



The Power of Positive Self-Talk

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Background Leading to this Inquiry

- 12th year as a school administrator
 - Struggled to see positive impacts within the schools I oversaw
 - Always saw the glass $\frac{1}{2}$ empty rather than $\frac{1}{2}$ full
 - Always shared what's going wrong rather than what's going right



The Purpose of My Inquiry

Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to explore how intentionally practicing positive self-talk impacts how I interact with my staff.



My Wondering

With this purpose, I wondered how intentionally practicing positive self-talk and gratitude might help me to approach situations in a positive and productive way thus allowing me to positively interact with my staff.



My Actions

1. capturing my thoughts in the moment
 - a. My thoughts and statements were recorded in journal
 - b. my school secretary tracked the number of times I shared a negative thought



My Actions

2. Listened to various podcast topics on positive self-affirmations and mindsets.
 - a. Narrowed it down to four podcasters
 - i. Pepp Talk with Breeny Lee, Affirmations for Black Girls with Tyra the Creative, Affirm Better Beliefs, On Purpose with Jay Shetty, and Maxwell Leadership
 - b. words and/or phrases from the podcasts became my daily affirmations I would say to myself while getting ready for work



My Actions

3. Thirdly, I decided to collect my data through journaling and keeping samples of my observational feedback to my staff (before the action research and during the action research cycle).

4. Lastly, I reflected on my journey entries and staff observational feedback every Friday. I continued this process for 8 weeks ending it on Friday, March 25th.



Data Collection

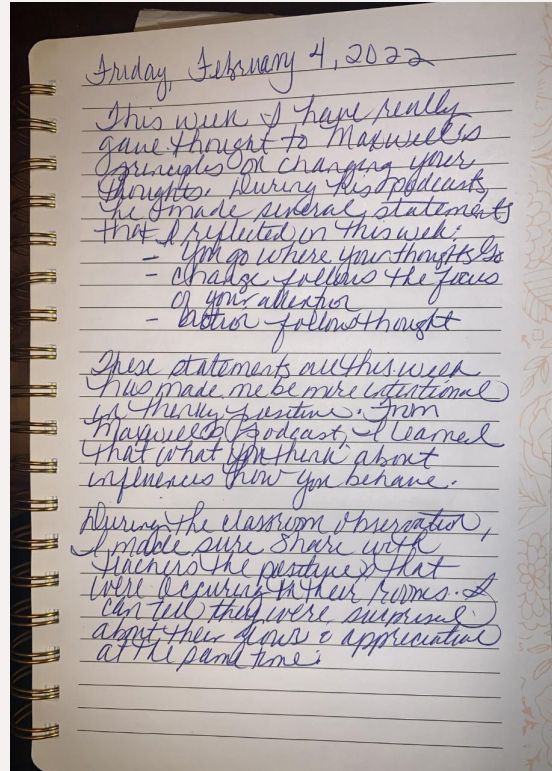


- ☐ Journaling
- ☐ Samples of observational staff feedback (before the action research and during the action research cycle).

My Data



Excerpts from journal entries



This journal entry shows how I reflect on how well I implement the ideas on positive self-talk that were learned while listening to podcasters on this topic. This entry I reflected on Maxwell's "Change Your Thoughts" podcast.

My Data

This observation feedback was given on October 27, 2021 before conducting the action research. In this example, I failed to give the teacher any glows. Instead, I provided the teacher with at least five grows to improve.

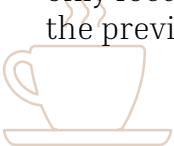


Sample Teacher Observation Feedback (Pre- Action Research)

Goals	
Goal#1: To prepare instructional lessons that learning targets are aligned and follows the curriculum map	
Goal #2: To create a strong presence when resetting the class	
Glow	
Grows	Findings
Lesson Plan and/or Observation Feedback	Managing student behaviors <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Teacher positions (stance) within the classrooms make it difficult to view off tasks behaviors2. Sense of urgency wasn't evident- When CHAMPing out expectations, the teacher focus on one student and continues with a task without getting 100% from students.3. Positive behaviors are rarely recognized.4. Too much instructional time is lost due to classroom disruption Setting Instructional Outcomes <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Activities are not aligned with curriculum nor connected to mastering a learning objective (no evidence of planning)

My Data

This observation feedback was given on February 2nd during the action research cycle. In this example, I gave the teacher two glows. Instead, I provided the teacher with two grows to improve. I even include a reflective question for the teacher as well. This examples shows how I equally focused on the positives and improvements that were needed in this teacher’s classroom rather than only focusing on the negative as I did in the previous example.



