

Chapter 1 : 7 Powerful Tips for Creating a Culture of Learning in the Classroom

This publication presents a process for developing a teaching perspective that embraces the centrality of culture in school learning. The six-part process presented in the book involves objectifying culture, personalizing culture, inquiring about students' cultures and communities, applying.

In this set article, Professor Louise Stoll explores the relationship between school culture and school improvement. Complex and important concept School culture is one of the most complex and important concepts in education. These are the heart of school culture and what makes it so hard to grasp and change. How we view the world Culture describes how things are and acts as a screen or lens through which the world is viewed. It also has its own mindset in relation to what occurs in its external environment. In midlife the most important aspects of the culture are embedded and taken for granted, and the culture is increasingly implicit. Change becomes more difficult because of less consciousness of the culture; it is harder to articulate and understand. This stage is most problematic from the cultural change perspective. Vary between primary and secondary School cultures vary between primary and secondary schools Cooper, In primary schools, care and control influence their culture Hargreaves et al. Political and economic forces or changes in national policies can also influence what is valued at school. Thrupp argues that the social mix of the school plays a major role in how it functions, largely because of the cumulative effects of how students relate to each other as a group. Essentially, students who attend the school flavour it in a particular way, through their own student culture. Changes might relate to learning, the student population, organisational management, rapid technological developments or other societal changes. Such changes often demand rapid responses from a school. Yet while culture changes as participants change, it can also be a stabilising force, particularly for those who have been part of the culture for a longer period. It can therefore appear problematic for those in search of quick fix changes because it often seems as though it is an unmoveable force. While culture presents, therefore, the paradox of both being static and dynamic Rossman et al. Reflective questions These reflective questions might guide you in your reading of this article: What different subcultures can you see in your school? With collaborative culture being the desired style, how could you guide your staff towards this? If you feel that your school already manifests a collaborative culture, how can this be enhanced? How can these be overcome? Analysing the micro-politics within your school, BOT, and community what key power issues pose difficulty for your school? Autumn Institute of Education, University of London. Black hole or fertile garden for school improvement, in J. Research Information for Teachers, 3, pp Tell a colleague Back to top Tags.

Chapter 2 : Culture in School Learning : Etta R. Hollins :

The six-part process covers examining culture, personalizing culture, inquiring about students' cultures and communities, applying knowledge about culture to teaching, formulating theory or a conceptual framework linking culture and school learning, and transforming professional practice to better meet the needs of students from different.

Maybe they have struggled in previous courses, doubted their intellectual abilities or had a hard time concentrating in class. Regardless of their reason for struggling, every student deserves the chance to be in a positive learning environment. Creating a culture of learning in the classroom can require some work up front, but once that environment is established, teachers will see nothing but joy and success from their students. To help teachers create culture of learning, we have put together seven tips for teachers to foster a culture of learning in the classroom. Expectations help shape both social and academic aspects within a classroom. Students will rise to the expectations a teacher that he or she creates. Studies have even shown that when teachers have a higher expectation, students tend to rise to these expectations and learn more throughout the year. A Harvard professor named Robert Rosenthal performed a study on the subject. He found that teachers who had high expectations tended to give students more time to answer questions, more specific feedback and more approval. Encourage students to have positive interactions with each other. It is important for students to be supportive of one another and to not tolerate bullying. When students are supportive and willing to help others, the class environment will be one of collectiveness, ease and positivity. Good Samaritan Day can be used to educate students how to stand up against bullying. Give students a voice during class. It is important for students to feel empowered in the classroom. This means they need to feel comfortable disagreeing with what someone said and being able to respectfully voice their opinion. Teaching students the art of a cordial debate and to communicate disagreements successfully will be crucial not only in a classroom, but as they continue to grow and enter the professional world. Teaching them non-verbal communication skills is part of this as well, we have a list of positive listening postures here , and what not to do here that will make you laugh. Make the classroom a safe place to fail. Failure is what oftentimes delays people from following their dreams or halts them from ever starting. It is very important for teachers to help students understand that failure is not the end of the world. It is a part of the learning process that everyone goes through. John Shufeldt talks here about the extreme failures he has faced on his journey to success. Failure is not the end, failure is the beginning of a road to success. Model how students can learn. This includes not only learning, but setting goals as well. Goals are a big part of learning and students need to know how to set and manage goals. It can be fun for students to go through the learning process with a teacher. Teachers can do discovery lessons with their students to help students learn how to take charge of the own learning and foster curiosity. By providing feedback to students, they are able to see if they are on track or if they need to make adjustments in their learning. Students can gain confidence quicker when teachers give them more feedback because they will learn to not second guess themselves as much. When students are not doing something right, it is important for teachers to also be careful of how to word their feedback. Some students are very sensitive to negative feedback and will become closed off. Sometimes the student who struggle the most, show the most improvement, increasing their grade with every assignment. This can be huge for a student, even if their grade is still not the best. Or, maybe there is a student who has been really shy, but has been speaking up more in class. Victories for every student may be different, but it is important to recognize them so that students will gain more confidence and continue to grow. We hope these seven steps will help you create a culture of learning in your classroom. Has there been another technique that you have found helpful in your classroom? Please add to the list by commenting below. And as always, share with your teacher friends!

