

IPLI Cohort 7 AR Teresa Stuckey

We Need a Leader, Not a Manager

Hello, I am Teresa Stuckey, IPLI Cohort 7. My action research is entitled We Need a Leader, Not a Manager. Have you ever felt like you spend most of your day being a manager when you really wanted to be a leader? That's where I found myself many days. My background belief is that the most important role of the school administrator is to be an instructional leader and according to Strong, Richardson, and Gitano, the primary goal for the principal should be building and sustaining school vision, sharing leadership, leading a learning community, using data to make instructional decisions, and monitoring curriculum and instruction. That's what I really wanted to be spending my days doing.

The perceptions and the reality in my school at 68% poverty, much of which comes from Section 8 housing, the time spent addressing social emotional learning challenges and emotional dysregulation is consumed with putting out fires instead of doing what I really love to do, being an instructional leader for my staff and for my students. Coming into the principal ship, I was used to independently handling all my issues and I'm learning that I can delegate to my secretary more than what I am used to doing. My Educational Assistants in lunchtime aids seem to escalate some of the issues with student and from after recess to the end of the day, my days became consumed with dealing with behavior issues. I needed to find a way to change that, so the purpose of my inquiry was to quantify my current time on instructional leadership and find ways to maximize my time for more instructional practices. The organizational and administrative tasks are inevitable, but my goal is to make adjustments to my current practices so that I can spend more time planning and implementing instructional leadership and focus on classroom instruction.

So my wondering was this: What changes could I make to my current practices to show my staff that all things related to classroom instruction and student learning are my priority, how can I demonstrate that leadership is my priority, how much time do I currently spend on tasks that could be categorized as instructional, management, personal, or other. What instructional tasks do I need to spend more time doing and how can I make more time available to be the instructional leader that I want to be. My goals were to determine the instructional leadership task that I feel I need to do more by naming and keeping the vision in front in the forefront of every day for students, staff, and myself, keeping up with my current daily walkthroughs, while making more time for positive or directive feedback, more time to discuss data at grade level meetings, and keeping up the Tile 1 strategies for every grade level, narrow our vision and strategies used to achieve them, and inspect what I expect, like their plans or objectives interventions and student engagement. My data on time spent on other tasks showed too little time on the most important part of my job, so I began to assess in my actions

by collecting data on time usage, reading Daniel Pink's *When*, training and delegating educational assistant, local assistants, and secretaries on best practices and expectations, revamping the behavioral plan for Buddy teachers and procedures before sending them to the office, streamlining the behavior Improvement Plan, making clear and timely requests to special education school psychologist when observations show that we were going to need that, ensure that I did not let the urgent take place of the important for more than a day at a time, intentionally schedule instructional time if needed, schoolwide book study which we began in March using *Hacking School Discipline* by Maynard and Weinstein. We will continue that over the summer. Another goal was just to get more sleep. So I tracked how often I was in bed before 10:30 p.m. and it does need to be more often.

The following is the data in columns showing time spent on instructional, management, and personal tasks. I used different colors to differentiate and I differentiated between hours on contract and after hours' time, as well as the days of feeling satisfied or that I kept management bay with teachers and parents satisfied at the same time versus days that I spent most of my time doing management and what teachers notice or comment about. I began collecting data and I did this over the very beginning of my action research and then again in the middle and the end. What I'm showing you here is the yellow columns which are management and if you look at the later half of the day, especially, and sometimes the mornings, it was a lot of yellow or a lot of management. My goal was to get more pink during the instructional part of the day. During the school day, I'm really wanting to do more instructional instead of having to push that off until after hours or late at night. When I analyzed the data at a glance, it's obvious that I was able to accomplish more instructional time. It was just a brief showing so you may not have seen that, but I did. If you consider that the picture on the right with the p.m. part of the day belongs underneath the picture on the left, you can see that the columns on the left represent the second semester. The semester after I started implementing some of my strategies, I also noticed feeling much more satisfied with accomplishments. I noticed having more conversations about planning and goals instead of behavior management, and that was my goal. My discoveries included that it is best to carve out time for an important work that requires more thoughtful and insight in the morning instead of tackling all of the urgent things first. The checklist of things that can probably be handled in the afternoon, I would do whether I was tired or not. I should do the more thought consuming things first. By doing these earlier in the day I found that I was more productive. I could stay focused on the other little task even at the end of the day when I'm mentally exhausted because they require less thought and because I'm motivated to stick with it and check them off my to-do list.

