



Interactive Module on School Leadership

Developed by
SLA, SCERT Assam
in collaboration with NCSL - NEIPA, New Delhi

Developing Professional Self for the Secondary School Heads of Assam

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

In today's schools, the role of a Secondary School Principal goes far beyond managing files and routines. Principals are expected to lead learning, support teachers, motivate students and respond thoughtfully to academic, social and organisational challenges. Effective leadership begins with the leader's ability to reflect, connect with others and act with clarity and empathy.

In the Indian context, school leadership involves influencing, guiding, empowering and working together with the school community. This reminds us that leadership is not only about rules and systems, but also about the professional self of the leader. Our values, beliefs, ethics and emotional awareness shape how we make decisions, build relationships and create a positive school culture.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 highlights the role of principals as transformational leaders who encourage collaboration, innovation, inclusion and a supportive learning environment. To fulfil this role, continuous professional development and reflective practice are essential.

4.1.1 Purpose and Rationale :

This module invites you to pause, reflect and engage with your own professional journey as a school leader. Through discussion, reflection and practical activities, you will explore how strengthening your professional self can enhance your leadership and positively influence your school.

4.1.2 Learning Outcomes :

By the end of the module, participants will be able to:

- 1 Understand the concept of the professional self and its importance in school leadership.**
- 2 Reflect on their leadership identity, values and ethical practices.**
- 3 Apply reflective and emotionally intelligent approaches in everyday school leadership.**
- 4 Prepare a Personal Professional Growth Plan (PPGP) to sustain continuous professional learning.**



4.2

UNDERSTANDING THE PROFESSIONAL SELF OF A SCHOOL LEADER

4.2.1 Learning Outcomes :

Participants will be able to:

- Understand the concept and components of the professional self.
- Examine how beliefs, values and attitudes influence leadership decisions.
- Identify strengths and areas requiring further development in their leadership journey.

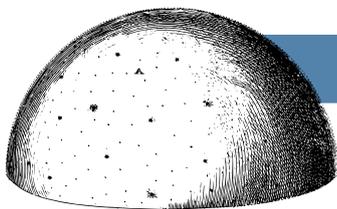
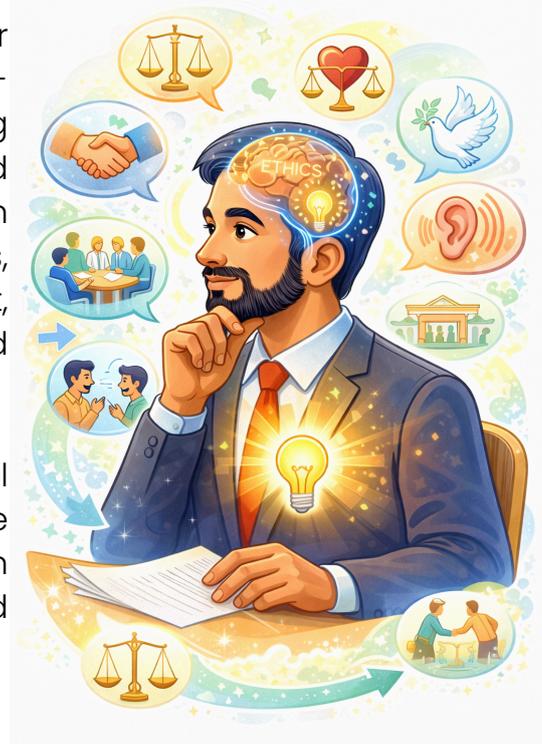


Professional identity, leadership values, self-awareness, personal mastery, self-efficacy

4.2.2 Introduction :

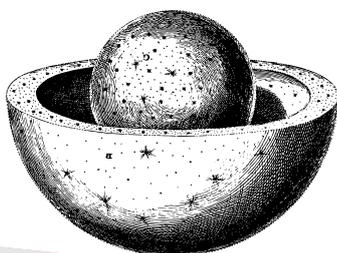
The professional self refers to the inner framework of the school leader – values, self-concept, ethics, motivations, beliefs and guiding principles – that shape how they think, act and interact. It determines leadership behaviour in routine decisions and crisis situations, influences conflict management, communication and team dynamics, and shapes the culture of the institution.

A leader with a strong sense of professional self-responds rather than reacts. They engage thoughtfully in decision-making, maintain emotional balance and ensure fairness and dignity in interactions.



Core Content:

- Professional identity develops through experiences, self-reflection, learning and interactions within the school ecosystem.
- Leadership values act as internal anchors for ethical decision-making and role modelling.
- High self-efficacy and confidence enable resilience during crises and inspire others.
- Awareness of personal biases and assumptions promotes equity and inclusion.





