



16th Annual  
Hawker Brownlow  
**Thinking &  
Learning**  
Conference

*the teacher's conference*

**ANTHONY MUHAMMAD**

**SATURDAY 18 MAY**

**Session 1**

**Building Purpose and Overcoming  
Frustration on Your Improvement Journey**

**MELBOURNE**



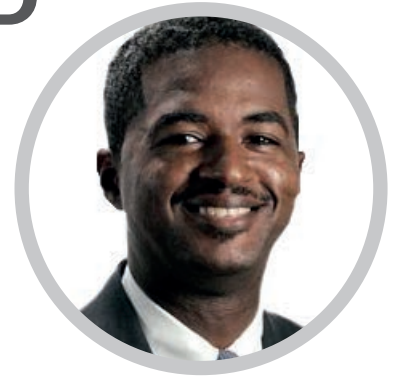
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# ANTHONY MUHAMMAD

Dr Anthony Muhammad is a much sought-after educational consultant, having served as principal for a middle and high school and as a middle school teacher and assistant principal. His tenure as a practitioner has earned him several awards as both a teacher and a principal. As a researcher, Anthony has published multiple books and articles, and he regularly gives seminars on the subject of transforming school culture. Anthony's most notable accomplishment came as principal of Levey Middle School in Michigan, a National School of Excellence, where student proficiency on state assessments more than doubled in five years.



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**Building Culture, Purpose, and Overcoming Frustration on Your PLC Journey**

Anthony Muhammad, PhD

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**The Task at Hand**

“If schools are to be transformed into learning communities, educators must be prepared first of all to acknowledge that the traditional guiding model of education is no longer relevant in a post-industrial, knowledge-based society. Second, they must embrace ideas and assumptions that are radically different than those that have guided schools in the past.”

—DuFour & Eaker, *Professional Learning Communities at Work* (1998), p. 34

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**Two Forms of Change**

- Technical–structural (skill)
- Cultural (will)

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### Healthy School Culture

“Educators have an unwavering belief in the ability of all of their students to achieve success, and they pass that belief on to others in overt and covert ways. Educators create policies and procedures and adopt practices that support their belief in the ability of every student.”

—Peterson (in Cromwell, 2002)

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### The Will to Lead

- Aligning the philosophy
- Managing frustration
- Creating a culture of collaboration
- Institutionalizing cultural health

—Hollie & Muhammad, 2011

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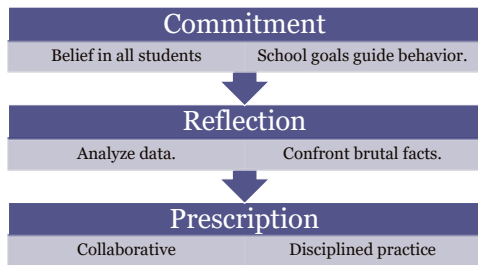
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### Prescriptive



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**Aligning the Philosophy  
Developing Shared Purpose**

“The mission question challenges members of a group to reflect on the fundamental purpose of the organization, the very reason for its existence. The question asks, ‘*Why do we exist?*’ ‘*What are we here to do together?*’ and ‘*What is the business of our business?*’”

—DuFour & Eaker, 1998

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**3 Big “Ideas” of a PLC**

- **Ensure high** levels of learning for **all** students
- Create of a **culture of collaboration**
- Focus on **Results**

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### Crucial Conversations

- Conflicting opinions
- Potential to become highly emotional
- Stakes are high

Patterson, et.al, Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When the Stakes are High (2011)

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### Starting a Movement



- Align, clarify, and build consensus to improve practice
- Identify impediments to collaboration and address them aggressively
- Create a plan that improves our collective effectiveness

-Hierck and Williams, Starting a Movement: Building Culture From the Inside Out in Professional Learning Communities (2015)

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### Pause to Think

- What are you planning to do when you return to school to stimulate dialogue about shared purpose and addressing philosophical conflict?
- Are you prepared to respond to attitudes and belief systems that contradict the PLC philosophy?

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### Managing Frustration



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### Toxic School Culture

“Educators believe that student success is based on students’ level of concern, attentiveness, prior knowledge, and willingness to comply with the demands of the school, and they articulate that belief in overt and covert ways. Educators create policies and procedures and adopt practices that support their belief in the impossibility of universal achievement.”