Chapter 3 : How cultural differences may affect student performance | Parenting

In this text Etta Hollins presents a powerful process for developing a teaching perspective that embraces the centrality of culture in school learning. The six-part process covers objectifying culture, personalizing culture, inquiring about students' cultures and communities, applying knowledge.

Creating Culture in Schools An underground flow of feelings and folkways [wending] its way within schools in the form of vision and values, beliefs and assumptions, rituals and ceremonies, history and stories, and physical symbols. Most school improvement plans concentrate on academic achievement goals, decisions about academic focus, deployment of instructional models, and teaching techniques and curriculum tools. Academic press is absolutely necessary, but not sufficient to operationalize the mission of the school. We believe that no school improvement effort will be effective, maintained, or enhanced unless school culture and academic press are both addressed and aligned. Both developing school culture and creating academic press are necessary, but neither is in and of itself sufficient. We suggest that these two elements of school effectiveness must be integrated and unified. Heretofore, researchers have referred to two curricula operating in the school. The first is the academic curriculum, which has been described as the objective, explicit curriculum of the school. The second is school culture—the implicit curriculum of the school. It should be uncovered, openly and purposely discussed, assessed, and developed. School culture cannot be hidden and implicit; rather, it must be as explicit as our approach to teaching and learning. In fact, we propose that our academic press and our school culture should be looked at, thought about, and acted upon in a unified and coordinated manner. Cultures are not created overnight or by pen and planning alone. Stating your mission is significant, but only a small part of your effort. Culture develops and grows up through an accumulation of actions, traditions, symbols, ceremonies, and rituals that are closely aligned with that vision. According to Deal and Peterson, research suggests that a strong, positive culture serves several beneficial functions, including the following: Fostering effort and productivity. Improving collegial and collaborative activities that in turn promote better communication and problem solving. Supporting successful change and improvement efforts. Building commitment and helping students and teachers identify with the school. Amplifying energy and motivation of staff members and students. Focusing attention and daily behavior on what is important and valued. So we have purposely worked at developing school culture in ways that will further engage each student in a world-class educational experience. The looking, thinking, and acting we will encourage will be about increasing a culture of educational engagement by promoting A culture that is welcoming, A culture in which the conditions for learning are ever-present, A culture in which we examine how our behaviors affect us, others, and our world, A culture in which there is a shared belief that we are a part of something special and great, and A culture in which the language creates and facilitates personal pride, purpose and power. Yes, Schools and Students Have Them We believe that culture must be purposely developed and managed to optimize the chance to live our mission, become our vision, and fulfill our educational purpose and responsibilities. We also recognize that our students bring their cultures with them. Consider the following students, all enrolling in a local high school. Amal is a year-old girl. For the past six years she has attended an Islamic private school. Prior to that she was homeschooled. To this point in her life she has had virtually no unsupervised interactions with males outside her immediate family. She has a strong fundamental cultural identity as a Muslim girl. Renee is also 14 years old. She has been homeschooled all her life. Her family organized the homeschooling of their children with other members of their church. Renee has a strong sense of culture from the values instilled in her by her family and her Christian faith. Despite his school choice, gang involvement is a large part of his family, his extended family, his current friends, and his community. That culture is a part of who Eddie presently is. Life on the streets dictates certain rules of survival, such as "fight back and defend family" and "retaliate when you or your family is disrespected. Stephen has always expected to attend college and graduate school and become a doctor. He gave up the opportunity to attend a high-performing suburban high school to attend one that catered to his niche interests. Stephen comes to school with a lot of cultural capital that has always made him a driven and successful student. Tony attends the

