Advanced Topics in Adaptive Schools

In this experience-based two-day institute, you will explore and discover the principles of complex and complicated organizations as they relate to the perspectives and skills of adaptive leadership. Leadership will be considered as a function, not as a role. Central to this understanding will be the opportunities for everyone to orchestrate positive conflict.

Skills development will center on managing tensions between affective and cognitive conflict, balancing advocacy and inquiry, deepening dialogue skills, and participating in facilitation clinics.

"Conversations are the way workers discover what they know, share it with their colleagues, and in the process create new knowledge for the organization. In the new economy, conversations are the most important form of work...so much so that the conversation *is* the organization."

Alan Webber, "What's So New About the New Economy," *Harvard Business Review*

Presenters
Carol Brooks Simoneau and James Roussin
Thinking Collaborative

About Your Presenters

Jim Roussin has worked as a language arts teacher; gifted coordinator; ESL coordinator; curriculum director; executive director of teaching, learning, and school improvement; adjunct professor; and educational consultant. He is currently the executive director for Generative Learning (www.generative-learning.com).

Jim is the author of a variety of articles as well as a coauthor of the book Guiding Professional Learning Communities: Inspiration, Challenge, Surprise, and Meaning (with Shirley M. Hord and William A. Sommers, 2010). His recent book, published in 2013, is Implementing Change Through Learning (with Shirley M. Hord).

Jim is a teaching associate for Human Systems Dynamics (an institute that is using complexity theory to impact system-wide improvement). In February of 2006, Jim traveled to India on a Berkana Learning Journey to explore new forms of leadership that are emerging in global communities. And, in 2009 he worked in the United Arab Emirates with ASCD in supporting the Ministry of Education in implementing new professional development standards around brain-based learning and classroom management.

Email: jim.roussin@gmail.com

Carol Brooks Simoneau is a Co-Director for Thinking Collaborative, the umbrella organization for Adaptive Schools and Cognitive Coaching[SM]. Carol graduated from the University of Nebraska with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in elementary education. She earned a Master of Science Degree with a Reading Specialist endorsement and an Educational Administration and Leadership endorsement from Kansas State University. Carol earned a Doctorate in Educational Administration and Leadership from Kansas State University.

Carol has over 25 years of experience as a teacher and reading specialist with students of all ages. As a reading specialist, she modeled instructional strategies in the classroom and worked with students in intervention programs created to prevent reading failure. She has also chaired or served as a member on school improvement and accreditation teams designed to develop school community and facilitate achievement. Carol has received the Kansas State Department of Education Distinguished Educator Award. She has also served on the Board of Directors for the Kansas Staff Development Council.

Carol provides Cognitive Coaching[SM] and Adaptive Schools training. Carol is also a consultant for the Danielson Group and offers instruction in Framework for Teaching and Learning Focused Supervision. She is the author of A Facilitator's Guide to On-line Professional Development: Establishing Communities of Learning and Cultures of Thinking.

Email: carolsimoneau@gmail.com

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Adaptive Leaders
When the task is done, the people will say
we did it ourselves.
—Lau Lau Tzu, describing the best leader in Tzu's Tao Te Ching, c. 500 BC

Traditional, views of leadership are less and less useful given the complexities of our modern world. Never-ending reform efforts, ongoing political challenges to schools and rapid social and technological change strain systems organized as hierarchies. At no time has the need for adaptivity been so urgent, requiring both protection and questioning of the status quo, orchestrating conflict to press for richer levels of understanding and action, and developing capacities for provocative leadership in all members of an organization. As both stability and change are needed, the adaptive leader is both a member of a group and an observer of the group and its environment. Teachers, school and department heads, and students can all lead adaptively.

