

Reduce Email Overload



Greendale Middle School
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Background Leading to this Inquiry

- I was feeling overwhelmed at home and work because I felt like I was “always on the go” with a never ending “to do” list.
- I was staying at school late most nights (after 5 p.m.) Fridays were often past 9 p.m. to make sure everything was ready for the next week to avoid working on weekends.
- Teachers were missing deadlines and/or forgetting upcoming events.
- Staff often commented on
 - Amount of emails
 - Time of day I sent emails
 - Emails concerning school improvement surveys sent over a break



Purpose of This Inquiry

The purpose of my action inquiry was to get organized and improve/streamline communication.



My Wondering

Due to the amount and time of emails I send out, I think teachers are overwhelmed with emails and missing important information. I wonder if I condense school information or expectations into a Shared Google Doc with hyperlinks if staff will miss less deadlines and will feel more informed. I also wonder how I will feel adapting to not sending the information out immediately but waiting for the weekly email.





My Actions

- I looked at a few different colleagues weekly newsletters.
- I determined I wanted to accomplish the following with my newsletter: inspirational quotes, funny memes, professional development, reminders, upcoming events.
- I created my template in December to start in January.
- I included optional professional development that was more involved and teachers received PGPs.
- Starting in February, I included required weekly professional development with a short video and Google Form to complete.
- Starting in March, I included an area where I added different submissions by other teachers (technology ideas, quotes, etc.)



Data Collection

- I collected data from August to March on how many emails I sent each day to the entire staff. [Monthly Email Data](#)
- I collected weekly data on who completed the professional development without reminders.
- I collected the results from all the Google Forms on the PDs and looked for evidence in classes as I visited. [PD Response Survey Data](#)
- I kept a journal of how it changed me personally.



Data

Quantitative

- Daily/Monthly Email Count
- I received numerous emails and comments about liking the one stop shop for information.
- Husband and kids made comments when I came home early than in the past.
- Weekly checklist of who completed without reminder

Qualitative- Professional Development

1. The optional professional development that required more time and a summary to get PGPs was only utilized by a handful of teachers.
2. The required professional development and submissions on Google Forms were very reflective and I often saw strategies used in classrooms. I even had teachers sharing ways they were using strategies and technology to include in the newsletter.
3. The required professional development submissions were due on Fridays. At first I just sent it out and didn't include any reminders. After two weeks, I started checking submissions on Thursday or Friday and emailed only the teachers who had not submitted. Many of the same teachers who missed deadlines required reminders at first. By the last newsletter in March, they were all completed by Friday afternoon (with the reminder emails sent on Thursdays). Only one staff member was repetitive about needing the reminder.



Data

Qualitative- Personal Change

1. In regards to changes for me personally, the results were the most unexpected. I really believe it started with my Mini AR goal (more personal time) not turning out exactly as I desired. I was determined to make this one successful. I knew I wanted my newsletter to more than just information I could include in yet another email. I wanted it to inspire change! After starting the search for professional development and inspirational quotes to include in the newsletter, I realized I had been missing some of that in my personal life. Over the course of this AR Project, I am EXCITED to say ...
 - a. I finished eleven books (which had been on my “wish list” for months even years- some were audio but still).
 - b. “Kondooed”my house and office. I decluttered/organized and for the first time took time to decorate each space. Taking the time to really think and care about the areas has made our house a home that we have pride in now.
 - c. I completed professional development on cultural mastery that all administrators in the corporation participated.
 - d. I completed three classes for my Eds and IPLI course work
 - e. Most importantly I spent more quality time with my family. I even started going to the gym with my husband and lost 10 pounds!



My Discoveries



1. Teachers appreciate when we try to condense information.

Due to the nature of teaching, sometimes reminders are necessary but for the most part if in a condensed form they will read it and complete the tasks. The weekly data indicated when reminded on Thursday via personal email they completed the task by Friday. Only one teacher was on the list every week for the reminder email.

2. The more organized I was for the teachers the more I was for myself as well.

I noticed I was more reluctant to add an activity for the teachers if it wasn't on the expected schedule. I also noticed I kept to my schedule much better and created a to do list for the week prioritized by importance. I found myself leaving on most Fridays by 5 pm.

3. If you really want to do something, you'll find a way. If you don't you'll find an excuse.

The weekly priority to do list helped me to organize my time and necessary actions much better. I noticed that as long as I completed all the important tasks by the end of the day I established at the start of the week I didn't stay late every night trying to "get things done". I knew what had to be done by when to avoid stress. I also realized audiobooks and podcasts were fantastic ways to achieve my goals for improving myself by utilizing the 90 minute daily commute to/from work. I also determined I need to be pushed to get to the gym. I used to not want to exercise with my husband because I was comparing my accomplishments to his. Once I quit the negative self talk was nice having an accountability partner.



Where Am I Heading Next

I intend to keep up the newsletter format for the rest of the year. I am sure I will make tweaks for the start of next year.

I am setting more concrete personal goals for a more healthy lifestyle.

