

## Chapter 9

# Adult Engagement

## DEFINITION

The current level of authentic involvement, ownership, and voice that staff have in decisions that affect their work. This isn't about whether engagement structures exist (that's Culture), but whether people are actually engaging right now—bringing their full selves, contributing ideas, taking ownership rather than just complying.

## Why It Matters

Engaged adults implement with fidelity and adapt intelligently. Compliant adults follow directions but don't problem-solve when things don't go as planned. Research consistently shows that involvement in decision-making increases commitment to outcomes. When people feel like things are done 'to' them rather than 'with' them, they disengage—physically present but mentally checked out. The Lippitt-Knoster model identifies consensus as essential; without adult engagement, you don't have genuine consensus.

## THE DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION

*When the last significant decision was made, did staff feel they had genuine input—or did they feel the decision was made and they were informed?*

## Warning Signs

Watch for these indicators of weakness:

- Decisions are announced rather than developed together
- Staff meetings feel like information delivery, not dialogue
- People comply but don't commit—they do what's required but no more
- Good ideas from staff aren't implemented or acknowledged
- 'They' language is common ('they decided,' 'they want us to')
- Feedback is requested but nothing changes as a result

## Quick Severity Scale

1	No engagement. Decisions announced. Input not sought or ignored. Compliance only.
2	Token engagement. Input sometimes requested but rarely influences decisions.
3	Inconsistent engagement. Some decisions involve staff genuinely; others don't.
4	Meaningful engagement. Most decisions include genuine staff input.
5	Deep partnership. Staff are genuine partners in direction-setting.

## Your Assessment

Based on the warning signs and scale above, rate your organization:

Current Score: \_\_\_\_\_ / 5      Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

PRE-ASSESSMENT

# Adult Engagement

*The current level of motivation, ownership, and genuine investment adults bring to their work. Whether staff experience partnership in decisions that affect them or feel like passive recipients of directives handed down from above.*

**Instructions:** Rate your current capacity on each item using the scale below. Be honest—this assessment is for your own growth, not evaluation. Circle or write your rating in the right column.

1 = Not at all	2 = Somewhat	3 = Moderately	4 = Mostly	5 = Completely
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## KNOWLEDGE: What I understand about this component

Item	Rating
1. I can explain Pink's three drivers of intrinsic motivation: autonomy, mastery, purpose.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I understand Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory and its application to workplaces.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I know Gallup's Q12 engagement research and which factors most predict engagement.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I can describe Vroom's Expectancy Theory (effort-performance-outcome links).	1 2 3 4 5
5. I understand the difference between compliance and commitment.	1 2 3 4 5

## SKILLS: What I can do with this knowledge

Item	Rating
1. I can diagnose which engagement factors are strongest/weakest in my context.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I know how to create genuine choice and voice without creating chaos.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I can connect daily work to meaningful purpose beyond compliance.	1 2 3 4 5
4. I can identify when I'm creating compliance rather than commitment.	1 2 3 4 5
5. I can involve staff in decisions without abdicating leadership responsibility.	1 2 3 4 5

## BELIEFS: What I hold to be true

Item	Rating
1. People support what they help create.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Compliance produces minimum effort; commitment produces discretionary effort.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Autonomy doesn't mean 'anything goes'—it means voice, choice, and ownership within clear parameters.	1 2 3 4 5
4. Adults need to understand 'why' before they can fully invest in 'what.'	1 2 3 4 5
5. Engagement is earned through how we treat people, not mandated through policy.	1 2 3 4 5

## SCORING SUMMARY

Section	Total (out of 25)	Percentage
Knowledge	_____	_____
Skills	_____	_____
Beliefs	_____	_____
<b>OVERALL TOTAL (out of 75)</b>	_____	_____

## REFLECTION

**1. Which items scored lowest? What might be blocking your growth in those areas?**

**2. Are your gaps primarily in Knowledge, Skills, or Beliefs? What does that tell you about what kind of development you need?**

**3. What is one specific action you could take in the next two weeks to strengthen your capacity in this component?**

**CLIMATE LAYER** — Can shift in weeks/months

## Component 9: Adult Engagement

*Are adults in your building genuinely engaged in the work of improvement, or are they just complying with requirements? The difference between engagement and compliance determines whether change is sustainable or cosmetic.*

### What This Really Means

Adult engagement is about the quality of professional involvement—not just showing up and doing what's required, but genuinely investing in the work. Engaged adults think about how to improve, collaborate willingly, take ownership of outcomes, and persist through difficulties. Disengaged adults do the minimum, resist new demands, and psychologically check out while physically present.

### The Compliance Trap

It's easy to confuse compliance with engagement. People show up to meetings, fill out forms, implement mandated practices—and leaders assume this means buy-in. But compliance is surface behavior; engagement is internal commitment. Compliance does the minimum; engagement does whatever it takes. Compliance lasts while you're watching; engagement continues when you're not. Compliance is fragile; engagement sustains.

### What Engagement Requires

Self-Determination Theory identifies three human needs: autonomy (choice and control), competence (feeling capable), and relatedness (connection to others). When these needs are met, intrinsic motivation flourishes and engagement follows naturally. When they're thwarted—through micromanagement, impossible expectations, or isolation—engagement withers regardless of incentives or accountability.

### Building Engagement

You can't mandate engagement—that's an oxymoron. You can only create conditions where engagement is more likely: meaningful work, appropriate challenge, genuine voice, connection to purpose, authentic relationships, trust that effort matters. Leaders who try to force engagement through pressure usually get compliance at best, resistance at worst, and engagement almost never.

### Questions for Reflection

- What percentage of adults in your building are genuinely engaged vs. just complying?
- What conditions in your organization support or undermine intrinsic motivation?
- When you're not watching, do people maintain effort—or is compliance all you have?

## ADULT ENGAGEMENT

*Hearts and Minds, Not Just Compliance*

### KEY INSIGHT

*Engagement is discretionary effort—the difference between people doing what's required and people giving their best. You can mandate compliance. You cannot mandate engagement. Engagement comes from autonomy, mastery, and purpose.*

### Activity: The Engagement Audit (Gallup Q12 Adapted)

How strongly do people in your organization agree? (1-5)

- I know what is expected of me at work \_\_\_/5
- I have the materials and equipment to do my work right \_\_\_/5
- I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day \_\_\_/5
- My supervisor or someone at work cares about me as a person \_\_\_/5
- Someone at work encourages my development \_\_\_/5
- My opinions seem to count \_\_\_/5
- The mission makes me feel my job is important \_\_\_/5
- My fellow workers are committed to doing quality work \_\_\_/5

### Pink's Three Drivers of Intrinsic Motivation

Which driver is weakest in your organization right now?

- AUTONOMY: Do people have meaningful choice? \_\_\_/5
- MASTERY: Are people growing and getting better? \_\_\_/5
- PURPOSE: Do people connect to WHY the work matters? \_\_\_/5

### MY COMMITMENTS

#### This Week:

*One way I will increase autonomy, mastery, or purpose...*

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#### This Month:

*One systemic change to better engage adults...*

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**EXIT REFLECTION:** *"To move from compliance to engagement, I will..."*

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## CCC FRAMEWORK: CLIMATE LAYER

## Component 9

**ADULT ENGAGEMENT**

Screening &amp; Progress Monitoring Tool

The current level of authentic involvement that staff have in the decisions affecting their work—not token consultation or fake choice, but genuine participation in shaping direction, solving problems, and owning improvement.

**Assessment Instructions**

Rate each statement based on your organization's current reality, not where you aspire to be.

**Rating Scale:**

- 1 = Strongly Disagree / Almost Never True
- 2 = Disagree / Rarely True
- 3 = Somewhat Agree / Sometimes True
- 4 = Agree / Often True
- 5 = Strongly Agree / Almost Always True

**Time Required:** 10-15 minutes | **Recommended Frequency:** Quarterly or when targeting this component

**Sub-Dimension A: Genuine Input Opportunities**

1. \_\_\_ Staff have genuine input into significant decisions.
2. \_\_\_ Input is sought early enough to actually influence outcomes.
3. \_\_\_ The scope of input is meaningful, not trivial.
4. \_\_\_ Input opportunities are accessible to all, not just a few.
5. \_\_\_ There's clarity about what's open for input vs. already decided.

**Genuine Input Opportunities Subtotal:** \_\_\_/25

**Sub-Dimension B: Visible Influence**

6. \_\_\_ When input is requested, it visibly influences decisions.
7. \_\_\_ People can see how their ideas were incorporated.
8. \_\_\_ There's transparency about how input was used (or why it wasn't).
9. \_\_\_ Staff believe their input actually matters.