One of the demands of adaptive leadership is the need to mobilize people to take on difficult challenges. Such leadership is grounded in the idea that prevailing issues in schools are often addressed unsuccessfully because of insufficient knowledge, skills, and values (Zoller, 2015). Adaptive leadership activates new perspectives and builds on the past, helping people determine what is worth preserving and what is productive to question (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002). "Who are we?" "Why are we doing this?" and "Why are we doing this, this way?" are potent questions, stimulating adaptivity. As such, successful adaptive changes build on the past rather than ignoring it, making successful adaptations both conservative and progressive.

Mobilization includes developing faculties for cultures of inquiry and collaboration. Adaptive leaders patiently cultivate the social skills of professional capital, by nurturing the skills sets for dialogue, discussion, productive conflict, and pushing teachers to continually explore the relationship between curriculum, pedagogy, and student learning. Mobilization, too, involves developing in faculties a sense of system awareness and discernment between technical and adaptive challenges. Technical problems are head and shoulders issues, adaptive changes are processed lower in the gut (Linsky and Zoller, 2015).

Adaptive challenges are issues that, in the beginning, others do not recognize as problems. It is the adaptive leader that brings heat to the system, and structures responses in such a way that the people who have the problem do the work. These leaders sell the problem and not the solution.

Because adaptive change is disruptive, leaders also support people in navigating the change. Rather than resisting change, according to Heifetz and Linsky, people resist loss. This is congruent with Bridges' (1980) seminal work on transitions in which people inevitably move through three psychological zones related to change—endings, where loss is profoundly experienced, a neutral zone of disorientation, and finally new beginnings in which leaders focus people on the process of achieving outcomes, not the outcomes themselves.

Because these first two are normal reactions to change, and because, uninformed, many feel there is something wrong with them when they experience these, the adaptive leader helps normalize the processes and offers tools for making the psychological changes necessary. We have found these questions useful with groups experiencing adaptive change. (Garmston, 2004).

- What is over and what is not?

- What do you value and want to continue?
- As individuals and as a group, what can we do to support ourselves through changes?
- What are some areas in which we might need to tap into our creativity?
- What are some areas in which we might need to manage the chaos of transition?
- If this phase of life for this school looks like clouds, what might be some silver linings?

Viewing the system and system change from the balcony is an essential trait of leadership. We have watched countless examples of skilled quarterbacks, in the middle of the action, appear seemingly calm as they scan the field looking for possible receivers. In the immediacy, the quarterback is sensitive to burly bodies hurling his way allowing him to step aside to avoid them, while the balcony view affords an understanding of the whole play. Every leader, according to Heifetz and Linsky, should routinely climb to the balcony over the organization to survey, study, and to gain perspective on what is going on and determine needed adjustments. School leaders, too, operate from these multiple perspectives—participating in the group, modeling new behaviors, embracing learning and risk taking, keeping ears to the ground in private conversations, and moving to the balcony in meetings and in reflections as they consider progress of their unit as a whole.

Consistent with the values, goals, and tools of Adaptive Schools, we increasingly witness the following adaptive leadership practices in schools, departments, and grade-level teams.

- Reframing the leader's job from that of problem-solver to problem framers and developer of problem solvers.
- Asking the important, tough questions without having the answers.
- Knowing how to help people learn, not by telling, but by understanding the perceptions, beliefs, and values that drive their action, and helping them to plug into alternative, more agile ways of thinking.
- Fostering reflection and big-picture thinking, slowing down to move the action forward.
- Demonstrating and modeling consciousness, efficacy, flexibility, and courage.
- And, finally, seeking or being open to coaching, a practice consistent with world-renown classical musicians and professional dancers as well as professional athletes in team and individual sports.

It seems the critical question is no longer, "How to manage change?" rather, the current question asked by Heifetz and others is, "How to lead adaptive change."

Garmston, R., & Wellman, B. (2016). *The Adaptive School: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups.* Lanyard, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Adaptive Challenges vs. Technical Problems
Ronald A. Heifetz

Adaptive Leadership distinguishes between adaptive challenges and technical problems.