school because of the influence that a community mentor has had on his life for many years. Tony lives with his mother, his four siblings, and extended family members who have come and gone over the years. Tony has never been particularly interested or successful in school. His propensity to sleep in and ignore his alarm is frequent, as is his absenteeism. Tony expresses no postschool plans, and his commitment to graduate is weak. These real vignettes are wrought with biting and predictable stereotypes. We assure you that each of these young people is a unique individual packed with obvious and hidden attributes, interests, talents, and gifts. Each has aspirations and nightmares that are influenced by every opportunity given to them and by every opportunity they were denied. The fact remains, however, that each of these unique individuals will come to school with a cultural identity that is based on his or her experiences. That culture has provided much of the context for how these individuals view the world. So this book is also about the culture of schools populated by individuals. Although others may suggest that conscious attention to creating school culture may be mostly to promote student achievement, especially when the school population is diverse and includes many who may not have had experiences developing the cultural capital leading to successful public school performance, the five new students we profiled taught us otherwise. As a public school, we should at least expect that the school culture will be more pluralistic than many of these students have experienced. It may be less tolerant of behaviors they know that help them survive on the streets. It will certainly be committed to graduation and postsecondary planning. The fact is that students enter the culture of the school with an intact cultural identity that has been formed from already being part of one or more home and community cultures. The job of school, then, is to foster a bicultural student body—one that recognizes the home culture while creating a school one. A diverse student body also means that students who have many different cultural histories are about to converge on a setting that hosts them all. On that point, know now that we believe that teaching tolerance, understanding, and respect is a nonnegotiable part of creating an effective school culture. We believe that creating an effective school culture for a student who arrives with a dissimilar cultural identity and history is likely to make a student bicultural. An effective school culture will provide students a respectful mediating experience through which they can understand, examine, affirm, modify, or change understandings of the world and how they want to engage in it. The bicultural experience will be pluralistic to the extent that each student will feel respected, welcomed, and included within that which defines the school. What is the alternative to a bicultural experience? If left to chance, if students feel prejudged and unwanted, they will create cultural cliques and take separate and parallel journeys through the school. They will not belong, feel ownership, and engage in the school or its mission. Their perspective of the school culture will be that there is no place for them, and that the school is not a place they want to be part of or a place where they choose to engage. The other extreme to bicultural identity may be a wholesale rejection of all they believe and all the values and beliefs they have come to school with. If this means a rejection of behaviors and rituals that are illegal, undeniably destructive and antisocial, all the better. But public schools cannot be in the business of purposefully changing Republicans into Democrats or making pro-choice activists out of right-to-life believers or vice versa. School should provide them the safe opportunity to share their narrative, to tell their story, and to start writing the next several chapters of the person whom they aspire to be. The Culture Must Facilitate Quality As we have noted, having a mission is an important first step in improving student achievement, because it focuses the various people inside the organization on a common purpose. We are reminded of a school that had four different major educational reform efforts as their focus. Different teachers concentrated on different reforms. The reform efforts were not bad ideas—in fact some of them were really good. But the fact that different people were focused on different things made it hard for them to reach agreements and then focus on quality implementation of the ideas. When there is agreement on the focus, work gets directed toward that focus. We know of an elementary school, for example, that focused on writing instruction. As they honed their skills, they increased their understanding of quality instruction and were able to have some excellent conversations with one another about what worked and what did not. Lasting change requires an agreement on quality such that the leader and the teacher can have a productive conversation. As part of the observation, you notice several opportunities that the teacher missed to build and activate background knowledge. The conversation you have with the teacher might go something like this: How do you think the lesson went?

