

9/12/2021 Adult Development Challenge

This occurred last year. I have not experienced a bad situation professionally this year.

I was named PBL director and charged by my principal to provide professional development to each teacher in creating and supporting projects within their curriculum. I would have all staff meetings and also work with teachers individually.

We were in the teachers lounge for an all staff meeting about PBL
I was trying to talk to everyone about the Big Picture and essential questions that help students understand the WHY of what they are learning.

I was having successful conversations with the majority of the staff and then one staff member became angry and even belligerent towards the idea.

She is a math teacher and a very traditional teacher. She is extremely gifted and is by far the best math teacher that students ever have. However, she is opposed to change and believes that math curriculum is the exception to any room for improvement. She is adamant about there not needing to be a big question in math and that they need to learn skills. She also discussed the pressure that she has within the context of state testing and the immensity of curriculum that she must cover within a year.

She has been given special concessions often, such as extra class time with students, double courses in geometry, taking students from other classes to tutor them.

There is an important thing to say. She is Russian. When she speaks, she is passionate.

I was asking her about calculus and what real world things are explained by calculus.

She did not have an answer.

The Biology teacher asked if how ocean waves work, would be under the guise of calculus.

Then the Bio teacher put a graph on the board and started sketching and asking her questions.

The Bio teacher has several of us in the room excited and asking questions.

The Math teacher is getting visibly annoyed.

She begins to rant. She talks about how this is so unimportant and if they can't do the skills then what does it matter if related to the ocean.

Myself, along with several others, tried to tell her that this IS exciting and maybe a path for the students to get on board.

I tried to explain that she would still be teaching the skills that she wanted them to learn but under what would be considered cool to the kids.

Then it became personal. She talked about the classes that I teach and how I can just have fun in my subject areas and they aren't important. She talked about how she hears me sing with kids and I'm doing them a disservice by not being serious in my subject matter. She talked about her child's Spanish teacher and how horrible she was and was linking it to me (or perhaps all Spanish teachers). She then went on about how I have no business telling her how to teach her kids. She talked about this being a fad in education and how the AP exam wasn't going to ask kids about the ocean and so it would be pointless.

She probably spoke for 10 minutes straight. Everyone in the room was silent.

This is not unusual behavior for the Math teacher, so we all just sat back and let it happen.

After she was done, I left.

I stewed about it for the afternoon and spoke to my principal in the afternoon.

Again, because this is normal behavior for her, the principal totally understood but there is definitely a "she'll never change" sort of attitude. So there was no recourse. I told my principal that I would no longer be providing her with professional development in PBL. My principal agreed but it still angers me that if you are stubborn enough, you get what you want and don't have to change - and you actually get out of responsibilities that other teachers still have to do.

I was triggered on a personal and professional level.

I really can't stand teachers who don't pull an equal amount of weight in our school. It's a small staff and if one person is allowed to not meet obligations, it adds to the responsibilities of everyone else.

I don't enjoy being reprimanded.

She made me feel like my work was unimportant. Though I know deep down that it is.

She left the situation unchanged (maybe exhausted from yelling) but I was still carrying the burden and having to make the decision to take it to my principal or just swallow it.

Even though she was clearly in the wrong, there were no consequences for her behavior.

9/26/2021 ITC Map & Reflection

Here is the link for my [ITC Map](#).

I find it very interesting that ultimately, I realized that many of my behaviors are related to how I connect productivity with self-worth. I grew up in a blue collar family that constantly busted their butts to make ends meet. After living through quite a bit of trauma, I also found myself, living on my own as a teenager, having to pay for my own existence. I had to hustle. I had to work a full time job while doing high school. I also knew that education was my way out and up. I have always been the type of person to try to get straight A's and do everything "perfectly." I think I needed to do this so that others would judge me on my work and not on my background.

So since I was a teenager, my work ethic HAD to be extremely high, in order to truly survive and house and feed myself. So the combination of this blue collar work ethic and my own experiences have led me to create a cycle of frenzied work. My very value as a human being is tied to what I get done in a day and if I've done it well.

