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Fundamentals that result in a well-managed school : a reflective essay

Abstract

Educational leadership takes on many roles. In this paper I will reason in areas of collaboration, discipline, and planning, while exploring the relationship that they have on a well managed school. I will address the six Iowa Leadership Standards of: Professional Leadership, Visionary Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Collaborative Leadership, Organizational Leadership, Ethical Leadership, and Political Leadership; and make some parallels to my future success as an administrator using these standards.

FUNDAMENTALS THAT RESULT IN A WELL MANAGED SCHOOL

A REFLECTIVE ESSAY

A Research Paper

Presented to

The Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling,

And Postsecondary Education

University of Northern Iowa

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

by

Brian Gravel

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Education is a fundamental tool that can be used to improve your life. This sentence has been a belief of mine as long as I can remember. I believe that the totality of experiences in life has a huge impact on the formation of an individual's outlook on life; education has been a value that I have held to be very important throughout life. As a parent and an educator, one of the goals of almost everything I do is to make an impression that persistence, experience, and open mindedness have a huge impact on success. Giving the best possible effort on a daily basis is another key to that success.

I can remember my first grade experience. I went to a Catholic School where students showed respect to others on a daily basis, and were expected to do so. I really enjoyed elementary school because it was structured, there was a clearly defined leader in the classroom, and my friends were there. Throughout my pre college days this was regularly the case, I thought that this was an understandable system and I accomplished the goal of graduation. For many not in the same situation as I was, I think that school meant different things, and I believe that is acceptable too because we are all not the same. A fundamental goal of mine in leadership will be to make the process of goal setting very important so that not only can I assist students in finding their goal, but work with other educators to make professional steps to improve their lives.

Educational leadership takes on many roles. I hope to continue learning as an educator, and to be a good role model for those who work with me and for themselves. In this paper I will reason in areas of collaboration, discipline, and planning, while exploring the relationship that they have on a well managed school. I will address the six Iowa Leadership Standards of:

Professional Leadership, Visionary Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Collaborative Leadership, Organizational Leadership, Ethical Leadership, and Political Leadership, and make some parallels to my future success as an administrator using these standards.

I believe that education is a tool to improve life. I think that a person has the ability to improve life for the better, no matter who they are or where they are, through education. We are tremendously fortunate in this country to have a great learning environment to work with, and in, on a daily basis. Since I have become an educator it has become more apparent to me that the world is a classroom because of the impact adults have on children, students, and families. Each part of daily life requires so much skill that we take for granted, and I think that education requires the ability to recognize and utilize those skills. As an administrator it is tremendously important to utilize this sense of improvement for students.

I have had the opportunity to work with many students who come from what many would consider the lower economic class. I use the word opportunity because it has awarded me the ability to see that even when people are not given many things in life, they can use what they do have to improve their lifestyle. During this time I have worked with a lot of individuals who have been harnessed by a disability, a stigmatism placed upon them by someone else's behavior, which has given them a really poor attitude on life. As a leader, I hope I can work to bridge the gap of misunderstanding that is so large in our culture regarding disabilities.

Many people forget that education is also a sign of completion. Many people in life do not complete a higher education. Some people do not see the value of years of education, and some do. On the other hand I think that those who can complete a higher education have done something truly special, and it is a great accomplishment. Leadership is the synthesis of education, motivation, discipline, and planning. The six Iowa Leadership standards of:

Visionary Leadership, Instructional Leadership, Collaborative Leadership, Organizational Leadership, Ethical Leadership, and Political Leadership, are qualities that are important to the success of an administrator. Although all of these qualities are important, I hope to be a leader that synthesizes the most important fundamentals of individual situations. I believe that my personal strengths and attributes contribute to the areas of collaboration, discipline, and planning to make schools more effective.

Discipline and Leadership

Leadership is an exceptionally important, yet elusive quality. I believe that true leadership can make or break a team, and that leading by example is critical. Each year that I have been a teacher I have worked under the same principal. I have had the opportunity to learn about consistency, perseverance, and professionalism.

Throughout my life, consistency has been a virtue that I have aimed to achieve. Consistency is important for me as an individual because it gives me meaning, and a path to remain constant. I believe that a consistent and steady pace is vital to educational and personal growth, both from a student and staff leadership perspective.

In the current educational climate that exists, perseverance seems to be a tremendously important virtue to have. The “No Child Left Behind” legislation has created a huge amount of turmoil in many areas of education. It has created the question in many educators’ mind, of “they want us to do what?” From what I can tell, this is an issue that educators do need to be patient with, and display a certain degree of flexibility. This is a great example of an unfunded mandate, and I think that through quality leadership schools will again persevere.

When I began college as an undergraduate, I was enrolled in many business classes. One of the classes that I took (and thought useless at the time) was called “Professionalism”. In this

class we learned how to conduct ourselves, and the daily behaviors of successful people. I really did not see the practicality of this class at that point in my life, but I have really found this course to be enormously important in the working world.

Because schools are pillars in the community where they exist, impressions by the community of the school are very important. As I work into an administrative role I believe I can work with the custodial staff to maintain a clean, well kept school. I work with three paraprofessionals “report” to me, and I have tried to be a good role model to the things that I see as important in working with staff and members of the community such as timeliness and professionalism. I hope that I can grow in these areas also and look forward to the opportunity to do this.

During most of its twenty-two year existence, the Annual Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes toward the Public Schools has identified “lack of discipline” (Doyle) as the most serious problem facing the nation’s educational system. Many parents, teachers, and students are gravely concerned about disorder and danger in school environments. These are some of the facts surrounding the issue of school discipline. School administration today deals with an increasing amount of disciplinary referrals daily. Classroom time for students to master essential standards increasingly remains a premium. Effective leaders can communicate well with students, staff, and other leaders, to reach goals of the school and the community in both academic excellence and constructive citizenship. Having a school wide disciplinary plan helps to maintain the consistency and vision that are essential in educational leadership.

Is “discipline” concerned with preventing misconduct or punishing it? According to the Webster’s Universal College Dictionary (p.229), the word means both prevention and remediation. It can be training to produce a specified result, or it can be punishment that is used

to train or correct. Educational research has examined both the prevention and the remediation aspects of school and classroom discipline. I will cite findings of both in this report because I believe that a well organized school should have a well stated discipline plan as well as classrooms that follow the plan. Effective leaders can assist both staff and students by implementing a discipline plan that holds high standard of conduct that fosters the educational and personal growth of students.

A discipline plan that is effective will meet the needs of those who administer it and follow it. Having high behavioral expectations and commitment from staff are essential preconditions of learning. Well-disciplined schools tend to be those in which there is a school wide emphasis on the importance of learning and intolerance of conditions that inhibit learning (Dowd).

Student participation in developing and reviewing school discipline programs creates a sense of ownership and belonging. Widespread understanding of clearly stated rules assures that staff and students understand what is and is not accepted, this simple policy is a great way to maintain consistency at a school. In 1989, six middle schools in South Carolina combined data and found that students lost 7,932 instructional hours to in and out of school suspensions in a single academic year. From this point it is important to make the difference between the offenses of criminal and non-criminal offenses (Dowd p.3) .

Offenses that are criminal in nature at a school generally are the least common. Such crimes include but are not limited to physical assault, violent threats, illegal substance usage and distribution, and traffic violations. The most time consuming of offenses, the non-criminal, involve tardiness, inappropriate hallway activity, inappropriate language, classroom behavior, and student appearance issues. School discipline policies can greatly assist in establishing

guidelines to these trouble areas if well written, well communicated, and followed through with on a consistent basis. A consistently delivered disciplinary program in a school can be both nurturing and reinforcing.

Along with consistency, rules, sanctions, and procedures should be developed with input from students, staff, and parents. Policies that are clearly specified and are made known will assure that there is less misunderstanding of these policies. For students that are in crisis, disarray, or feel that they are being singled out, it can be somewhat comforting to know that they are being treated in a fair and systemic approach. A warm school atmosphere can be created by students accepting some ownership of school policy, not only to conform but to realize that they are actually contributing to life long learning and citizenship. Delegation of authority to teachers from administration helps to create this environment, as well as a highly visible principal.

