

## The Will to Lead, the Skill to Teach: Transforming Schools at Every Level create a responsive learning environment

By Anthony Muhammad, Sharroky Hollie

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**The Will to Lead, the Skill to Teach: Transforming Schools at Every Level create a responsive learning environment** By Anthony Muhammad, Sharroky Hollie

School improvement begins with self-examination and honest dialogue about socialization, bias, discrimination, and cultural insensitivity. In *The Will to Lead, the Skill to Teach*, the authors acknowledge both the structural and sociological issues that contribute to low-performing schools, and describe how leaders can create a healthy school culture. They offer multiple strategies and activities to improve classroom management, increase literacy, establish academic vocabulary, and create an engaging learning environment.

After making a distinction between a staff's will--that is, their belief in all students' abilities along with their determination to make student learning and success a schoolwide priority and a staff's skill their use of quality, responsive methods and activities--the authors submit that healthy school cultures grow out of a marriage of the two.

Examine four broad steps to developing a positive learning environment (aligning philosophies, managing frustration, creating a culture of collaboration, and institutionalizing a healthy culture) and uncover the components of responsive pedagogy--a skillful and balanced framework of traditional and culturally responsive activities used in the classroom.

### Benefits

- \* Reflect on current practices and identify areas for school improvement.
- \* Spot the factors that can be harmful to school cultures.
- \* Identify your school as high will/low skill, high skill/low will, low will/low skill, or high will/high skill.
- \* Develop a blueprint for achieving skilled pedagogy and successful school improvement.

\* Gain practical classroom management strategies and activities.

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## **Editorial Review**

### Review

Muhammad and Hollie write from experience. Both have led the transformation of traditional schools into exemplary schools by demonstrating the will to challenge the prevailing culture and by helping their staffs develop the skills to better meet student needs. I urge educators to embrace the ideas they present for changing their practices and to work together collaboratively to develop and implement the powerful instructional strategies offered in this book. --Richard DuFour, Author and Education Consultant

With uncommon candor and clarity, Muhammad and Hollie challenge us as educators to examine our underlying beliefs, accept responsibility for building a school culture that ensures adult and student learning, and employ the practical and proven instructional practices needed to achieve these goals. I implore every educator, from classroom teachers to policymakers, to read this book and act on its compelling, common-sense recommendations. --Mike Mattos, Educator and Author

The Will to Lead, the Skill to Teach puts into words, backed by facts, what some of us in education have intuitively felt for a very long while: positive motivation to make a difference in children's lives combined with the tools for effective instruction is absolutely essential to improve the quality of our children's education. This book does not stop with research it outlines specific techniques teachers can use in their classrooms and schools. Muhammad and Hollie have produced a beautiful combination of theory into practice that should be in the hands of every educator."

--Bob Howe, Executive Director, Michigan Elementary & Middle School Principals Association

"Dr. Muhammad has done it again! With Dr. Hollie, he has created another practical, informational book for any principal who wishes to transform his or her school culture. --Debra L. Jones, superintendent, Waverly Community Schools, Michigan

### About the Author

Anthony Muhammad, PhD, is a much sought-after educational consultant. A practitioner for nearly twenty years, he has served as a middle school teacher, assistant principal, and principal, and as a high school principal. His tenure as a practitioner has earned him several awards as both a teacher and a principal. Anthony's most notable accomplishment came as principal of Levey Middle School in Southfield, Michigan, a National School of Excellence, where student proficiency on state assessments more than doubled in five years. Anthony and the staff at Levey used the Professional Learning Communities at Work™ model of school improvement, and they have been recognized in several videos and articles as a model high-performing professional learning community (PLC).

As a researcher, Anthony has published articles in several publications in both the United States and Canada. He is author of *Transforming School Culture: How to Overcome Staff Division* and a contributor to *The Collaborative Administrator*.

Sharroky Hollie, PhD, is a tenured assistant professor at California State University, Dominguez Hills, in the Teacher Education department. Sharroky teaches reading for secondary teachers, classroom management, and methodology. From 2007-2009, he was a visiting professor in diversity at Webster University in St. Louis in the School of Education. In spring 2011, Sharroky was a guest lecturer at Stanford University.

Sharroky is the co-founder of the nationally acclaimed laboratory school Culture and Language Academy of Success (CLAS) in Los Angeles. CLAS is a K 8 independent charter school that espouses culturally responsive pedagogy as its primary approach. At CLAS, Sharroky directs and develops the curriculum, professional development, and teacher development. Sharroky is also the executive director of the Center for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing stellar professional development for educators desiring to become culturally responsive, where he serves as a national expert, traveling around the country training thousands of teachers.

Sharroky is a featured author for Pearson publishing, coauthoring with Jim Cummins in the Cornerstone and Keystone series and as a contributing author in their Prentice Hall anthology. His work has appeared in several edited texts, including Teaching African American Learners to Read and Talkin Black Talk. He is also the author of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching and Learning: Classroom Practices for Student Success.

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