Technical problems are ones that can be defined clearly and for which solutions exist; it may be a difficult fix, but we know what to do or can find an expert who does. Technical problems can be managed and usually fall to someone with the authority to address them.
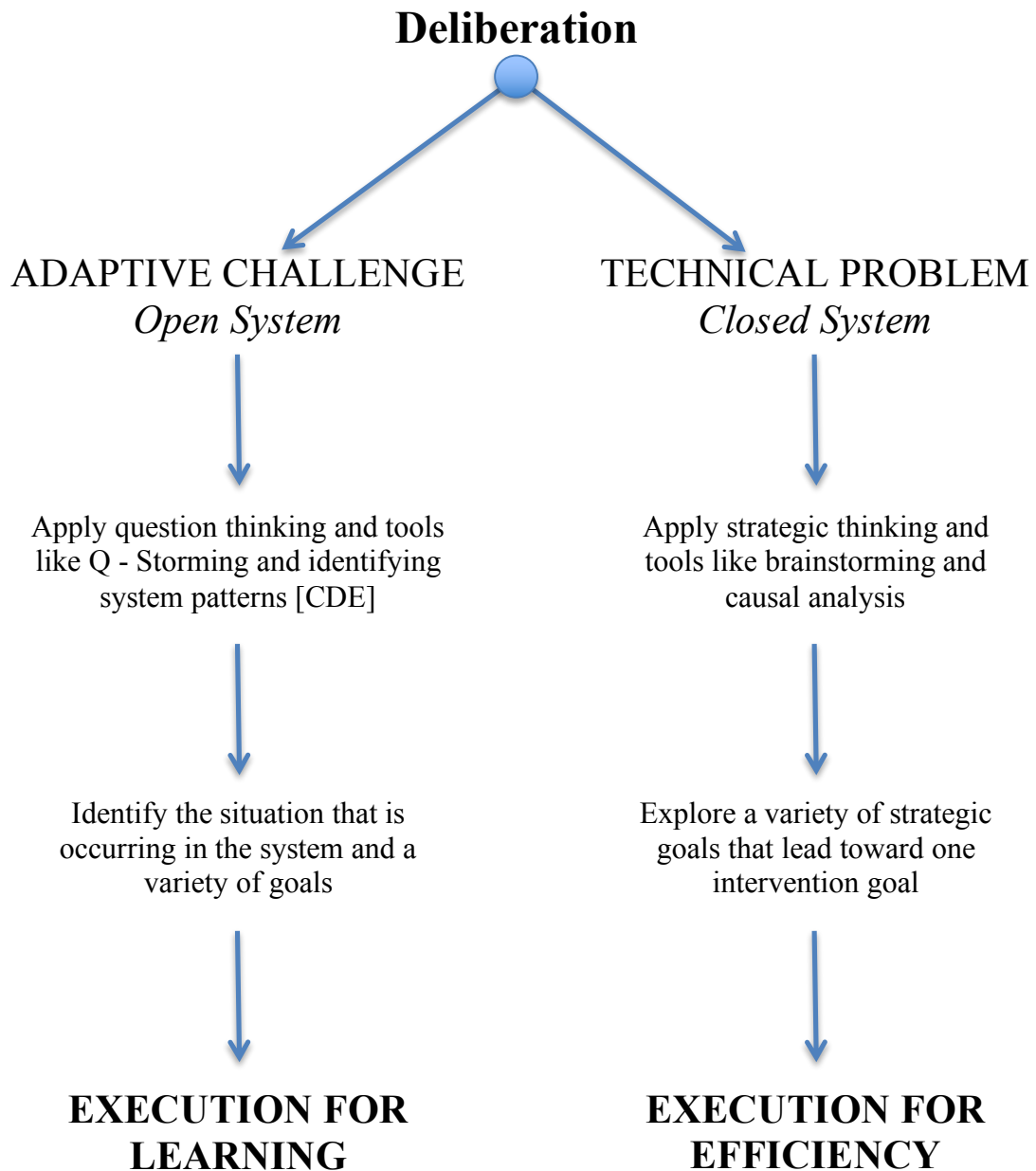Example: *Take medication to lower blood pressure*

