

Final Summary Essay

The biggest takeaway in this course, as the ethics and leadership go, was the reaffirmation of what I already knew and the new information on how to be even more ethical as a leader. This may sound cliché, but before one becomes a leader, one always questions whether he or she is making the decisions with ethics in mind. I'd like to think that once a true leader in the field of education, it is imperative to continue that self-reflection. I also realized that there is an abundance of resources that will help me achieve my goal of being a fair and ethical leader. From texts, to twitter, to PLNs to peer guidance, I know that I can continue to read and learn and ask questions, just like a teacher! Also, after reading the BOSA ethics, the ESPN article, and both books, it is clear that the mostly correct answer is not "clear-cut" from the mostly incorrect answer. This has led me to believe that decision by committee has its place and that the "buck" must stop here.

I definitely found the Clifton StrengthsFinder test to be a great way to determine, for lack of better words, my strengths. I have always known that I can influence people and help them strive to be better, but I never thought about what my best attributes were to bring to the discussion. So it was nice to discover via the test that one of my strengths is communication. I often wondered if the message I was trying to convey was the message that needed to be understood. This test has given me ample confidence that I am doing communication in a positive and productive way.

Another idea that I learned was that twitter is an overwhelming resource! I'm one of those people who enjoy talking about how I don't need social media – and what does one get out of it? I used to think that it only had the purpose to self-serve an attention-needy individual, whose sole purpose in life was to be recognized by everyone, yet no one in particular. This course has taught me that not only can twitter or other social media be viable, but it can be necessary to enhance one's leadership and pedagogy. After reading several articles provided by this course, it is clear that I must continue the effort to learn and understand how to build a PLN. I apologize for not knowing where I read this in one of the provided articles that was on our resources, but Maxwell said, "Know more. Grow more. Show more." It stuck with me because I wanted to discount twitter and its advantages. I wanted to keep my view of superiority, yet I knew that I simply did not understand twitter yet. This concept allowed me to rethink my previous ideas and determine that I could learn more, I could create more, and that will help me lead even more.

Lastly, I focused on the combination of active listening and communicating through story. I found that it is important to be a journeyman in both topics as they are tools for any leader, who wishes to be successful, to have. Active listening is a simple concept. A leader needs to make sure that they are there for their colleague or subordinate (I hate that word) and that there is a purpose for having the conversation. I often find myself using a prompt chart to assist in the active listening process so that I can best help my peers determine a solution to their dilemma. A prompt chart has clarifying questions, analyzing questions, perspective questions and sometimes more. This leads me to understand how to communicate through story. By communicating through story, a leader is almost convincing his/her staff to be active listeners in return. If the story has that intrigue, then the people will listen. I found it fascinating that the Ted Talk ventured into Barak Obama's story; whereas, Hilary Clinton's story was not entertaining. It emphasized how well Obama spoke and how he told his story, and at the same time diminished Hilary's story due to its ineptitude and captivation.

Overall, I'm very happy to have had this class as my first into graduate school. It reminded me of how important it is to constantly reflect on whether or not the ethics involved are being honored. Thankfully, I have understood these premises and worked diligently under my director to maintain the practice of being ethical. I have also relearned that ethics can be a slippery slope once you make a compromise and that is why it is always better to stray on the side of caution. Nothing gets one terminated quicker than a lack of ethics, ore leadership for that matter. Great class!