I will say though, that I am passionate. I generally don't work or get involved with things, just because I need to stay busy. I feel blessed to have a very clear path and calling as a teacher. My love for the realm of education is palpable and I commit to things with this passion in mind. When I asked my ex husband about what I needed to improve on, he mentioned work life balance; but also called attention to the fact that what I throw myself into is inherently valuable.

I do fear though that if I'm not constantly impressing others, I will feel less valued as a person. I need to work on finding worth in myself without connecting it to the idea of productivity. That's a hard one for me, but I have started.

10/9/2021: Deep Listening Practice x 3

What did you notice about your ability to listen deeply?
What came up for you when you tried it out in different contexts?
Where would you place yourself on the [Deep Listening Rubric](#)?

This was a particularly trying week with a lot of very serious issues at hand - so it was perfect for practicing deep listening. I do honestly think that listening is one of my strengths as I work very closely with students and their emotional issues. As Dean of students, I spend a good portion of each day listening and talking to students about a wide range of topics, but mostly about their feelings and experiences. I am lucky to have regular opportunities and the trust of my students to provide a space where they feel comfortable and heard.

I am one who likes to give advice, but have been working on leaving space first and then asking the participant if they would like feedback.

This week we had a student go missing and it was extraordinarily difficult for our student body. On Wednesday, I spoke with three of the missing student's best friends individually. I notice that I lean into them physically, try to understand their level of comfort with eye contact and adapt accordingly, and I nod a lot. I'm also physical and touch them if they are comfortable.

Listening with students is a much different experience than listening to adults. Students seem to get to the heart of the matter more directly while adults tend to tangentialize their complaints or feelings (more like a storm). So when listening to adults, I find myself trying to take mental notes so that if it is necessary to address particular issues, I can do so. I'm sure this practice then leads to less deep listening; so I'm unsure of how to manage that at this point.

I think on the rubric, I fall somewhere between Practicing/Developing and Advanced/Self-Authoring.

10/24/2021 Growth Culture and Homebuilder

I feel incredibly blessed to work in a school in which the vast majority of our staff embraces change and is always looking for ways to improve our practices, both within the classroom and through the functionality of our school. My principal was a teacher at the school for 20 years before taking on the role of administrator. She has a deep connection and commitment to providing an environment where growth is appreciated and applauded.

However, the concept of radical transparency would be difficult to accept. I'm having a hard time accepting the concepts of the Dot Collector, the Issues Log and the Baseball Card protocols by Keegan that are mentioned in the An Everyone Culture article. I feel that this idea of the DDO is potentially contradictory in its very presence. I suppose that these folks in these organizations feel comfortable using these types of protocols to enhance their growth and learning. But as a teacher, I can't even imagine trying to incorporate this in any meaningful way. While observing others teach would be superbly helpful in elevating growth, adding this very intrusive means of identifying others' issues would only make this already difficult profession feel unbearable. I would quit. I'll be honest. The constant internalizing of behavior would drive me mad. It feels like it would be so difficult to breathe and be yourself.

I understand the principles behind the DDO, but honestly school does not feel like the correct environment for it. It is a lonely profession in that we do not receive feedback from many adults - solely the occasional observation from a principal. So this feedback would have to be received by the kids. And I think it would be potentially hazardous to the mental health of both students and teachers to move into a place of constant self-review. Teenagers and children need to learn to improve, but they also need grace. I don't feel any grace in these DDO organizations.

However, the Homebuilders are great! We often use these in faculty meetings and in classes. We do strive at my school to increase our collegiality with our peers; we are like a family at my school. There are only 14 teachers on staff, so we really do have to rely on each other. This makes creating a culture of love and growth very important as it is felt by everyone and is a large part of our culture overall.

December 14th Ladder of Inference & MBTI Reflection

Ladder of Inference:

Can you remember a time when you "climbed the ladder"? What happened?

Describe your ladder? What does it sound like?

How might you use this tool to guide your internal voice and stay low on the ladder?

