

Can Regular Exercise Make Me a Better Principal?

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Background That Led to Your Inquiry:

There is no doubt that being a principal can be very stressful and finding time to address my own personal needs is challenging as I balance the high demands of school responsibilities with my other personal commitments. I was looking for a way to determine if maintaining regular exercise habits could have a positive effect on my work performance.

I noticed that when I went days without exercising I became sluggish and my work productivity seemed to decrease. Other times after exercising it seemed my mood became more positive and I was more efficient. Therefore, the purpose of my action research was to determine if regular exercise could help me be a better building leader.

Statement of Your Wondering:

With this purpose, I wondered if regular exercise could increase my performance with work productivity, focus, and mood.

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into my wonderings, I looked for a way that I could track data to determine if regular exercise could positively impact my work productivity, focus, and mood. I also wanted to track these areas separately to determine if one area was affected more than the other. I decided that a 1-10 rating system submitted each night via google form would give me the information that I needed to determine any trends.

I set a goal to exercise at least 3 times a week so that I would have enough data to make the action research project a viable experiment. Evenings were the optimal time for me to exercise ,so I tracked my performance the following day after each exercise session. My goal was to spend at least 30 minutes either walking, jogging, or running.

At the end of each work day, I consistently rated how I performed in the area of work productivity, focus, and mood. I reported out at the same each day in an attempt to get consistent data, and I tracked this data consistently over the course of 2.5 months.

Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:

As a result of analyzing my data, I learned that exercise did impact my work performance as a building leader. On days following exercise, I saw an increase in my work performance, productivity, and mood. I also learned that work productivity was the area most affected by exercise ,whereas, mood was the least affected.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

This action research project has reinforced the fact that in order to help others, I must first help myself. The airline safety rule of "first put the oxygen mask over your face before helping others" really seemed to connect with how my personal self-care habits need to be a priority.

By taking care of my own health needs, I can be more present and more productive for the people around me. I learned that carving out some time each night for healthy habits, is not time wasted but rather time "invested" so that I am fresh and energetic the following day.

In conclusion, being a building leader is about finding balance. There are only 24 hours in the day; however, if I am intentional about scheduling time for healthy habits, then I can recoupe that time through increased work productivity, focus, and mood.

References:

N/A