Reflection Activity – Think–Pair–Share

Reflect and write briefly:

- **When do I feel most effective as a leader?**

- **Which personal belief or value guides my decisions most often?**

- **When have my emotions influenced my professional actions?**

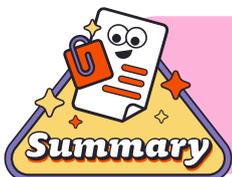


CASE STUDY

A Principal avoids student council elections, arguing that elections may create conflict and discipline issues.

Discussion prompts

- What beliefs or past experiences may be influencing this decision?
- What opportunities for student leadership are being lost?
- How could improving self-awareness change this behaviour?



Summary

Self-awareness is the foundation of professional growth. When leaders understand their values, motivations and biases, they act ethically, communicate authentically and create an inclusive school climate.



4.3 REFLECTIVE PRACTICE AND LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

4.3.1 Learning Outcomes :

Participants will be able to:

- Understand reflection as a systematic tool for professional learning.
- Apply reflective thinking to analyse their decisions and actions.
- Cultivate habits that support continuous improvement.

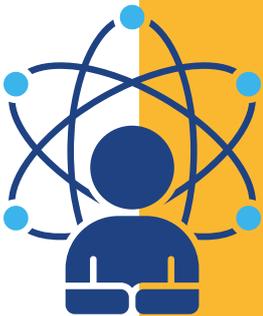


Reflection, self-review, learning journal, reflective leadership

4.3.2 Introduction :

Reflection is the deliberate analysis of one's actions, emotions and assumptions to derive insight and improvement. It shifts focus from "What happened?" to "What have I learned?" and "How will I improve?"

CORE CONTENT



- **Reflection develops cognitive, emotional and behavioural awareness.**
- **Structured reflection prevents repetition of unproductive behaviours.**
- **Reflection may be individual (journals, meditation and timelines) or collective (peer consultations, PLCs, leadership circles).**

Guiding questions:

• **What happened?**

• **Why did it happen?**

• **Which assumptions influenced my actions?**

• **What can I do differently next time?**



ACTIVITY-REFLECTION JOURNAL

Participants write about a school initiative that did not produce the expected outcome and analyse:

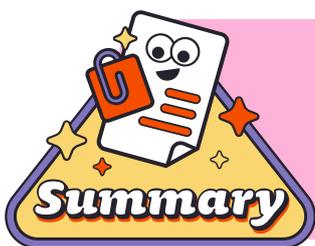
Assumptions behind decisions

Key personal learnings

Emotions during the process

Future behavioural changes

Lined writing area for journaling.



Reflection converts experience into wisdom. It fosters humility, curiosity and mindful leadership – all of which are essential to building a learning-oriented school.



4.4 COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

4.4.1 Learning Outcomes :

Participants will be able to:

- Understand collaboration as a driver of professional learning.
- Build structures for professional dialogue among school staff.
- Promote shared learning and collective responsibility.



Collaboration, professional learning community (PLC), shared vision, collegiality

4.4.2 Introduction :

Leadership cannot develop in isolation. Collaboration deepens understanding, supports problem solving and distributes responsibility. Schools become learning organisations when school leaders and teachers learn together.

CORE CONTENT



- PLCs create space for joint analysis, experimentation and reflection.
- Shared vision fosters collective ownership of goals.
- Leaders must model openness to feedback, active listening and appreciation of diverse viewpoints.
- Collaboration regenerates energy, builds collective efficacy and protects against burnout.

4.4.3 Case Study

Transformative Leadership: Overcoming Absenteeism and Fostering Community Engagement at Sonowal Kachari Higher Secondary School, Majuli

Background: Sonowal Kachari Higher Secondary School, established in 1966, is the only higher secondary school in the greater Luitporia Gaon Panchayat of Majuli District, Assam. Situated between Sonowal Kachari and Chikari Mising villages near the Brahmaputra embankment, the school serves primarily the ST (Plain) Mising community, whose lifestyle is rooted in agriculture, fishing, and strong traditional cultural practices.

In 2023 the school have 253 students (Class VI–XII) with 19 teachers. Although the campus is spacious and the school enjoys community respect, infrastructure remains inadequate, teachers lack professional development, and students show low academic performance and high absenteeism.



