Title: School Climate and Culture, and the Culture of Innovation
Date: October 8, 2015

This Solution-finding Report provides information, requested by the Great Lakes Comprehensive Center at American Institutes for Research, on behalf of the Indiana Department of Education, for resources related to school climate and culture, including the culture of innovation.

The resources have been broken up into two categories: School Climate and Culture, and Culture of Innovation.

Solution-finding Reports are intended to provide a quick response to the request for information; they are not intended to be a definitive literature survey or synthesis of the topic.
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School Climate and Culture


According to this article, “Based on recent activities and the current climate supporting disciplinary reform, Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY) has developed a public information campaign, *Effective School Discipline for Maryland*. The campaign is to create awareness about creating a positive learning environment while holding students accountable for their actions. This information to help schools and districts develop fair and effective discipline policies and practices. The campaign includes an online tool called the *Effective School Discipline Guide* which provides the steps necessary to create positive school climates with high expectations for academic achievement and student behavior.”


http://www.ascd.org/research-a-topic/school-culture-and-climate-resources.aspx

This webpage from ASCD, formerly known as the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, differentiates between school climate and school culture, and contains a video entitled “What the Experts Say: Hear what ASCD’s authors and experts have to say about school climate and culture.”


This article states, “Using school climate data, education leaders can get a picture of the whole child and the whole school.”


The article begins, “To explore the significance of social integration in the educational system, this study examined whether student–teacher relationships predicted two important student behavior outcomes (academic achievement and disciplinary problems); whether these within-school intragenerational relationships were predicted by the structural, compositional, and climate-related characteristics of schools; and how the behavioral and contextual correlates of student–teacher relationships varied by race-ethnicity. Our findings, based on nationally representative panel data, indicated that stronger intergenerational bonding in school was associated with higher academic achievement, especially for Hispanic American girls, and with a lower likelihood of disciplinary problems, especially for white girls.”


According to this scientific study, “After controlling for gender and grade level, the teacher’s perspective of the student–teacher relationship uniquely accounted for explained variance in behavioral referrals and suspensions (11% and 23% of the variance, respectively)....As teacher-reports of positive student–teacher relationships increased, the number of suspensions students received decreased....This study suggests that the quality of the student–teacher relationship can either support or deter resiliency for at-risk students. Clearly, the next step is considering how positive student–teacher relationships can be promoted in the schools.”


According to this white paper from the Education Commission of the States, “Research confirms what teachers and parents have claimed for decades: a safe and supportive school environment, in which students have positive social relationships and are respected, engaged in their work and feel competent, matters.”

Center on Innovations in Learning
http://www.center4il.org/

http://www.educationworld.com/a_admin/admin/admin275.shtml

This article contains a conversation with Dr. Kent D. Peterson—a professor in the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Wisconsin-Madison—about the differences between positive and negative school cultures and how administrators and teachers can create a positive culture in their schools. It includes tips for creating a positive school culture.


http://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1212&context=childrenatrisk

According to this article’s abstract, “Advocates call for schools with high suspension rates to receive technical assistance in adopting ‘proven-effective’ systematic supports. Such supports include teacher professional development. This call is justified given evidence that good teaching matters. But what types of professional development should be funded? Increasingly, research points to the promise of programs that are sustained, rigorous, and focused on teachers’ interactions with students.”


The authors state, “An authoritative school climate should be characterized by high expectations for student performance accompanied by a respectful and encouraging attitude. We hypothesized that students would be most responsive to academic and behavioral demands made in the context of a supportive atmosphere, and as a result would be less likely to receive suspensions from school.” In the Discussion section, the authors find, “Study findings support the characterization of high school climate in terms of our model of authoritative structure and support. There were consistent relationships between schoolwide suspension rates and one measure of structure, based on the degree to which students perceive their teachers as having high academic press/expectations, and the measure of supportiveness, as reflected in student perceptions of teachers as caring and respectful.”