Great, I thought that my students were all engaged. Yes, true, they all seemed interested in the topic. Did you think about what they might already know about the topic? Or what they might not know about the topic? I think that they learned a lot from the experience. Did you hear them talking with each other? Yes, they were talking and asking good questions. But what did they already know? But I will bet that they do well on the assessment. Did you think about making connections between their background knowledge and the topic at hand? Could it be that some of the students already knew this before the lesson? Some know it already, some get it, and others need more teaching. I really liked the summaries they wrote at the end. As a result, the teacher is immune to the feedback being provided and is not likely to change as a result of the experience. As Goetsch and Davis note, people often define quality using specifications, standards, and other measures.

Chapter 4 : Creating Culture in Schools

Culture in School Learning: Revealing the Deep Meaning Jun 8, by Etta R. Hollins. Paperback. \$ \$ 25 27 to rent Prime. \$ \$ 50 97 to buy Prime.

Culture and Style That need for a sense of individuality is in every human being and one must not ignore it. What words do you use to describe characteristics of your own culture? When do such descriptions feel comfortable, and when do they become simplistic stereotypes? We know that culture and learning are connected in important ways. If this relationship is true, could we then assume that students who share cultural characteristics have common learning style patterns? Does culture create a learning style, and how would we know this? These questions are both important and controversial. They are important because we need all the information we can get to help every learner succeed in school, and because a deep understanding of the learning process should provide a framework for curriculum and instructional decisions. Such questions are controversial because information about a group of people often leads to naive inferences about individual members of that group. Additionally, in the search for explanations of the continued achievement difference between students of color and mainstream white students, there is an understandable sensitivity about causes and effects. It is all too easy to confuse descriptions of differences with explanations for deficits. The questions also are controversial because they force us to confront philosophical issues in the uniformity versus diversity debate. Is equality of instruction synonymous with equity of educational opportunity for all? A highly public example of how sensitive these issues are occurred in when New York state published a booklet for educators aimed at decreasing the student dropout rate. A small section of the booklet described learning styles typical of minority students and identified certain patterns associated with African American students. These descriptions became the subject of intense scrutiny and animated debate. A deep understanding of both culture and learning style is important for all educators, though the subject must be addressed carefully. The learner, of any age, is a product of nature and nurture. We each are born with predispositions for learning in certain ways. We also are products of external influences, especially within our immediate family, extended community, and culture. Researchers confirm that learning patterns are a function of both nature and nurture. Many researchers describe the importance of socialization within the family, immediate culture, and wider culture. Gardner echoes this perspective: Sometimes people wonder which is more important: This question has no clear answer. When my culture supports my individuality, I grow and develop in healthy ways. When my family encourages my uniqueness, I learn to trust my own innate predisposition. Sometimes that reconciliation gives me more strengths and a wider range of behaviors. At other times, it leads to conflict and uncertainties. Every child of every culture, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, age, ability, and talent deserves to have an equal opportunity to be successful in school. Understanding learning differences will help educators facilitate, structure, and validate successful learning for every student. Reports About Culture and Learning Style Reports about culture and learning style consistently agree that within a group, variations among individuals are as great as commonalities. This important point is often verbally acknowledged, but ignored in practice. Cox and Ramirez explain the result: Recognition and identification of these average differences have had both positive and negative effects in education. The positive effect has been the development of an awareness of the types of learning that our public schools tend to foster. Where is this information coming from? In general, there are three sources of information about learning styles and culture. These traits explain why Mexican American students often seek a personal relationship with a teacher and are more comfortable with broad concepts rather than distinct facts and specifics. These call for classroom work that includes collaboration, discussion, and active projects. Asian Americans are described as serious, independent, content oriented, and focused Moore. This description implies that working alone, especially on serious content, is appealing to these learners. Girls are said to value relationships, be verbal, and be social. In the classroom they like working in groups and having opportunities to share Gilligan. The same authors report that mainstream white male Americans value independence, analytic thinking, objectivity, and accuracy. These values translate into learning experiences that focus on information, competition, tests, grades, and

