EDA 611: Leadership that Works

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EDA 611: Pro Development Seminar I

October 8, 2023

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Clear Administrative Services Credential Program

National University

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**Assignment: analyze and critique an educational leader, past or present. Analyze his/her behavior in relation to the points listed in *School Leadership that Works* concerning principal behaviors that positively effect schools and student achievement.Select at least three of those behaviors and describe how you have observed the principal or administrator demonstrate (or not demonstrate) those behaviors in their role as a school leader. Describe how the principal's behavior in these areas impacted the school or organization:**

*School Leadership that Works* (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005) identifies varied theories on leadership; however, each theory, in application, has integral overlapping qualities: Transformational and Transactional; Servant Leadership; Situational Leadership; Instructional Leadership. Personally, when choosing a leader to emulate or not to mimic, no matter the theory, a synthesis of foundational and reciprocal traits are itemized with individual tenets of differing Leadership theories: Safe and orderly environment; Vision and goals focused on high levels of student learning; High expectations for student learning; Self-confidence, responsibility, and perseverance; Visibility and accessibility; Positive and supportive climate; Communication and interaction; Emotional and interpersonal support; Parent and community outreach and involvement

Rituals, ceremonies, and other symbolic actions; Shared leadership, decision making, and staff empowerment; Collaboration; Instructional leadership; Ongoing pursuit of high levels of student learning; Norms of continuous improvement; Discussion of instructional issues; Classroom observation and feedback to teachers; Support of risk taking; Professional development opportunities and resources; Protecting instructional time; Monitoring student progress and sharing findings

Use of student progress for program improvement; Recognition of student and staff achievement; Role modeling (Marzano et al., 2005).

 Mr. Ernesto Castro, Principal at Global Studies co-located on the Miguel Contreras Learning Complex (MCLC) within the Los Angeles Unified School District, is a mentor, friend, and National University Coach. When choosing three leadership traits, Mr. Castro has the demeanor and the operational skill to maximize Collaborative opportunities. Castro integrates the administrative leadership, personnel, and shared resources/facilities among the four co-located schools. Castro is very conscientious to follow protocol when requesting shared resources, diligent in coordination and communication when calendaring events, and supportive to offer instructional programs and resources to address district mandates and varied district certification deadlines related to testing and compliance. The motto of the MCLC campus is “Four Schools, One Spirit.” Castro practices this mantra with open communication, available resources, refined and tested systems, and, on a personal level, offering a consistently friendly and helpful demeanor that is centered around instructional objectives with a keen awareness for civility in an educational context that requires relational support. Castro understands that developing authentic and dynamic relationships is the immeasurable variable at the center of leadership and progress (Marzano et al., 2005).

Castro practices Servant Leadership consistently and diligently with faculty, staff, and other administrators. Castro, exemplifies the altruistic-side of the education profession by freely giving his personal and professional time with grace and patience to any endeavor that supports student instruction and personal growth (e.g., Testing, Trainings, Athletics). Castro has a collective respect as an instructional leader that translates a genuine care to the educational community, fostering a safe, caring, and supportive learning environment. Castro is known at the school and in the local community as an educator and as a man that practices visible integrity, honor, care, and temperance in school and community activities, recruitment efforts, student expectation communications, and operational facilities that require accommodation and open-communication with all stakeholders. Castro’s servant leadership is centered from his spiritual worldview manifested in visible tenets aligned to a philosophical worldview dictated by dogmatic guidelines. As a consequence, I have consistently witnessed Castro practice humility toward students, staff, faculty, and parent/guardian communication with a lighthearted personality that is joyful, happy, and content. Castro understands that it is a “responsibility” to communicate by actions the authenticity of his worldview as a witness to his beliefs that translate to effective and dynamic servant leadership rooted and held accountable to “instructional leadership” (Marzano et al., 2005).

Lastly, as an amplification and a natural consequence of Collaborative and Service Leadership, Castro channels these attributes into the accountability of diligent Instructional Leadership. Castro is competent and diligent in data-driven instruction that drives programming, networking, and systems development. Castro develops and then offers his resources for local and the larger campus academic and instructional development. Castro is diligent to drive instruction through supportive, informal observational guidance and feedback that is built on a pre-existing respect and fostered relationships that allow for natural and effective development and interaction. I have witnessed Castro’s amiable personality and patient delivery that allows for welcoming classroom observations and collaboration with in and out-of-the classroom support to drive instructional practices–all complemented with a personal, friendly, and empowering delivery cognizant of the heightened awareness of the larger school community.

 Castro is aware that instruction begins in the classroom with strong pedagogy and the fidelity of authentic relationships. Castro knows that “. . . groups that respond successfully to problematic or challenging circumstances are composed of members with a high degree of diversity in both experience and point of view” (Bensimon and Neumann, 1993). Castro has patiently and diligently hired a diverse and competent staff and faculty to provide varied lenses with malleable hearts to shape the community needs to support instructional resources of the classroom and student. A successful leader recruits diverse and accomplished staff and faculty that offer the possibility to cultivate a conducive learning environment, addressing obstacles and allowing to celebrate the successes of the academic and social culture of the school. Castro knows that the entire community of stakeholders need to be activated to support Instructional Leadership accountabilities; consequently, Castro knows that administration must demonstrate and integrate opportunities for instructional best practices that are data-driven and that are instructionally and culturally sensitive to nurture and achieve the full ecology of the student and that of the faculty and staff–a holistic academic, emotional, and social proficiency.

Marzano et al. (2005) state, “Culture is implicit or explicit and . . . espoused by every theorist . . . . an effective leader builds culture that positively influences teachers, who, in turn, positively influence students.” Castro understands this and cultivates a culture that is measured by positive influence and exhibited in instructional formative and summative measures. Castro knows that it is the abstract values that amplify the concrete measurements. Castro strategically and devotedly nurtures the relational value of education, building culture and achieving educational excellence. He knows that at the core of honest and sincere, profound, and sustaining leadership is the concept of service over power as an “instrument of good” that guides daily practice.

References

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