Sample Teacher Observation Feedback (During-Action Research Cycle)

Goal#1: To maximize instructional time and create a sense of urgency during student independent work by planning

Goal #2: Implementing small group instruction during the math and reading block

Glows	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> At least 87% of the students were engaged in a task. During the restroom break transition, 100% of students were held accountable to the lineup procedure and expectation. For example, the teacher called for STAR position 14 out of 15 students were in STAR position. The teacher called for “STAR” position looking towards the direction of the student who wasn’t in STAR position. The student went into STAR position immediately after the reminder
Grows	February 1 st Observation Feedback:
Lesson Plan and/or Observation Feedback	<p><u>Findings</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Missed opportunity to conduct small group instruction during independent student work time. Sense of urgency wasn’t evident
Explore (Ponder)	<p><u>Question(s)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How can you focus on high-yield Tier I instructional strategies in order to reduce the number of students who need Tier II interventions?

My Discoveries



Learning Statement One:

Intentionally choosing to practice positive daily self-talks helped me to work from a strengths-based approach versus a deficit-based approach.

- ❑ In order for growth (change) to happen I must be able to positively frame key moments- recognizing the strengths in my staff
- ❑ When I took the time to intentionally write down my leadership goals and strengths, it encouraged me to use “yet” when describing goals that are unmet and develop achievable steps to obtain it.

My Discoveries



Learning Statement Two:
My viewpoint of situations directly impacted how I interacted with my staff.

- ❑ Before the action research, I found it hard to give “glows”
- ❑ Based on this findings, I decided that it would best to make sure I’m in a positive mindset before conducting observations, especially when providing staff feedback.
- ❑ My staff viewpoints were from the “deficit” framework

Where I Am Heading Next



General reflection:

- ❑ I have begun the process of developing a growth-mindset.
- ❑ From this action research, I learned that I set the temperature of the school- it all starts with me (the change needs to start with me).
- ❑ It is my goal to be a strengths-focused school leader – one who notices and names what is going well and committed to a routine that celebrates these moments.

Where I Am Heading Next

Generation of Directions for The Future:

- ❑ Once I am comfortable with my own routines of practicing positive self-talk, the plan is to introduce these ideas to the staff and students.
- ❑ Additionally, I will support teachers (as well as other staff members) in fostering a growth- mindset.



Bibliography

Cunningham, K. E., & Rainville, K. N. (2018). Joyful Leadership. Educational Leadership.

Dweck, Carol S. (2008). Mindset: The new psychology of success. New York: Ballantine Books

Gladwell, M. (2005). Blink: The power of thinking without thinking. New York: Little, Brown, and Company

Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. American Psychologist, 55(1), 5–14.



The Power of Positive Self-Talk

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Background Leading to My Inquiry (Slide 2)

This is my 12th year as school administrator. Before now, I never gave thought to how self-talk (whether positively or negatively) affected how one interacts with others. For as long as I can remember, I engaged in self-talk that is generally disinterested and non-affirming. In times of distress, it became worse. When looking back at the observational feedback given to my staff, it was always from the ½ glass empty standpoint. My conversations with my staff was mostly what is going wrong, rarely acknowledging the positive impacts we were making in the school with our students.

