

“Courageous leadership and the perseverance to continually improve are critical to creating a better learning culture for all students and ultimately, to transform learning” (Sheninger and Murray 2017, 227).

Chapter 9: Sustaining Connections in a Learning Culture

Building and sustaining a collaborative culture of learning provides the necessary foundation for change. In order for any innovation to be successful, all stakeholders must work together to achieve that shared goal. In this culture, leaders engender trust and ensure positive relationships among team members. Beginning and ending with the plural pronoun “our,” all members of the school learning community share responsibility for learning and take pride in the outcomes. They all have a common stake in continuous improvement that results in student success.

A collaborative culture of learning allows individual educators to capitalize on the strengths their colleagues possess while they build their own instructional expertise. When school librarians enter into future ready learning partnerships, they help others achieve their goals. Working in teams, they build trusting relationships. In classrooms and libraries, educators practice reciprocal mentorship in order to improve student learning outcomes. They take risks together to coteach, and they believe that their instructional practices can develop at a much greater rate with more assured improvements when they collaborate.

With leadership, a successful change process breeds more change. School librarians working as change aides have the opportunity and responsibility to collaborate with administrators to codevelop and sustain library programs that are at the center of initiatives to transform learning and teaching. As leaders, librarians embody the vision, walk the talk, and go the extra mile.

What you will find in this chapter:

1. Graphic from *How to Make a Switch* (Heath and Heath 2010);
2. AASL Shared Foundations and Key Commitments (AASL 2018);
3. Your Plan and Reality Graphic;
4. Empowered Collaborative Culture of Learning Graphic.

For all stakeholders to work together over time, an empowered learning culture must be nurtured in order to sustain change. Time and time again, principals, school librarians, and teacher leaders will be called upon to renew and reinvigorate the learning community’s commitment to growth. School librarians can be essential leaders who build and sustain the relationships that cement the foundation of a culture of learners—young and older—who strive to make schools joyful, relevant, challenging, and effective learning environments for all.

Works Cited

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Sheninger, Eric C., and Thomas C. Murray. 2017. *Learning Transformed: 8 Keys to Designing Tomorrow’s Schools, Today*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

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