Personality Types:

When have you worked with (or lived/studied/traveled etc. with) someone who had very different preferences from you? What happened? How do you think your type pairing was at play for you both?

Ladder of Inference

I'm going to be really honest when I talk about my ladder of inference. I do have a terrible problem of assessing men in my profession. Unfortunately, I have had many experiences where the men of my school building just have not pulled their weight and have actively engaged in, what I now understand to be called, malicious incompetence. I would still say that overall, at my school site, the majority of men just do not engage in professional learning, take on additional activities that would benefit the kids, and even complete the required duties. So this then makes me jump to many conclusions about other men that come into the school or are hired.

So I have adopted a belief that I can not lean on the men in my building and that I, or the other women teachers, will have to pick up their slack. When we hired a new male teacher and I was giving our opening Climate and Culture meeting, I made the assumption that this new teacher would either 1. Not be engaged or 2. Try to take over.

I was completely wrong. His responses were thoughtful, engaging and he then volunteered to work with me to create a program that would engage more students in our school's culture. I learned a lot about my biases in that moment and continue to "check myself" as I know that this bleeds into all the relationships that I have, personal and professional.

Personality Types

I am an ENFP. Many of the teachers at my school are tremendously introverted and it is often my job to train and/or travel for training with them. My colleague and dear friend, Lorah, is maybe one of the most introverted individuals I have ever met. I have always found it fascinating that introverts become teachers - it seems like such an extroverted profession. I have been doing a lot of research on this for both my Capstone project and in EDU 610. Anyways, my first trip to San Diego to see HTH was with Lorah. I'm an avid traveler and she is not - and kind of has a fear of new experiences in general. It was clear that I was to be the leader of this experience and she was thankful to have someone there who had the confidence to traverse the airports, taxi cab rides and dinner decisions. But what really struck me was the differences in our approaches to the HTH experience and tour. While I was busy asking questions and approaching teachers and students, she observed. She noticed things that I didn't. She took notes about the feeling of the buildings, the work on the walls, she looked more into the processes that the teachers were using and when she did ask questions, were based on these observations. Whereas, I was just shooting from the hip. Each night, we would have dinner and discuss our day. With the two of us, I think we came out having a well-rounded impression of the school and how it functions. Without her there, I would have missed some of the most important details.

Reflection Journal Prompt: Thinking about the guests we had in class, Romeo Garcia, Dr. Mike Veal, Dr. Adriana Chavarin Lopez, Superintendent Dr. Tina Owen Moore, and Dr. Cyn Rosario's video interview, and the various discussions that we had with them, was there anything that was said that particularly hit home for you in your own leadership journey? Anything that resonates in your current context? Any key takeaways, practices, or ideas that you might want to adopt or adapt?

Where do I even BEGIN??? These guests were so incredibly influential! Just the level of courage and innovation in these people were incredibly inspiring. As you know, through my consultancy, I have been struggling with helping others in the building buy into the changes that I am trying to make this year. I loved that Dr. Tina Owen Moore starts any interpersonal experience of leadership with the idea that "if you can see yourself in others, you can do no harm." It reiterates my need to show the teachers that I am doing this WITH them and not TO them. That I am trying to improve my own growth mindset and that I too am pushing through exhaustion and frustration. It's a delicate balance to be a leader in this aspect while also allowing myself to be authentically tired while simultaneously excited to bring change.

Romeo Garcia's motto of "Better Me! Better You! Better Us!" falls along the same lines as what I mentioned above. I think his role as principal helps in his ability to push this idea among his staff, whereas if I were to preach this, I would certainly get eye rolls and sighs. It is a hard year to implement new ideas. It really is.

Both Adriana and Michael spoke about transformational schools and this is ultimately what I would love to create in the future. But what Michael said about feedback hit home the most. He talked about how feedback is often received as evaluative. This is HUGE. I need to get past this too. I need to recognize feedback as an opportunity for growth and improvement while not falling into the trap that there has been a judgment made about me or my performance. I love that he also talked about how feedback is a reflection of the beliefs and values of the person giving it to you and that we have the right to choose whether or not to receive it. I at this point, like he said, tend to "take every piece of feedback as a hard truth." This is something that I need to work on and remember while I'm giving feedback to others, to remind them that it is not evaluative. Hopefully this will lead to more openness.