—Peterson (in Cromwell, 2002)

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### Descriptive and Deflective



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The Real Difference

Toxic	Healthy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Descriptive</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reflective</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deflective</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prescriptive</li></ul>

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Frustration  
The Root of a Toxic Culture

**Frustration:** The feeling of being upset or annoyed because of inability to change or achieve something

- A mismatch between skill set and task
- Causes people to deflect blame onto others and create covert alliances with people experiencing similar struggles

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Recipe for Disaster

- Inappropriate preparation
- Poor support system
- Task overload

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### Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to identify, assess, and control the emotions of oneself, of others, and of groups. It can be divided into **ability EI** and **trait EI**

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### The Culture of Complaint

#### Two Vs

- Venting
- Validation

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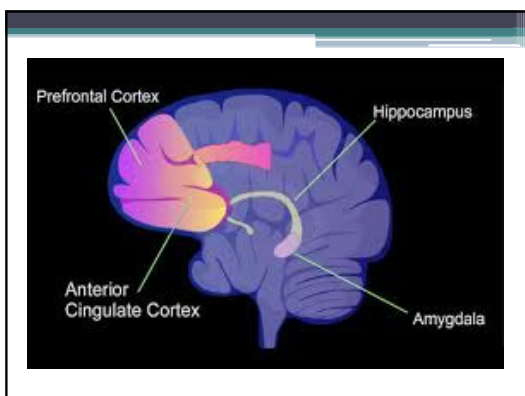
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**Complaining....**

- Creates a default bridge to the amygdala
- Increases cortisol
- Produces **neuronal mirroring**
- Shrinks hippocampus

Bradberry, T. "How Complaining Rewires the Brain for Negativity", Fast Company, September 9, 2016

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**Time Out!**

“To be a good teammate, your responsibilities must be more important than your rights”

—John Wooden

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**Good to Great, Jim Collins**

What do **great** corporations or organizations do differently than **good or average** organizations?

1. They seek and confront the brutal facts.
2. They get the right people on the bus and sit them in the right seats.

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### Adult Drama

Dysfunctional social interactions between adult professionals within a school environment that interfere with the proper implementation of important policies, practices, and procedures that support the proper education of students

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### The Quandary




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### Pause to Think

- How do people in your work environment typically respond when they get frustrated (Reflective and Prescriptive or Descriptive and Deflective)?
- Do you have an active group of Fundamentalists? If so, how do they affect your culture?

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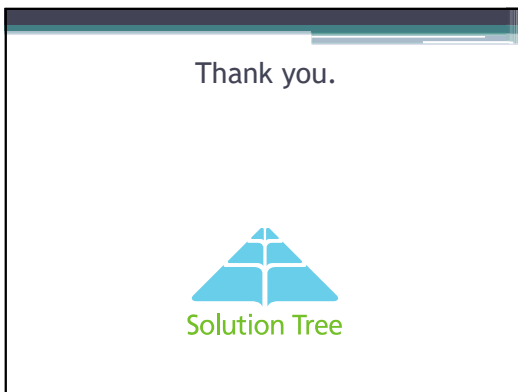
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### Staff Concern Form

Staff Member \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Seriousness of the concern:

1            2            3            4            5

My concern is.....

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My suggestion is.....

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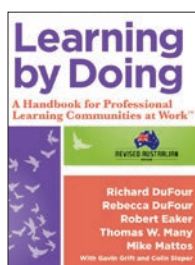




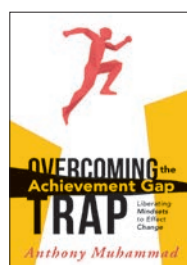


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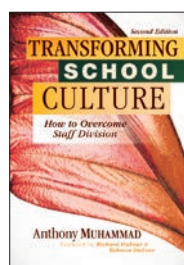
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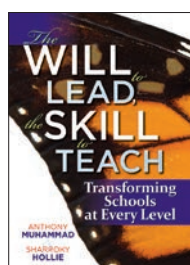
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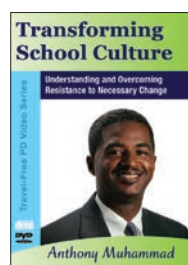
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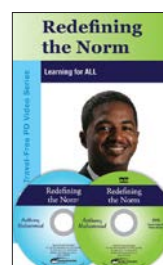
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