Taking time to meet with employee groups regularly and to train them on staff expectations, behavior management, emotional learning strategies, and other procedures is well worth the time and actually save time in the long run. My

interventions included quarterly custodial meetings instead of one per semester, working to keep the peace and high standards, and quarterly educational and local assistant meetings to keep everyone at peace and maintaining high standards, and applying strategies from Daniel Ping on the best time to tackle certain types of tasks, delegating more to my secretaries. If it is something that does not require decisions or confidentiality, allow them to do it. It took me awhile to learn this when I came into the principalship. Next year, from the start of the school year this coming fall, I hope to stay on track with my new practices and I plan to track the time spent on various tasks next year to compare to this past fall. I hope to see that my productivity as a leader has remained elevated with my new practices and discoveries in place. I will continue to have at least quarterly meetings with employee groups and train all staff as we progress towards our academic goals and those strategies that help us manage behavior. We are beginning a school-wide book study, *Hacking School Discipline* by Maynard and Weinstein. This was to have begun in April we are actually having a staff meeting next week off of school property, since gathering at school is not actually allowed right now. We are staying on track with our book study and will be ready to begin implementing in the fall. I will work this spring and summer with my Core Team to establish our goals for the 2021 school year and set a time schedule for staying on track with those goals/

Here are my resources. I used *Qualities of Effective Principals*, *Hacking School Discipline*, and *When: The scientific secrets of perfect timing*. If you have any questions or would like to speak to me more about my project ,please feel free to email me at TRL@Vigoschools.org

We Need a Leader, Not a Manager

Action Research

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Sugar Grove Elementary

Spring 2020 Cohort 7 Indiana Principal Leadership Institute

Background Belief

- The most important roll of the school administrator is to be the instructional leader. According to Strong, Richards, & Catano, the primary goals of the principal should be:
- Building and sustaining a school vision
- Sharing leadership
- Leading a learning community
- Using data to make instructional decisions
- Monitoring curriculum and instruction

Background Perceptions & Realities

- In my school of 68% poverty, much of which comes from Section 8 housing, the time spent addressing Social Emotional Learning challenges and emotional dysregulation which disrupts the learning environment, I felt consumed with putting out fires instead of doing what I love, being an instructional leader for my staff and students.
- Coming into the principalship, I was used to independently handling everything on my own. I am learning that I can delegate to my secretaries and designees more so that I am more available as an instructional leader.
- My educational assistants and lunchtime local aids seem to escalate issues with students and from recess to the end of the day, my days become consumed with discipline.

Purpose of This Inquiry

- The purpose of my action research is to quantify my current time on instructional leadership, and then find ways to maximize my time for more instructional practices. Though organizational and administrative tasks are inevitable, my goal is to make adjustments to my current practices so that I can spend more time planning, discussing, and implementing instructional leadership focused on classroom instruction.

My Wondering

- What changes can I make to my current practices to show my staff that all things related to classroom instruction and student learning is my priority. How can I demonstrate that instructional leadership is my priority?
 - How much time do I currently spend on tasks that could be categorized as instructional, management, personal, or other?
 - What instructional tasks do I need to spend more time doing?
 - How can I make more time available to be the instructional leader that I want to be?