According to this article, suspended students are more likely to have low achievement, be retained, receive future suspensions, and experience dissatisfaction and alienation, and are at risk for such long-term negative outcomes as dropping out of school, becoming involved in the juvenile justice system, and later being incarcerated. “Given these negative consequences of school suspension, it is important to identify teacher approaches that are linked with students’ cooperative behavior….Results showed that the association between teachers’ relational approach to discipline and low student defiance was mediated by students’ perceptions of teacher trustworthiness. In other words, teachers who reported that they used a relational approach were more likely to have students who exhibited lower defiant behavior than those teachers who did not report using such an approach. This significant association between a relational approach and low defiant behavior was explained by student trust in teacher authority.”


In this article, the authors write, “Freiberg and Lapointe (2006) reviewed 40 school-based programs targeting the reduction of behavior problems in schools. Of those, 29 were implemented with Black, Latino, urban, and low-income students and offered some evidence for their success in increasing student problem solving and/or reducing difficulties in classroom management for participants as a whole. Freiberg and Lapointe identified commonalities among those effective programs. The programs move beyond discipline, emphasizing student learning and self-regulation, not simply procedures for addressing rule infractions. They encourage ‘school connectedness’ and ‘caring and trusting relationships’ between teachers and students. Overall, the programs try to increase students’ positive experience of schooling and to move away from a reliance on punitive reactions to misbehavior. The programmatic commonalities described by Freiberg and Lapointe (2006) offer a promising direction for lowering the oversanctioning of Black, Latino, and American Indian students.”

This article states, “Ethnographic researchers have found that teachers who communicate both warmth and demandingness are exemplary instructors of African American children (Ladson-Billings, 1994). Called ‘warm demanders’ (Vasquez, 1988) and ‘compassionate disciplinarians’ (Irvine, 2002), these teachers demand the best, exercise their authority, and show deep caring. Thus, they may not fall prey to behavioral stereotypes of students of color as aggressive or defiant.”


According to this article’s author, “Culture is intangible, but it’s essential: you can walk into a school and know immediately whether you want to be there or not. The same thing goes for the students, and the staff. But just because culture is intangible doesn’t mean that it’s undefinable.”


In this report, the authors focus on the assumption that educators can design/redesign schools’ instructional strategies, structures, and cultures to explicitly focus on deeper learning. The goal is primarily descriptive—to provide a picture of the strategies and structures the adults in the sampled network schools used to foster deeper learning.


This article claims you can “share the secrets of success of principals in seven high-achieving, high-poverty urban middle level schools.”


Building on the urgency for utilizing digital learning and innovative teaching practices to meet current needs, this paper delves into the characteristics of a learner-centered approach to education and the support that educators and schools require to transition to this model.


http://www.interventioncentral.org/academic-interventions/general-academic/reducing-problem-behaviors-through-good-academic-management-

Many of this article’s suggestions for reducing problem behaviors also apply to good teaching. The 10 suggestions are: (1) Be sure that assigned work is not too easy and not too difficult; (2) Offer frequent opportunities for choice; (3) Select high-interest or functional learning activities; (4) Instruct students at a brisk pace; (5) Structure lessons to require active student involvement; (6) Incorporate cooperative-learning opportunities into instruction; (7) Give frequent teacher feedback and encouragement; (8) Provide correct models during independent work; (9) Be consistent in managing the academic setting; and (10) Target interventions to coincide closely with ‘point of performance’.
Culture of Innovation


This issue paper examines the successful applicants for the USDOE’s Race to the Top-District (RTT-D) grant program, “to assess and learn lessons from this initial group of pioneering grantees’ efforts to implement and scale teaching and learning innovations.”


http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/10/02/06el-culture.h33.html

This article asks the question, “What is the ‘secret sauce’ in a district’s way of operating that allows good ideas to flourish?”


http://www.nymetroparents.com/article/innovative-educators-bring-customized-approach-to-teaching#.U_TuSErD9zM

According to this article, “One size does not fit all when it comes to learning, and a variety of innovative educators are honing in on that idea to bring a more customized approach to teaching our children.”


