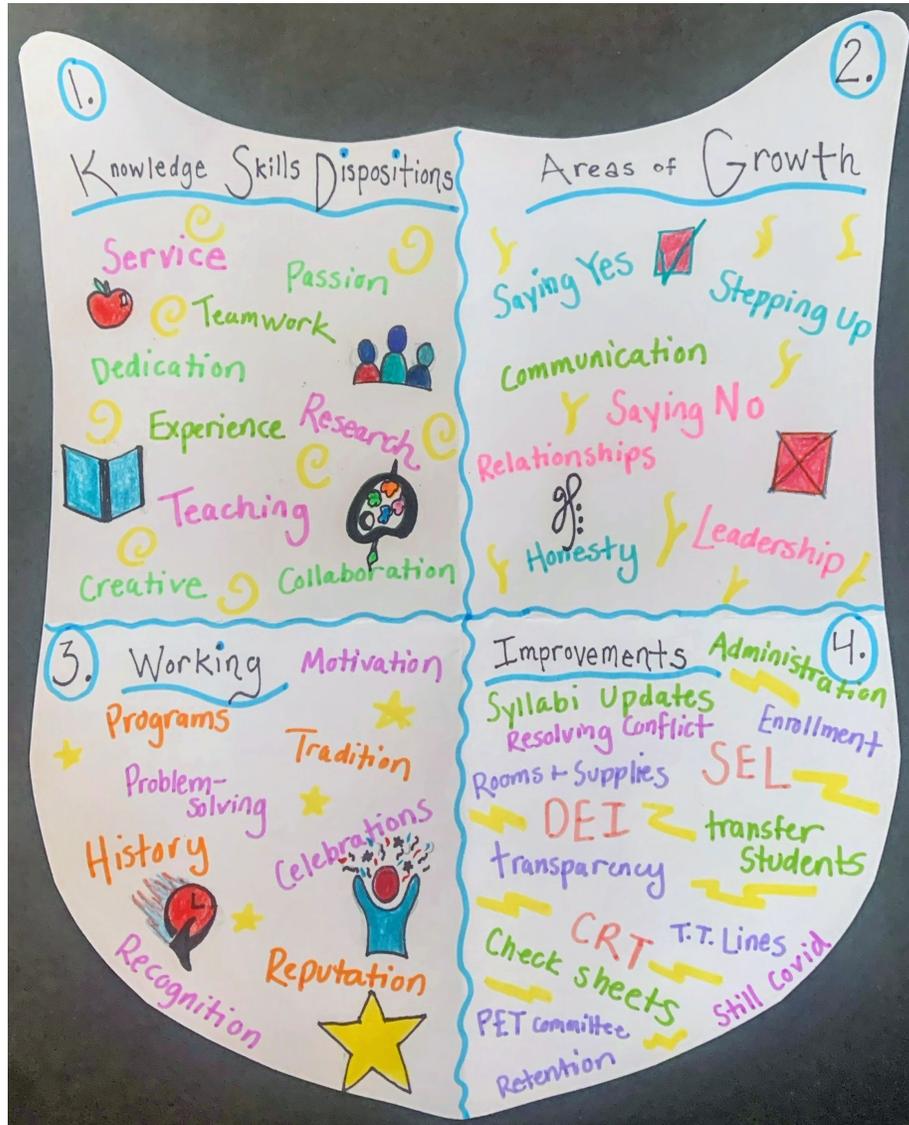
Walking a circular path is a way to practice entering quiet (Mora, 2010). It promotes creative and critical thinking while at the same time offering solitude and refreshment. Labyrinths have long proved to be a way for people to reflect. People follow a single winding path from the outer edge into the center. They have the potential to quiet their mind while enhancing creativity. Today there are even many digital and finger labyrinths. This exercise combines the ideas behind a labyrinth with quiet places and spaces.

- 1. Think of a place or space you go to withdraw, retreat and sit in stillness and, as Pat Mora says, a place where you are free to go into yourself for a bit and discover the silence needed to do inside work.**
- 2. These questions can help you get to this place in your mind. It may help to close your eyes. What place nurtures your solitude? Where do you do your best thinking?**
- 3. Create a sketch of that place and/or find images in magazines, postcards or photographs.**
- 4. Add a finger labyrinth.**
- 5. Engage with it and stay in that place for a few minutes. Imagine yourself in that there.**



Creative Shield Team Building

This exercise embraces the notion that creativity is a mindset for all. It is an empathetic, inclusive, differentiated and inspirational tool best implemented at the beginning of a new school year. It meets the department members where they are.