10. \_\_\_ The connection between input and outcomes is clear.

**Visible Influence Subtotal: \_\_\_/25**

### Sub-Dimension C: Ownership & Partnership

11. \_\_\_ People feel like partners in improvement, not recipients of mandates.

12. \_\_\_ Staff describe initiatives as 'ours,' not 'theirs.'

13. \_\_\_ There's shared ownership of both problems and solutions.

14. \_\_\_ People feel responsible for outcomes, not just compliance.

15. \_\_\_ The language is 'we decided,' not 'they decided.'

**Ownership & Partnership Subtotal: \_\_\_/25**

### Sub-Dimension D: Feedback Loop Closure

16. \_\_\_ When staff raise concerns, they learn what happened as a result.

17. \_\_\_ Feedback doesn't go into a black hole.

18. \_\_\_ Even when the answer is 'no,' people understand why.

19. \_\_\_ There's follow-up on suggestions and concerns.

20. \_\_\_ People know their voice was heard even if the outcome wasn't their preference.

**Feedback Loop Closure Subtotal: \_\_\_/25**

## SCORING & INTERPRETATION

### Calculate Your Scores

Sub-Dimension	Raw Score	Max	Percentage
A. Genuine Input Opportunities	___	25	___%
B. Visible Influence	___	25	___%
C. Ownership & Partnership	___	25	___%
D. Feedback Loop Closure	___	25	___%
<b>Adult Engagement TOTAL</b>	___	<b>100</b>	<b>___%</b>

### Interpretation Guide

<b>80-100%</b>	<b>Strong:</b> This is an area of strength. Maintain and protect what's working.
<b>60-79%</b>	<b>Developing:</b> Building momentum. Focus on consistency and deepening practices.
<b>40-59%</b>	<b>Emerging:</b> Pockets of strength but gaps remain. Target specific sub-dimensions.
<b>20-39%</b>	<b>Needs Attention:</b> Significant weakness. Prioritize intervention in this component.
<b>0-19%</b>	<b>Critical:</b> Urgent attention required. This is blocking organizational progress.

### Progress Monitoring Tracker

Use this table to track scores over time:

Sub-Dimension	Baseline	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
A. Genuine Input Opportunities	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%
B. Visible Influence	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%
C. Ownership & Partnership	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%
D. Feedback Loop Closure	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%
<b>OVERALL</b>	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%

### Reflection Questions

1. For the last significant decision, what input did staff have? How did it influence the outcome?
2. Is the language 'we decided' or 'they decided'? What does that reveal?
3. When staff raise concerns, do they learn what happened as a result?
4. Where do people feel they have real influence? Where do they feel they have none?
5. What would staff say about their level of genuine involvement?

# ADULT ENGAGEMENT

Training Reflection Guide

*"People don't resist change. They resist being changed."*

— Peter Senge

## KEY CONCEPT

Adult Engagement is the current level of authentic involvement that staff have in decisions affecting their work—not token consultation or fake choice, but genuine participation in shaping direction and owning improvement. Without genuine engagement, you get compliance without commitment—and initiatives that die the moment pressure eases.

## 1. Before We Begin: Self-Assessment

How would you rate your organization's current strength in Adult Engagement?

1 - Critical

2 - Weak

3 - Developing

4 - Strong

5 - Excellent

What made you choose that rating? What evidence informed your assessment?

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## 2. Key Takeaways

*As you engage with this content, capture the ideas that resonate most:*

**What's one idea that confirms something you already believed?**

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**What's one idea that challenges or surprises you?**

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**What's one idea you want to explore further?**

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### 3. Connecting to Your Context

Consider how Adult Engagement shows up in your organization:

1. Think of the last significant decision that affected staff. Did they have genuine input that influenced the outcome?

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2. Is the language here 'we decided' or 'they decided'?

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3. When staff raise concerns, do they learn what happened as a result?

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### 4. Examining the Sub-Dimensions

Adult Engagement breaks down into these key areas. Rate each and identify one specific observation:

#### A. Genuine Input Opportunities

Rating: \_\_\_/5

One specific observation about this area:

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#### B. Visible Influence

Rating: \_\_\_/5

One specific observation about this area:

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#### C. Ownership & Partnership

Rating: \_\_\_/5

One specific observation about this area:

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#### D. Feedback Loop Closure

Rating: \_\_\_/5

One specific observation about this area:

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## 5. Honest Assessment

*Transformation requires honesty. Consider these questions privately:*

1. When was the last time staff input actually changed your thinking or decision?

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2. Are there places where you ask for input but have already decided?

