Why have Charters and Norms?

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Charters contain the norms we will operate by as a learning community. This is a process I have committed to over the last year with teams I work with. How we need to conduct ourselves to *get the job done* may seem obvious to us as adults BUT when groups begin working together, we soon see the results of not having explicit agreements about how we will work together. People can be easily annoyed or offended by the words, actions (or perceived lack of action) of others. If the group are not clear around what is expected of each other, there is nothing to fall back on if we need to have difficult discussions about non-professional conduct.

When group norms are <u>agreed, public and explicit</u>, they create structure in which people feel safe to contribute and to professionally challenge one another.

Norms and values are the grains of sand that become pearls in the oyster of true community. How people treat one another, their social taboos, and the whys and hows of celebrations are manifestations of norms and values in action.

Shared norms and values establish reciprocal expectations for community members. Developing consciousness about norms and values is central to the community-building process.

(Garmston & Wellman, 1999, p 17)

Professional community is built on the bedrock of norms and values, which are both honed by dialogue and discussion. Strong schools have core values about how children learn, what they should learn, and how faculties should work together.

(Garmston & Wellman, 1999, p 59)

Relational trust turns out to be the driver in improving learning in schools

(Parker Palmer)

Norms build Trust. In schools with low levels of relational trust, there is a 1 in 7 chance of showing gains in student achievement. In schools with high levels of relational trust, there is a 1 in 2 chance of showing gains in student achievement.

(Bryk & Schneider)

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