

Role of Teachers as Effective Communicators

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Abstract

Schools are complex, dynamic systems in nature. They require effective communication to meet the diverse needs of its stakeholders. Communication is important to maintain healthy relationships with the students, faculty, and parents. Establishing effective communication practices in a school requires understanding the characteristics of communication, including the benefits and common barriers. The three critical components of effective communication viz., trust, transparency, and active listening build the relationship necessary to engage in effective conversations.

Keywords: *Effective Communication, Schools, Conversations*

Effective Communication in Schools

Every teacher requires excellent communication skills and willingness to engage in challenging conversations. Schools have many stakeholders like students, teachers, administrators, and families. The educational system is also expected to be of the highest standards by each group, and excellent teacher and student communication skills that consist of both verbal and oral (Glaze, 2014) are necessary. In order to foster and proliferate the practice, the practice is helping itself to understand benefits and barriers in effective communication. It's necessary to create all the three imperative components for it such as trust, transparency, listening. Each stakeholder relationship has unique challenges about which the teachers should have awareness.

Benefits and Barriers of Effective Communication

Transfer of information is one to the other. Effective means that a message must pass from the intended form to the audience (Fashiku, 2017). Elevated emotions on top of crafting a challenge conversation, so everything is and everyone is amazing (Ontario Principals' Council, 2011). There is direct and also indirect communication. Intentional communication is direct communication, and indirect communication falls into expressions, physical behaviors and speech patterns (Bender, 2005).

Since the school culture for change is made through effective communication, education is always changing (Hollingworth et al., 2017). The only general relationships with a significant number of students that are teacher student are teacher administrator, teacher parent, or administrator parent (Wieczorek & Manard, 2018).

The organization determines its response to change as influenced by school culture, and low morale is accompanied by unwillingness to accept change (Hollingworth et al., 2017). Leaders that fail to heed to the apprehension staff feelings will spend more time squashing undesirable behaviors (Brown, 2018). The changes that are necessary to school improvement require engaging in challenging conversations that can be done through effective communication and listening (Ontario Principals' Council, 2011).

We know that it pays off to open up the conversations, but everyone has barriers to having this discussion. They are unpredictable and emotional because there is an apprehension about them (Brown, 2018). With the cultural norm of being nice, we cannot talk about the tough conversations, we also cannot be honest about giving someones feedback (Brown, 2018). In order to be kind, people often lack clarity in their communication. Leaders often fear that if they engaged in conversation with a person they held dear they hurt the relationship, they become tired, they can humorously misplace the seriousness of the issue, and they do not possess the confidence in their skills (Ontario Principals' Council, 2011). According to Bender (2005), communication is considered complicated once a participant is lacking skills needed to interpret an intent of the message. Body language and the manner of speaking must match; and must bring about the aim, and the intended tone. Passive aggressive discussions can die out behind the scenes (Brown, 2018) without tough conversation and so we must be prepared against the walls of effective communication.

Essential Components of Effective Communication

As Brown (2018) points out, staff have to believe they are in safe space, being free from ridicule of them making mistakes in difficult conversations. When mutual respect, collaboration and trust in leadership came as the norms, and the conversation is being challenged (Ontario Principals' Council, 2011), it is much easier. This relationship as such is now turned into an environment where the participants could see the reaction or could express thinking. The essential components of effective communication can be used to help return damaged previous school cultures (Wieczorek & Manard 2018). The first element to this is the requirement of trust, as trust is central to any relationship in which communication is to be a part.

Trust is based on transparency, which shows the stakeholders the stakeholder's purpose, goals and values. When transparency is provided in leadership – productivity increases, the employee's focus is better aligned to where leadership would like this to go (Lavoie, 2015). Since the organization has experienced overwhelming changes and lack of focus in the past, they seek transparency in the organization's directives and vision (Llopis, 2012). Relatable leaders are those ones who can be approached and tackle their issues openly and transparently. Honesty allegedly rebuilds stakeholder trust in future decisions at the low points (Llopis, 2012). The most successful challenging conversations occur when the parties have a clear vision and are open with intent (Ontario Principals' Council, 2011). Changes are felt forced at the last minute if staff has not been part of clear and open communication (Wieczorek & Manard, 2018). Indirect communication is seen more transparent than real communication since they can read the indirect communication and thus misunderstandings are less (Llopis, 2012). The key in this is transparency.

The last ingredient in a successful communication is listening. Listening that is deep tells the people to anticipate that there are issues here, while the listening that is strategic demands putting leading questions and guiding questions out there and laying down a course of action for them to consider. Strategic (active) listening means asking relevant questions and to fix meaning (Bender, 2005). For instance, the behaviours to inhibit effective communication include; judgment to give advice without the speaker's permission, lack of confidentiality, interrupting a speaker (Brown, 2018). Typically, ineffective communicators ask if there are any questions and do not give enough time for the responses.

It is the awareness of indirect communication; anything from gestures or body language can tell the other party that they should be finishing talking (Brown, 2018). Listening is a prerequisite for successful responses to difficult conversations (Ontario Principals' Council, 2011). When you are in a discussion of a difficult aspect, it is important not to answer before the listening. Listening to criticism and feedback, and at the same time, not being able to hear it are part of effective communication (Brown, 2018). It should be to establish a culture in the classroom and school whereby active listening and collaborative conversation is expected (Ontario Principals' Council, 2011). To create a collaborative culture in a school, trust, transparency and listening – the 3 essential components of successful communication have to be accounted for.