Adaptive challenges are usually fuzzy and hard to identify clearly. They require change in numerous places; usually across organizational boundaries. Adaptive challenges imply having to learn new ways and choose between what appear to be contradictory values. They require changes in values, beliefs, roles, relationships, and approaches to work.
Example: *Change lifestyle to eat healthy, get more exercise and lower stress*

Technical Problem	Unsure	Adaptive Challenge

Addressing Organizational
Problems and Challenges

Deliberation

ADAPTIVE CHALLENGE
Open System

TECHNICAL PROBLEM
Closed System

Apply question thinking and tools like Q - Storming and identifying system patterns [CDE]

Apply strategic thinking and tools like brainstorming and causal analysis

Identify the situation that is occurring in the system and a variety of goals

Explore a variety of strategic goals that lead toward one intervention goal

EXECUTION FOR LEARNING

EXECUTION FOR EFFICIENCY

Senge, Heifetz & Adams. Graphic created by James Roussin (2016)

Question Storming – Framing the Adaptive Challenge

Adaptive leaders focus more on questions than answers. They understand that questions open thinking while answers typically close down or limit thoughtful options. Adaptive leaders also know that using questions can be more important in determining the right problem, especially in complex environments. So, a process that is often used is Question Storming.

Question storming is a variant of brainstorming, the technique developed at MIT in the 1950s for getting a group of participants to come up with more creative solutions to problems. This strategy supports groups in getting clear about all the questions that need to be raised and answered to form more impactful goals, especially in complex systems. One of the outcomes of question storming is to determine what might be the best questions that need to be asked right now in order to address the current adaptive challenge.

There are seven steps to question storming.

1. **Prepare:** It is important to have someone to facilitate the group in this process. You will also need two easels with plenty of flipchart paper and two recorders.
2. **Frame the Adaptive Challenge:** On one of the flipcharts, frame what you see as the current adaptive challenge. Post it in somewhere in between the two charts.
3. **Begin the Process:** Each recorder will take turns capturing each question that emerges from specific group members. The recorders, however, will wait for the facilitator who will verbally recapture the questions that are being proposed. The group tries not to repeat questions that have already been asked. When a flipchart has been filled, the recorder will post it on a wall where everyone can see it.
4. **Organize the Questions:** At the end of the questioning process, the group members will take a short break while the recorders cut out the questions into strips. When all of the questions are in strips, the group members will organize them into themes and patterns and assign headings to each group.
5. **Dialogue on Themes**: The facilitator invites the group to reflect on the various themes and which ones might be most important right now in addressing the adaptive challenge.
6. **Gather additional Data:** The group might then determine additional data to be collected around the key themes that emerged from the question storming process. This is usually done before choosing any specific goals to address the challenge.
7. **Determine Goals or Next Steps**

May, M. E. (2016). *Winning the Brain Game: Fixing the 7 Fatal Flaws of Thinking*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Adams, M. (2016). *Change Your Questions, Change Your Life*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Dyer, J. H., Gregersen, H. B., & Christensen, C. M. (2011). *The Innovator's DNA: Mastering the Five Skills of Disruptive Innovators*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Preparing for Dialogue

"We are proposing a kind of collective inquiry not only into the content of what each of us says, thinks, and feels but also into the underlying motivations, assumptions, and beliefs that lead us to do so."   Professor David Bohm, FRS (1917- 92)

"What is essential here is the presence of the spirit of dialogue, which is, in short, the ability to hold many points of view in suspension, along with a primary interest in the creation of a common meaning."   *The Essential David Bohm: Dialogue as a New Creative Order* (1987)

In dialogue, a group of people can explore the individual and collective presuppositions, ideas, beliefs, and feelings that subtly control their interactions.

Dialogue is a way of observing, collectively, how hidden values and intentions can control our behavior.

There will be no particular agenda. No decisions are to be made, no problems to be solved, no results to be achieved, no attempts made to change anything. There is only one task: to listen without prejudice to each other and pay attention to what is happening within oneself and within the group.