This report distills the common features of 25 exemplary but nevertheless unique schools implementing all or part of the P21 Framework for 21st Century Learning. It finds that these schools all evidence five essential and interacting ingredients: the use of research & evidence, a climate of achievement, an engaged community, distributed leadership, and student agency—a “cluster of academic mindsets and learning strategies that have been demonstrated to advance learning and achievement.”

http://images.erepublic.com/documents/CDE13+YEARBOOK_V.PDF

This 2013 yearbook gives readers market awareness by outlining how much money schools spent on education technology, where the funding came from, and what technologies have been garnering the most attention.


This Center for Digital Education crowdsourced white paper discusses the challenges institutions face in ensuring their networks are robust and how institutions are using their networks to support digital initiatives. It also offers best practices and strategies to help institutions meet the growing bandwidth and connectivity demands of today’s technology-fueled education environment.


http://www.centeril.org/ToolsTrainingModules/

This webpage contains four training modules, each of which includes a video and various PowerPoint and Word documents. The module topics are:
(1) Getting Better at What We Do (“Whatever our role, the best thing we can do for students is to keep getting better at what we do. Here is how we improve.”)
(2) The Process: Getting Better Together (“Improving professional practices includes a cycle of assessing, planning, implementing, and monitoring our progress. Here is how we work through that cycle.”)
(3) Getting Better Together In Teams (“No man is an island. School improvement takes teams of people working together toward the same goals. Here is how we improve our teaming.”)
(4) Getting Better Together with Coaching (“Tips for coaching a district or school through the school improvement process.”)


This chapter addresses the principles of the “science of implementation” and principles for the effective diffusion of innovations. A cautionary tale on the failed California CSR initiative provides a graphic lesson of an undisciplined and uncoordinated attempt to implement change.


This paper provides a snapshot of some of the dominant trends in the ever-evolving blended learning landscape and takes a look at how innovative approaches are boosting achievement in elementary mathematics classrooms.


http://www.wise-qatar.org/education-culture-innovation-lisa-duty

This article begins, “Like many educators and organizational leaders around the globe, my organization is working hard to design and implement new approaches to education that we believe can be more effective for students than those we currently have in place. Through sheer force of will, many of these new ideas will have the chance to be tested in practice—and some will prove effective. Along the way, each of these ideas must pass through the context of one or more organizations. How receptive an organization is to new approaches will determine whether or not they succeed and, more importantly, whether ideas that prove effective will have a chance to spread to other parts of the system. This begs the question: What more could we do to help leaders across the education sector develop and sustain a culture of innovation?”


In this publication, the authors provide an analysis of what innovation culture means within an education context; describe why it’s essential that we get better at building it; introduce a new framework that defines the factors that influence a robust and healthy culture of innovation; and share a self-assessment tool that educational leaders can use on their path to building innovation culture.


This is an education case study developed from the “Innovation Powered by Technology” conference in 2012, and a model of how to convene a successful conference about student-centered digital learning.


http://www.minncan.org/news-blog/blog/coding-in-schools

According to this article, “There is nothing more important than teaching our students how to think. Our schools are the PERFECT place to teach future generations all the soft skills they will need in our rapidly changing world. Learning how to code isn’t so much about learning the languages (HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Objective-C, Swift, Java, Ruby, etc.). It’s about learning how to think, collaborate and solve problems.”


http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mark-w-guay/innovative-business_b_3853274.html

This article suggests, “To make change happen, teachers need to know what they can do to be the change they want to see in transforming education....Teachers, like school leaders, need a simple and poignant directive on how they can help be the shift. This could, of course, start with creating a workplace where innovation is accepted -- if not demanded. Force teachers to use their degrees without slapping down professional development packets that tell teachers what they do. Allow them to think for themselves and value this.”

http://www.centeril.org/

http://www.digitalpromise.org/blog/entry/designing-a-network-of-education-innovation-clusters

This article concerns Education Innovation Clusters (EICs) -- local communities of practice that bring together educators, startups, policymakers, investors, researchers, and community groups across the usual boundaries that separate them.


http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/edtechresearcher/2015/05/four_ways_to_create_a_culture_of_innovation.html

This article begins, “Never before has there been a time in education where students possessed computing devices so powerful that they allowed them to be graphic designers, movie makers, editors, directors, authors, developers, music makers and more. Yet in many conversations with educators around the country, the number one question is often how can we allow students to enhance and develop these skills when we have to adhere to the standards. The culture in our educational system, one that does not always permit our teachers or students to take risks, is ironic given the innovative nature of our society.”