Collaboration

Understanding of the dynamics involved in school composition is fundamental to the success of discipline. At any given time in secondary schools there may be many different social and educational issues occurring at the same time. The atmosphere of safety for learning is very important; a strong school discipline plan can offer the nurturing environment necessary for growth and learning to occur, while instilling the structure that is essential for progress. The flexibility of discipline is vital to the success of children, just as there are differences in each student and the perception that they may have, policies also may need to have an amount of flexibility to accommodate for student needs. Public Law 94-142 is a mandate that is greatly important in the administration of Special Education Law. P. L. 94-142 does not specifically address the discipline of handicapped students, however, regulations surrounding a students' Individualized Education Program have stipulations as to how they also can be disciplined.

Students with IEP's should not be above the regulations stated in the discipline plan of a school, however their disability may cause the policy to need additional flexibility. As administration deals with students and with families, it is important to remember that individual families have socioeconomic issues that may add stress to situations. Collaboration with staff professionals to implement individualized programs, and working with families to attempt a communication plan to insure student success in school can be vital to school success.

Programs that have been effective are ones that provide balance. Consequences that are commensurate with the offense are vital. If there is inequity in a consequence, there will be more friction caused and the effectiveness of the consequence may be lost. The student must see the consequence as an effect of the action that they took. Occasionally punishment can be unintentionally reinforcing to students by drawing negative attention. Consequences should be limiting to students, limiting their privileges, mobility in the school, or the company of their peers. Team driven decisions and career driven innovations such as career exploration assignments can be very enlightening to students. Other ideas for accountability for students include; in school suspension, contingency contracting, and of course all discipline should involve home/parental contact. William Glasser's Reality Therapy is one way of teachers helping students to make clear choices based on the consequences that may happen due to those choices. Glasser is a well-noted behaviorist who studied choices people make and the consequences of these on a persons thinking pattern (Glasser p.76). Ineffective discipline programs often include inconsistent, unenforceable rules. Vague rules that can be manipulated, teachers ignoring of violations, excessive punishment, and corporal punishment are all things that lead to ineffectiveness (Doyle). The unpredictability of previously mentioned policies lead to unpredictable behavior, which is against positive school discipline and against school

improvement goals. Moreover, creating rules that may cause spontaneous results are divisive and counterproductive; productive disciplinary actions should include student study teams to evaluate students and assure proper placement in appropriate settings.

As an administrator, I envision working longer days, having more responsibility, and a busier schedule filled with appointments and interruptions. I am positive that my daily schedule will change very much as I move from teaching to administration. The positives of administration will include working with staff and students to build their career goals, professional and personal flexibility, and the lifestyle that will contribute to my personal and professional success. An enormous part of administrative success will include administrative intervention with students. Each administrator that I have interviewed has said that student intervention and office referrals are a growing time commitment, and they feel it is important to be an effective interventionist.

School Wide Planning

Father Edward J. Flannagan said, "There are no bad boys. There are only bad environments, bad examples, bad thinking" (Connolly p.3). Father Flannagan was the creator of what would later be known as Boys Town, a treatment facility for troubled youth. This program would evolve into what becomes the Boys Town Educational Model in 1979. Planning for intervention is one of the key components to the Boys Town Model, and it is historically a very respected system for managing behavior and social skills in schools. Administrators can learn from the Boys Town Model not only when working with students, but in many aspects of the daily routine in education. Planning for the systematic and unpredictable aspects of education by having a solid plan of action can ease many pressures that can arise. Planning for educational excellence, academic recognition, student scheduling, and community communication can assist

administrators in being successful. Having a well-managed calendar, secretarial staff that is well organized, and courteous office personnel, are all essential parts of planning for a successful school.

Each school year that I have been in education, both as a student and as a teacher, was unique. A school year is a journey that can be an odyssey, a horror, or a prelude to a long sleep. As administrators, we will be in charge of facilitating a vigorous and inclusive environment that challenges students and staff to insure life long learning. Planning by administration to ensure having the most qualified staff, helpful answers to each question, and the best effort to make every student find some success in every day will add to the continuous success of the school.