Michael also gave great feedback for giving feedback UP the chain of command by using the "I Notice and I Wonder" framework. So brilliant. Feels casual enough not to rock the boat, but certainly opens up the window of communication.

Just one more thing that I would like to remember to do is to “bring a child into the room” during staff meetings and remembering to circle our thoughts and intentions around our kids. It’s a great reminder.

January 17, 2022

Courageous Leadership Reflection

Reflection Journal Prompt: Take two or three ideas from the reading Pedagogy of Courage & two or three ideas from the Dr. Camacho interview that stood out to you related to courage and leadership. What implication might there be for your leadership journey? Anything that resonates in your current context? Any key takeaways, practices, or ideas you might want to adopt or adapt?

I really appreciated Dr. Camacho talking about courage coming from your core values and the need to advocate for what is right and what you need, even if it isn’t popular. This seems to be the core of everything. Paideia is about “pursuing humanity’s highest ideals.” In this very political and divisive time, I do have to wonder who’s ideals we are talking about. I certainly have my interpretation which centers around equity and justice and kindness and cultivating compassion and community. And of course, I do believe those to be the highest ideals. I see these through my own bias and lenses and I know that those who are politically opposed to me would view their ideals as humanity’s highest. I do believe that we all make assumptions about those with opposing views and so at times, this idea of full steam ahead in our own pursuits, feels a bit dangerous. I struggle with this. And then the idea of parrhesia, I feel deep in my heart that speaking the truth and “unreluctantly” standing by what you believe, may be detrimental to connection, conversation and compromise. Those that favor independent rights, American values, use their platform with a “parrhesia” vigor that I often find to be confrontational in a way that stops discourse. So where, as a leader, does one employ Paideia and parrhesia or a willingness for discussion? How am I to be sure that my ideals and core values are what is best for humanity?

On another note, something that stuck out to me during Dr. Camacho’s interview was her discussion of learning how to move in different spaces and curbing her thoughts and reactions so that she wouldn’t be fodder for those who wished to “cross her out of the game.” While I appreciate learning to manage your emotions, I wonder how her adaptability to these different spaces and people fits with the idea of radical authenticity and not letting white supremacy culture dictate the conversation and behavior.

I felt very connected with her when she talked about her armor and being proud of it and unwilling at first to let go of it. As Antonio Gramsci discusses in the article, you have to be willing to let parts of you die in order to mature and gain a more critical view of the world. So when Dr. Camacho discussed her hesitancy, I felt that very relatable, because I know

that my “fighter” mentality has helped protect and move me forward; yet I also understand that for true enlightenment, I must let those parts of me go - being unafraid to be vulnerable to the lessons that I will learn in that process. So this brings up yet another juxtaposition for me; the idea of balance of self and self care and the need to continue to pursue purpose and Paideia. Where does that lie? How does one not burn out, but is that even important in the grand scope of the work that needs to be done?

- Core values - no matter the level of education. Find a shared vision. Parents as decision makers. No one has anything figured out.
- Sense of belonging. Fuels her.
- Learn how to move in different spaces - people looking for ways to cross you out of the game - can give them that - have to manage your emotions...But how does that fit in with being radically authentic and not letting white supremacy culture win???
- Questioning competence - can hold back and not take that personal now.
- Was proud of armor. Feels powerful when able to catch a pinch. I feel powerful when I can see it and manage it instead of just being subject to it.
- How do I fight this without being seen as a fight.
- The anchors are so helpful.
- Advocate for what you need even if it isn't popular.
- Needed the right coach - trust
- Balance own well being (thinking about moving on to another position)
- Struggle with self care and purpose

February 1, 2022 SCARF/TRIGGER & Pinch Sorting Reflection

Write a journal reflection on the TRIGGER that you identified in your Pinch Sort and how it shows up for you, how you deal with it, etc.