Dialogue: Four Developmental Levels

1. Exploring
- Reading about dialogue
- Politeness
- Beginning Norms practice
- Reluctant to address differences
- Dialogue skills are isolated, external

2. Developing
- Belief in dialogue affirmed
- Developing skill in presuming positive intention
- Consistent use of pausing, paraphrasing, posing questions
- Putting assumptions on the table

3. Maturing
- Goal setting around enhanced dialogue skills
- Curiosity as a norm
- Valuing silence
- Honors and explores diversity of ideas, engaging cognitive conflict
- Norms of collaboration becoming internalized

4. Generating
- Individually and collectively conscious
- Synergistic
- Csikszentmihalyi's "flow"
- Transformational
- Presence
- Trusting the process

Garmston, R., & Dolcemascolo, M. (2009). *Dialogue: An Introduction DVD Viewers Guide*. Highlands Ranch, CO: Thinking Collaborative.

Monitoring Dialogue

'What is essential here is the presence of the spirit of dialogue, which is, in short, the ability to hold many points of view in suspension, along with a primary interest in the creation of a common meaning' – 'Dialogue as a New Creative Order' (1987), in The Essential David Bohm

Mindful group members pay attention to three essential elements during productive dialogue. They monitor themselves, the process of the dialogue, and the new whole that is emerging within the group.

SELF - Dialogue is first and foremost a listening practice. When we "listen to our listening," we notice whether we are internally debating with the speaker, reviewing our mental catalogue of related information and personal anecdotes, or composing a response. Noticing these common internal processes allows us to switch them off so that we can hear others without judging.

Dialogue requires choice making. Typical choices include how and when to talk. Do we paraphrase prior comments to check for under- standing and or synthesis? Do we inquire into the ideas and assumptions of others? Do we put a new idea or perspective on the table to widen the frame?

Listening set asides and suspension are essential internal skills in dialogue. To suspend judgment, group members temporarily set aside their own perceptions, feelings, and impulses and carefully monitor their internal experience. Points of personal conflict can easily emerge when we believe that others are not hearing us or that they are distorting our point of view. Points of conflict also surface when our own values conflict with those of a speaker. These areas of discomfort influence our listening and our responses, which in turn influence the thoughts and behaviors of other group members.

Senge, Roberts, Ross, Smith, and Kleiner (1994) note that suspension also involves developing an awareness of our own assumptions and purposely "hanging them from the ceiling"—that is, suspending them in front of the group so that all can examine them. These assumptions are beliefs—often unexamined— about why we think things work as they do. Our assumptions drive our perceptions, simultaneously opening and blinding us to possibilities in the world around us.

PROCESS - Dialogue as a process requires focusing on the goal of developing shared understanding. In our action-oriented work environments, this is often countercultural. Yet in every group with which we've worked, all the participants could recite examples of decisions that were poorly conceived, poorly communicated, simply ignored, or, in the worst cases, violated by many organizational members without consequence. At the root of all these stories were group processes that were not thought out, but rather of- ten hurried and inappropriately facilitated. The rush to action pushed unclear decision-making processes and timelines onto the group with- out sufficient attention to developing a shared understanding of both problems and solutions.

By going slow and honoring the flow of dialogue, groups can often go fast when they get to the choice points in decision-making. When the assumptions and the implications of those assumptions have been explored during dialogue, group members don't second-guess the

motives of others during discussions.

Meetings should be safe but not necessarily comfortable. When a group confuses safety with comfort, it sacrifices productive tension for the ease of conviviality. Humor and banter can be avoidance strategies as much as they can be social lubricants. A lack of comfort with discomfort weakens dialogue and undermines the learning possibilities in that moment.

WHOLE - Thought is both a personal and a collective process. We influence and are influenced in turn by others. During dialogue, the line be- tween self and others blurs when we open our-selves to the possibilities within the communal thought space. This created whole is in itself a goal of dialogue. Communities move forward together. Collective understanding leads to shared goals and shared practices that tap the power of cumulative effect for student learning and for the adult learning community.