Management

The excitement of a new school year provides opportunities to reestablish expectations and introduce changes (Whitaker p.37). A well-managed plan to introduce management practices within a school can help to deliver a consistent attitude to students and a strong, confident, and uniform language to staff and students. Consistency throughout the year can be assured by communicating with students that the same process will be followed with each situation, and that it is the goal of the administration to create an environment in which social skills and education are valued.

Reviews of classroom and school management suggest that five major factors can be correlated with school management. The following are large components of the Boys Town Educational Model.

- A sound theoretical foundation and understanding of classroom management and the needs of students.
- Strong positive teacher-student and peer relationships.

- Instructional that is motivational.
- Organizational and group management techniques that maximize student on task behavior.
- Problem solving techniques that empower students to assume responsibility for managing their own behavior (Brophy).

The five foundations of a well-managed school can create environments that are positive, supportive, and at the same time, well structured. Effective management can maintain the structure of school, and help students acquire the necessary skills to think and problem solve, ultimately helping to develop a more positive self-image.

Communication

Administrators set the tone for school communication. Administrators can be the collectors, keepers, and disseminators of information that gets communicated in schools (Brock p.112). Strong leadership requires self-awareness, a strong philosophy, and professional goals. The management of daily routines through a cohesive and consistent plan of action can greatly aid the functioning ability of the educational system. A plan for management can fundamentally assist school staff, and can be a direct reflection on the leadership of the school.

Rationale, by definition, is exercising fundamental reason (Zamajtuk p. 342). Having a common language used by staff and students helps to insure a solid communication plan, and ensures sound reasoning and validities discipline. Staff in a building generally has a common language, which is supplemented by the previous education that they possess. The bridge that is created between students and staff by having a management plan can help in the development of a school. Maximizing the effectiveness of all individuals in a school, including staff and students can build a cohesive bond that will benefit the school.

Educators that work in Special Education or in the General Population each have challenging daily tasks. When a student that has started in Special Education has the ability and the desire to reach the general population, yet the work has only begun! Not only will the student be asked to do more and be accountable in another setting, both the General Education teacher and the Special Education teacher are both in for quite an additional job. The implementation of the federal law No Child Left Behind keeps the school districts in Iowa with children in categories, or subgroups, in numbers greater than 30 in a very tough position. These children must score above the 40th percentile on standardized tests to help the school maintain a good standing by the Federal Government. With this emphasis on improved testing, it is increasingly important for Special Education to work in collaboration with General Education to help students meet their educational goals.

Administrators that can improve the staff communication of the people in the building in which they are working are improving the education of the students. Teachers can do their jobs more efficiently, more productively, and the school can be a better-managed school if communication lines are open between staff. As a teacher it is much harder to establish success for a student if a teacher in another classroom is not aware of the goals, hurdles, and accomplishments that a student is dealing with. I have worked with many teachers who have been receptive to Special Education students integrating into the General Education classroom, and I have worked with a few teachers that are unwilling to work with students and teachers that are trying to make the classroom a success

Transition is a huge issue when working with Special Education students. The classroom setting that I have been involved with for seven years in High School has been a self contained environment that students come to generally after many failures throughout their lives, but they

are still willing to come to school, even though they have very intense needs, which includes a small class size and a higher supervision rate. Transition from the classroom that is self-contained to a classroom that has a higher number of students is a difficult thing to do, but with careful planning and good communication it can be done correctly. As an administrator, I will take the experience of a self contained environment and working with challenging students in a large school with a diverse population, and use the positive integration that the students have had as a building block to future integration successes. Transition is an area that takes regular communication between teachers, homes of students, and any support staff that are involved to make it possible. Even if everything is done correctly, transition will sometimes fail, and this is perhaps the hardest element of collaboration. Persistence is a huge quality to possess when working with students, and as an administrator, I am sure I will not always experience success. The concept of communication will make the times that I am not successful hopefully fewer and further between.