critical thinking. It is no surprise that these patterns are prevalent in most schools because they were established and are generally administrated by mainstream white males. The further away from this style of education a student is, the more difficulty he or she has adjusting. Research Study Descriptions Another way we know about the links between culture and learning style is research study descriptions of specific groups. Style instruments are discussed in more detail in Chapter Many of these instruments are self-report. In other words, the adult or student fills out a response to a series of questions, and the frequency of responses indicates certain preferences for specific approaches to learning. When a person is asked to respond to specific words and questions, the language is interpreted through personal cultural experience. When strengths are tested and learning style inferred from the results of these instruments, a great deal of variety exists within like-cultural groups. Thus, the information obtained from formal assessments of learning styles of specific cultural groups has been based on different ways of assessing and describing style. Yet results of different studies are often compared, ignoring or diminishing the relevance of the type of assessment instrument in the report of the findings. The variation in type of assessment instrument used often accounts for the seemingly contradictory information reported about groups of learners. Direct Discussion The third way we know about learning style and culture is through direct discussion. A number of authors have written about the importance of understanding culture to more effectively facilitate the learning of all students. Shade comments that: Issues and Questions When educators apply knowledge of culture and learning style to the classroom they face a number of unresolved areas and differences of opinion. This information is even mandated in certain states as part of their multicultural goals, although, ironically, learning styles information usually is missing. Other educators argue that these descriptions will result in more stereotyping and ultimately in a differentiated, segregated approach to curriculum. Cox and Ramirez observe: The concept of cognitive or learning styles of minority and other students is one easily over-simplified, misunderstood, or misinterpreted. Unfortunately, it has been used to stereotype minority students or to further label them rather than to identify individual differences that are educationally meaningful. They argue that they want to form their own impressions of each learner. Other educators feel that comprehensive background and educational history of each student is invaluable for helping the learner be successful. Why waste time reinventing the wheel? When these same issues are applied to knowledge relating to a specific cultural group, there is also lack of agreement. The relationship of culture and learning style is also addressed in reference to student achievement. Most researchers believe that learning styles are neutral. All learning styles can be successful, but they also could become a stumbling block when overused or applied inappropriately. This concept explains the success or failure of different learning approaches with different tasks, especially as they relate to expectations in schools. There is evidence that students with specific learning style patterns kinesthetic, field-dependent, sensing, extraversion underachieve in school. Regardless of their cultural background, students who have these dominant learning style patterns have limited opportunities to use their style strengths in the classroom. Some students are caught in a no-win situation, unable to be true to their culture or meet school expectations. Irvine and York are blunt: What training do teachers need for this challenge? Bennett also warns that ignoring the effects of culture and learning style affects all students: If classroom expectations are limited by our own cultural orientations, we impede successful learners guided by another cultural orientation. If we only teach according to the ways we ourselves learn best, we are also likely to thwart successful learners who may share our cultural background but whose learning styles deviate from our own. However, we all have learned successfully from teachers who differed from us in learning style or culture. Often, these were masterful, caring teachers. Sometimes our own motivation helped us learn in spite of the teacher. Yet teachers of all cultural backgrounds and style will have to work conscientiously to provide equity for students as classrooms increasingly reflect the diversity of our society. It is also important to be willing to confront the issue of cultural identity and self-esteem. Many large city school systems struggle with the appropriateness of ethnically identified schools such as an African American academy. All-girl schools, math classes, and science classes are promoted for their affirmative action approach. The goal of encouraging positive self-esteem would lead one to argue for like-groups at certain stages of development. An acceptance of learning styles demands an approach that develops skills through strengths. Should the same not be said of cultural identity?

Intentional instructional diversity will benefit all students. In other words, improved instructional methodologies and practices for certain students will result in improved instruction for all. A teacher who brings outstanding skills and competencies to his work offers students from all cultures and with varying learning styles greater opportunities for success. These teachers know that to provide effective instruction, they must accommodate both the cultural values and individual learning styles of their students. Therefore, they are continually interested in learning about their students. A teacher who cares about and develops methodologies sensitive to the needs of the learners she works with will foster success. Too often, the accommodation of differences is limited to a cultural holiday celebration or a multicultural fair.

