PRODUCTIVITY HACKS: COUNTERING TEACHER’S SUICIDE

by:
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I am a club adviser, an SBM department secretary, a coach, an adviser, a teacher, a student in graduate studies, and a mom – SO, how am I supposed to accomplish all these tasks? The answer is definitely NOT suicide.

An 8 year career as a teacher in a public high school requires all the immense effort. It takes one to really know how enormous that effort should be for a government worker who can’t just slack off and leave the work behind schedule. Work does not end in the four corners of the room. In fact, teachers bring work even at home or, in my case, even in my dreams so teaching concepts to students is just thirty percent of what a teacher does. The other seventy percent goes from maintaining the cleanliness of the premises, and decorating classrooms, to planning lessons, preparing instructional materials, recording scores, computing grades, keeping the discipline of students, communicating with parents, visiting homes of students-at-risk, stressing on all kinds of reports, and trying to beat deadlines. Recently, there have been news about teachers committing suicide because of depression caused by tons of paperwork. According to Rappaport (2010), when someone is depressed and suicidal they can often have lethal misperceptions. Their desperate misery can be fueled by the faulty logic that their problem is permanent and that ending their life is the only solution. While there may be people who felt cynical about such news, there are also people who empathize because they are in the same situation or they used to feel the same. They know that “the struggle is real”. Teachers can counter these struggling situations. We can be a POSER or teachers who Prioritize, Organize, Systematize, Execute, and RELAX.

Prioritize. Ask yourself which needed to be accomplished first? Which can wait? Though teacher-tasks might seem equally important, one must figure out how to deal
with tasks that can be considered to be most priority and/or least priority as of the moment. Learning the sense of urgency is important to deduce the work accordingly.

Organize. Mind your table manners. A cluttered work place can affect productivity. A study at University of Texas at Austin evaluated an absent officeholder more positively on nine personality traits if his desk was messy than if it was neat. The positive effect of a messy desk lessened with the presence of the occupant, however, and his ratings for sincerity, intelligence, ambition, warmth, and calmness improved when his desk was tidy.

Systematized. Learning to create a system on how to do work properly offers a great help to get things done the easiest and fastest way possible. I know a seasoned teacher in our school who will retire soon but still manages to learn operating gadgets and downloading contents on her ipad to show different pictures of cooking utensils to her students. Through this, she doesn’t need to draw or write lengthy lectures on a manila paper. A few clicks can do the trick.

Execute. Now that you have prioritized, organized and systematized the work, it is time to work yourself up and get things done. There might be challenges or uncertainties along this process so never hesitate to ask wisdom from colleagues especially the seasoned ones because their years of experience are also years of invaluable lessons learned.

Relax. Learn to chill out and breathe because a person who works hard deserves to be rewarded. Have a good sleep, a delicious meal, a nice chat with friends or a day well spent with family. Learn to take care of yourself because a lot of people depend on you.

Becoming a POSER might work for some or might not however the point that should be reiterated is that there is leeway to teacher’s dilemma and it is definitely NOT suicide.
References:
