PCM and Teacher Retention

Name of School: Eastwood Elementary
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Background Leading to this Inquiry

New teachers have entered the education profession at an unfamiliar time. Coming out of a pandemic, given the mental health instability of students, and the general stressors of the job; new teachers are leaving the profession quicker than ever. I hired three first-year teachers and one first-year counselor before the school year began. Eastwood receives the most Title 1 funding in our district. We are a K-6 building and have around 350 students. Our students come to us experiencing high amounts of trauma and families from poverty. For new teachers, this can be a challenge with so many students in your classroom experiencing this.

Purpose of this Inquiry

Therefore, I wondered if I was able to learn more about the PCM and found ways to better communicate to my new teachers, if that would help increase staff morale and help with teacher retention. If my new teachers felt this way then hopefully this would help with teacher retention as they would feel valued and appreciated. With this purpose in mind, I wondered how the PCM could best serve me as a leader with my teachers.

My Actions

- My Understanding of PCM and how it impacted me
- Identifying my new teachers base and phase based on the PCM Book
- Schedule Meetings to discuss my thoughts with each teacher
- Create a google quiz using Seeing People Through
- Meet with the the teachers again
- Implement the knowledge I now have to make teachers feel valued

Data Collection

- Notes from book of examples that I heard or noticed about each teacher.
- Quiz Results

Phase: Harmonizer: Losing confidence and self-esteem.

Base: Imaginer: Imaginative, reflective, calm, (Want privacy and their own space) – She imagines, not sure at times, waits for more directions, struggles making decisions on her own.
Prefers to be told what to do. (p89). Doesn't like requestive mode of communication as it can invite stress and miscommunication. When I do communicate I need to clarify directives and allow time and space to execute.

P125- She starts questions often with "If it's okay, could I...." "I'm fine with whatever" (Harmonizer)

(Imaginer) It occurred to me that

Things I can do according to p126
-Make her feel safe, avoid judgement, listen to their feelings and show I care. (Harmonizer)

Examples: Social interactions with other lifeskill teachers often turn to tears and anger for Kim. She lacks confidence because she doesn't know as much and in turn, gets angry at herself and others. By her own admission, her body will start to cry whenever conflict arises, even if she doesn't necessarily feel that way. This has happened in my interactions with me and other teachers.

When it comes to her students, she wants them to be treated fairly. She has tried several times to mainstream some students, which is a good thing. Finding the right lunch schedule for her students has been an issue this year as some become aggressive in that setting. She has fought, and gotten angry, with lunch staff when she perceives things as unfair.

In her personal life, she is a natural caregiver. Examples are she has adopted a former student with special needs. This was a long process that started when she was an aide. The parents had passed away so she fought

Emily Orr (Counselor)

Base: Thinker

Phase: Harmonize

Feed the(base)side of her by

Phase needs:
1) Recognition of productive work and proper time structure.
2) Energized when there are clear structures, guidelines and a chain of command is in place.
3) Can I count on you?
4) Provide them time to complete desired tasks and follow through on my end of what I will say I do.

Choose 2 of these options that you typically find yourself saying when presented with a new idea.

- [x] I think- I need options- I need the facts- The Who, What When, Where, and Why
- [ ] I believe- In my opinion- We should- I trust that- I am committed to- My values
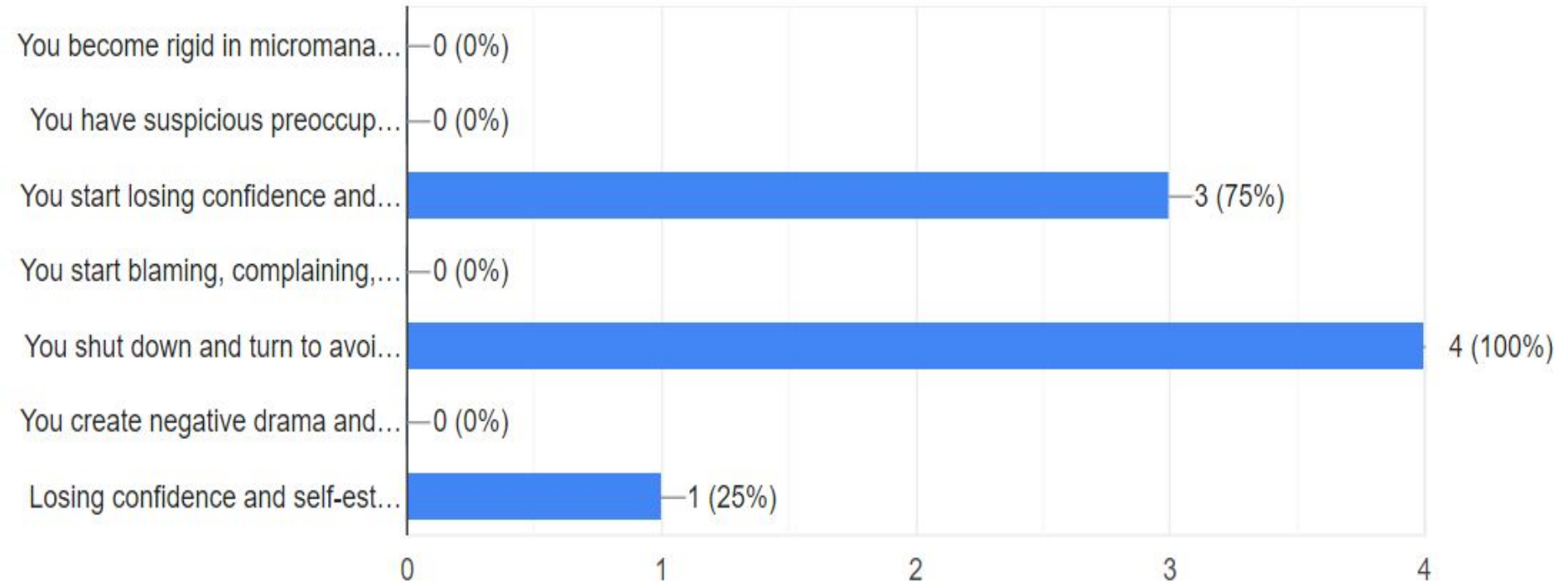- [x] I feel- I am comfortable with- I am happy, sad - I love, care
- [ ] I like it, I hate it, I want it, I don't want it, Wow! Sounds like fun
- [ ] I imagine, I'm not sure, I'll wait for more direction, I need time to reflect, I don't want to rock the boat
- [ ] Let's Go!, Let's make it happen, Let's go for it, The bottom line is