Chapter 5 : Is Your School's Culture Toxic or Positive? | Education World

The six-part process covers objectifying culture, personalizing culture, inquiring about students' cultures and communities, applying knowledge about culture to teaching, formulating theory or a conceptual framework linking culture and school learning, and transforming professional practice to better meet the needs of students from different.

Creating a culture for high learning and achievement. How can schools be designed to help create high levels of learning among students that increase individual opportunity? How can schools help children become citizens for democracy, providing social, business, and community leadership to develop innovations and solve important problems. We must pay very close attention to what helps, and what hurts in reaching these important ends. Many schools, too many, use practices that assure that many children fail and are left behind. It is as if such schools systemically and explicitly developed a school deform plan, to use the language of James Kauffman. What are the principles that guide practices of such schools? Demanding compliance and obedience of staff and students. Segregating, tracking, and ability grouping. Teaching to the middle using one size fits all instruction. Creating a culture of pressure, tension, and competition. Isolating adults from one another and assuring professional turf. Parents and educators blaming each other. These practices work together to create conditions that hamper the learning process. Once such cultures become imbedded, they are difficult to change. But change can and must occur if we are to meet the promise to our children and create future citizen leaders for our communities. What are the principles that describe a school culture that supports high levels of learning for all? After several years of work, we developed Six Principles that represent a simple but comprehensive synthesis of a broad range of scientific research on practices regarding schooling and classroom practices designed to maximize learning at high levels. Each of these principles, we have found, is interactive and mutually reinforcing. Empowering citizens for democracy.

Chapter 6 : School culture / Understanding school cultures / Culture / Home - Educational Leaders

School culture cannot be hidden and implicit; rather, it must be as explicit as our approach to teaching and learning. In fact, we propose that our academic press and our school culture should be looked at, thought about, and acted upon in a unified and coordinated manner.

Big issues that affect a lot of people. It can even mitigate the negative effects of self-criticism and socioeconomic status on academic success. In addition, working in this kind of climate lessens teacher burnout while increasing retention. All really good stuff! Creating a positive school climate is really, really hard to do, as any principal will tell you. It takes elbow grease and much care to implement, simply because human motivations and needs are so complex. Here are some research-tested tips to get you started. Advertisement X A three-course professional certificate series that teaches you the what, why, and how of increasing happiness at work. Do the teachers, students, and school leaders seem happy to be there and are they treating each other with respect? Is the school clean and orderly? Are the bulletin board displays sending out positive messages? Are students engaged in their learning? In , the National School Climate Council spelled out specific criteria for what defines a positive school climate, including: Norms, values, and expectations that support social, emotional, and physical safety. People are engaged and respected. Students, families, and educators work together to develop and live a shared school vision. Educators model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits gained from learning. Each person contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment. It starts with trust , which researchers say is an essential prerequisite to a more positive climate. The following steps are in part designed to build trust, mainly by giving teachers, staff, and students some say in the processâ€”and leaders who guide the process must never miss an opportunity to prove themselves trustworthy and to facilitate trust-building between stakeholders. Here are some research-based suggestions for school leaders on how to start cultivating a positive school climate: There are a number of ways to assess your school climate. The Safe and Supportive Schools website provides a list of validated survey instruments â€”some of which are free. However, I would caution against relying on just a survey. On surveys, people can interpret the questions differently. Also, it is very difficult to know which questions to ask on a survey and how deeply a person feels about a particular area. He outlines a simple method in his book *The Corporate Culture Survival Guide* that is easily adaptable to schools. Individual interviews are also another way to get a sense of the school climate, and should be conducted by someone outside the school to ensure honesty and impartiality, e. Research suggests that bringing everyone together to create a shared vision of the kind of climate they want increases the likelihood that the vision will actually be carried out. For example, part of my personal vision is wanting schools to be socially and emotionally healthy places for everyone which comes from my deeply held belief that human beings thrive in positive environments. So before creating a shared vision together, ask everyone to write down his or her personal vision. To ensure student participation, have teachers guide students through this process. Be sure to include the students in whatever way possible. However, if you find your school off to a slow start, you might try one of these simple motivating ideas that will give a quick boost of positive emotions: One participant at the Greater Good Summer Institute for Educators told us that when her school did it at a staff meeting, some long-held grudges between staff members were healed. Gratitude has the wonderful effect of helping us feel more connected to one another and also gives us a boost in our own self-worthâ€”both important aspects of a positive school climate. While it may seem like a lot of work, the tremendous benefits of a positive school climate far out-weigh the time and effort required. Throughout this next school year, watch for articles on more specific, research-based ideas for building a positive school climate. Greater Good wants to know: Do you think this article will influence your opinions or behavior?

Chapter 7 : How to Create a Positive School Climate | GGM

Vary between primary and secondary. School cultures vary between primary and secondary schools (Cooper,). In primary schools, care and control influence their culture (Hargreaves et al.,), such that when students leave primary school there is a feeling that have left a family (Ruddock,).

More Relationships come before everything. Building a positive environment in individual classrooms and throughout your whole school is a matter of cultivating and maintaining relationships. It takes commitment and consistency from the whole team—administrators, teachers and support staff. You can make it happen, though, even in the most challenging school environments. Here are eight ways for improving school culture based on the Boys Town Education Model , which has helped hundreds of troubled schools turn their school culture around. Build strong relationships Your success at creating a well-managed school depends more than anything else on the quality of the relationships that teachers forge with students. Staff-student relationships influence everything—from the social climate to the individual performances of your students. The research on this is clear. When students feel liked and respected by their teachers, they find more success in school, academically and behaviorally. Conversely, when interpersonal relationships are weak and trust is lacking, fear and failure will likely start to define school culture. Building strong relationships needs to be a whole school priority. How do you do it? Teachers need to have time to talk to their students in and out of the classroom. The goal should be for every adult in the building to maintain a high rate of positive interactions with students and to show genuine interest in their lives, their activities, their goals and their struggles. Teach essential social skills How to share, how to listen to others, how to disagree respectfully—these are the kind of essential social skills we expect our students to have. But the truth is they may not have learned them. Together as a staff, you should identify the social skills you want your students to have and the step-by-step routines to teach them. Get on the same page Every classroom environment contributes to your school culture. Together as a staff, you need to create a shared vision of your school. That means developing consistent school rules and ways of defining and meeting student behavior. When students believe that the rules are fair and consistently enforced, it goes a long way toward building trust. Be role models At school, students learn by watching just as they learn by doing. Observing the actions of others influences how they respond to their environment and cope with unfamiliar situations. For example, research has shown that when a student is rejected by peers, the rejection is more likely to stop if the teacher models warm and friendly behavior to the isolated student. The opposite is also true. As educators, you set the tone. Clarify classroom and school rules Classroom rules communicate your expectations to your students. This is the standard of behavior we know you can achieve. Ideally, classroom rules are simple and declarative e. Most important, rules need to be consistent across the building. The same expectations need to apply in the classroom, the gym and the cafeteria. Teach all students problem solving Problems will always come up inside and outside of school. Students are much more likely to recognize and resolve them appropriately when we teach them how to do so. Problem solving can also be used retrospectively with the luxury of hindsight to help students make better decisions in the future. SODAS is an acronym for the following steps: Set appropriate consequences Establishing classroom and school-wide rules and procedures is an important step in any effort to bring more structure to your school. Effective consequences show young people the connection between what they do and what happens as a result of their choices or actions. Consequences need to be appropriate, immediate and consistent. Equally important, they need to be delivered with empathy, not in anger. You might think about the current consequences for inappropriate behaviors and how their connections to the offenses can be strengthened where necessary. You might even consider Restorative Discipline as a school-wide program. Challenge your whole team to give 15 compliments a day, or 25 or even You might just be amazed at the difference it makes. Posted by Dana Truby.

Chapter 8 : Culture in School Learning: Revealing the Deep Meaning - Etta R. Hollins - Google Books

To help teachers create culture of learning, we have put together seven tips for teachers to foster a culture of learning in the classroom. Establish high expectations. Expectations help shape both social and academic aspects within a classroom.

Chapter 9 : Why School Culture Matters, and How to Improve It | HuffPost

Every school has a culture. In big chaotic schools, kids drive many of the behavioral norms. In contrast, powerful learning environments are intentionally hand crafted around an intellectual mission; they are made fresh and visible in word and deed every week.