§20 U.S.C. Chapter 33, Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), is an important legislative action not only because it puts an enormous amount of money into the educational system for students with special needs, but also it makes it mandatory that schools do their best to meet the needs of students. In this act, the law identifies the driving force in Special Education, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). In the IEP, it is mandatory that a General Education teacher be present at the meeting if the student is going to be involved in General Education. This is an example of how important the concept of collaboration between general Education and Special Education is. Honestly, I think that some schools do a better job of “encouraging” teachers to follow these guidelines, for example the atmosphere that I work in does an average job of assuring that collaboration happens. When the year is coming to a close, it

seems to be a very arduous task for administrators to hunt down teachers to assure that their IEP's are completed for the year, so I plan on having a consistent message with special education teachers to do their jobs. I believe that it is a simple concept and that when a teacher signs a contract or accepts a job, that it is a job expectation to do IEP's on time. As an administrator, I hope that I can be flexible on this policy when I need to be, and hold it as an expectation most of the time.

Because it is so important, the educational placement decision is protected by a variety of procedural safeguards (Bartlett p.198). Placement of students into Special Education is a hugely important task, and another reason that collaboration must happen to be a successful administrator. Parental involvement is one of the most important safeguards, and challenging when dealing with the difficult situations that seem to be growing in the lives of students of today. If a student is appropriately placed, the chances of Special Education services being effective are greatly increased. There are students that will not ever see a day in the general population for classes. Again, this is where it is wonderful to have school assemblies and activities where students can be involved and included. I think that Washington High School in Cedar Rapids Iowa does a good job of including students, but it is something that can always be improved.

What is motivation and how can I as a leader help others to reach for higher places than they are currently at? This is the question that will help me to become a better leader. While working with students I have decided that it does little good to work with the end product, i.e. a person who feels that someone has done something to them; but if I am going to make a lasting change in someone, it will do me more good to attempt changing the environment and the working attitude of the person. When I work with staff and students in the future, in the capacity

of a teacher or an administrator, I will have the ability to work with many different individuals. Individuals have something that makes him or her work, something that motivates them, which, in turn, drives them toward success (Dweck). Each of these programs has a benefit, and each will reach a specified audience more effectively. Overall, the benefits of cognitive restructuring can be worthwhile and a great assistance to education of students that have problems with behavior, if educators and other professionals can use a system to help students identify problematic areas in their lives it may be a huge benefit for them.

In public education, there is an increasing number of youth being served in our schools that are eligible for IDEA services. One of the criteria for being served in Special Education is if a student has a Behavior Disorder. Among the qualifications for a Behavior Disordered student is not following directions and choosing to oppose the directions that they have been given. Motivation for students that are oppositional is a very challenging area, and it can be a frustrating and draining experience to find a method to assist these students. A pattern of thought leading to negative cycles of behavior in the classroom is an area that educators have attributed to problems in schools.

In psychological terms, changing minds is called cognitive restructuring. The ways we perceive people and events around us and the beliefs we hold about them are the keys to our feelings and actions. People in distress can learn to reinterpret happenings, think differently about them so that they seem less overwhelming. The purpose of this teaching tool is to teach students to challenge the logic of faulty beliefs and perceptions and to replace them with new thoughts that are calming and constructive. When restructuring ideas, abstract ideas are made reachable for young thinkers by personifying them, and when actions are taken in this light it makes them easier to examine, and change for the benefit of the student and educational system.

Methods

There are a number of skill training methods that are currently being used in schools to enhance the skills of students. Many of the existing programs often take on different names. They sometimes are changed to meet the individual goals or standards that are needed in particular areas or schools. Below are a few different programs that have been used in schools; some are more successful in certain situations than others.