Which 2 personality types do you find yourself reverting to when times of stress/anxiety take over?

4 responses

Response	Count
You become rigid in micromana...	0 (0%)
You have suspicious preoccup...	0 (0%)
You start losing confidence and...	3 (75%)
You start blaming, complaining,...	0 (0%)
You shut down and turn to avoi...	4 (100%)
You create negative drama and...	0 (0%)
Losing confidence and self-est...	1 (25%)

My Discoveries

During this project I learned that how people perceive leadership matters, that teachers who feel valued and heard show resiliency in tough situations, and that investing in people is the best way to build the culture of the building.

Next Steps

My next steps will be:

1) Keep feeding the phase of my new teachers.
2) Long term goal: I get to know all teachers base and phases
3) Share with teaching partners and staff others base and phase

Bibliography

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To gain insights into my wondering, I first needed to understand the PCM for myself. Viewing my results first, I wanted to be able to explain the PCM and how it helped me understand myself better to my new teachers. I read Seeing People Through and began to write down certain statements that I would say matched my phase and base. I then looked at what my stressors were and what I need in order to get back to phase and base. Doing this first helped me understand myself better, which helped me understand the PCM better, and then I was able to explain to my new teachers the need for this.

Next, I began to schedule meetings with each teacher and explain the PCM and why I was doing this. In this meeting, I had jotted down a few thoughts on what I thought their base and phase might be based on statements or personality tendencies I had experienced. The teachers were excited after leaving this meeting as they found it interesting and they appreciated the forethought of wanting them to feel appreciated and considered. Most of the teachers agreed with what I was seeing, but there were still some questions about the validity on the different types based on conversations.

After this meeting, I wanted to be sure that I was as accurate as possible with their base and phase. I worried that if I'm wrong then I might be doing more harm to the teachers if I'm not feeding the base properly. I went into the book and created a 5 question quiz based upon the graphs in the book. This was a very basic quiz, however, it did give me more insight into what each teacher needed from their opinion rather than formulating my own.

Next, I held meetings with each teacher to go over the results from their quiz. In all four of my cases, there was an overwhelming majority of answers that led to one of the traits. I believe this told me the base type for each person. Then, I looked at the next two highest totals,

as they were close, to ask which one they thought they were more liek based on some of the information from the book.

Finally, once I established their base and phase I was able to have great conversations with each of my new teachers. It went from surface level conversation to some really great insights for me as their principal. In every occasion, I could see my teachers start to get more comfortable once they knew that I understood how they worked, what made them feel valued and worthy. Teachers began opening up and telling me what they needed from me so that I knew what to say to make them feel valued. It was also great for me to discuss with them their cover-ups they might use when they are stressed and are out of their phase. We were able to discuss what I would be able to notice if they were out of their phase and ways to bring them back.

Once implemented, I was able to have convserations, send positive emails, and step into situations where I knew the teacher might be overwhelmed and help get them back to their base. Data is still being collected, but each teacher has said they feel supported and valued at this school. All intend to be back next year. Two teachers have been trying to get friends to apply for openings that we have. One teacher is trying to get her mom to come work in the main office. This is evidence that the teachers think this is a great place to work and where they feel valued.

During this project I learned that how people perceive leadership matters, that teachers who feel valued and heard show resiliency in tough situations, and that investing in people is the best way to build the culture of the building.

How teachers perceive me as leader matters more than reality. I learned that once I was able to sit down and have these deep conversations, how much more authentic I became to them and them to me. We got to see eachother as people rather than co workers in this top down mentality. I now feel like I can give them constructive feedback and they understand that I am coming from a place of growth and trust. This has been evident with feedback I have given on observations and their openness towards it.

The teachers that I chose for this have worked one of the strangest years in education. Coming in with students who haven't had a full year of school in two years is hard enough, but for a first year teacher its even harder. The teachers I have been investing into have taken tough students on and haven't back down. They have found their teacher voice when other first year teachers are heading for new careers after this year. These teachers are excited about their profession and although they work hard and are stressed, they find fulfillment in their jobs.

Finally, I have learned that investing in people is a great way to build culture. These teachers trust me as their leader and trust that we will do what is best for students. These teachers all feel supported with administration. We don't have a lot of negativity in this school, but they have steered away from it and look for solutions to problems rather than living in their problem. They are great assets to our school in their first year of teaching.