In any functioning company, open communication is the key to success. Educational institutes are no different. There are many lines of communication in a school: teachers to parents, parents to administrators, students to teachers, etc. Perhaps the most important line of communication in successful schools is the positive and open communication between the administrators and teachers. This relationship is complex, comprised of many layers, and must display certain characteristics in regards to frame factors, metapatterns and double bind scenarios.

Frame Factors

In Posner’s work, he states, “Frame factors function as limitations or constraints on teaching, and thus on curriculum implementation” (2004, p. 193). Understanding frames and how they work, both positively and negatively, helps to further describe the issue of communication. A frame befitting of this issue is a Cultural Frame. According Posner, “A curriculum depends on two different set of cultural factors, the culture within the school and the culture of the community in which the school exists.” (2004, p. 200). The administration team is the backbone of the cultural feel of school and sets the tone for communication. The positive culture of a campus allows information to flow freely between administrators, teachers, and parents. Ideally, teachers are able to bring concerns or innovative ideas to the administration team without hesitations. The converse would be a closed frame where administration is closed off from the staff, inhibiting communication and thus preventing the transferring of information. The lack of communication can lead to teachers barricading themselves, ideas, and concerns in their own department or even worse, their own classroom. In this case, teachers would not invest a stakeholder in the school or the community.

Metapatterns

Metapatterns can be used to “design frameworks for establishing school, classroom, and professional communities” (Bloom, 2005). A holarchies pattern can allow for maximum lines of communication between teachers and administration. Holarchies can be described as “nested system of layers” (Bloom, 2005). In a school we have content groups, subject groups, and teacher/staff/administration. Each group works on its own but makes smaller parts of the hole. Math teacher are experts in their content and thus take the responsibility for teaching math on campus. Similarly, the administration team should be the experts in leading a school. These groups work together but allow the experts handle their area. Some schools function in a tubular patter. Administration gives an order; the teachers are expected to execute that order. The communication is often one way and not reciprocated from the teachers to the administrators. I have been at schools with both patterns. The holarchic patterns allowed for issues or concerns to be addressed immediately, making staff (and parents) feel secure. The tubular school left staff members in the dark and unsupported. In the end, parents felt frustrated and unsupported, thus resulting in taking their students elsewhere.

Double Binds

Lack of communication will lead to double binds causing teacher to make tough decisions on their own. According to Wikipedia, a double bind is “an emotional distressing dilemma in communication in which an individual (or group) receives two or more conflicting messages, in which one message negates the other” (“Double bind”, 2013). I have had the same situation happen in an open communication environment and a closed communication environment. In this situation, I realized that the prescribed curriculum was out of reach for my students and I needed to choose between teaching this content or make adjustments to meet the needs of my students. It would have been impossible to do both. In the open communication situation, I was told to do what I thought was best and administration would deal with any negative repercussions. The students were more successful and results yielded large growth from August to May. In the closed communication situation, my issue was never addressed. I did what I thought was best for my students, only to be reprimanded for not covering the entire curriculum even though growth was still shown.

Although schools do not always follow a traditional business model, the ideals behind supervisor-employee relationships are still applicable. In order for a school to run smoothly and successfully, administrators are responsible for establishing a tone of equal partnership so that employees feel their ideas are welcomed and valued, that they are not alone in making weighty decisions, and have clear and established protocol for sharing ideas.

Resources

Bloom, J. (2005) Welcome to metapatterns: The pattern underground wiki - metapatterns.

Retrieved June 15, 2013, from http://metapatterns.wikidot.com/bkgd:meta

Double bind - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. (n.d.). Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

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[Posner, G. J. (2004).](http://www.jeffbloom.net/z-eci696docs/a-Posner-AnalyzingCurr-Ch8.pdf) Chapter 8: Frame factors (pp. 191—215). In: Analyzing the curriculum

(3rd ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill.