

Transforming School Culture

In my work with schools in the area of [education leadership](#), I have seen all forms of resistance to change. In some groups of educators, their focus on the status quo is difficult to spot which make it difficult for school leadership and educational leadership whose focused is on implementing best practices in education. The untrained ear hears rational, logical arguments for current methodologies and current approaches. We can be quickly lulled into tranquility ... and loss of action. In other groups, the overt resistance to new initiatives is so obvious that it can be identified immediately. While we are not lulled into inaction, the hard-edged, purposeful resistance of an entire school of teachers is nearly impossible for even experienced school administrators to overcome.

In Anthony Muhammad's book, *Transforming School Culture* he does an excellent job of discussing these challenges. He also provides us a framework for understanding the different levels of resistance we may encounter. In doing so, he codifies the participants in resistance to better enable us to understand who they are, what they believe and how we can have an impact on them. Good stuff and very relevant.

However, I found something even more interesting. If you have not listened in on the [Voicethread conversation](#) regarding this book, please do it now. Hosted and moderated by Bill Ferriter of the [Tempered Radical](#), this conversation is amazing. Anthony Muhammad contributed to the discussion throughout.

Here are a few of the interesting questions posed by the book and the discussion:

- How do we avoid exacerbating an us-vs-them mentality in public education in an age of accountability?
- How are we passing cultural expectation on to new teachers? Are we intentional about passing information on to new teachers through our actions or are we letting the "bad apples" pass on their own cultural expectations?
- How do we enable teachers (in an age of increased reliance on each other with collaboration, PLCs, etc.) to confront their peers? How can principals and other school leaders teach the skills to teachers which enable them to address their peers appropriately? How can we provide them with the courage and moral authority to do so?
- Are we overlooking a valuable group of people in our schools -- technology coordinators and media specialists -- who are best positioned to help enable cultural shifts in our schools? Does their school-wide (but non-administrative) role provide a communication point with all teachers that is critical in transforming the cultural norms of a school?

These are all topics of ongoing thought and discussions. Listen, enjoy and think.