EDA 612: Change Leader Essay #2

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**Read each quote from Change Leader and respond to the prompt for reflection. Respond to all five prompts. Your essay should be 2-3 pages.**

**1. “The effective change leader actively participates as a learner in helping the organization improve.” Change leaders “show up” – that is, they participate with others in mutual learning. For reflection: Would staff call you a participating learner in the organization? What more could you do to demonstrate this?**

A good educational leader is an instructional expert. Yes, my faculty and staff would definitely call me a “participating leader” in that I am always willing to get my “hands dirty” no matter the job. For example, I was the primary architect of the recent WASC report that required organization of the categorical domain collaboratives, the categorical Lead team writings, final editing and submission criteria, and organizing the 4 day WASC Visiting Committee visitation that required maintenance, clerical production, catering, and operational logistics. At the very end of the successful WASC process, the faculty and staff were explicitly appreciative of my efforts and wanted to specifically say thank you with an after-hour celebration at a restaurant name “Hillside.” It was a lovely gesture and speaks directly to tangible efforts that offer real supports and resources to collaborate efforts to achieve a shared objective. What more could I do? I am not good at self-promotion so a lot of what I do will never be known or recognized; however, relying on the expertise and talents around me while I take a lesser role is also good leadership in that people want to work with and for me while I allow promotion of their own leadership skills.

**2. “Effective change leaders combine resolute moral purpose with impressive empathy.” While change leaders never give up, they also have an impressive empathy even for those with whom they disagree. For reflection: What is your track record for building relationships with people who initially disagreed with you? Do you have an example you can share?**

I’ve said it many times and firmly believe that true educational leadership is first and foremost relational. I spend the time to truly get to know people and be willing to celebrate the diversity and sometimes idiosyncrasies that make our team special. One example involves a discipline issue that would affect the eligibility of seven choir students to attend a competition fieldtrip. Since I could not elaborate on the disciplinary concern with the teachers, I did not give a reason or justification for why these students were not allowed to participate; however, though the teacher was frustrated, I gave him a platform to share his thoughts and opinions while I reinforced our prior relationship values while confirming my personal and professional value of the teacher. I offered an apology that it seemed as if I showed disrespect to not notifying him of the exact reason for disqualification of these seven students; however, I did reinforce that this is the unfortunate protocol that administration needs to follow operationally despite it being “unfriendly.” I reinforced that fact that I totally understand it seemed like a “clinical” choice but I valued the time for him to share his frustrations and to listen to explanations that deemed it not to be a personal disregard.

**3. “Realized effectiveness is what motivates people to do more.” Change leaders know that talk is cheap and what really motivates people is realizing success. For reflection: Under your leadership, how much have you and your staff actually accomplished. Provide an example.**

As stated, the WASC accreditation process was an unbelievably complex and mammoth job responsibility. Even though a lot of the heavy lifting fell on my shoulders, it was a true school-wide effort to write and showcase the evidence of Operations, Accountability and Assessment, Teaching and Learning, Curriculum, and School Climate Efforts. Bringing all the stakeholders together on a weekly basis and to create a repository of information for findings and evidence resulted in a collective experience that not only was rewarding as a collaborative process but resulted in an extrinsic reward of a 6 year accreditation from the CDE. This required deliberated diligence to organize and maintain the trajectory and momentum to complete the multi-faceted project. It is a true summative assessment of all the great work being done with identified areas of continuous improvement mainly in Math, ELA, PBL and School Climate vertical; alignment and fidelity of operational and educational resources and supports.

**4. “Collaborative competition is the yin and yang of successful change.” Collaboration provides both support and pressure for greater performance. For reflection: Are you both building greater mutual allegiance with wider groups and also encouraging friendly competition? What are some examples?**

The School of Business and Tourism is a co-located campus with three other pilot schools. This is inherently collaborative with a healthy dose of competition. I do lean on the experience and expertise of the other administration to provide collaborative efforts in organizing school-wide trainings, assemblies, interventions, and operational protocols. Also, the way the district requires various accountability artifacts, all four schools keep a healthy collaborative competition in informal observations counts, testing participation rates, SBAC score comparisons, intervention participations, attendance incentives, and PBIS TFI reporting and certification. This allows us to engage our entire faculty and staff resources and to share with the entire campus to achieve shared objectives and to meet district deadlines and requirements.

**5. “Change leaders are more confident than the situation warrants but more humble than they look.” Change leaders are humble because they have confidence that they and the group will figure it out. For reflection: Do you have a good balance between confidence and humility?**

The adage ”the higher you climb the lighter you step” is extremely important to me specifically of the type of profession of education. Education is inherently altruistic and leaders are to be incredibly cognizant of the “ministerial” tone required to meet the quota of hearts and minds. It’s always a team effort and to make sure leaders continually ground themselves in, hopefully, the initial reason for choosing this social-martyrdom of teaching is incredibly important to help maintain one’s right state of service while recognizing the complex and taxing efforts of all dedicated faculty and staff in a profession that is overburdened with instructional and social mentoring without real jurisdiction to enforce proper and effectual change. So, it is purposeful to be known consistently as a “servant” as a caring and vulnerable leader that is centered on what is best and what is right for the students that have been entrusted to us. I think my confidence lies in trusting in the value and devotion of my faculty and staff. It’s incredibly important for me to meet each firstly as the person and then as the educator. The idea of “family” is often circulated so if I am going to avoid hypocrisy and to protect sincerity and authenticity, then confidence and humility must be demonstrated as a successful marriage of respect and loyalty.

References

Fullan, M. (2011). Change leader: learning to do what's mattersmost. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.