

Podcast series

Leadership in Focus

Episode 5 – Virtuous Educational Leadership

Discussion guide

The School Leadership Institute's Leadership in Focus podcast series shines a spotlight on school leaders and explores the key issues and challenges they face. This episode focuses on virtuous educational leadership.

Episode 5 – Virtual Educational Leadership

[Part 1 podcast 24:21 mins](#)

[Part 2 podcast 18:34 mins](#)

Speakers

Joanne Jarvis: SLI Director and host of the series

Viviane Robinson: Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of Auckland and Visiting Professor at University College, London

Discussion points

For individuals

- Viviane Robinson says, 'In philosophical terms, desirable dispositions of character are called virtues'. She explains that they are not to be studied in the abstract – they inform action. What is 'the right work' in educational terms, as defined in this podcast?
- Three purposes of education are outlined in part 1. Define and give one example of each that are part of your current practices. Relate each to the department's purpose: 'to prepare young people for rewarding lives as engaged citizens in a complex and dynamic society'.
- Joanne Jarvis asserts that strong educational leaders are able to 'ask the right questions'. List examples of these from your own recent experience.
- What are the three sets, or clusters, of virtues a school leader needs, as outlined in this podcast?

- Why is interpersonal courage an important virtue for a school leader to have?
- Theories of action are the sets of beliefs and motivations that explain why teachers do things certain ways. Inquiry into teachers' theories of action is part of the analytic virtues. How do you discover a teacher's theory of action and why is this important?

For teams

- Is educational leadership distinctive? Do you have to be a teacher in order to lead a school? What is the knowledge base of our profession? Debate these issues in the light of your experience.
- How are virtues and values different?
- Viviane Robinson says that educational leaders need to create the conditions that foster the deep learning that modern curricula want students to acquire and master. List ways that you enable – or steps you could take to enable – the collaborative, complex problem solving she believes is essential.
- How can you get a virtuous circle happening?
- As a group, rehearse and workshop a situation where it is difficult to be courageous while also being respectful and maintaining integrity. What do you say? What don't you say? Why?

For your reference

Robinson, Viviane, *Virtuous Educational Leadership: Doing the Right Work the Right Way*, SAGE Publications Inc, 2022 [Virtuous Educational Leadership](#)

Robinson, Viviane, *Reduce Change to Increase Improvement*, Corwin Press, 2017 [Reduce change to Increase Improvement](#)

[Ethics Explainer: Virtue Ethics](#) article, in the 'Big Thinkers + Explainers' series, The Ethics Centre, 2016

[Virtue Ethics](#), The Ethics Centre
YouTube video 3:18 mins