

THE EIGHT PRINCIPLES OF THE MANIFESTO SUSTAINABLE PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP

WITH QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS & TEACHER TEAMS



The accompanying questions will help you and your teaching team to experience, empathize, sympathize and model sustainable learning, thinking and doing.

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voor meer informatie over
het lectoraat.



February 2025

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Teachers, team leaders and directors can use this document to question themselves and their team on their vision of pedagogical action for a sustainable future.

The Sustainable Leadership Manifesto was drawn up by the research group of the lectorate Pedagogy for Sustainable & Democratic Education of NHL Stenden, led by Dr. José Middendorp.

Leadership is seen as an attitude that every colleague is invited to adopt, from janitor to director, from teacher to policy officer: everyone within the school has the responsibility to look for opportunities within themselves, with the team and with the pupils/students to build a healthy, green, safe, sustainable future.

The questions in the document are aimed at creating a connection - with your own values and experiences, with those of your colleagues and also with daily educational practice - how do you involve pupils and students in leadership for a sustainable or vital future.



The Professorship “Educating and Leading Towards Sustainable and Democratic Living Together” was established by NHL Stenden in 2022. Our mission is to work towards a human(e) and world-oriented education, rooted in a hopeful perspective. We aim to collaborate locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, creating time and space for encounters, for doubt and dialogue, for pedagogical leadership. With this perspective and these actions, we, with the Professorship, wish to actively contribute to an inclusive and regenerative society.

The Professorship calls us to action, guided by a moral responsibility and the conviction that hope and imagination can give direction to a sustainable and democratic future, which emerges from thoughtful actions in the present. There are nine principles that inspire our work and underpin this manifesto:

1. **Think and act hopefully**
Put hope and creativity as activating principles at the centre of thought and action.

Think and act from what ‘can be’, and create opportunities to teach, learn and live differently, starting from your own educational practices.
2. **Take moral responsibility**
Thinking and acting from what ‘can be’ requires moral responsibility. Reflect upon which values and norms are important in the light of the here and now, elsewhere and later.

Let why-questions be more important than what-questions. Be active. Do what you say you are going to do.
3. **Resist**
Develop the courage to resist.

Why-questions give direction to our actions and also require courage to refuse to act, to resist time pressure, to resist far-flung standardisation and an ever-increasing educational technocracy.
4. **Slow down**
Take literally and figuratively the time to stand still. Increase your attention to other perspectives.

Reflect on your own practices from a distance, so as to see more clearly.
5. **Find space**
Collaborate in small communities in and outside your class and school, despite limitations and constraints.

Reflect together upon your role in the systems that regulate and control. Investigate where you are capable of bending or interrupting these systems.
6. **Think and act relationally**
Hopeful thinking and acting is concerned with the common good.

Let imaginative actions be underpinned by solidarity; let them benefit life – whether this is about people or other creatures with whom we share the earth, near or far.
7. **Think and act pluralistically**
Strive towards pluralism and deliberately seek difference.

Consider the human as well as non-human world.
8. **Persist**
Persist in thinking and acting. Complex questions require attention and active patience.

Persist in the courage that is needed with goals that cannot easily be attained.
9. **Be doubtful**
Dare to be led by strong principles, and be prepared to question and revise your principles, actions and consequences. Embrace provisionality, unpredictability and plurality.

Be prepared to revise one or more of the above mentioned principles if needed.

THINK AND ACT HOPEFULLY

Put hope and creativity as activating principles at the centre of your thinking and acting.

Think and act from what can be, and thus create opportunities to teach, learn and live differently in daily educational practice.

In-depth questions for you and your team

- What is hope for you?
- Who or what gives you hope?
- To what extent do you also experience despair?
- What does hopeful action look like in the classroom?

In what way can you, together with pupils/students, make hope visible in the school?

TAKE MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

Thinking and acting from 'what can be' requires moral responsibility. Think about which values and standards are important in the light of the here and now, the elsewhere and later. Let 'why'-questions be more important than 'what'-questions. Be active. Do what you say you will do.