The whole is always greater than the sum of the individual parts. In many ways it is both process and product simultaneously. By learning to observe the processes, patterns, and results that emerge from our dialogues, we can more consciously participate and more consciously contribute to the whole of which we are the parts.

Garmston, R., & Wellman, B. (2016). *The Adaptive School: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups.* Lanyard, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Willing to Be Disturbed
Margaret J. Wheatley

As we work together to restore hope to the future, we need to include a new and strange ally—our willingness to be disturbed. Our willingness to have our beliefs and ideas challenged by what others think. No one person or perspective can give us the answers we need to the problems of today. Paradoxically, we can only find those answers by admitting we don't know. We have to be willing to let go of our certainty and expect ourselves to be confused for a time.

We weren't trained to admit we don't know. Most of us were taught to sound certain and confident, to state our opinion as if it were true. We haven't been rewarded for being confused. Or for asking more questions rather than giving quick answers. We've also spent many years listening to others mainly to determine whether we agree with them or not. We don't have time or interest to sit and listen to those who think differently than we do.

But the world now is quite perplexing. We no longer live in those sweet, slow days when life felt predictable, when we actually knew what to do next. We live in a complex world, we often don't know what's going on, and we won't be able to understand its complexity unless we spend more time in not knowing.

It is very difficult to give up our certainties—our positions, our beliefs, our explanations. These help define us; they lie at the heart of our personal identity. Yet I believe we will succeed in changing this world only if we can think and work together in new ways. Curiosity is what we need. We don't have to let go of what we believe, but we don't need to be curious about what someone else believes. We do need to acknowledge that their way of interpreting the world might be essential to our survival.

We live in a dense and tangled global system. Because we live in different parts of this complexity, and because no two people are physically identical, we each experience life differently. It's impossible for any two people to ever see things exactly the same. You can test this out for yourself. Take any event that you've shared with others (a speech, a movie, a current event, a major problem) and ask your colleagues and friends to describe their interpretation of that event. I think you'll be amazed at how many different explanations you'll hear. Once you get a sense of diversity, try asking even more colleagues. You'll end up with a rich tapestry of interpretations that are much more interesting than any single one.

To be curious about how someone else interprets things, we have to be willing to admit that we're not capable of figuring things out alone. If our solutions don't work as well as we want them to, if our explanations of why something happened don't feel sufficient, it's time to begin asking others about what they see and think. When so many interpretations are available, I can't understand why we would be satisfied with superficial conversations where we pretend to agree with one another.

There are many ways to sit and listen for the differences. Lately, I've been listening for what surprises me. What did I just hear that startled me? This isn't easy – I'm accustomed to sitting there nodding my head to those saying things I agree with. But when I notice what surprises me,

I'm able to see my own views more clearly, including my beliefs and assumptions.

Noticing what surprises and disturbs me has been a very useful way to see invisible beliefs. If what you say surprises me, I must have been assuming something else was true. If what you say disturbs me, I must believe something contrary to you. My shock at your position exposes my own position. When I hear myself saying, "How could anyone believe something like that?" a light comes on for me to see my own beliefs. These moments are great gifts. If I can see my beliefs and assumptions, I can decide whether I still value them.

I hope you'll begin a conversation, listening for what's new. Listen as best you can for what's different, for what surprises you. See if this practice helps you learn something new. Notice whether you develop a better relationship with the person you're talking with. If you try this with several people, you might find yourself laughing in delight as you realize how many unique ways there are to be human.

We have the opportunity many times a day, every day, to be the one who listens to others, curious rather than certain. But the greatest benefit of all is that listening moves us closer. When we listen with less judgment, we always develop better relationships with each other. It's not differences that divide us. It's our judgments about each other that do curiosity and good listening bring us back together.

