

EDA 610: School Culture/Climate Instrumentation

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### EDA 610: School Culture/Climate Instrumentation

The School of Business and Tourism (BT) is one of four schools located on the extended campus of the Miguel Contreras Learning Complex (MCLC) in Local District East within the larger Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Per year, LAUSD distributes to each school site a detailed School Climate/Culture Survey with the expectation of high percentage rates of participation from Students, Parents and/or Guardians, and Faculty/Staff. The survey targets mixed-methodology to provide qualitative and quantitative data capturing socio-cultural, socio-emotional, instructional, disciplinary, and organizational variables. For scope and sequence, the purpose of this paper will focus solely on the Faculty/Staff methodology, Instrumentation, and Data Evidence.

Effective surveys measuring and activating the lens of all relevant stakeholders are a matter of collective bargaining and the leveraging of personnel or cultural currency. Collaboration is crucial for sustainable and long-term performance. “What a person does on his own, without being stimulated by the thoughts and experiences of others, is even in the best of cases rather paltry and monotonous” (Albert Einstein, as cited in Dyer, Gregersen, & Christensen, 2011, p. 113). Consequently, when stakeholders are engaged, defining a goal (e.g., cultural/climate improvement) with necessary parameters directed to a tangible objective is paramount for identification and proper reinforcement (Catmull & Wallace, 2014). The marriage between stakeholder collaboration and collective goal-design and implementation is a matter of objective data-driven factors that encourage a harmony in priorities among constituents, making networking compete with personal goals of each representing group (Ibarra, 2015).

**Description of Instrument**

“Good questions inform; great questions transform” (Ken Coleman, as cited in Burgess, S., & Houf, B. (2017). The survey instrument targeted The School of Business and Tourism’s (BT) Faculty/Staff with customized email invites through LAUSD’s verification system to validate input and to protect the anonymity of participants.

**The Faculty/Staff Instrument**

The Faculty/Staff instrument used a Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Disagree or Agree, Agree, and Strongly Agree scale. Part one identified the Faculty/Staff employment classification (e.g., Administrator, Certificated, Classified) and possible additional educational responsibilities (e.g., PSA, PSW, TSP, Sped). General categories of the instrument highlighted varied instructional and collaboration factors:

This school is a supportive and inviting place for students to learn; This school sets high standards for academic performance for all students; This school promotes academic success for all students; This school emphasizes helping students academically when they need it; This school emphasizes teaching lessons in ways relevant to students; This school encourages all students to enroll in rigorous courses (such as honors and AP); Students' backgrounds are valued at this school; At this school, decisions are made based on students' needs and interests; Adults at this school expect students to go to college; At this school, parents treat teachers with respect; At this school, parents treat staff with respect; This school is a supportive and inviting place for staff to work; This school promotes trust and collegiality among staff; This school promotes personnel participation in decision-making that affects the school practices and policies.

Additionally, the instrument continued to ask questions pertaining to general categories, as mentioned, with additional employment clarification questions for disaggregated data analysis. Other questions addressed specific questioning related to faculty/staff relations affecting the culture/climate at BT using a scale of Nearly All; Most; Some, Few, Almost None:

How many adults at this school have close professional relationships with one another?

How many adults at this school support and treat each other with respect?

How many adults at this school feel a responsibility to improve this school?

Lastly, the following questions used the same agree or disagree scale targeting professional development, fidelity of resources, discipline, and effective long-term educational preparation to accommodate socio-cultural and socio-emotional contingencies:

I feel comfortable talking with the school leadership about issues and concerns; I have the materials I need to do my job well; Generally speaking, my technology issues are resolved within an acceptable time period; I get the help I need to communicate with parents; The child abuse training I receive adequately prepares me to address child abuse at my school; This school clearly communicates to students the consequences of breaking school rules; Students know how they are expected to act; Students know what the rules are; This school handles discipline problems fairly; This school effectively handles student discipline and behavioral problems; Adults at this school treat all students with respect; I have received professional development on preventing bullying; I address bullying that occurs in my school; I feel safe in the neighborhood around my school; I feel safe on school grounds during the day; Students treat adults at this school with Respect.

**Data Analysis**

In total, the Faculty/Staff survey asked a total of 105 questions ranging from instructional, disciplinary, and organizational procedures. Instructionally, 74% of the Faculty/Staff feel BT's instructional fidelity falls in the positive categories of Agree to Strongly Agree; however, only 13% of the total 74% Strongly Agree that BT's instructional practice and rigor is exemplary. Additionally, 26% of BT's Faculty/Staff did not indicate a positive response suggesting the need to identify areas for improvement.

Collaborative efforts also indicated a need for improvement with 68% suggesting that BT's professional development and professional learning communities are effective to very effective. Categories represented in these categories were identified by specific professional development modules to identify areas of strength and weakness for improved site-wide professional learning.