My Goals

- Determine the instructional leadership tasks that I feel I need to do more.
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- Naming and keeping the vision in the forefront of every day for students, staff, and myself.
 - Keeping up with my current daily walkthroughs, but making more time for positive or directive feedback.
 - More time to discuss data at grade level meetings and keeping up with our Title 1 strategies for every grade level.
 - Narrow our vision and the strategies used to achieve them.
 - Inspect what I expect. (Plans, objectives, interventions, student engagement)
 - Data on time spent on other tasks showed too little time on the most important part of my job.

My Actions

- Collect data on time usage
- Read Daniel Pink's *When* and apply pertinent practices
- Train and delegate Educational Assistants, Local Assistants, and Secretaries on best practices and expectations
- Revamp the Behavior Plan for buddy teachers and procedures before sending to the office.
- Streamline the Behavior Improvement Plan writing
- Make clear and timely requests to the Special Education School Psychologist when observation needs are suspected.
- Ensure that I do not let the urgent take the place of important for more than a day at a time. Intentionally schedule instructional time if needed.
- Schoolwide book study beginning in March using *Hacking School Discipline* by Maynard & Weinstein
- Get more sleep—How often do I get to bed before 10:30PM? Needs to be more!

Data Collection

- *Tracked:*
 - *time usage data in columns showing time spent on instructional, management, personal, and other with differentiation between hours on contract vs. after hours.*
 - *days of feeling satisfied or that I kept management at bay and kept teachers and parents satisfied at the same time*
 - *what teachers notice or comment about*

Tracking Administrative Tasks

The charts below show tracking of the types of tasks during a school day including early morning and evening hours. The goal is to have more pink shaded areas than yellow. The columns on the right side of each pictures show 2nd semester progress.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
6:00:00 AM	M(custodian)						
6:10:00 AM	M(custodian)						
6:20:00 AM							
6:30:00 AM					P Swim @ VCSC Aquatic Center		P Swim @ VCSC Aquatic Center
6:40:00 AM							
6:50:00 AM							
7:00:00 AM			M-emails				
7:10:00 AM	M(tidy prep absent custodian)	I Admin Coop	M-Teacher needs				
7:20:00 AM	I Trngll	I	M				
7:30:00 AM	I needs	I	M	M-Respond to email. Show subs to room	M-Responding to emails, directing secretaries	I-VCTA Discussion Group	M-Calls for PreK Aid and respond to emails
7:40:00 AM	M(Ifunction) Mfg Plan	P coffee stop	M-Supervision/arr				
7:50:00 AM	M-Breakfast				M Breakfast/Arrival		
8:00:00 AM	M	M-arrival, etc	M	M-		M-Behavior Intervention	M- Breakfast/Arrival
8:10:00 AM	M	M parent conf	M	Breakfast/Arrival	M		
8:20:00 AM	M (pledge/announcement)	M pledge/announcement	M Pledge/Announcements	M-Pledge Announcement		M-Pledge Announcement	M-Pledge Announcement
8:30:00 AM	M	M-disregulated Ch	I Met with Parent		I-Reviewing Data & notes for Grade Level Team Meetings		I- Star Student Celebrations (Getting to Kids)
8:40:00 AM	M (issues)	M	M				
8:50:00 AM	M	M	I				
9:00:00 AM	I-Meet w/ parent		I Walkthroughs	I-Walkthroughs	M-Working with custodians & Delivery Guys for new refrigerator	I-Grade Level Team Meeting	
9:10:00 AM	preschooler add	M	I			I-Retirement Party Planning for SPO	
9:20:00 AM	about gutting.		I	I-Working on Writing Grant Plans			
9:30:00 AM	Advisory	M-Sped Staffing					M-Assist with Vision Screenings
9:40:00 AM	I-Walkthroughs	M	I				
9:50:00 AM	I	M	I		M-Student Discipline		
10:00:00 AM	I	M	M-discipline				
10:10:00 AM	behavior to others	M	M	M-Discipline			
10:20:00 AM	sharing)	M	I Work w/ student		I-School Improvement Plan Prep		
10:30:00 AM	M	M	I-work w/ student				
10:40:00 AM	M	M	I				
10:50:00 AM	training)	M	I				
11:00:00 AM	I-Walk-throughs	M	M-discipline	I-Walkthroughs	I-Walkthroughs	I-Walkthroughs	
11:10:00 AM	I	I-Walk Throughs	M-discipline				
11:20:00 AM	disregulated child	I	of students		M-Lunch with students and supervision	M-Behavior Interventions	
11:30:00 AM	M	I	I				I- Lunch visits with kids
11:40:00 AM	M	I	I	I Meeting with Teachers		Lunch conversations with students	
11:50:00 AM	students	I	I Learn review				
12:00:00 PM	I	I	I		M-Emails and Planning		
12:10:00 PM	child	I lunch w/ students	M	M Lunch with students and supervision		M-Purchase Orders	
12:20:00 PM	M	I	M				
12:30:00 PM	M	M-disregulated Child	M				
12:40:00 PM	M	M-parent conf	M		I Faculty Meeting & Core Team Planning	M-Building Needs and Work Requests	
12:50:00 PM	M	M	M				
1:00:00 PM	M	M	M Submit reports	M-Discipline			
1:10:00 PM	M	M-child discipline	M				

