

Generating Energy: Professional Growth and Agency (Aspects of Culture and Climate, Part 5 of 8)

Shayna Pond, Mariah Warren, Shelby Blackwood, Patricia McDaniels-Gomez, Mary Braggs, Evalyne Tracy, Jared Whaley

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Essential Question(s)

How does professional growth and sense of support foster employee agency and energize their engagement with work?

Summary

When a work environment provides agency, social support, and opportunities for professional growth, these factors stimulate employees to become more competent and engaged in their work. This professional learning session is part of a series that explores the eight aspects of organizational culture and climate measured by K20's research-based survey. Participants look at the research factors that support professional growth and agency and then reflect on the data collected from their school survey to create a goal for improving professional growth and agency at their school.

Learning Goals

Participants will:

- Explore research-based characteristics of professional growth and agency.
- Analyze survey constructs and data in the context of their organization.
- Apply strategies to their role within their team and organization.

Attachments

- Chain Notes—Aspects of Culture and Climate, Professional Growth and Agency.docx
- Chain Notes—Aspects of Culture and Climate, Professional Growth and Agency.pdf
- Research Brief—Aspects of Culture and Climate, Professional Growth and Agency.pdf
- Session Slides—Aspects of Culture and Climate, Professional Growth and Agency.pptx
- What Fills You Up—Aspects of Culture and Climate, Professional Growth and Agency.pdf
- Wheel of Resources—Aspects of Culture and Climate, Professional Growth and Agency.docx
- Wheel of Resources—Aspects of Culture and Climate, Professional Growth and Agency.pdf

Materials

- Session Slides (attached)
- “What Fills You Up?” coloring sheets (attached; 1 per participant)
- Wheel of Resources worksheet (attached; 1 per participant)
- Chain Notes handouts (attached; 1 set per table group)
- Research Brief (attached; 1 per participant)
- Colored pencils (1-2 set/s per table group)
- Chart paper (1 sheet per table group)
- Markers (1 per table group)

15 minutes

Engage

Facilitator's Note

This construct relates closely to Goals, Supports, and Structures and Leadership Supportiveness. Both are about kinds of resources, so the job demands/resources model applies to both. These constructs are distinct in the sense that Leadership Supportiveness and Goals, Supports, and Structures are more about *organizational* resources, such as directing work through goals. This construct (Professional Growth and Agency) is more about supporting *personal* resources, such as motivation, well-being, and direct supervisor support.

Finding the core of motivation is the generating energy concept that inspired the title for this session.

Display **slide 2** and begin by handing out the attached **What Fills You Up?** coloring sheets. There are three options provided in this document, a heart, a bucket, and a battery. These choices enable the participants to choose which one they want to color in order to express the big ideas in their lives that keep them going. Again, this is to introduce the generating energy concept. Participants can draw pictures or write words on their coloring sheet. It may help them to provide some reflection questions on what sort of ideas they want to represent. It doesn't have to all be grand philosophical ideas, if porch sitting is what you need to feel fully charged each day, that's worth including.

- What are the things that take up space in your heart?
- What drives you personally and professionally?
- What are your passions?
- Values
- Motivators
- Aspirations
- Hobbies

As everyone is finishing their coloring, go over the essential question on **slide 3** and the learning objectives on **slide 4**.

30 minutes

Explore

Transition to **slide 6** (slide 5 is optional as an introduction to this activity) and hand out the attached **Wheel of Resources** worksheet. Each participant should consider how the concepts they included in the "What fills me up?" coloring activity can be accounted for in their work life. For example, if family was the biggest thing on the heart map, what does that look like in terms of your job? This might look like predictable work hours or not having to take work home or flexibility to take time off. If creative expression was important on your heart map, put that here too.

Each participant should come up with at least 4 resources informed by their heart map that are also important to them in their job. You'll notice that there are solid lines breaking the wheel into 4 quadrants. If they wish to come up with more than four, they can use the dotted lines to break each quadrant into either two or three more sections.

Next, have participants rate how well their job currently fills these resources up on a scale of 1-5 by coloring in each slice up to the circular lines provided.

The reasoning behind this activity is to make the connections between personal motivators, job design, and resources in our work. The premise for this is based on the job-demands/resources model (an activity that goes more in-depth on this model can be found in "Directing Energy: Goals, Supports, and Structures"). There are organizational and personal resources that can be provided and/or supported by an organization's overall climate and culture.

20 minutes

Explain

Move on to **slide 8** and hand out the attached **Research Brief**. Have participants spend about 10 minutes reading through the brief on their own.

Then move to **slide 9** and ask participants to look back at their Wheel of Resources and take note of how their labels might align what the research says. Do they have a slice to fit each category of the research?

1. Job Design
2. Agency
3. Well-being
4. Professional Growth

Have them label each slice of their wheel according to these categories. It's okay if a slice can fit into more than one. Likewise, it's okay if your elbow partner labels a slice with the same name as yours into a different category. For example, one person might feel that creativity fits into agency (because they feel they have agency when they can express creatively in their work), someone else may say job design (because they feel that it's the design of their role that permits them to be creative) and another might even say it fits into well-being (especially if they feel emotionally depleted if they don't have time or agency to be creative at work). These are all acceptable reasons and depend on individual processing of how their job provides them personal resources.

The goal for this activity is to provide personal connections that help us understand how the research constructs apply to us as individuals.

40 minutes

Extend

Facilitator's Note

If you don't have these links, you will need to request access to them prior to facilitating this session. Take a screen shot of the infographic page to paste into **slide 10**. You will also want to create a QR code and short URL to put on this slide for easy access.

Bring up **slide 10** and provide time for each participant to bring up the infographic data for your school. Also, begin to hand out a set of the attached **Chain Notes** handout for each table. In this case, the ideal group size will be 5 participants. Each participant's page will have a different sub-construct heading at the top of the page along with the survey questions that align to that construct.

Progress to **slide 11** to begin the Chain Notes activity. Be sure to state clearly that each participant will have about five minutes to fill in ONLY the FIRST BOX on their handout. After time is up, progress to **slide 12**; they will pass their sheet to the right. Then begin a timer for each participant to fill in the SECOND BOX ONLY. This rotation will happen four times (through **slide 14**) until all of the boxes are filled in on each page at their table.

Once the rotations are done, move to **slide 15** and have each person in the group read a summary of their page to the whole table. After all have shared at their table, the whole group should come up with a summary of takeaways to share with the whole group.

Evaluate

Tech Note

Before facilitating this session, make a copy of this Padlet:
https://k20center.padlet.org/shaynapond/remake-of-rose-bud-and-thorn-4x8tbbse0dbewwyz

Share the QR code and a short link on **slide 16**.

Ask each participant to make a post in each of the three columns (this strategy is called Rose, Bud, and Thorn).

1. **Rose:** Something that's already blooming (well-supported in our culture/climate)
2. **Thorn:** Something you would like to see change
3. **Bud:** Something you need to support your future growth

Research Rationale

When employers are committed to developing resources, employees feel dedicated to their organization, resulting in higher engagement in work (Ogbonnaya & Valizade, 2018). A primary way to invest in employees is by attending to the areas of **(1) job design**, **(2) agency**, **(3) well-being**, and **(4) professional growth.** Addressing these factors provides a buffer that protects employees from burnout even when the demands of their job are high (Albrecht et al., 2018). These aspects fuel a passion for the work. In addition, they generate positive energy and perceptions of the organization, resulting in goodwill towards leadership.

Resources

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