I have purchased an Audible subscription and also get audiobooks from my library. I intend to listen to professional and personal books.

Plan more activities with my family.

Finish my EDS

Excited about Year Two for IPLI



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Background Leading to My Inquiry (Slide 2)

I have always been somewhat of a workaholic. Honestly everyone in my life (including myself) expect it during the week. Over the past few years, I have been feeling overwhelmed and frustrated at home and work because I felt like I was “always on the go” with a never ending “to do” list. I was staying at school later than usual most nights (not including nights I have to stay for events). Fridays were often past 9 p.m. to make sure everything was ready for the next week to avoid working on weekends.

The mini AR project helped me realize “me time” for myself would never look like me time for other people and that is okay! When I started doing the activities that I wanted to do (organize my life, read books, workout on my terms, etc.), I noticed my frustrations at home dropped dramatically. I noticed over all breaks I drank no pop and was fine.

School frustrations were a different matter. I had become more organized but my stress was coming from my surroundings. I caught myself craving pop. Teachers were missing deadlines and/or forgetting upcoming events causing me “put the fire out stress”. Staff often blamed the missed information on the following: amount of emails, time of day I sent emails, and emails concerning school improvement surveys sent over a break. I had to get teachers past using excuses but had to admit to myself they had some valid points.

The Purpose of My Inquiry (Slide 3)

The purpose of my action inquiry was to get organized and improve/streamline communication.

My Wondering (Slide 4)

Due to the amount and time of emails I send out, I think teachers are overwhelmed with emails and missing important information. I wonder if I condense school information or expectations into a Shared Google Doc with hyperlinks if staff will miss less deadlines and will feel more informed. A second (smaller) wondering is how I will feel adapting to not sending the information out immediately but waiting for the weekly email.

My Actions (Slide 5)

At the start of this project, I looked at a few different colleagues weekly newsletters. I determined I wanted to accomplish the following with my newsletter: inspirational quotes, funny memes, professional development, reminders, upcoming events. I created a template so the information would be easy to find (same place each week). I included different levels of professional development for teachers.

Data Collection (Slide 6)

Quantitative data consisted of tracking two concerning factors. The first concern was how many emails I sent each day to the entire staff from July to April. The second concern was determining who completed the required professional development without reminders each week. Qualitative data came from tracking two positive areas. I collected the results from all the Google Forms on the PDs and looked for evidence in classes as I visited. I kept a journal of how this process changed me personally.

My Data (Slides 7-8)

Quantitative data

The daily data collection on emails opened my eyes to how overwhelming my teachers were with sheer number of emails. I received numerous emails and comments about liking the one stop shop for information.

The weekly data collection on professional development indicated when reminded on Thursday via personal email they completed the task by Friday. Only one teacher was on the list every week for the reminder email.

Qualitative data

The professional development submissions on Google Forms were very reflective and I often saw strategies used in classrooms. I even had teachers sharing ways they were using strategies and technology to include in the newsletter. The optional professional development that required more time and a summary to get PGPs was only utilized by a handful of teachers. Also, more participated in the school improvement surveys because I included the reminders on the weekly newsletter.

In regards to changes for me personally, I really believe it started with my Mini AR goal (more personal time) being more difficult than I thought it would be. I knew I wanted my newsletter to more than just information I could include in yet another email. I wanted it to inspire change! After starting the search for inspirational quotes to include in the newsletter, I realized I had been missing some of that in my personal life. Over the course of this AR Project, I am EXCITED to say ...

- a. Husband and kids commented on me being home early and time together
- b. I finished eleven books (some had been on my "wish list" for years)
- c. "Kondooed" my house and office. I decluttered/organized and for the first time took time to decorate each space. Taking the time to really care about the areas has made our house a home that we have pride in now.
- d. I completed PD on cultural mastery, three classes for my Eds
- e. I even started going to the gym with my husband and lost 10 pounds.

My Discoveries (Slide 9)

Teachers appreciate when we try to condense information. Due to the nature of teaching, sometimes reminders are necessary but for the most part if in a condensed form they will read it and complete the tasks.

The more organized I was for the teachers the more I was for myself as well. I noticed I was more reluctant to add an activity for the teachers if it wasn't on the expected schedule. I also kept to my schedule much better and created a prioritized to do list for the week.

If you really want to do something, you'll find a way. If you don't you'll find an excuse. The weekly prioritized to do list helped me to organize my time and necessary actions much better to avoid stress. I realized audiobooks and podcasts were fantastic ways to achieve my goals for improving

myself by utilizing the 90 minute daily commute to/from work. I determined I need to be pushed to get to the gym it was nice having an accountability partner.

Where I Am Heading Next (Slide 10)

- I intend to keep up the newsletter format for the rest of the year. I am sure I will make tweaks for the start of next year.
- I am setting more concrete personal goals for a more healthy lifestyle.
- I have purchased an Audible subscription and also get audiobooks from my library.
- Plan more activities with my family.

Bibliography (Slide 11)

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