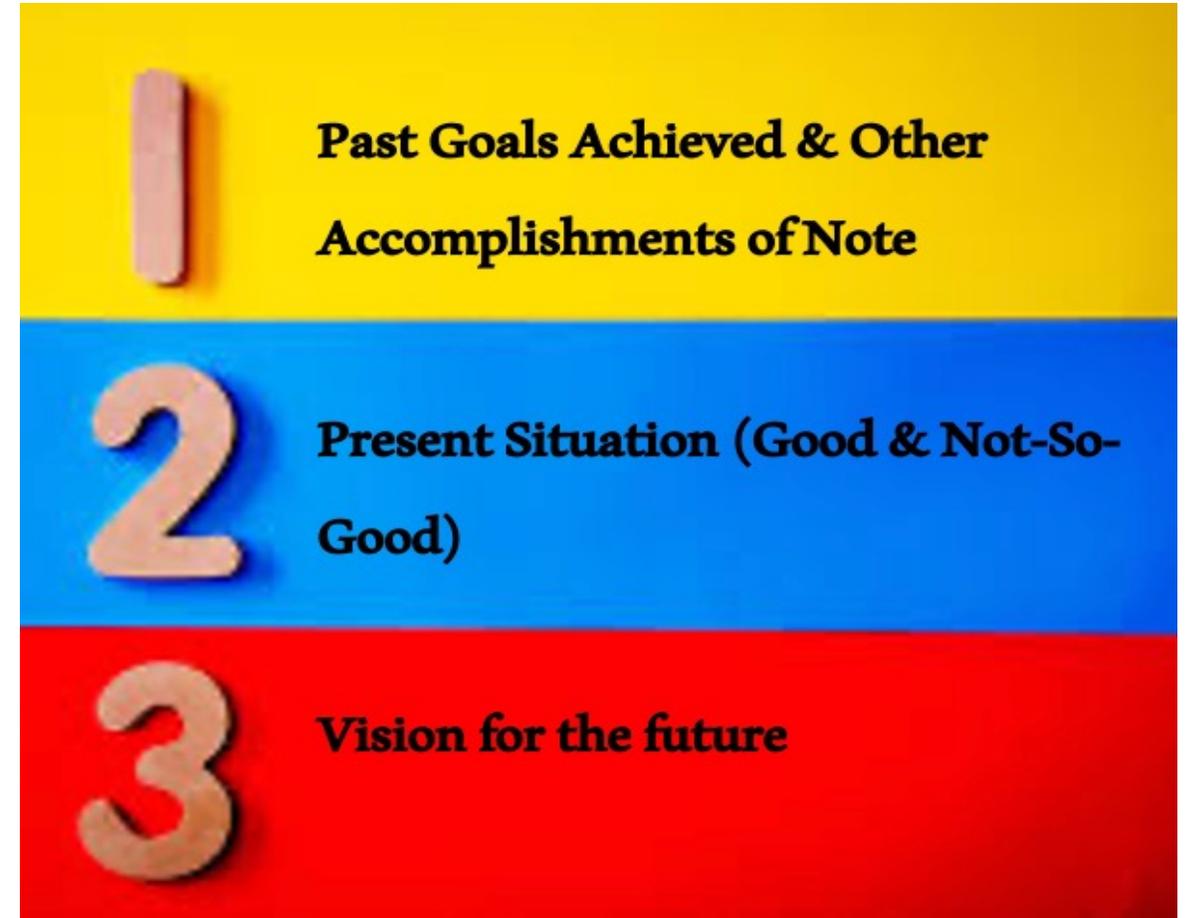
Preliminary work: Ask yourself...What knowledge, skills, and dispositions does the department need now? How can the department members' varying strengths, talents, and points of view contribute to the department's efficacy? How can feelings and history be valued while cultivating change and growth? **Ask the group...**What are your three top priorities for the new school year? Do you feel the time was spent on the right initiatives in previous years? What was a highlight and a lowlight from the previous year? What accomplishment from the year before had the most significance? Were there any mistakes or failures? Did you make progress on any goals? If so, what helped to make that progress? This preliminary work eliminates surprises that might impede the activities' progress.

1. As the department arrives, set out a large piece of paper in the center of the table cut into the shape of a shield divided into four sections.
2. Section one outlines each member's knowledge, skills, and dispositions they bring to the department, and section two details areas of further growth and development.
3. Section three asks what they feel is working well in the department, and section four is what the members feel could be improved upon in the department.
4. You can remind them they are creating a department shield because shields contain unique designs and symbols representing a group.
5. Team members work together to fill in the sections. They engage in dialog. All members can write, draw and add images to complete the shield.
6. When finished, team members share what they took from the exercise and how they can use it to plan and intuitively envision the future.

Three-Act Play: Creatively & Intuitively Envisioning the Future

The premise of a growth mindset is the underpinning of this exercise. A growth mindset means people view themselves as everchanging and lifelong learners, and they know that mistakes are a big part of this growth. On the other hand, a fixed mindset means people view their abilities as innate; they are uncomfortable with mistakes. This activity also provides clarity to the department as they can take stock and look toward the future. This exercise helps the everyone to creatively, empathetically, and collectively envision the future and gives all members a positive perspective and clarity about future achievements and possibilities.

- 1. Ask the members to write the story of their time in the department in three acts. Remind them to think of it like a play.**
- 2. The first act includes past goals achieved and other accomplishments of note.**
- 3. The second is the present situation, including the good and not-so-good parts.**
- 4. The last act is their vision for their future and the future of the department.**
- 5. At the meeting, all members share their play. Others can make a note of and discuss what the plays have in common and what is different.**
- 6. Finally, the department can collectively write the department's story in three acts.**
- 7. If time allows you can write your play in three acts.**



Providing ample time for members to complete this task individually ahead of a scheduled meeting is a wise idea.