School Culture Rewired

Steve Gruenert
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The connection between school culture:

• your school culture will determine the type of conversations faculty (are allowed to) have,
• these conversations determine the level of (unspoken) commitment among faculty,
• faculty commitment will leverage faculty efficacy,
• faculty efficacy will impact individual teacher efficacy,

...which impacts instructional delivery.

• instructional delivery quality will impact student efficacy,
• which drives student academic performance and behavior in the classroom and student achievement is not a straight line.
Where do cultures come from?

One person cannot make a culture. Anytime a group of people spend a significant period of time together they (probably have something in common) will develop roles and expectations for each other. Over time these roles will define each person and give balance to the group as they attempt to survive the environment (accomplish goals). The group will create (unwritten) rules to regulate how they relate to each other, define who is a member and who is not. Rewards and sanctions will support these rules usually in the form of peer pressure. There is comfort and predictability as routines and rituals bond the group. An enemy will be defined.
How do we know “it” is part of the culture?

• If you think something is part of the culture, don’t do it one time and see who cares.

• It makes you feel normal and safe.
WEAK = fragmented

STRONG = on same page
2 things that are not true:

1. Cultures change fast
2. Culture and climate are the same thing
Cultures Changing Fast.....

The **NEW PROGRAM** culture change

“We are so excited about this new program that allows us to keep track of student progress in real time, and it provides a framework for identifying patterns across or within courses. It has really changed the way we look at student data. Our culture is now one that is responsive to student needs.”

The **GREAT LEADER** culture change

“Now that Mrs. Jones is our new director the teachers seem very friendly, the support staff are helpful, and the students are excited about coming. With this new culture shift teachers are happy to come to school too.”

The **WEAK LEADER** culture change

“With all the new rules our new director Mr. Smith has imposed it will be difficult to experiment with new teaching methods. It is difficult to be effective with this new culture of efficiency leaning on us.”
SHAPING SCHOOL CULTURE

UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT OF SCHOOL CULTURE AND TYPES

UNDERSTAND YOUR SCHOOL’S CULTURE

SHAPE A NEW SCHOOL CULTURE

Culture shaping people

- KNOW LEVERAGE POINTS
- KNOW THE ROADBLOCKS
- RECOGNIZE AND ACKNOWLEDGE CURRENT STATUS
- RECOGNIZE AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE PAST

People shaping culture

- BUILD CAPACITY TO CHANGE
- BUILD A TEAM
- NUDGE THE CULTURE
- DESCRIBE THE DESIRED CHANGE

Gruenert & Whitaker, 2017
Climate

Culture
Climate - Culture
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Climate . . .</th>
<th>Culture . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(window)</td>
<td>(house)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| . . . is the group's attitude. | . . . is the group's personality. |
| . . . differs from Monday to Friday. | . . . gives Mondays permission to be miserable. |
| . . . creates a state of mind. | . . . provides for a limited way of thinking. |
| . . . is easy to change. | . . . takes years to evolve. |
| . . . is based on perceptions. | . . . is based on values and beliefs. |
| . . . is the fever. | . . . is the immune system. |
| . . . surrounds us. | . . . is part of us. |
| . . . is &quot;the way we feel around here.&quot; | . . . is &quot;the way we do things around here.&quot; |
| . . . is the first thing that changes when positive or negative change is made. | . . . determines whether or not improvement is possible. |
| . . . is in your head. | . . . is in your head. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Climate</th>
<th>Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>. . . is the group's attitude.</td>
<td>. . . is the group's personality, trademark, brand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Climate . . . Culture . . .

. . . differs from Monday to Friday. . . . gives Mondays permission to be miserable.

- Monday again....
- It's Friday!!!
Climate . . .  

. . . creates a state of mind.

Culture . . . 

. . . provides for a limited way of thinking.
Climate . . .

. . . is easy to change.

Culture . . .

. . . takes years to evolve.

No School?

Tomorrow?

Yes!!
Climate . . .

... is based on perceptions.

Culture . . .

... is based on values and beliefs.
Climate... is the fever.

Culture... is the immune system.

Change is the Virus.
Climate . . .

. . . surrounds us.

Climate . . .

Culture . . .

. . . is part of us.
Climate . . .

. . . is "the way we feel around here."

The way we are “supposed” to feel.

Culture . . .

. . . is "the way we do things around here."

The way we are “supposed” to feel.
Climate . . .

. . . is the first thing that changes when positive or negative change is made.

Culture . . .

. . . determines whether or not improvement is possible.
Climate . . .

... is in your head.

So is your “vision”

Culture . . .

... is in your head.
The Elements of Organizational Culture

*Use the following categories to describe what is happening at your school.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>RITUALS</strong> (organizational habits)</th>
<th><strong>MISSION</strong> (why are we here)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>We’ve always done it this way.</em></td>
<td><em>What gets us out of bed.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>CEREMONIES</strong> (glorified rituals)</th>
<th><strong>LANGUAGE</strong> (local jargon, humor)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Public display of values.</em></td>
<td><em>Can RtI initiate an IEP in a 9-12?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>VALUES &amp; BELIEFS</strong> (what’s really important)</th>
<th><strong>SYMBOLS</strong> (tangible stuff)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Where our energy goes.</em></td>
<td><em>We don’t look at it but we see it.</em></td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>CLIMATE</strong> (the mood we are usually in)</th>
<th><strong>HEROES</strong> (who are we proud of)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The mood we are supposed to display.</em></td>
<td><em>Re: Stories being told.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<tr>
<th><strong>TOOLS</strong> (what we use to get work done)</th>
<th><strong>NORMS</strong> (unwritten rules)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Hammer &amp; nails.</em></td>
<td><em>The way we do things around here.</em></td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<th><strong>STORIES</strong> (myths passed on to rookies)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><em>How culture gets into our heads.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
People value ideas from their friends more than the ideas.
Culture gets into your head/mind through stories.

Stories give meaning to what happened.

Stories outweigh data when influencing behaviors.
How people change, for better:

From a friend-
“We can do better.”
“Let’s try this.”
“It worked!”
How people change, or worse:

From a friend-
“*We are good enough.*”
“*Let’s not try this.*”
“*See, it didn’t work!*”
Questions, thoughts, meaning
Thanks!

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