

HOW TO BUILD STRONG ADULT PROFESSIONAL CULTURE (APC): The Essential Ingredient for School Improvement

This is a course about the everyday behaviors of school leaders who build strong adult professional cultures (APC). It is a course for principals, assistant principals, team leaders, and instructional coaches, and very much for central office personnel who interact with school leaders

Our learning at RBT, supported solidly by research, is that there will be no sustainable improvement in student results and no elimination of the achievement gap until leaders and teachers succeed in making strong the norms of behavior between adults.

Many other elements of school practice count, and count heavily (good curriculum; community support; resources; school structures like induction and teacher leadership and common planning time; and others.) But no matter how well these important areas are structured, they will not accomplish on their own what we need for students unless the adults act as profiled on the other side of this sheet

Trust is the foundation of everything we will do to strengthen culture, and without it nothing much will happen. But once trust in a leader is established, that trust translates over time into trust of one's colleagues. How do successful leaders build that? Trust that what? What do they do in everyday behavior that results in it? We delve into these questions in considerable detail and give participants tools to self-assess and take action.



AUDIENCE

- Administrators
- Instructional Coaches
- Teacher Leaders
- District Leaders- especially those who supervise principals and designers of leader certification programs
- Supervisors and Evaluators

OUTCOMES

As a result of taking this program, participants will be able to:

- Explain the principal elements of strong Adult Professional Culture (APC) and why they are essential for elevating student achievement and closing the achievement gap
- Use a repertoire of skills to build relationship trust
- Effectively implement procedures and structures for growing the 12 norms of strong APC

37.5 HOUR PROGRAM (6-Days)

Contact info@RBTeach.com for more information





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FORMAT

Participants will keep logs, do experiments in their leadership, and share results with peers. Activities will include readings, case studies, interactive practice of skills, analysis of vignettes of leaders in action, and problem solving with colleagues in the course.

Topics include:

- Strengthening Trust
- 12 Norms of strong APC
- Structures and Procedures
- Communication Skills
- Vulnerability and Strength
- Building Courage and Conviction
- Building Essential Beliefs:
 - The knowledge based for successful teaching is huge, wide-ranging and complex
 - Everyone can get better; we all have more to learn
 - “Smart is something you can get.”

Vulnerability means being open and authentic about your risk-taking, your fears and doubts, what you know and don't know, and when you need help.

Strength means standing for certain values and commitments, and acting from them with consistency, force, and sincerity. It means facing toxic behaviors directly and clearly; and it means taking on the most significant things for improvement even though they are hard, and you're not quite sure how to do it yet.

Visible Practices of a Strong Adult Professional Culture

LEARNING ORGANIZATION

1. Frequent teaching in the presence of other adults (Public Teaching)
2. Safety to take risks, be vulnerable in front of colleagues
3. Constant learning about High-Expertise Teaching

TEAMS & DATA

4. Deep collaboration and deliberate design for interdependent work and joint responsibility for student results
5. Non-defensive self-examination of teaching practice in relation to student results
6. Constant use of data to re-focus teaching

PASSION AND PRESS

7. Urgency and press to reach all students and do better for our disadvantaged students
8. Commitment to implement “Smart is something you can get” in classroom practice, class structures, and school policies and procedures

HUMANE CARING ENVIRONMENT

9. Human environment of caring, appreciation and recognition, getting to know one another, traditions we look forward to

CRITICAL FEEDBACK

10. Demanding and high standards for development towards high expertise teaching for all teachers
11. Honest, open communication and the ability to have difficult conversations
12. Environment of Reflection with Habits of Mindful Inquiry





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The course starts with an overview of the **research on the connection between strong APC and student achievement**. We want to establish at the outset that these leadership skills are the fulcrum for school improvement and student achievement, thus providing motivation for participants to elevate learning these skills to the top of their list.

Then we go directly to the indispensable catalyst: these strong cultures are built on a **foundation of trust** in the leader.

The next part of the course examines three **essential beliefs** that energize the culture so that all the adults press for improvement of teaching, achievement for all students not just some, and equity. These beliefs are:

- The knowledge based for successful teaching is huge, wide-ranging and complex
- Everyone of us can better; we all have more to learn
- “Smart is something you can get.” and we can convince students that this is true

Trust in the leader sets the stage for developing and spreading these beliefs and the actions that proceed from them. But **trust is not enough**. Successful leaders know how to plant the seeds, nurture the early adopters and organize structures that support exercise of the beliefs. This is where we will lay out the guidelines for 5-Point Advocacy: *Say it, Model it, Organize for it, Protect it and Reward it*.

We next focus on the **procedures and structures** that flourish in strong cultures, what they look like and sound like and how to get them started, including:

- Getting teachers in each other’s rooms
- Legitimate decision-making
- High functioning PLCs

After that we practice the **essential communication skills** of successful culture builders like checking the ladder of inference, active listening, practicing inquiry before advocacy.

Finally we help participants **make plans** to implement the strategies above.

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