Sometimes we hesitate to listen for differences because we don't want to change. We're comfortable with our lives, and if we listened to anyone who raised questions, we'd have to get engaged in changing things. If we don't listen, things can stay as they are and we won't have to expend any energy. But most of us do see things in our life or in the world that we would like to be different. If that's true, we have to listen more, not less. And we have to be willing to move into the very uncomfortable place of uncertainty.

We can't be creative if we refuse to be confused. Change always starts with confusion; cherished interpretations must dissolve to make way for the new. Of course it's scary to give up what we know, but the abyss is where newness lives. Great ideas and inventions miraculously appear in the space of not knowing. If we can move through the fear and enter the abyss, we are rewarded greatly. We rediscover we're creative.

As the world grows more strange and puzzling and difficult, I don't believe most of us want to keep struggling through it alone, I can't know what to do from my own narrow perspective. I know I need a better understanding of what's going on. I want to sit down with you and talk about all the frightening and hopeful things I observe, and listen to what frightens you and gives you hope. I need new ideas and solutions for the problems I care about. I know I need to talk to you to discover those. I need to learn to value your perspective, and I want you to value mine. I expect to be disturbed by what I hear from you. I know we don't have to agree with each other in order to think well together. There is no need for us to be joined at the head. We are joined by our human hearts.

Wheatley, M. J. (2009). *Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Peeves and Traits Protocol

"Give One to Get One" Process

1. Individuals respond on a 3 × 5 card to the following two questions:

Side One:
On one side of the card, write one pet peeve you have when working with a group. Use the phrase:

"A pet peeve I have when working in a group is…"

Side Two:
On the other side of the card, write one trait about yourself that everyone in the group should know about you in order to work best in a group setting. Use the phrase:

"One thing you all should know about me is…"

2. After meeting a variety of partners and trading cards, go back to your table group with your new card and identify common themes around pet peeves and traits.
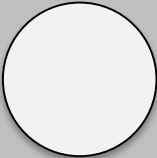
Venables, D. R., & ebrary Academic Complete. (2014). *How teachers can turn data into action*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

# Investing in Social Capital Through Five Facets of Trust

"For trust to form, it may not be necessary to have a high level of confidence in all facets, only in those areas in which there is critical interdependence. There are crucial thresholds across which trust turns to distrust. Different facets of trust may have different thresholds depending on the level of reliance in a particular area and the consequence of one's expectations being disappointed (Shaw, 1997)." Tschannen-Moran, M. (2004). *Trust Matters*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Facets	Attributes	Deposits	Withdrawals
Benevolence	**Benevolence** is the confidence that one's well being or something one cares about will not be harmed by the trusted party. It is about demonstrating good will and genuine concern for another's well being. **BENEVOLENCE LOOKS LIKE…** • The person not only shows interest in what others are doing but also verbally acknowledges it • The person shows respect and care for others through kind actions and gentle words • It is evident the person is emotionally invested in the relationship • Expresses positive intentions for others as well as the belief that they can be successful		
Honesty	**Honesty** is fundamental to trust. Honesty concerns a person's character, their integrity, and authenticity. Without the confidence that a person's words can accurately predict future actions, trust is unlikely to develop. **HONESTY LOOKS LIKE…** • What the persons says and does is a match • Does not try to please everyone to avoid conflict - is able to be upfront and frank • The person is truthful in every way possible • The person does not place blame away from him/herself • Courageously being one's authentic self, not putting on a fake persona		
Opennes	**Openness** is the process by which people make themselves vulnerable to each other by sharing information, influence, and control. Sharing information increases vulnerability because with knowledge comes power. OPENNESS LOOKS LIKE…		