I consider myself to be a reflective practitioner. I've been knowing for a while the something was keeping from being an effective leader and stealing my enjoyment for leading and teaching. This process made turn the mirror on myself and reflection on my personal actions (what was I doing to build myself or tear myself down). I've never considered it was my words that I needed to examine until one of my mid-year observational feedback sessions with my teachers. During the observational feedback session, when I asked what went well in the lesson each teacher started their response with what they could have done better. It was hard for them to identify what went right in their lessons. Before this action research, this would not have not been perplexed to me. Since I was reflecting on my impacts and effectiveness as a leader, I began to question why my staff were operating from the deficit. I discovered how my words were impacting how I interacted with me staff.

The Purpose of My Inquiry (Slide 3)

Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to explore how intentionally practicing positive self-talk impacts how I interact with my staff.

My Wondering (Slide 4)

With this purpose, I wondered how intentionally practicing positive self-talk might help me to approach situations in a positive and productive way thus allowing me to positively interact with my staff.

My Actions (Slide 5-7)

First, I started capturing my thoughts in the moment. The goal of this action was to identify any patterns in my self-talk. Also, to take inventory of the words I spoke that dictated my actions and how I interacted with my staff. My thoughts and statements were recorded in journal. In addition, my school secretary tracked the number of times I shared a negative thought. This was done for one-week in the month of December. In examining my thoughts and interactions with others, I discovered that I had self-doubt and fear that I may be pushing on to others. During the last week of December, I decided to replace those words with positive words about myself. I wrote down my leadership goals and strengths. I made a conscious decision that the negative words were no longer going to shape me as a leader.

Secondly, I started listening to podcast topics on positive self-affirmations and mindsets. For three months, I intentionally listened to various podcasts that helped one develop positive self-talks during my morning drive to work. I wanted to see if it would help to set a positive tone for the day and impact how I interacted with the staff. Starting out I would randomly listen to different podcasters on this topic trying to find the right ones that resonating with me the most. This process went on for three weeks, until I was able to narrow it down to four podcasters. By January 26th, I listening to the following podcasters almost consistently every morning: Pepp Talk with Breeny Lee, Affirmations for Black Girls with Tyra the Creative, Affirm Better Beliefs, On Purpose with Jay Shetty, and Maxwell Leadership

Words and/or phrases that resonated with me, I would record it on a sticky note placing it on my bathroom mirror. Those words and/or phrases became my daily affirmations I would say to myself while getting ready for work. Additionally, I would share the daily affirmations with my staff and students. I become conscious of my word choices (self-talks) and would remind myself of affirmations I committed to memory in order to shift my actions. My office manager would also remind me of my positive self- talk goal anytime she heard me talking negatively.

Thirdly, I decided to collect my data through journaling and keeping samples of my observational feedback to my staff (before the action research and during the action research cycle).

Lastly, I reflected on my journey entries and staff observational feedback every Friday. I continued this process for 8 weeks ending it on Friday, March 25th.

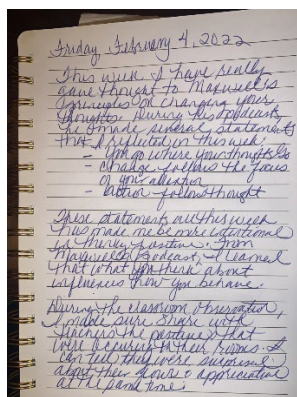
Data Collection (Slide 8)

- Journaling
- Samples of observational staff feedback (before the action research and during the action research cycle).

My Data (Slides 9-11)

Qualitative Data:

Excerpts from journal entries



This journal entry shows how I reflect on how well I implement the ideas on positive self-talk that were learned while listening to podcasters on this topic. This entry I reflected on Maxwell's "Change Your Thoughts" podcast.

Sample Teacher Observation Feedback (Pre- Action Research)

Goals

Goal#1: To prepare instructional lessons that learning targets are aligned and follows the curriculum map

Goal #2: To create a strong presence when resetting the class

Glow	
Grows	Findings
Lesson Plan and/or Observation Feedback	<p><u>Managing student behaviors</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher positions (stance) within the classrooms make it difficult to view off tasks behaviors 2. Sense of urgency wasn't evident- When <u>CHAMPing</u> out expectations, the teacher focus on one student and continues with a task without getting 100% from students. 3. Positive behaviors are rarely recognized. 4. Too much instructional time is lost due to classroom disruption <p><u>Setting Instructional Outcomes</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activities are not aligned with curriculum nor connected to mastering a learning objective (no evidence of planning)

This observation feedback was given on October 27, 2021 before conducting the action research. In this example, I failed to give the teacher any glows. Instead, I provided the teacher with at least five grows to improve.