ENROLMENT TREND OF THE SCHOOL IN LAST TWO YEARS

District	Block	School Name	UDISE Code	School Management	School Category	Year	Total Class VI to Class XII
Majuli	Majuli	SONOWAL KACHARI HSS	18310422004	1	5	2023-24	253
						2024-25	272

PRIMARY CHALLENGE

High rate of student absenteeism, rooted in factors such as:

- Low parental awareness and educational attainment
- Low student motivation for academics
- Limited emphasis on sports and co-curricular activities
- Traditional teaching styles and lack of experiential learning
- Weak collaboration between school and parents
- Health, safety and child labour issues

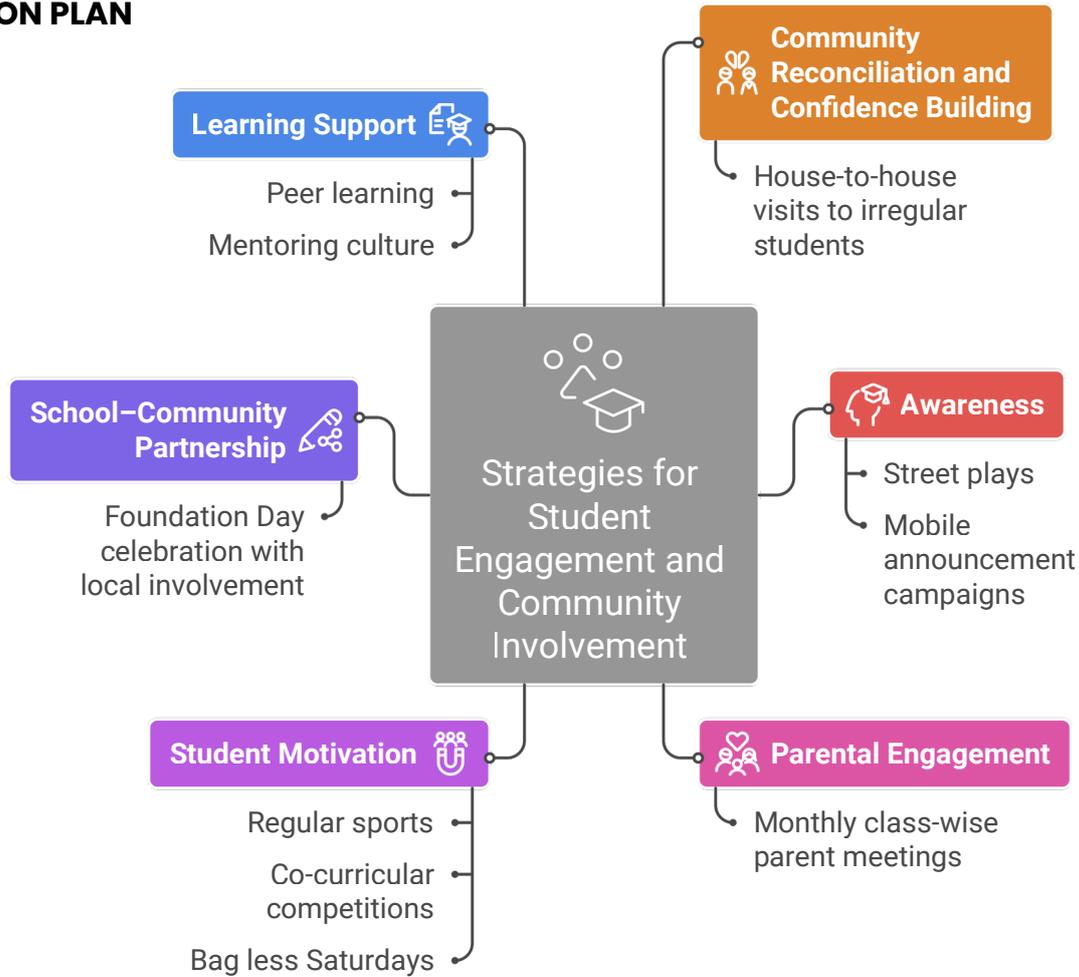
LEADERSHIP INTERVENTION

The Principal initiated a transformational school improvement effort under the Leaders Initiative for School Acceleration (LISA) with a community-based approach summarised as "School Moves to Community."



SCAN QR FOR VIDEOS





Observable Outcomes

- ✓ Trust between teachers and parents improved significantly
- ✓ School began functioning as a safe, supportive learning space
- ✓ Student attendance increased from ~20% to ~90%
- ✓ Greater community participation in school programmes
- ✓ Alumni engagement strengthened in the Village Education Committee



4.4.4 Learning–Reflection Tasks Based on Case Study

Group Discussion Questions: In Small group

- Which actions of the principal reflect collaborative and transformational leadership?

- How did the shift from “parents must come to school” to “school moves to community” change the culture of engagement?

- What professional qualities of the Principal (values, beliefs and interpersonal skills) enabled the success of this initiative?

- What challenges may arise in sustaining the outcomes? What preventive strategies can be planned?

