

Lighting the Way: Using Story, Reflection and Metaphor to Build Literacy, Leadership and Self-Awareness

As young people navigate increasing social, emotional and ethical complexity, educators are being asked to support not only literacy development, but also self-awareness, agency and responsibility. This interactive workshop explores how story, metaphor and reflective dialogue can be used as everyday literacy tools to support both learning and leadership in the classroom.

Drawing on the illustrated leadership text *My Leadership Shadow and Me*, the session positions narrative as a pedagogical artefact, not a book talk. Through the accessible metaphor of shadow and light, students are invited to explore how words, actions and choices shape impact - providing rich entry points for reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Participants will experience practical, classroom-ready strategies that can be used across upper primary and secondary contexts, including:

- short narrative prompts to support reflective, persuasive and creative writing
- structured dialogue protocols that strengthen listening, oral language and perspective-taking
- visual and metaphor-based activities that support comprehension and meaning-making
- low-stakes reflection tasks that build metacognition and student voice

The workshop models how these approaches can be embedded across English, Humanities and Health & Wellbeing, supporting reluctant writers, deepening comprehension, and creating psychologically safe classrooms where students can engage with values, leadership and responsibility through language.

Participants will experience the strategies as learners first, before unpacking how they can be adapted for different year levels, learning areas and classroom needs. Educators will leave with practical tools, adaptable prompts and clear examples they can use immediately.

This session reframes literacy as more than skill acquisition - positioning it as a way for young people to make sense of who they are, how they show up, and the kind of impact they want to have - lighting the way for both learning and leadership.