Trust (Certainty) – *Our ability to trust others, including their decisions or direction.*

Relatedness (Relatedness) – *How seen we feel, our sense of belonging.*

Image (Status) – *our perception of positionality and our importance to others.*

Greater-Good – *how good we perceive the impact to be on the collective.*

Equity (Fairness) – *how fair we perceive a situation or person to be to us.*

Respect (Autonomy) – *How respected we feel in our ability to carry out a job.*

Here is the link to my [Pinch Sorting Tool](#)

I really learned a lot about myself through looking at my pinches and trigger's. And when I went back to my ITC map, I made quite the realization about myself. I value, above all,

hustle and productivity - both for myself and others. It is the lens through which I make judgements about others and consider my own self worth.

Looking back at my family and where and how I grew up, work ethic was engraved into my brain. You did not gain the respect of my father if you didn't work hard. My brother was seen as lazy and was thus ostracized from the family when he was quite young. My parents divorced and my mother and I moved out of state. We lived in a trailer and were really quite poor. At 12, I was cleaning toilets with my mom who had hustled to get the cleaning job where she was also working as a secretary. We hustled.

My mom then left when I was 15 and I was on my own. I had to go to school full time and work as much as possible. I had to pay for the trailer and all my own food and bills. I maintained all A's while taking care of myself. Hustle was all I knew. I got myself into college and lived on my own (not the dorms) because I couldn't stand the thought of being around students who didn't understand how to work.

So as I have grown, I have settled into this idea that if you do not work hard (almost to the point of ridiculousness) then you have very little value. I have the hardest time relaxing. If I am not "productive" then I feel horrible about myself and my day. In addition, I also want to be in charge because I know that I won't "drop the ball." I have a hard time relying on others that have not demonstrated the same level of hustle. I see a lack of equitable work ethic as unfair. I am angry with others who want to insert their opinions without demonstrating the same willingness in their level of effort - even if their ideas are genius or come from the most authentic of places. I immediately react in this situation.

But it is unfair of me to value productivity over compassion, thoughtfulness and the ideologies that I consider to be of the most importance to my HEART. Productivity is the chatter of my MIND and love is the chatter of my heart.

My boss reminds me that people show their strengths in a variety of ways. The person that I mentioned in my pinch sort shows his through is unending flexibility. He has demonstrated that he is willing to pivot and go with the flow in times where it is necessary. This is not a strength of mine. As a leader, I will need to remember to look for peoples' strengths not necessarily in their work ethic, but through a variety of lenses.

Three Habits to Work On:

1. Creating things WITH others instead of FOR others.
2. Reconnecting with my body through somatic exercises and yoga.

- Opening up and being vulnerable with my boyfriend.

February 16, 2022

Tiny Habit Reflection

The Habit Recipe

	Anchor After I...	Behavior I will...	Celebration To wire the habit in immediately, I will...
<i>Professional</i>	Determine that a plan or activity must be created for the school.	Reach out to others FIRST to receive ideas and co-create if possible.	Give double check marks in my planner.
<i>Professional or Personal</i>	Take my morning pills.	Take two minutes to stretch my body.	Give myself praise.
<i>Professional or Personal</i>	Feel cold and unloving	I will connect physically through touch or emotionally through poetry.	Imagine my heart literally growing.

Tiny Habits Reflection

Well, today I stretched after I took my morning pill. It wasn't quite two minutes, but I remembered my goal and at least took a step in the right direction. I couldn't remember how I was supposed to reward myself, so I just said "good job for remembering" to myself. It's a start.

As for my leadership goal, this has come from many of the issues that I have been confronted with during my program in trying to implement or enhance parts of our school culture. After the incidents that I described in my consultancy and also in my pinch sort, I

realized that many of these issues could be avoided by simply working more collaboratively. I need to get out of my own damn way and the way of others. I tend to take everything on my shoulders and as I realized from my ITC, it's my ego's way of upholding myself and integrating my value with my productivity. So I charge forward. Something needs to be done; I'll do it. I'll get it done, take it on, do it well.