Critical Thinking Questions

Would improving classroom teaching alone (without community involvement) resolve absenteeism? Justify.

Can community participation substitute for strong academic leadership? Why or why not?



4.5 CREATING AND SUSTAINING A PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLAN

4.5.1 Learning Outcomes :

Participants will be able to:

- Prepare a personalised professional development plan.
- Align personal leadership goals with institutional priorities.
- Apply strategies to sustain motivation and learning.



Growth plan, professional goals, continuous development, mentoring

4.5.2 Introduction :

Professional growth becomes impactful when it is intentional. A Personal Professional Growth Plan (PPGP) allows school leaders to set priorities, track progress, self-monitor and remain accountable to improvement.

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Goals should be SMART — Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound.

- Self-assessment identifies competence (skills) and character (values/behaviours).
- Professional growth can be supported by:
 - ✓ Networking and peer groups
 - ✓ Mentoring and coaching
 - ✓ Action research and inquiry-based learning
 - ✓ Participation in professional forums and reading circles
- Celebrating progress reinforces motivation.






4.5.3 Activity — Draft Your Growth Plan

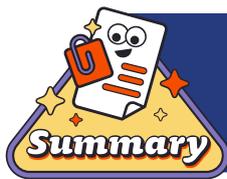
PROPOSED TIMELINE

Time Line	Key Actions
0-1 Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on leadership practice • Identify one area for growth • Prepare a simple PPGP 
1-3 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practise reflection daily • Lead with empathy and balance 
3-6 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote teacher collaboration • Encourage professional dialogue 
6-12 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review progress regularly • Align learning with the school plan 

GROUP DISCUSSION



How can a principal align their personal professional growth with the school's professional development plan for teachers?



A growth plan makes leadership proactive rather than reactive. It strengthens professional identity and builds a culture of continuous improvement across the school.

4.5.4 Professional Self-Assessment Rubric:

Domain	Beginning	Developing	Proficient	Exemplary
 Self-awareness	Understands Values ambiguously	Identifies values when prompted	Consistently aligns actions with values	Models ethical and value-driven behaviour for others
 Reflection	Rarely reflects	Reflects occasionally	Uses reflection to improve actions	Models and promotes reflective culture in school
 Collaboration	Prefers working alone	Participates selectively	Actively collaborates	Creates sustained cultures of collaboration
 Growth Orientation	Engages in PD only when required	Attends PD occasionally	Continually seeks learning opportunities	Demonstrates personal mastery; mentors others

4.5.5 Self-Assessment – MCQ

1 Professional self refers to:

a Administrative skills only

b Beliefs, values and identity influencing behaviour

2 Reflection supports:

a Repetition of past behaviour

b Learning from experience

3 Collaboration requires:

a Competition

b Mutual trust and respect



4 Personal mastery emphasises:

- a Continuous disciplined learning b Avoiding feedback

5 A growth plan should:

- a Be broad and vague b Include specific goals and timelines

4.6 CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

Developing the professional self is an ongoing journey that grows with experience, reflection and purposeful action. For school leaders, this journey becomes meaningful when learning is translated into everyday practice and sustained over time. When principals consciously nurture self-awareness, emotional balance and collaborative learning, their leadership becomes more ethical, confident and resilient.

4.7 REFERENCES

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2. NCF–SE 2023 – Ministry of Education, Government of India.
3. Senge, Peter (2012). The Fifth Discipline: Schools That Learn
4. NIEPA (2020). Pedagogical Leadership: A Handbook for Leading Learning in Schools



AUTHOR PROFILE

Parash Goswami

Parash Goswami is an experienced education professional with over two decades of service in Samagra Shiksha (formerly Sarba Shiksha Abhiyan). He is currently serving as District Programme Officer (Alternative Schooling, Teacher Training & Pedagogy) in Jorhat, Assam, where he has played a key role in strengthening academic support systems, teacher professional development, and school leadership capacity across the district.



He has been a core member of the School Leadership Development Programme of SCERT Assam since 2014, contributing significantly to the design and facilitation of leadership training programmes for school heads at both elementary and secondary levels.

Mr. Goswami served as a Key Resource Person for NISHTHA 1.0 (2019–20) and was a member of the Social Studies (History) Textbook Review Committee for Classes VI–VIII in 2021.

He is a recipient of the DIKSHA Award (2020) in recognition of his contributions to academic leadership and digital professional development initiatives. He also contributed to the development of the One-Month Certificate Course for Secondary School Heads (2024) of SCERT Assam. Earlier, he developed an interactive leadership module (2022) hosted on the NCSL, NIEPA New Delhi platform.

His professional work focuses on reflective leadership, institutional capacity building, and fostering professional learning cultures in schools.

