

"Get The Monkey Off My Back!"

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Background That Led to Your Inquiry:

In August, I started the school year with new office staff. I know the importance of being a strong instructional leader in order to see growth in staff and students.

I was looking for a way to track delegated tasks to help me with personal growth and to build teacher-leaders. My goal is to move from business manager, with many monkeys on my back, to an instructional leader who protects lead teachers. Therefore, the purpose of my action research project was to track and delegate tasks to my office staff and create more instructional leadership time for me.

Statement of Your Wondering:

With this purpose I wondered the best way to track delegation to help with my personal growth and create trust among my teacher leaders.

Methods/Procedures:

To gain insights into my wondering, I collected data by journaling how time was spent, daily for 2 months. I wanted to keep track of delegating office work to my new administrative assistants. I also wanted to keep track of how my time was spent to see if there were other areas team leaders could help in. I then color coded data and divided tasks into 5 areas. The 5 areas included Special Education, Office, Discipline, Professional Development, and Human Resources. I made a pie chart. In October and November I spent 42% of my time on office tasks. I spent 21% of my time on Professional Development.

January and February I collected the same data, colored how time was spent and made another pie chart for comparisons. Much to my surprise, I spent 52% of my time with discipline issues related to Special Education. Only 12% of my time was spent on office tasks. In December I had read the book, "Shifting the Monkey" by Todd Whitaker. This proved to be helpful in the managing of office tasks. But it brought to light another area of concern.

Stating Your Learning and Supporting it with Data:

FINDINGS:

As a result of analyzing my data, I learned that my Special Education Department needed reorganization in the transition room.

Second, I learned that classroom teachers need more tools in their toolbox to help with explosive students. We had at least 3 meetings with Special Education staff to brainstorm ideas of supporting explosive students. We met with the Spec Ed coordinator. The transition teacher and myself visited another transition classroom to get ideas of running centers, computer programs that might be helpful to manage different learning levels of students spending larger amounts of time in this classroom. We also started researching sensory room equipment.'

Second we viewed Dr. Greene's videos for collaborative and proactive solutions to help behaviorally challenging students. The literacy coach and I planned a book study of "Lost at School" by Dr. Greene. We highlighted the philosophy of kids do well if they can. We reviewed the first 2 chapters of the book and will continue an in depth study next school year. We are also planning Compliance Training for staff next school year.

Providing Concluding Thoughts:

I learned that tracking my data helped me to focus on spending my time with staff and students instead of office tasks. I am a visual learner. The graphs that I created were very helpful. I shared them with administration and staff. My findings second semester helped to start some good discussions to support Special Education and discipline support in the classroom for teachers for explosive children.

For the Future: We created a leadership team for the next school year to help with team meetings and PLC's. We have planned at least one book study on the explosive child and lagging skills. One classroom teacher is doing research on a classroom management idea to replace the current "move your clip" system. We have planned Compliance Training to support staff members.

References:

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- Whitaker, Todd. (2012). Shifting the Monkey. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.