**Leveraging the Four Elements of Trust**

I believe that trust is the key factor that will provide a school administrator with the opportunity to continually expand the potential for student learning in our schools. Trust in the school leader can be considered the social lubricant for organizational effectiveness and has been correlated with high levels of student achievement (Vodicka, 2007). Harvey & Drolet (2006) said, “With trust, you have a richer organizational culture” (p. 23). Trust that is developed throughout an organization can help to stem greater productivity at a school site or within a district. According to Vodicka, trust for an instructional leader is created through the four elements of trust: consistency, communication, competency, and compassion (2006). My leadership experiences at Vista High School (VHS) have shown that I can and will continue to leverage the four elements of trust to continually improve student learning.

**Consistency**

As the face of the school, an educational leader must be consistent to show that the choices made for students will establish reliability and stability over time. Vodicka (2006) said, “Consistency means that messages for different audiences have the same meaning” (p. 29). My passion for leadership is consistently shown in the variety of interactions that I have with students, parents, and staff. At VHS, I have had the opportunity to develop leadership retreats for student groups that helped form a sense of spirit and camaraderie on campus. Through Vista Unified School District’s (VUSD) buy back day conferences, I have been able to demonstrate the significance of using leadership in the classroom to my peers. At VHS, I was also chosen as one of the youngest members to receive the Honor V. The Honor V is given to individuals who have made a significant impact to improving the lives of students, staff, and our school wide community consistently through many years of service to VHS.

**Communication**

Communication allows an administrator to effectively build relationships between parents, students, staff, and the community. Chance said, “Communication is an essential function of any organization. Schools . . . rely on the cooperation and collaboration of many people to achieve their goals” (p. 153). In Dr. Jose Villarreal’s class, we learned how to use Twitter as a method for communication to our schools. With the #satchat hashtag, Twitter has allowed me to engage in insightful conversation in a webinar format. I have been able to share and learn the best practices to improve student learning while engaging with educational leaders throughout the country. I have also used Twitter to share my classroom experiences by using the district’s hashtag, #wave. As an educational leader, I will use social media as a powerful tool to provide transparency to the learning that occurs in the classroom, within a school, or throughout a district.

**Competency**

I have shown competency in my ability to utilize Instructional Rounds (IR) to drive instructional leadership at VHS. When one produces results, it is an example of executing his or her individual responsibilities (Vodicka, 2006). In Dr. Jose Villareal’s class, we learned about IR. IR is an observational practice that is rooted in the instructional core: teacher, student, and content (City, Elmore, Firaman, & Teitel, 2006). My district and school site have adopted IR as a tool to improve student learning. My involvement in the IR network has allowed me to utilize observational teachers practices as data to establish a positive and collaborative professional environment that provides critical feedback of teacher practice at the site. The network that has been established through IR at VHS will provide the direction for: school culture, Depth of Knowledge, Professional Learning Communities, and Common Core State Standards integration.

**Compassionate**

A compassionate leader is one who is able to understand the needs of another and is moved to offer help. Vodicka (2006) said, “Compassion in a relationship implies that there is a semblance of protection and that one person will not do harm to the other person” (p. 29). My development of passion for students can be seen through my master’s thesis: The Transgender Experience Impact on Secondary School Choice: A Case Study. Transgender youth have a high rate of depression, suicide, and absenteeism. Because of this, the case study set out to understand the factors that parents of a transgender child might use when choosing schools for their child. This information may prove useful for educational leaders, teachers, students and parents who want to provide a safe and nurturing environment for transgender students and the school.

**Conclusion**

As an educational leader, I will seek to build the four elements of trust with students, parents, and staff through consistency, communication, competency, and compassion to ultimately improve student learning. Utilizing the four elements of trust as my guiding purpose, I am confident that my leadership experiences will lead me to drive sustainable change in our schools. The experiences gained through the educational administrative program at California State University San Marcos have sparked my determination and desire to advance education and give students the best educational learning opportunities to fulfill their wishes, hopes, and dreams.

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