

Blind Spots: Communicating and Reflecting on my Leadership Core Values

By: Ryan Hill, The Crossing

Contact: rhill@crossingcec.com

Background That Led to Your Inquiry:

I recently transitioned into an expanded leadership role. Upon reflection, it occurred to me that a set of clearly established and communicated personal core values may help my teams and I clearly pursue our school's mission and goals. When leadership is passed from one leader to the next, it seems important for the new leader to identify and communicate the core values that will create the lenses for decision making. Therefore, the purpose of my action research was to identify and communicate my core values and determine the impact of doing so on my educational leadership practices.

Statement of Your Wondering:

With this purpose, I wondered how my practice of school leadership might be improved if I identify and communicate my leadership core values?

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into my wondering, I went through a self-discovery process to identify my leadership core values. I used a few online tools to evaluate my personal leadership values. I then explored how my values are present in my leadership practice both through self-assessment and staff surveys. I did this by identifying the core values present in my leadership meeting agendas (and the meetings themselves). I then surveyed staff to ask which values they found present in the same agendas/meetings upon conclusion of each of a series of five meetings. This meant that we were evaluating both the content of the agenda and the meetings themselves for alignment to the values. I analyzed the survey data for similarities and differences and journaled my reflections of the reasons for the likenesses and variations. This process occurred over a period of 3 months.

Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing my data, three important things I learned include: 1) Myself and others see me lead highly focused teams and meetings with strong action plans, delegation and shared responsibility 2) Myself and others see room for improvement in achievement of specific goals in the agenda (possibly trying to accomplish too much at once) AND my driven nature leaves room for more creativity and balance 3) Myself and others were scattered on value creation for numerous stakeholders, creativity and balance.

I discovered the above learnings through survey data analysis and self-assessment. I looked at "most like responses" "most discrepancies" and "largest variations" in the data sets. In other words, the values and corresponding questions of did our agenda/meeting get to:

- Truth (Get to the core/center of issues?)

- Ownership (us and others?)
- Empower (us and others?)
- Perseverance (Overcome obstacles?)
- Value Creation (Add value for stakeholders?)
- Achieve (Desired results?)
- Focus (Streamline, create win-wins, precise goal?)
- Inquiry (Data, questioning, facts, critical thinking?)
- Creativity (New solutions to complex problems)
- Balance (Will solutions create balance for stakeholders?)

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

I learned:

1) In leadership, communicating my core values and accepting feedback uncovered blind-spots in my current leadership methods/style when compared to the desired state of my leadership practices and desired outcomes.

2) Reflecting on variations in perspective between myself and my team allowed me to focus on key growth areas.

3) Fighting a top-down implementation tendency will be my greatest challenge as I tend to be a driver. Harnessing creativity of others and balance will be a challenge.

I will make adjustments to my leadership practice by:

- 1) Slowing down, pausing and breathing
- 2) Ensuring time for creative collaboration
- 3) Gaining buy-in and A-Z support for plans

References:

<https://www.inc.com/kevin-daum/define-your-personal-core-values-5-steps.html>
<http://www.herbstevenson.com/articles/core-values-assessment.php>



Leadership Core Values

Cohort #5 - AR Year 1

Ryan Hill



The Set-Up

Purpose: Identify my leadership core values and understand how they are reflected in my practice.

Question (Wondering): How will my practice of school leadership be improved/affected, if I identify and communicate my leadership core values?



The Process

Identify my leadership core values

Be reflective when leading (core team meetings)

Post-meeting surveys (team and personal) / Journals

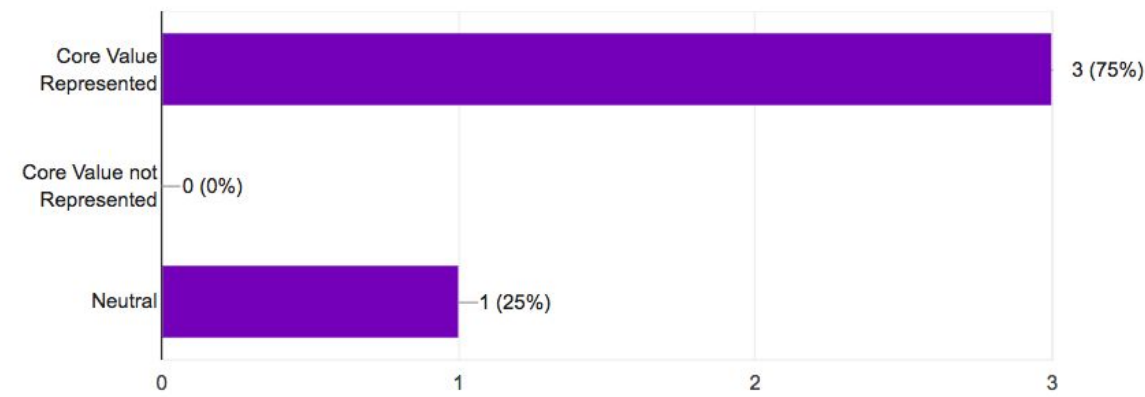
Data Analysis, Reflection, Findings, Next Steps

My Core

1. **Truth** (Get to the core/center of issues?)
2. **Ownership** (us and others?)
3. **Empower** (us and others?)
4. **Perseverance** (Overcome obstacles?)
5. **Value Creation** (Add value for stakeholders?)
6. **Achieve** (Desired results?)
7. **Focus** (Streamline, create win-wins, precise goal?)
8. **Inquiry** (Data, questioning, facts, critical thinking?)
9. **Creativity** (New solutions to complex problems)
10. **Balance** (Will solutions create balance for stakeholders?)

