EDA 610: Communication Style

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Analysis of Communication, if not a necessity, is a powerful tool for professional growth and achieving overall objectives of the individual or team. According to Murphy (2002), "One . . . philosophical difference that separates . . . communication styles is the extent to which you communicate with emotions or with data . . . . another [,] the extent to which you communicate in a linear . . . or in a freeform way." Learning from professionals theoretically through research or narrative is inherent within professional growth; however, to witness and mimic the actual pragmatic process in the field of practice is where learning and improvement cross the threshold into reality. The dynamic relationships and strategic communication approach confronted, nurtured, and warranted within the specific context is the immeasurable variable at the center of leadership and progress (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). The educational setting is especially dynamic and vulnerable in that stakeholders possess prior-knowledge, prejudices, and subjective theories about the process, being products of the system. Education is a highly personal, competitive, and stressful development that often dictates life's choices, opportunities, and satisfaction. Targeting communication styles dictated by the context and objective is a metacognitive practice (Murphy, 2002), aiding the navigation of all the moving parts within education–a complex study with no panacea.

According to Bensimon and Neumann (1993), ". . . 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" (i.e., communication styles). A successful leader recruits diverse and accomplished staff and faculty that offer the possibility to cultivate a conducive learning environment that addresses obstacles and celebrates the successes of the academic and social culture

of the school. In essence, delegating responsibilities and opportunities for leadership with the

carefully recruited talent is a version of pluralistic leadership (Kezar, 2000). Consequently, an

educational leader is appointed and responsible to nurture and to achieve the holistic academic,

emotional, and social proficiency while guiding and supporting all stakeholders that are

commissioned to support these achievements (i.e., student, teacher, faculty, staff, administration,

parents or guardians, etc.). Monitoring the health of the culture as a whole becomes a foundational

tenet that guides philosophical pedagogy and allows for consistent and systemic change within the

school or educational system (Elmore, 2000). A successful leader is held to statistical achievement

that is inherently intertwined with the value of the educational climate or culture. Murphy's (2022)

dichotomy of communication delineates this line of data and emotions with an acknowledgment to

adapt and manage emotions or data, or, essentially, both. The juggling act of linear or freeform, data

or emotion are not exclusive but collectively inclusive. The emotional and/or freeform approach is

an act of "reading the room" but the intent of being held accountable to data, linear-driven

instruction for external validity.

      Marzano et al. (2005) state in *School Leadership that Works*, "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." It will be up to the leader to act as an

communications acrobat to achieve the greatest collaborative input accommodating all four

communication dimensions (i.e., analytical, intuitive, functional, and personal) (Murphy, 2022). As

stated, these domains are not islands unto themselves with isolated objectives, they represent the four

corners of one categorical communication domain. However, choosing one style, "Personal"

Communication is the more personally natural and, consequently, the most impactful dimension.

"Knowledge is constructive and all learning is relational, emotion drives attention and attention drives learning" (Shriver, 2023). Personally ironic, to witness a seasoned educational leader that builds culture and achieves educational excellence in the field of practice is a gift which should be a requirement for future leaders to anticipate and accommodate the strengths and deficiencies that are confronted in daily practice. Forfeiting the first person personal pronoun, I have had the fortune to learn from effective and, equally impactful, astonishingly ineffective Personal Leadership, witnessing the path of cultural destruction along the way, a bona fide Dunning Kruger effect (Gimbel, 2016).

There are leaders that rise or fall, and there are leaders that are admired or disdained, no matter the objectives. To be an educational leader that not only achieves statistical greatness but also fosters inherent and intrinsic love for the process without compromising integrity is an unfortunate rarity. At the core of honest and sincere, profound, and sustaining leadership is the concept of service over power as an "instrument of good" that presupposes a worldview that guides daily practice (Keith, 1995). This leader must meet state standards and achieve national benchmarks while mentoring and inspiring a sincere culture of learning that is safe, healthy, accessible, and proficient for all participants. These above sentiments will be worthy of an epitaph. It is not the desire to only achieve statistical greatness but to achieve inspiration, respect, dignity, loyalty, kindness–a plagiarized definition of a virtuous man taken from the mouth of King Malcolm in *MacBeth*. It is a desire to bridge the pedagogical gap between teacher and administrator, to be known as a friend, as a man that is admired for his candor, discipline, leadership style, friendly demeanor, fatherly nurturing, and, even, athletic and healthy physique.

Education is a sensitive ministry not built on quota-driven profit. Education lives in the abstract parts of life to be manifested with great temperance in the concrete things in life. It is a *sine qua non* existence and, if deferred, the abstract is more preferable than the raw, clinical data. It is not only about content but character, to be highly respected because one fosters a learning environment reinforced by one's personal mantra (e.g., conscientiousness, integrity, respect, loyalty, honesty). These are all traits to be cultivated in the personal communication domain. A central personal communication lens will heighten awareness of the personal integrity that drives one's view of service towards those placed in one's care. It is a desire to rely on the spiritual resources that are a natural manifestation of a true servant leader (Keith, 1995). It is a desire for faculty/staff to witness subtle and humble servant leadership evident when addressing students, staff, faculty, resource officers, and college personnel.

I desire to prioritize or make it a "responsibility" to be visible which is associated with genuine involvement and "instructional leadership" (Marzano et al., 2005). It is a desire to be a diligent instructional leader that continues to use resources to adapt and encourage academic and personal growth. It is a desire for all constituents to continually observe natural administration interaction with differing social contexts. Through classroom visitations, interacting with counselors, instructing and directing office personnel in a loving and empowering tone, and engaging in friendly and accessible conversations with cafeteria and school store workers, It is a desire to practice the personal communication domain as a "cornerstone" indicative of a personal worldview affecting the inherent culture of the school. It is a desire to be diligent to engage all variables that add to the overall equation and culture of academic and social preparation which begins and is foundational under the personal communication domain.

As cited in Marzano et al. (2005), "Deep change requires knowing what is happening, distancing the ego from daily events, and honestly appraising the state of the organization." A review of Don Clifton's (1999) article, *Who needs a constituency*, outlines suggestions to build a strong team through collaboration and constituency support. It is a desire to utilize Clifton's suggestions through a careful and objective analysis of communication skills, identifying and capitalizing on strengths and deficiencies. Palmer (2000) states, "Consciousness precedes being: consciousness, your and mine, can form, deform, or reform our world." A personal approach to daily life with incremental temperance is rooted in ideals that are incorruptible, that are planted, strengthened, and tested for fortitude, maybe virility, that wars against deformity or compromise. It is a belief that the personal communication tenant is the best foundation that leads to reform and fights deformity or complacency composed of the "right stuff," (i.e., intelligence, competency, discipline, conviction). It is a personal mission to have "real meaning" that takes "real leaders . . . with extraordinary determination . . . . [that] are not just spokes in the wheels, [but] . . . the hubs (McGowan & Miller, 2001). A leaders end success will be determined if they are considered to be a diligent, consummate servant leader that understands the need for instructional, emotional and social intelligence, fostering the synthesis of the whole human educational experience rooted in a personal communication lens: mind, body, and soul.

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