The Clear Thinking program (Nichols p. 4) is a model of cognitive restructuring. It is a program that aims to challenge the thought process of youth by a series of activities that put a student into a decision making role. Clear Thinking materials are based on the literature of cognitive-behavioral therapies, principally those of Albert Essi (1962), Aaron Beck (1976), Donald Meichenbaum (1977), and their successors (Nichols p. 5). They are termed cognitive because they stress helping people by teaching them to change their thoughts and beliefs. They are called behavioral because when people's thoughts and beliefs change, their behaviors change, and so do the behaviors of people around them. The methods are described as psycho-educational because they are the same ones educators use to teach new skills in school: new ideas are presented, real life applications are investigated, new thoughts are practiced and repeated until they become automatic, and homework is assigned to assure that classroom learning is generalized to real life. Students are given a soft cover text that they use clear thinking skills to solve problems, this is a class that can be taught and used as a type of elective credit for social skill training. The vocabulary of this method of cognitive restructuring is vital to the development of students. Words such as rational, irrational, over-generalization and catastrophe are some of them. The text is broken into short passages by obvious typographical bullets and sections; a workbook that students can provide practice on specific points supports it.

It provides fundamental resources for ongoing counseling with students as well as things for students to analyze. The system is set up to keep a portfolio of thoughts, habits, and internalized beliefs; this is the assessment tool for educators. Along with the above information, it emphasizes student groups to facilitate conversation.

The Boystown Educational Model is based on teaching social skills to youth (Dowd). The complexities of human social behavior become readily apparent upon examination of techniques for training a youth to be more “socially skilled”. Activities that many people see as part of daily life such as introducing yourself, following directions, and carrying on a conversation, can present major hurdles for students who have not developed a repertoire of effective and acceptable social skills. The Boystown method offers many different scenarios to present to youth, and hold discussions with students to solidify proper social skills. This is a program that is not necessarily a “class”, but is offered as an addition to other curriculum to help educator’s model appropriate behavior. The goal of this social skill training is to establish in students acceptable interaction skills with other students and adults. In order to accomplish this, staff, working with students must have a clear concept of what constitutes social skills. This system analyzes functional relationships of behavior, and breaks them down into Antecedents, Behaviors, and Consequences. This model offers skill scenarios to assist in the teaching of students that are leveled to build skills in students.

Criminalized Antisocial Behavior, a concept developed and implemented by Stanton Samenow and Herbert Quay, is a model that focuses on a system of beliefs that lead students to deviant thought processes (Samenow p. 41). Cognitive restructuring is the goal of this program and it is often offered by many alternative school settings that deal with more students who exhibit highly oppositional behaviors. This method is usually accompanied with some type of

physical training program, sometimes the students that are in these programs are court ordered and have had socialization problems.

Samenow studied groups of criminals at St. Elizabeth's Psychiatric Hospital in Washington DC. He proposed that all criminal behavior and thinking can be explained by the existence of thinking errors that do not have deterministic origins. "Biological, psychological, and sociological explanations have failed to account for the willful decisions of criminalistic behavior, regardless of personality or background" (Samenow p. 98). Moreover, he suggests that traditional methods of intervention are not effective with criminalistic thinkers, therefore the method of habilitation for these individuals in a phenomenological sense to surmount activities by pre-empting the activity with a change in cognitive thinking (Samenow p. 13).

In my experiences, I have used all of the above models being used in schools and in Residential Treatment facilities. They each have merit, they each have down falls, and the key thing seems to be that they need to be tailored toward the students that are being educated. The most important thing that I have learned about these models is that each particular model does have a piece that can be used. The cognitive restructuring that can take place can be a motivating factor for not only the students to improve their own lives, but for the educators to use as learning tools. Dweck states that another possibility to blocking the growth of individuals are the entity and incremental learning viewpoints (Dweck p. 34). A very valuable learning tool in this experience is repetition, approaching the situations that come up with a common language, and with an understood goal. As administrators, we can use these models to understand how to choose parts of curriculum, what motivates students to learn, and that environmental characteristics effect learner outcome.

School Motivation

I currently work in a building that has over 100 certified staff, and in the Special Education Department, which is the largest department in the building. Our department is experiencing a change in the leadership of the Department Chairperson, the chairperson from the past many years retired last year and was replaced by two "co-chairs" who are splitting the duties. The transition has not been an easy one for anyone involved, and best said I am using the situation as a learning tool. Motivation is a huge part of this transition because it is clear that the co chairs are operation on their own agenda. They have not sought the opinions of the others in the department, and it is clear also that they do not value much input due to the fact that they did not seek it. As a teacher, I am very unmotivated by this attempt for them to do things their way, not because it is bad, but because it is plainly rude and I feel that people do not cooperate well if they feel like they are not valued. Motivation for a staff that is intrinsically motivated can be a dangerous thing in a situation like this because there are many staff people like myself who feel very disenfranchised at this point and may look for their own way to do things.