Effective Communication between Stakeholders

The educative is a manifold of particular relationships, whose own needs and characteristics of communication. At the classroom level, the most important relationship is that. The functions that communication plays at this level are to enable the teacher to achieve the learning outcomes set and to develop a relationship between the participants (Fashiku, 2017). It should be a place where participants will feel safe to be vulnerable (Brown, 2018). It needs to be an intellectually based relationship, rather than a relationship of building a friendship with students. With open communication and established relationships, there is still a divergence between the role, and status within the school for adults and students. The honest feedback starts with the student if the message is perceived as negative (Judkins, 2019). The intention of the conversation is to propel the student past what they've the capability of. To understand what the students think and feel, teachers need to be aware of what the students are not saying with words i.e. non verbal communication given by students. Good listening skills and emotional intelligence are necessary for recognizing and understanding students who have been traumatised. The goal of meeting the learning outcomes as well as the creation of the positive connections in the classroom can be achieved if teachers can establish and maintain a positive classroom with effective communication.

A classroom is similar to a faculty. In other words, there are individuals who are made up of different personalities and who communicate differently, and they need to achieve the goal. Intimidating discussions with colleagues can occur. To put it simple, clear expression of ideas and non exception are the essence whether people do agree with your opinion or not (Judkins, 2019). In case it happens while a colleague disagrees with one's idea in a presentation or in a meeting, it is ok to request further discussion later. Teachers who are experienced may regard new program and initiatives supporting colleagues as challenging experience and methods (Steen, 2017). Administrators and parents receive the deference that colleagues do not; but teachers, still, should practice good communication techniques to garner an positive relationship (Bender, 2005). Set deadlines and guidelines work, and with apathetic colleagues it prevents difficult conversations if every one in the group knows their role and purpose it serves. Subtle messages are not processed by dominant colleagues. They need clear boundaries with responses. Ontario Principals' Council (2011) states that the key elements of remaining assertive involve knowing the facts, maintaining focus, finding common ground and staying calm. Conversations with authoritative colleagues should be put in to e-mail records or meeting minutes (Bender, 2005). Growth is essential for collaboration, and there is no communication for collaboration to take place.

Prerequisite for improvement is honest conversations by administrators and staff among themselves. Reflection allows for growth, and effective communication can help uncover differences that occur in a teacher's practice and that contribute to the differences from the goal. Giving and receiving feedback must be learnt by both the teachers and administrators, whether it is positive or negative (Hollingworth et al., 2017). For resistant or under performing staff, now they have to engage in difficult administrative conversations. To promote active listening, it is essential for these concerns

should be paraphrased by participants when the discussion takes place. It also serves as a technique to ensure that the participants remember to remain mindful and not defensive when he is giving feedback to them (Brown, 2018). It is important for teachers to remember that the administrator's job involves difficult conversations, which means that teachers should not vent their frustration with their colleagues or create an adversarial environment (Bender, 2005). It is more likely that teachers will adopt the recommended changes if the relationship with the administrator is strong, there is safety and heard during the conversation (Hollingworth et al., 2017). Teachers feel appreciated, appreciate strength and are heard in positive staff relationships. In order for the teacher administrator communication to thrive, honest conversation must be had between teachers and administrators.

The final relationship in the paper is between the school and the parents. Effectively communicating is the resource that the teacher uses to create a strong partnership with the family and the school (Gartmeir et al., 2016). The increased academic success of the students is a contribution to this relationship. Teachers should also inform parents at the onset of the academic year of the relationship and how they expect them to support the kids. By asking parents for their input regarding their students' strategies and not criticizing them, teachers are more supported (Judkins, 2019). One reason teachers choose to have difficult conversations with their family is because. Given their high demand parental requests a highly demanding parent will require the teacher to feed into the accuracy of the parent's requests as well as connecting them to other professionals for further support (Gartmeir et al., 2016). To communicate with parents, one has to be patient, reassure, and composure (Bender, 2005). But, once angry parents come to see them, staff will have to compromise to stop a power struggle. If it does not seem, then this is a common ground between both parties and this goal for the student. Teachers learn of parents communication techniques from college on how to communicate with parents (Gartmeir et al., 2016). To do the prime function of a school based relationship, all school based relationships need effective communication.

Conclusion

The basic of excellence in education is good quality stakeholder relationships and communication is the tool to build these relationships (Wieczorek & Manard, 2018). However, the building of a good communication process leads to the formation of a good culture in the school and it is easier for the staff to live with and adopt change. When all items of effective communication are amplified, fear of difficult conversations lessens. Trust is important to build the strong relationship with the stakeholders. Once intent is clear, transparency and an active listening in feedback leads to people being able to understand the feedback they are being given and growing can happen. For the strong stakeholder relationships that can bring positive happenings in school improvement to be productive, these are the essential characteristics. This would help in maintaining relationship; communicating as well as assessing honestly the challenging colleague, difficult conversation, and partnership with families.

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