Sheet1
Sheet2
Sheet3
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Analyzing the Data

- At a glance, it is obvious that I was able to accomplish more instructionally focused tasks during the school day in the 2nd semester. If you consider that the picture on the right is the PM part of the day and belongs underneath the picture of the left, you can see that the columns on the left which represent the second semester tracking, are much more pink (instructional) than yellow (managerial).
- I also noticed feeling much more satisfied with the accomplishments of the day during 2nd semester than I did 2nd semester.
- I noticed having more conversations about planning and goals that behavior management. That was the goal. Yay!

My Discoveries

- It is best to carve out time for important work that requires more thought and insight in the morning instead of tackling all of the “urgent” things first. The checklist of things can probably be handled in the afternoon.
- By doing though-intensive tasks earlier in the day, I found that I was more productive. I could stay focused on the little other tasks even at the end of the day when I’m mentally exhausted because they require less thought and because I am motivated to stick with it to check them off my to-do list.
- Taking time to meet with employee groups regularly to train them on staff expectations, behavior management, social emotional learning, and other procedures is well worth the time and actually saves time in the long run.

My Interventions

- Quarterly custodial meeting instead of 1 per semester. Working to keep the peace and high standards.
- Quarterly Educational and Local Assistant meetings to keep everyone at peace and high standards.
- Applying strategies from Daniel Pink on the best times to tackle certain types of tasks.
- Delegating more to my secretaries. If it is something that does not require decisions & confidentiality, I can probably allow them to help.

Where Am I Heading Next

- From the start of the school year in the fall, I hope to stay on track with my new practices. I plan to track the time spent on various tasks next fall to compare to this past fall and hope to see that my productivity as a leader has remain elevated with my new practices and discoveries in place.
- I will continue to have at least quarterly meetings with employee groups and to train all staff in areas that may progress towards our academic goals and those that help us manage behavior so that behavior isn't taking up the majority of my time. We are beginning a schoolwide book study of *Hacking School Discipline* by Maynard & Weinstein in April 2020.
- I will work this spring and summer with my Core Team to establish our goals for the 2020-2021 school year and set a time schedule for staying on track for the goals.

Resources

- Strong, H., Richard, H. Catano, N. *Qualities of Effective Principals*. Retrieved 01/27/20 from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/108003/chapters/Instructional-Leadership@-Supporting-Best-Practice.aspx>
- Maynard, N. & Weinstein, B, *Hacking School Discipline*. (2019) Times 10: Ohio
- Pink, D. *When: The Scientific Secrets of Perfect Timing*. (2018). Riverside Books: New York