“The Idaho Leads project was designed to deeply engage a wide variety of education stakeholders over a significant period of time in regional networks and in-district support” to increase statewide leadership capacity.


This chapter, while providing an overview of current, mainstream K–12 hardware/software educational technology, focuses on more critical aspects of education technology: teaching and learning, and how we can use a technology of teaching to improve outcomes for all learners.
By tuning in to the latest innovations in learning and putting them into a context that allows you to use them every day, LearnNow recognizes how research in child development, neuroscience, psychology, health and medicine can be translated into a new field, the learning sciences.


In probing innovation contexts and conditions, this chapter’s authors note “innovation is as much about systemic change as it is about leadership and culture,” arguing for intentional planning, a realistic approach, and creativity in encouraging a culture willing to embrace innovation.


This book “focuses on innovations—both methodological and technological—in teaching and learning that promise to surpass standard practice in achieving learning outcomes for students.” Underlying principles, balanced approaches, and field reports on innovative practices are included.


This article describes long-term trends driving ed tech (advancing the culture of innovation and increasing cross-institution collaboration), mid-term trends (measuring learning and open educational resources), and short-term trends (blended learning and redesigning learning spaces).

http://www.digitalpromise.org/blog/entry/building-an-authentic-culture-of-professional-learning

According to this article, “Our current workforce system frequently requires continuous learning in the form of credit hours or continuing education units, and these are typically measured in seat-time. However, these structures do not often effectively value that learning. To fully prioritize lifelong learning for educators, we must rethink not only where learning happens, but how we recognize it.”


http://tech.ed.gov/innovationclusters/

“As an intentionally integrated innovation ecosystem, that links the different partners in an ongoing and iterative design process, can help remove the barriers that slow innovation in learning technologies….The US Department of Education seeks to identify forward thinking regions where commercial, academic, and education partners have come together to form an innovation cluster focusing on a specific challenge that their region is uniquely suited to address and solve.”


This paper presents a Change Leadership Framework and applies the framework to the role of leadership in a State Education Agency (SEA) in setting the conditions for change to accelerate student learning.


http://www.centeril.org/handbook/What_is_an_Innovation_SA.pdf

This book chapter grapples with defining innovation in the context of learning and teaching. The chapter provides guidance on the necessary conditions for innovation, including recognizing what a culture of innovation looks like and suggests a framework for identifying innovations in learning.

[https://learn.relay.edu/module/7](https://learn.relay.edu/module/7)

According to this free, online module’s summary, “When first rolling out blended in your classroom or school you have to think about three key components: the classroom space, routines, and culture. This module will explain each part and introduce you to concrete strategies related to each component being used to implement blended effectively around the nation.”


[http://www.2revolutions.net/CultureofInnovation_HigherEd_4.15.15_FINAL.pdf](http://www.2revolutions.net/CultureofInnovation_HigherEd_4.15.15_FINAL.pdf)

This is a follow-up publication to *So You Think You Want to Innovate? Emerging Lessons and a New Tool for State and District Leaders Working to Build a Culture of Innovation* (Duty & Kern, 2014).


A study of more than 20 schools with different instructional models indicates that “teachers need to adapt how they instruct students and, at times, take on major new responsibilities and, at others, split responsibilities with a team. That in turn requires district and school leaders to foster a culture of innovation, and intensively support teachers as they navigate this transition, with two particularly critical shifts in how they manage talent.”


[http://www.schoolturnaroundsupport.org/resources/championing-effective-instruction](http://www.schoolturnaroundsupport.org/resources/championing-effective-instruction)

This discussion paper summarizes the findings from a “convening of states on current research, policies, and innovative approaches [with] synopses of state initiatives and emerging lessons and implications” to promote high-quality instruction in turnaround schools.


This book explores the association between school innovation and different measures related to educational objectives.