Empower (Did we empower one another/others?)

4 responses



Sample of Survey Analysis

Example Survey Question

Survey Reflection

Ryan's Survey:

- I saw most core values reflected which is a win
- I didn't feel as though we "added Value" for stakeholders in a dramatic way so I stayed neutral, but we did provide management tools and structures that will eventually reach the goals. Same with Achievement.
- I didn't feel we overly creative or created balance for stakeholders.

Staff Survey:

- Staff members thought we owned it, allowed others to own it and achieved desired results.
- Dinged on perseverance, value creation and balance and creativity. Only by 1 person on each of those.

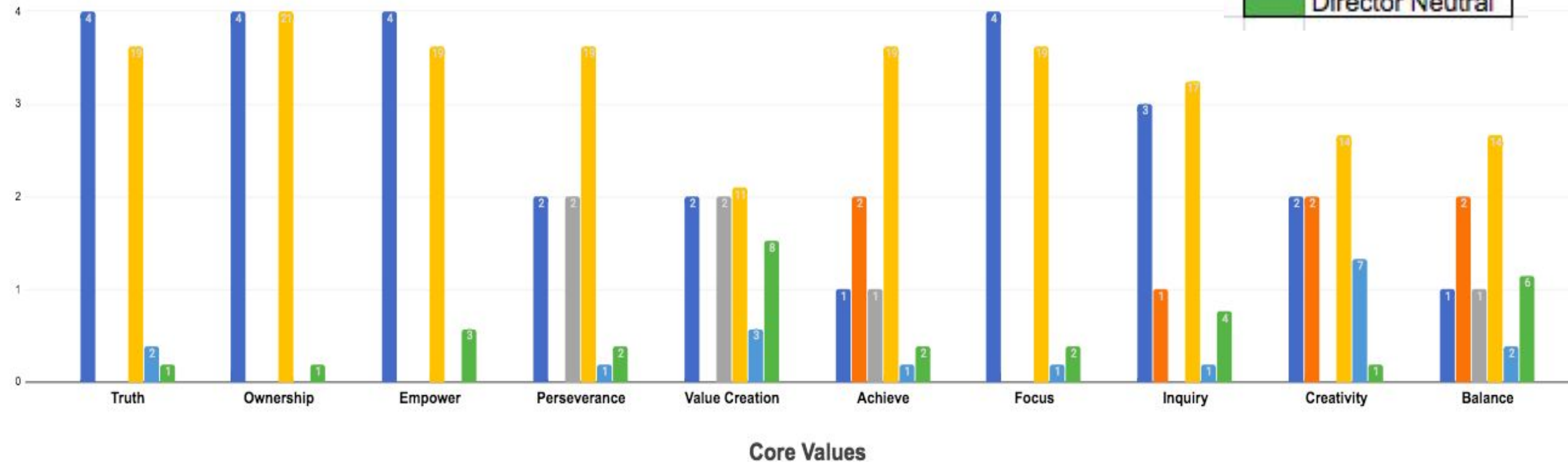
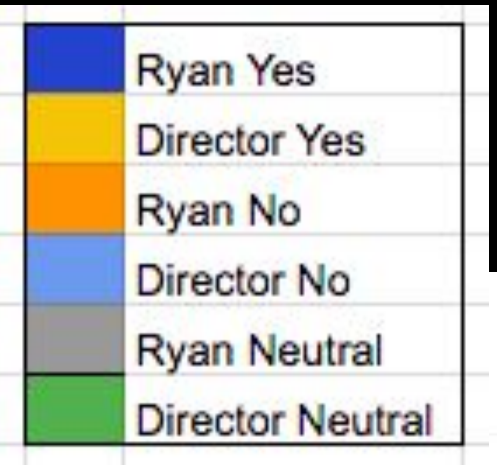
Core Values Reflection

- At this point, I am contemplating adding a value related to mission or relationships.



Findings - Survey Data

Core Values Represented in the Meetings?



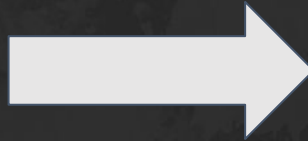


Findings - Journals/Reflections

****Analysis of survey data collected across four meetings****

- Most Like Responses

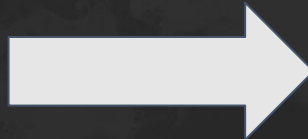
- Truth
- Ownership
- Empowerment
- Focus



Myself and others see me lead highly focused teams and meetings with strong action plans, delegation and shared responsibility.

- Most No's

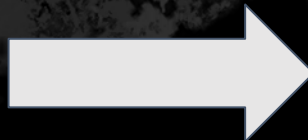
- Achieve
- Creativity
- Balance



Myself and others see room for improvement in achievement of goals at meetings AND my driven nature leaves room for more creativity and balance.

- Largest variations

- value creation
- creativity
- balance



Myself and others were scattered on value creation for numerous stakeholders, creativity and balance.

Benefits/Takeaways

“Communicating my core values and accepting feedback uncovered blind-spots in current leadership state vs desired state”

“Reflecting on variations in perspective between myself and my team allow me to focus on key growth areas”

“Fighting a top-down implementation tendency will be my greatest challenge. Harnessing creativity of others and balance are a close second”

Next Steps

“I will make adjustments to my leadership practice by...”

“1. Slowing down, pausing and breathing”

“2. Ensuring time for creative collaboration”

“3. Gaining buy-in and A-Z support for plans”