The areas and questions related to discipline dropped 5% from the previous year to 58%. These categories encapsulated SSPT referrals, PSA, PSW, CSA resourcing, and qualitative areas of respect from students and co-workers. For example, 42% of BT's Faculty/Staff see need of improvement in disciplinary procedures and referral protocol with continuity and coherency between on-campus support services represented in Gear Up, Black Student Union, PSA, PSW, and CSA. These numbers indicated that the Faculty/Staff can articulate the present resources in place to support Restorative Practices but do not see improvement in the reduction of student behavior problems affecting the larger community. If the school or district decides to embrace Restorative Practices instead of Punitive Reinforcement, then providing integral resources for viable integration and reciprocal support services is paramount to the change in disciplinary worldview.

Lastly, organizational practices were very similar to the above disciplinary practices most likely because they overlap or are consequential of each other. For example, the organizational categories focused on providing accountability and reinforcement for instructional practices via the MYPLN platform that tracks accountability for varied professional learning practices. The collective total of Agree to Strongly Agree of effective organizational practices indicated a 63% satisfaction rate considering trainings related to Implicit Bias, Title IX, sexual-harassment, and anti-racist instructional practices. As the corresponding disciplinary categories that are representing a fundamental shift from punitive to restorative practices, the complementary trainings under organizational accountability are equally challenging due to the controversial content being reinforced and the foundational approach changing due to the alteration of philosophical pedagogy.

### **Steps and Rationale to Affect Change**

I had the luxury of being the lead to gain a 95% participation rate amongst relevant stakeholders: faculty/staff, students, and parents/guardians. We utilized Blackboard connect messages, Google Texts, Coffee/Chat with the Principal opportunities, Schoology announcements, email and in-class flyers promoting participation. The 95% participation rate is important for District accountability; however, as a leader to affect change, there are many ways to celebrate the survey pre and post measurement so that it becomes a valued instrument suggesting pride and collaboration needed in an effective educational family. Consequently, the 95% participation rate would be a meaningful number knowing that there is an intentional built-in intrinsic value to the data. Celebrations can be promoted through school assemblies, classroom competitions, social-media outlets, and school promotional advertisements.

Also, since the above data review strategically measured the relevant Faculty/Staff stakeholders for the purpose of stratified data to drive instructional and organizational components, the data suggested a great disparity between student and parent and/or guardian satisfaction in correlated data. For example, the first finding indicated that more than 95% of BT's parents/guardians feel that the BT seeks out varied opportunities to extend participation to the community and parents. This was indicated through the varied forms of communication, efforts from the parent community representatives, and teacher and administrative communications. Secondly, 90% of our parents/guardians feel that the BT is a safe place to come and learn; however, there were narrative comments about concerns related to gang and drug use increase via communication from their children and the local community.

Lastly, 95% of our parents/guardians feel that BT practices a high-caliber of instruction with real-life practices (e.g., Project Based Learning) to prepare for College and Career Readiness. However, as indicated in the Faculty/Staff Data Analysis, the numbers vary to justify that each stakeholder group is not in strong communication or the instrument is not measuring what was intended. To bridge this gap and refine the instrumentation and methodology, a coordination and shared celebration of BT's practices could be rolled out in many informal ways to build a shared cultural value, inviting all participants needed for dynamic educational efforts.

As stated in the discussion post in the form of DOK I statements, as an administrator, I will be integral to addressing factors that affect the culture/climate from all stakeholders. I will utilize the communication tools to strategically reach to all participants and will be actively engaged in promoting school-wide efforts and in-person, authentic engagement in varied categories of instruction, discipline, and socio-cultural and emotional supports services (e.g., PSW, PSA, CSA).

Personally, there are many internal threats to BT's survey instrument, but the school district pushes for a high participation rate, not necessarily the efficacy of the measure. If the participation rate is beyond local-site control, I, as the administrator, will seek opportunities to add extrinsic and intrinsic value to the instrument. Also, since the instrument ends up being more qualitative, no matter the quantitative scale with tons of admitted limitations, BT's stakeholders need dedicated time to provide data analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation protocol to apply the strength of the collaborative "groupthink."

Robinson states (2004) that "... to know something is essentially to know the cause of it ... " (p. 53). Personally, as indicated in the discussion post, it was an honor to have direct access and ownership measuring the school climate directly affecting BT's student population. Statistically, having varied stakeholders that "triangulate" responses is incredibly powerful to identify and improve in areas of growth while celebrating areas of strength. Since the instrument was long and arduous because it was compulsory from the district and can yield unviable data when the participants breeze through the questions without really reading the wording, it will be necessary to customize the survey so that BT can incrementally measure specific questions for ad hoc purposes to uncover "essential causes" (Robinson, 2004). As the administrator, it will be an act of love to provide custom, differentiated measures to achieve more than the status quo. As stated in Catmull and Wallace (2014), the personal, emotional, and intellectual integration of observation is necessary to "fuel inspiration ... [and] keeps us creating rather than copying ... . A hallmark of a healthy creative culture is that its people feel free to share ideas, opinions, and criticisms." It is the microdetail in the delivery that accommodates the varied learning factors and aids in personalizing the professional development or instructional instrumentation (e.g., Culture/Climate survey) to be sustainable, efficient, and inspirational.



## References

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