Student leadership is a distinct area in both research and practice (Tan & Adams 2018; Bolman & Deal 2008; Sergiovanni 1992; Tan, Tie & Chua 2015; Tan, Chua & Tie 2014; Tie 2012). Students are tomorrow’s leaders, hence it is imperative that they grasp an understanding of their leadership styles early in their school life. Learning about leadership styles and models, and exposure to leadership training and development will help students increase their knowledge and individual capabilities as leaders in their organisation.

The focus on student leadership practices and development indicates a great need to develop socially responsible future leaders (Amey 2006; Astin 1991; Astin 1993; Dugan & Komives 2007; Komives et al. 2009; Posner 2012). More importantly, these researchers advocate that leadership is a skill that exists in everybody and can be developed by anybody (Rost 1993). They argue that student leadership should be given priority to encourage a strong leadership identity from an early stage.

EMERGENCE OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Recent developments in student leadership have seen a paradigm shift from leadership theories and philosophies towards reciprocal and relational models (Northouse 2007; Komives, Lucas & McMahon 1998; 1998; Rost 1991; Burns 1978). The growing emphasis on teams and collaborative practices in the business industry (Pearce & Conger 2003; Lipman-Blumen 1996), and the professionalisation of the educator’s role in student leadership (Komives, Dugan, Owen, Slack & Wagner 2006)