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3. What would people say about this if they knew their comments were truly anonymous?

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## 6. Warning Signs Check

*Check any warning signs currently present in your organization:*

- Decisions are announced as done deals with no meaningful input
- Input is requested but has no visible influence on outcomes
- Staff describe feeling like 'things are done to us'
- Feedback goes into a black hole—no response, no closure
- There are two conversations: official and hallway
- People have stopped offering input because it doesn't seem to matter

**If you checked 3 or more, this component needs focused attention.**

## 7. Table Discussion

*Discuss these questions with your table group:*

- What's the difference between genuine engagement and performative consultation?
- Where do staff have real influence here? Where do they have none?
- What would it take to close feedback loops more consistently?
- How do we build ownership without creating paralysis?

## 8. From Insight to Action

What I want to <b>START</b> doing:	What I want to <b>STOP</b> doing:
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What I want to <b>CONTINUE</b> doing:	What I need to <b>LEARN</b> more about:
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## 9. My Commitment

One specific action I will take in the next two weeks:

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How I'll know it's working:	Who will hold me accountable:
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What might get in the way:	How I'll overcome that obstacle:
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## 10. After the Training: Re-Assessment

Complete this section 30 days after training:

How would you now rate your organization's strength in Adult Engagement?

1 - Critical	2 - Weak	3 - Developing	4 - Strong	5 - Excellent
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What changed (if anything) since the training?

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Did you complete your committed action? What happened?

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What's your next step?

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### Remember

If you want commitment, you need involvement. If you're just going to decide anyway, don't pretend to consult—it erodes trust faster than not asking at all.

## 9. Adult Engagement

*Hearts and Minds, Not Just Compliance*

**DEFINITION:** The degree to which staff are genuinely invested in their work and the organization’s mission—not just complying but truly engaged. This includes voice (do people have input?) and ownership (do people feel like partners or employees?).

### Why It Matters

Gallup’s research shows managers account for 70% of the variance in engagement. Engaged employees give discretionary effort, solve problems proactively, and stay longer. Disengaged employees do the minimum, resist change, and spread cynicism.

✓ QUICK WINS (This Week)	▶ DEEPER INTERVENTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Before the next significant decision, genuinely ask for input—and visibly incorporate it</li> <li>✓ Close the loop: when staff gave input, tell them what you did with it and why</li> <li>✓ Convert one ‘announcement’ meeting into a ‘dialogue’ meeting</li> <li>✓ Ask: ‘What would you do if you were in my position?’ and actually listen</li> <li>✓ Identify a decision that could be delegated entirely to staff and do so</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Map decisions by type: which require staff input, which require staff decision-making, which are appropriately leader decisions?</li> <li>▶ Implement structured input processes (surveys, focus groups, representative committees) with clear feedback loops</li> <li>▶ Train leaders on facilitation skills—how to run genuine dialogue rather than information delivery</li> <li>▶ Address past betrayals: if input was requested and ignored, acknowledge it and commit to change</li> <li>▶ Create ‘ownership zones’ where staff have genuine authority, not just voice</li> </ul>

### ⚠ Red Flags That Require Immediate Attention

- ⚠ Staff openly say ‘why bother’ when input is requested
- ⚠ Union grievances or formal complaints about lack of involvement are increasing
- ⚠ Key staff are disengaging—showing up but not contributing
- ⚠ Decisions are being actively sabotaged through malicious compliance
- ⚠ There’s a complete disconnect between what leadership thinks staff want and what staff actually want

**THE DIAGNOSTIC QUESTION:** *Did staff have genuine input on the last significant decision—and did they see their input reflected?*

**Key Researchers:** Pink, Deci & Ryan, Gallup (Q12), Kahn

# Adult Engagement

*Hearts and Minds, Not Just Compliance*

## BASELINE SCORE

\_\_\_\_\_ / 5  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## TARGET SCORE

\_\_\_\_\_ / 5  
By: \_\_\_\_\_

### LEADING INDICATORS *(predict future success)*

What to Track	How Measured	Target	Current
Staff input visibly incorporated into decisions	Examples per month	3+ visible	_____
Feedback loops closed ('Here's what we did with your input')	% closed	100%	_____
Dialogue vs. announcement ratio in meetings	% dialogue	> 50%	_____
Staff initiating improvements without being asked	Count per month	5+ initiatives	_____

