TIME SAVER:
Changemaking Leadership

TIME FOR CHANGE:

DREAM. ACT. CHANGE OUR WORLD.

The leadership style used in changemaking recognizes that everyone has an area of expertise and is called upon to lead at different moments. Changemaking leadership means adapting to changing situations, being able to mobilize others around an idea, and maximizing the abilities and strengths of all team members. In other words, everyone contributes in different ways at different times.

A changemaking leader:

- Sees the big picture and helps others in the team envision it, too
- Stays focused on the main goal while facing complex, rapid change
- Connects the dots between individuals, communities, and society
- Is resilient and recovers quickly from setbacks
- Believes in every person's ability to lead and contribute positively to their communities

The following activity will give your students the opportunity to experience a range of roles within a team, including Builder, Adviser, and Observer. In changemaking, leadership is not rigid, static, or linear; everyone has the opportunity to lead as well as follow. In the days leading up to this activity, you may want to gather an assortment of empty recyclable containers, books, construction paper, pipe cleaners, wrapping paper rolls, etc. for students to use as building materials.

Visit the Leadership section of the First Book Canada Marketplace for a curated selection of books that will inspire and motivate.

TOWER BUILDING ACTIVITY

STEP 1

DIVIDE STUDENTS INTO GROUPS

Divide students into groups of three. Students will do this activity three times, so each member of the group has the opportunity to experience various aspects of leadership.

STEP 2

EXPLAIN THE GOAL & DEFINE THE ROLES

Each team will try to build the tallest tower possible using items available in the classroom. Each member of the team will take turns **building**, **advising**, and **observing**.

Builder: The person in the role of Builder will construct the tower with input and ideas from the Adviser.

Adviser: The person in the role of Adviser will help guide the design of the tower — perhaps suggesting materials to use or noting that adding one more item to the top of the tower might cause it to fall.

Observer: The person in the role of Observer will watch silently — reflecting on what went well and what could be improved upon next time — and then share their observations with the team.

STEP 3

SHARE OBSERVATIONS

After the Builder has completed their tower, the Observer can offer feedback to the Builder and/or the Adviser using the Compliment Sandwich method. This means giving a compliment, offering a suggestion, and then closing with another compliment.

Example: 1) You gave thoughtful advice about the risks of adding one more item to the tower. 2) Next time, you could suggest a lightweight item for the top of the tower. 3) You were encouraging and supportive, even after the tower collapsed.

STEP 4

REFLECT

Once students have had the opportunity to try each role, have them discuss what they learned — either in their small groups or as a class.

- In which role did you feel most comfortable?
- Which role was uncomfortable and why?
- In which role did you feel the most responsibility?
- Can you think of examples of how you could use some of the lessons of this activity with your friends, at home, or in your community? What value and perspective(s) did each role bring to the tower building process?

SHARE THIS!

Share this video about changemaker Matine Khalighi and how he stepped up to address homelessness in his state by noticing a problem, building a team, and designing a solution to help others.

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