But I don't PAUSE for a second and think about my process, my stakeholders, my partners, my feelings...or anyone else's either. The task needs to be done and so I march forward.

I need to slow down and consider. I need to develop the habit of immediately thinking about how to include others (especially those for whom the activity is based) in the process of creation - to at the minimum elicit their feedback post creation. I think this is hard for me for several reasons. When I'm working, I have a very tight schedule for when I get it done. It's scary for me to have to be burdened with scheduling on top of doing the task itself. It seems like so much extra work.

Also, because teachers are burnt out and over tasked, I don't want them to feel like they HAVE to be a part of it. You know that teachers run on guilt and will always try to help out even if they don't want to...so I don't want them to accidentally feel like they need to do something that is meant to actually save them time and effort. But at the same time, I want them to feel included in the creation process.

February 22, 2022

POL & Overall Course Reflection

Your final reflection on your course takeaways: This should be related to what you focused on in your POL. Reflect on your current needs, wonderings, and next steps for your examined leadership.

What are your main takeaways from this course?

What key learnings did you discover about your leadership?

What new insights did you gain about "examining" your leadership and locating yourself within it?

Here is a link to my [POL Slides](#).

This class has really been life changing. I would consider myself an introspective person, but this helped me push the limits of my thinking and get real with myself. I tried to approach each activity with vulnerability and brutal honesty so that I could expand myself, not only as a leader, but as a person. We have learned throughout this program that you must start with yourself, before being able to make change in any external situation. If you can't manage personal change then you will certainly be ineffective in creating holistic, humanistic change in people or organizations.

I've identified some traits and behaviors that I certainly need to change, but have also discovered parts of myself that exhibit bravery and deep courage. But let's start with those that I need to change.

Firstly, I equate value with productivity and work ethic. This is true for myself and also in how I view others. To me, the very essence of my being and the value that I place on my existence is utterly tied with how much I complete or do. I think this comes from several factors from my life. I have definitely lived the "pick yourself up by your bootstraps" life and it was ingrained in me since I was a child. We were poor and the idea of hard work being the escape of this was certainly a mindset that my family shared. When I lived on my own at 15, I HAD to work my ass off to survive and get myself out of my situation. I have always had to hustle and therefore, I see it as part of my identity to work hard. Though I don't want to completely disconnect from working hard, I want to balance my existence. I want to feel value in myself when I rest and reflect and need to embody a sense of respect for those aspects of my life as well. In addition, I certainly should not be judging others and the values of their IDEAS based on their work ethic and level of hustle. I find myself doing this all the time and it is something that I will continually have to work on to shake myself from this. I saw this in my adult development challenge, my ITC Map, my consultancy and my Pinch Sorting. So it's having a huge impact on my professional life - and perhaps my personal one as well. It's certainly driving my body into exhaustion.

Secondly, I have learned that I exhibit what I have deemed as toxic independence. This certainly feeds off of the value = productivity I discussed above. My ego believes that it would be overall better, if I just did whatever the task may be, by myself; and by incorporating others, relying on others or receiving help from others, I am demonstrating weakness as well as not having the opportunity to be the "person who gets shit done." I have a few coworkers that I just don't give the same level of respect to because I deem them lazier than they need to be. This toxic independence leads me to work too hard to feed my ego. It is also interrupting my personal life and relationship with a new boyfriend. I've spent many years on my own and believe that I'm a "bad bitch" in the sense that I don't need to rely on anyone. This, of course, is something that I need to let go of if I'm truly going to have an intimate relationship. Terrifying but true.

As to the final theme that I realized through this course is that I possess radical authenticity and that is a pillar of courageous leadership. This is a strength of mine that has helped me be successful in the classroom and beyond. I am unafraid to rock the boat, be myself and put myself in potentially sacrificial situations to do what I think is right. I have started standardized testing opt out groups throughout the state, I've stood up in front of school boards and city boards and mayors. I feel with great pride that I will put my job on the line if it means more equity or a better life for others. So even if I'm an

overachieving, overworking, toxic independent bad bitch, I'm real myself and am willing to fight for what's right.