### LAGGING INDICATORS *(confirm success happened)*

What to Track	How Measured	Target	Current
Ownership language ('we' vs. 'they')	Language analysis	Majority 'we'	_____
Commitment vs. compliance indicators	Survey items	> 4.0 / 5	_____
Discretionary effort on initiatives	Observation	High engagement	_____

### QUICK WINS *(actions for this week)*

Action	Done?
Before the next decision, genuinely ask for input	<input type="checkbox"/>
Close the loop: tell staff what you did with their input	<input type="checkbox"/>
Convert one announcement meeting to a dialogue	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ask 'What would you do in my position?' and listen	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify one decision to delegate entirely to staff	<input type="checkbox"/>

### PROGRESS TRACKING

Check-In Date	Score	Key Win	Key Challenge	Next Action

POST-ASSESSMENT

# Adult Engagement

Rate each item: 1 = Not at all 2 = Somewhat 3 = Moderately 4 = Mostly 5 = Completely

KNOWLEDGE	Rating
1. I understand Pink's three drivers of intrinsic motivation: autonomy, mastery, purpose.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I know what predicts engagement and the difference between compliance and commitment.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I can explain Expectancy Theory (effort-performance-outcome links).	1 2 3 4 5

SKILLS	Rating
1. I can diagnose which engagement factors are strongest/weakest in my context.	1 2 3 4 5
2. I can create genuine choice and voice without creating chaos.	1 2 3 4 5
3. I can involve staff in decisions without abdicating leadership responsibility.	1 2 3 4 5

BELIEFS	Rating
1. People support what they help create.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Compliance produces minimum effort; commitment produces discretionary effort.	1 2 3 4 5
3. Engagement is earned through how we treat people, not mandated through policy.	1 2 3 4 5

## SCORING

Knowledge: ___/15	Skills: ___/15	Beliefs: ___/15	<b>TOTAL: ___/45</b>
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## GROWTH CHECK

Pre-Assessment Total: ____/45	Post-Assessment Total: ____/45
<b>Growth: _____ points</b>   Where did you grow most? <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Beliefs	

## QUICK REFLECTION

**One thing I'll do differently based on this learning:**

## Component 9: Adult Engagement

*Beyond Compliance to Commitment*

Whether adults are actively engaged or just going through the motions—autonomy, mastery, and purpose.

**Lippitt-Knostr Connection:** *Consensus • Incentives*

### PART 1: ORGANIZATIONAL DNA PRE-READING QUESTIONS

*Before reading, reflect on these questions about how your organization's 'DNA' expresses itself:*

1. Pink's research shows that autonomy, mastery, and purpose drive engagement. Which of these 'genes' is most suppressed in your organization?
2. What's the difference between compliance and commitment? Where do your teachers fall on that continuum with literacy work?
3. How do your systems either activate or suppress people's natural drive for excellence?

### PART 2: LIPPITT-KNOSTER CONNECTION QUESTIONS

*How does this component connect to the six elements of successful change?*

1. True Consensus requires engagement. What does 'agreement' mean when people are disengaged—real buy-in or passive compliance?
2. Are your Incentives aligned with what actually motivates adults (purpose, growth, autonomy) or just carrots and sticks?
3. How does lack of voice and choice create Resistance disguised as agreement?

### PART 3: PROGRESS TOWARD LITERACY GOALS

*How does this component affect your literacy implementation and student outcomes?*

1. Are teachers genuinely invested in literacy improvement, or just complying with requirements? How can you tell?
2. What voice and choice do teachers have in how literacy instruction looks in their classrooms?
3. Where do teachers find purpose and meaning in their literacy work? What threatens that sense of purpose?

### PART 4: ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS

*What structures and supports need to be in place for this component to enable literacy success?*

1. How might you increase teacher autonomy in literacy instruction while maintaining quality and consistency?
2. What opportunities exist for teachers to pursue mastery in literacy teaching—to get really good at this?
3. How do you connect daily literacy work to meaningful purpose for students and communities?

### CLOSING REFLECTION

Based on this discussion of Adult Engagement, what's ONE thing you will commit to doing differently to support your literacy goals?