



## Podcast Script – Students

Welcome listeners! My name is Chelsea, and I'm a part of the U.S. Department of Education's You for Youth Technical Assistance Team. In this podcast series, we investigate how to build a positive organizational culture while sharing best practices for living out your organization's vision and mission. In this podcast, we discuss how to ensure your culture and climate shines throughout your program.

Most of you already went through this Click and Go's mini-lesson which means you learned about creating a program vision and mission, defining your core values, and writing culture and climate statements. Now you may be wondering how you go about implementing all of that to make sure your students feel the impact of your culture and climate. Let's review five tips for successfully implementing an organizational culture that positively impacts students.

The first and most important tip is to involve your students! Incorporating student voice and choice is the most important and impactful thing you can implement within your program. Give students a voice when it comes to your program culture and climate. Instead of having your staff or program team create all of your climate statements, have your students brainstorm and create climate statements too. Discuss with your students what your program vision and mission are and find out what it means to them. Share the culture statements that your program team created and have students describe what that particular value would look and feel like in action. For example, if you have culture statements such as, "We will strive to make a difference in the lives of each of our students," and "We will build respectful relationships with everyone," ask your students what that would look like, what that would feel like, and how they would like the program and staff to achieve that with them. You might be surprised by what you learn! Integrate the student-created climate statements, with the climate statements developed by your program team, to create a comprehensive view of what your culture should and will look like in action.

Many programs conduct activity and program observations to ensure that students are getting what they need and want. So, our second tip is to integrate your program culture into your observations. It's all well and good to create the pieces of a strong culture and climate but you want to make sure they are being implemented with fidelity throughout your program. An easy way to check this throughout the year is to integrate a culture and climate component into your existing observation process or form. As you look at each culture statement and associated climate statements, think about the specific student and staff behaviors you could look for during a program or activity observation. For example, if we are looking for the core value of respectful relationships, and know that one of our climate statements stipulates that we will not discipline students in front of others, that is something that we could easily look for during an observation. Including culture and climate in your observations impacts students by ensuring consistent implementation throughout the year without adding a significant amount of work to anyone.

Our third tip is to train your staff on your culture and climate. Staff handbooks typically have the program vision, mission, and core values listed in them, but is that enough to inspire and prepare your staff to implement them? Your culture and climate statements clearly describe the expectations of staff, students, and your program. Use these to train staff on how to model your culture and create a positive program climate. Have staff discuss each culture statement and associated climate statements, and address areas where they might feel confused, conflicted, or need additional training. Create role play scenarios where staff can practice implementing the

This resource is in the public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or part is granted. This resource was funded by the U.S. Department of Education in 2018 under contract number ED-ESE-14-D-0008. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the Department. Learn more about professional development planning and 21st CCLC learning at <https://y4y.ed.gov>.



## Podcast Script – Students

climate statements. Depending on staff experience and comfort levels, you may want to offer professional development on specific skills necessary to implement the culture and climate. For example, you may want a training on taking on the role of the facilitator vs. the instructor, or how to use positive behavior management techniques. Adequately preparing your staff will allow them to create and model the culture and climate with students in your program.

Tip four is to take time to gather feedback and assess how your staff and students feel about the program culture and climate throughout the year. We already talked about integrating your program culture into your observations which is one way to assess. However, it is important to gather feedback on whether the culture and climate statements should be updated or revised. During a staff meeting, discuss with staff which culture and climate statements they feel are being successfully implemented, and which they feel could be improved. Work together to determine ways to improve those areas and what additional training or resources could be needed. You can employ much of the same methods with your students. Hold student focus groups to discuss your program culture and climate. Have students describe the current climate of your program. Is it in alignment with what was intended? Post the climate statements around the room and have students use sticky notes to share ways they have seen that statement in action, or things they have seen that do not mesh with the climate statements. Make sure to debrief with the students to discuss their feedback and important next steps.

And finally, the fifth and final tip, is to make sure and take time to praise and celebrate your culture and climate successes! It can be all too easy to focus on those areas that fall short, or need work, but it is important to recognize your growth and areas where you excel. Celebrate achievements both large and small! If you notice a staff member making a concerted effort to build relationships with students, pull them aside and recognize their efforts or bring it up at the next staff meeting. You could even start a bulletin board where staff can recognize each other for working toward creating the intended climate. And you don't want to forget to also praise your students. Take one culture statement a month and celebrate a student who exemplifies that component. When staff and students realize that others notice they are trying, they are more likely to continue their efforts which only further builds your positive culture and climate.

Your culture and climate is not something that should be created overnight, but when done well, they can have a tremendous impact on your students. Use these five tips to help you head in the right direction, engage all your stakeholders, and launch the culture and climate you want for your students and your program. Use the other resources throughout this Click and Go to help you plan, implement, and assess your own organizational culture.

Thanks for choosing Y4Y as your professional learning resource! Have a great day.