

Michelle Beck

Covington Elementary

IPLI Cohort 10

Action Research Project: Lightening the Load

Background

In May of 2023 I finished my fourth year as principal of Covington Elementary school. This, however, was my 23rd year as a staff member at CES. After graduating from college, my first teaching position was here at Covington. I taught kindergarten for two years and third grade for 17 years prior to obtaining the role of administrator. I stepped into this position knowing the exact strengths and weaknesses of our school and the areas in which I wanted to improve. Shifting the climate of our school was my number one priority.

During my first semester as leader, I was carrying the heavy burden of changing the climate in my building and was wanting immediate gratification and results for my efforts. I began to notice a slight positive shift in the right direction, then Covid happened. We had taken one step forward and now two steps back. The following two years I found myself and my staff struggling to crawl out of the

hole that Covid had put us in. I was beginning to feel very discouraged.

The purpose of my action inquiry was to develop a better mindset in regards to enhancing the culture of my building and to avoid burn-out.

Wonderings

With this purpose, I wondered if I took a step back and focused on the success of each individual day and asked myself the following questions, would any of them surface as a priority and would they help me to avoid burn-out?

1. Have I nurtured relationships that I care about?
2. Have I taken care of “me”?
3. Have I asked for what I want?
4. Have I maintained my personal boundaries?
5. Do I experience being recognized for the above?

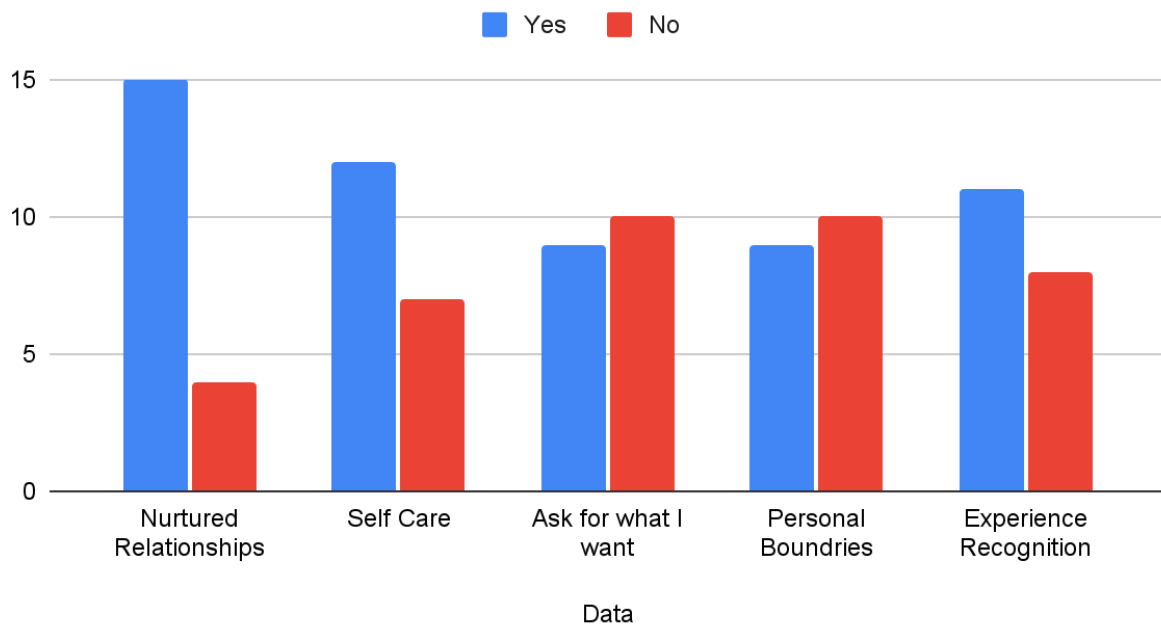
Method / Procedure

To gain insight to my wondering, I spent time at the end of each day, reflecting on that day, and asking myself the questions that challenge my “Harmonizing” personality. According to my PCM analysis, the questions above should pose a challenge to me. I used a checksheet system and recorded my responses for each question on google sheets.

Findings

After a six week period of time, I discovered that there are two areas of focus in which I answer “no” after daily reflection more often than “yes”. “Do I ask for what I want?” and “Do I set personal boundaries?” There was a consistent correlation between the days in which I indicated “no” to these two questions and the days I felt discouraged and burnt out.

Yes and No



Concluding Thoughts

Going forward I plan to start each day with a moment of meditation with a mindful focus on setting intentional boundaries and assertively asking for what I want during the day ahead of me. I plan on continuing to collect data

to measure my level of job satisfaction on the days in which I carry out this mission. I have also learned that it is completely unrealistic to think that I can make everyone happy all of the time. It is a natural process to experience highs and lows and to experience frustration. In my mission to “fix” the climate of my school, I set good goals but on an unattainable timeline and lost sight of the ultimate end goal. I have learned that patience is a virtue and this will be a lengthy process.

Bibliography:

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