In-depth questions for you and your team

- *Why do you work in education?*
- *What value do you bring to your team?*
- *How do your personal values relate to the values of the school?*
- *How do your pupils/students notice that you find those values important?*

In what way can we stimulate the development of moral responsibility in pupils/students?

RESIST

‘Why’-questions guide our actions and also require courage to refuse to act, to resist time pressure, far-reaching standardization and the technocratization of education.

In-depth questions for you and your team

- ***To what extent have you experienced resistance in the past month?***
- ***To what extent was there an opportunity in your team to talk about that resistance?***
- ***To what extent have you seen opportunities to convert resistance into action?***
- ***What do you need individually or as a team to resist?***

In what ways can we let pupils/students experience that resistance and its implication to act accordingly is important?

SLOW DOWN

Literally and figuratively take the time to stand still. This will strengthen the focus on other perspectives. Distance yourself from what you are doing so that you can see better.

In-depth questions for you and your team

- *When do you manage to literally and figuratively take the time to stand still?*
- *To what extent do you as a team take the time to listen to each other's perspective? When do you feel the opportunity to do so?*
- *To what extent do you invite others (parents/guardians/young people/elderly people/people from outside the school) to enrich your perspective?*

What are the ways to invite pupils/students to regularly slow down, listen, feel?

THINK AND ACT RELATIONALLY

Hopeful thinking and acting is focused on the common good. Let imaginative actions be in solidarity, and let them benefit others and the other, near and far*.

In-depth questions for you and your team

- *To what extent are we in solidarity in our team?*
- *Which example of solidarity inspires you?*
- *Can you also be in solidarity with nature?*
- *What can you say about your connection with the living environment?*

Can we experience and make meaningful connectedness with the lives of pupils/ students?

*with life here and now, and with life later and elsewhere on this planet

FIND SPACE

Work together in small communities (classes, schools), despite the limitations and presence of external, local, national and transnational bureaucracies. Reflect with each other on your own role in the system of regulation and control mechanisms and investigate where you are able to bend or interrupt this system.

In-depth questions for you and your team

- *What tension between people and bureaucracy in education do you experience?*
- *How do you as a team experience the relationship between people and bureaucracy in education?*
- *What questions can you ask about these tensions to generate forces/alliances that bend or interrupt systems?*

To what extent can you support pupils/students in finding space to learn and discover things in their own way?

THINK AND ACT PLURALISTICALLY

Strive for plurality and purposefully seek out differences; adopt a perspective that considers both the human and non-human world.

In-depth questions for you and your team

- *To what extent are you aware of your own quality and the qualities of your colleagues?*
- *Which qualities or perspectives are less evident in your team?*
- *In what way could you broaden your perspective on other qualities and perspectives?*
- *What perspective does a tree or a bird have on learning?*

How can you encourage pupils/students to delve into other ways of being in the world?

PERSIST

Persevere in this thinking and acting. Complex issues require attention and active patience. Persevere in the courage to endure that the goal is not reached quickly.

In-depth questions for you and your team

- ***Which slow processes do you recognize in educational practice?***
- ***To what extent do you know examples of changes that took a long time and ultimately led to improvement?***
- ***What does active patience look like for you?***
- ***What requires your attentive involvement?***

How can your pupils/students practice persevering?

DOUBT!

Dare to use strong principles, but always be prepared to question and revise (your own) actions and their effects.

Embrace provisionality, unpredictability and plurality, in your profession and in daily life. Be prepared to revise one or more of the above pedagogical principles if necessary.

In-depth questions for you and your team

- *What do you experience in your body when you doubt and how do you usually deal with that feeling?*
- *How do you view someone who dares to question her principles or actions?*
- *To what extent is there room in your team for vulnerability, for (temporarily) not knowing?*

How can you let pupils/students practice doubting?

**Good luck and have fun on your
journey of discovery towards a
sustainable future!**

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