Sample Teacher Observation Feedback (During- Action Research Cycle)

Goal#1: To maximize instructional time and create a sense of urgency during student independent work by planning

Goal #2: Implementing small group instruction during the math and reading block

Glow	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 87% of the students were engaged in a task. 2. During the restroom break transition, 100% of students were held accountable to the lineup procedure and expectation. For example, the teacher called for STAR position 14 out of 15 students were in STAR position. The teacher called for “STAR” position looking towards the direction of the student who wasn’t in STAR position. The student went into STAR position immediately after the reminder
Grows Lesson Plan and/or Observation Feedback	<p>February 1st Observation Feedback:</p> <p><u>Findings</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Missed opportunity to conduct small group instruction during independent student work time. 2. Sense of urgency wasn’t evident
Explore (Ponder)	<p><u>Question(s)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can you focus on high-yield Tier I instructional strategies in order to reduce the number of students who need Tier II interventions?

This observation feedback was given on February 2nd during the action research cycle. In this example, I gave the teacher two glows. Instead, I provided the teacher with two grows to improve. I even include a reflective question for the teacher as well. This examples shows how I equally focused on the positives and improvements that were needed in this teacher’s classroom rather than only focusing on the negative as I did in the previous example.

My Discoveries (Slide 12-13)

- **Learning Statement One: Intentionally choosing to practice positive daily self-talks helped me to work from a strengths-based approach versus a deficit- based approach.**
 - Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2000) explain, “Raising children ... is vastly more than fixing what is wrong with them. It is about identifying and nurturing their strongest qualities, what they own and are best at, and helping

them find niches in which they can best live out these strengths”. This statement is useful for school leaders as well. In order for growth (change) to happen I must be able to positively frame key moments- recognizing the strengths in my staff. In this process, I learned that it starts with recognizing my strengths and taking time to celebrate achievements (what is working well). When I took the time to intentionally write down my leadership goals and strengths, it encouraged me to use “yet” when describing goals that are unmet and develop achievable steps to obtain it. I began to see the glass ½ full rather than ½ empty.

- **Learning Statement Two: My viewpoint of situations directly impacted how I interacted with my staff.**
 - I noticed a major difference between the pre- action research teacher observational feedback and the observational feedback that was given during the action research cycle. Before the action research, I give any “glows” and listed five “grows” from the classroom observation. Based on this findings, I decided that it would best to make sure I’m in a positive mindset before conducting observations, especially when providing staff feedback.

Where I Am Heading Next (Slide 14-15)

- **General reflection:** Knowing that that employee’s productivity is influenced by a leader's skills and behavior (Cunningham & Rainville, 2018), I have begun the process of developing a growth-mindset. From this action research, I learned that I set the temperature of the school- it all starts with me (the change needs to start with me). Before this process, I sought after changing others rather than reflecting within. Unbeknownst to me, my deficit thinking was permeating throughout the building. It is my goal to be a strengths-focused school leader – one who notices and names what is going well and committed to a routine that celebrates these moments.
- **Generation of Directions for The Future:** Once I am comfortable with my own routines of practicing positive self-talk, the plan is to introduce these ideas to the staff and students. Additionally, I will support teachers (as well as other staff members) in fostering a growth- mindset. Building a school culture that embraces growth-mindsets, will ensure staff and students are continuously viewing their learning from a positive, strengths-based framework.

Bibliography (Slide 16)

Cunningham, K. E., & Rainville, K. N. (2018). Joyful Leadership. *Educational Leadership*.

Dweck, Carol S. (2008). Mindset: The new psychology of success. New York: Ballantine Books

Gladwell, M. (2005). Blink: The power of thinking without thinking. New York: Little, Brown, and Company

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