Adult motivation, more so with educators, is an evolving art. In my experience I think that respect is a huge element that cannot be over stated. The motivation put on people externally is becoming greater with the NCLB mandates, and whatever a person's position on this mandate it is unmistakable the power it holds in schools is unmistakable. Professionals need to be respected as such. I hope to be an administrator that can treat co-workers as the valued people that they should be, and motivate them to make their important jobs more valuable as team members and educators.

Staff motivation is a topic that I strongly believe is based, again, on the principle of respect and communication. I currently work with administrators that value what I do, and I am

given the respect and autonomy to make decisions. Along with those decisions, I am expected to communicate with the parties that are involved. This has been a great practical lesson in responsibility and accountability for me. As a leader and administrator I hope to carry on the correct things that I have learned that have made me feel more valued as an educator. I too plan to learn from the things that I have encountered that were not successful for me.

Conclusions

In closing, planning for the success of all students and coworkers is a fundamental part of success. Individual success and motivation are an area that I will value as an administrator. I hope that I can bridge the understanding that I have between this psychological foundation and the overall cohesiveness of a school by attempting to work with, and value the individuality of, both students and staff. I believe that motivation in its purest form can make or break the outcome of almost any situation, and I will try to align this belief for the better of the situations that I encounter. I feel that cognitive restructuring is a highly important part of education for some students. For other students, it will not motivate them to enter into situations that will lead to further opposition. I believe that elements of many concepts make effective learning, and that as educators we need to enlarge our "bag of tricks" to help students organize their lives.

Cognitive restructuring is a method for us as educators to improve the lives of students and make them more productive citizens. Increasing the motivation of oppositional students is a very difficult thing. The burn out level of teachers working with this type of student is very high; however there are more students that are being diagnosed with these types of needs, which show there is an increasing need for teachers in this area. Finally, there are different motivational strategies to work with oppositional youth, and it is in the best interest of professionals to educate themselves on the benefits of all to meet the needs of students and to be more successful

in the classroom. I really enjoy working with people who are open-minded and aspire to reach established goals. Being a professional leader is a goal that I hold important, and I hope to grow personally and professionally to reach this goal. Leadership is an area that is vital to the success of schools. Through the experiences I gain in this program I hope to be a leader who open minded and very successful.

As a teacher I have seen Special Education and General Education collaborate effectively and ineffectively. For the sake of the students, there are laws like IDEA in place that protect students. With the experiences I have had with successful integration by students, I firmly believe that it is the job of teachers to do everything possible to make transitions for students possible. Through communication and collaboration, it is possible for administrators and educators to work together to improve the lives of students with special needs. I have identified the vital role that management has in the administration of a successful school. School wide planning, communication, and school management are parts of life long learning that are the goal of every school. The Boys Town Education Model is an ideal system to manage the environment of a school. Largely focusing on social skills, the foundation of the Boys Town Model attempts to incorporate academics and life long improvement. Social skill programs have repeatedly demonstrated their effectiveness in developing a wide range of interpersonal behaviors and skill in diverse populations of adolescents. Administration plays an integral role in school management, as does a combination of evaluation, consultation, and training. Intervention and referrals to administration can be handled in a more uniform matter, as well as reduced in number, by using a uniform language and manner while promoting positive social skills.

Furthermore, I have outlined school discipline, collaboration, planning and leadership programs that are both effective and ineffective. The binding theme in programs that are successful is consistency and communication. Overall, discipline is an idea that does not have to be punitive, but should teach a lifelong learning skill that can be consistently performed and evaluated. Finally, the lack of discipline cited by most adults as a troubling part of education may not cease to exist, however it can be better managed with a solid disciplinary strategy.

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