	- A willingness to share important information in order to invite greater transparency - A willingness to share power - A willingness to be transparent in one's thoughts and feelings - Being reciprocal in learning by asking for feedback - The person does not withhold information from other - The ability to foster candor and open communication		
Reliability	**Reliability** is the belief that one can depend on another consistently. Reliability combines a sense of predictability with caring. We experience confidence in others when there is some predictability of behavior. **RELIABILITY LOOKS LIKE…** The persons is dependable and capable of following through - Knows how to manage time and commitments effectively so as not to be distracted - Is respectful to others by showing up on time - The person can be predictably relied on to do his/her part - Is not afraid to put in extra time beyond what is expected		
Competence	Competence is the ability to perform a task as expected, according to appropriate standards. In schools, principals and teachers depend upon one another's competence to accomplish the learning goals in their schools. **COMPETENCE LOOKS LIKE…** The person is highly motivated to do his/her best work - The person is capable of meeting the demands and challenges expected for the role, and does not complain - Shows interest in continually learning in order to improve - The person reveals competence and clarity in his/her skill level - Is able to meet or exceed the expectations of others for the perceived purpose of his/her role		

Image Cards
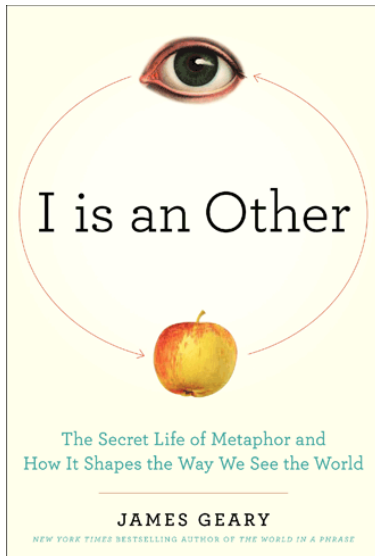
Metaphor is at work in all fields of human endeavor, from economics and advertising to politics and business to science and psychology. We utter about one metaphor for every 10 to 25 words, or about six metaphors a minute.

Whenever we describe anything abstract — ideas, feelings, thoughts, emotions, concepts — we instinctively resort to metaphor. Metaphorical thinking is essential to how we understand ourselves and others, how we communicate, learn, discover, and invent. Metaphor is a way of thought long before it is a way with words." (James Geary, *I is an Other: The Secret Life Of Metaphor And How It Shapes The Way We See Our World*)

Activity:

Step 1: Pick an image that captures your perspective of your current work environment and/or organizational culture.

Step 2: Next, choose an image that represents who you need/want to BE in that current work culture. This card would represent what would allow you to stay resourceful and productive.

Step 3: Share the following with your table group:
   1. Your cards
   2. Why you chose your cards, starting with what you see as the current organizational culture

Step 4: All table group members will listen for common themes that emerge from the sharing.

After everyone has talked, reach consensus on the common themes and be ready to share them with the larger group.

Conflict Management: Differentiating Concerns from Taking a Position

Collaborating is important when solving complex problems and determining which decisions might have the greatest impact. Research continues to support the finding that collaboration produces much better decision-making around complex and non-typical problems than individual leaders.

On the other hand, when group members focus attention on positional differences, it can often undermine effective decision-making, reduce trust, and minimize communication. So, a key skill of all group members is being able to differentiate concerns from positions. Kenneth W. Thomas says, "*Concerns* are the things people care about in a conflict—what they are trying to satisfy. In contrast, the *positions* people take are the solutions they recommend as a way of satisfying their concern—what we should do. Thomas suggests that when group members frame issues in terms of a position (what we should do) they limit finding the best possible decisions and set up interactions to be competitive.

Thomas suggests that finding a collaborative solution requires identifying concerns first before identifying particular solutions or taking a position. For example, "I'm concerned about these layoffs because of the effect they will have on the moral of the staff."

Below is a tool to assist groups in differentiating concerns from positions. Start listening during times of conflict and notice when group members are either sharing concerns or advocating for a position. See if you can shift the conversation toward the concerns that center on self, others and/or the collective whole before determining solutions.

	CONCERN	POSITION
EGOCENTRIC **"I or MY"**	*E.g. My concern is that these layoffs might affect the special programs we just put in place for students.*	*E.g. I think we should cut custodian positions since they won't have any direct effect on student learning.*
ALLOCENTRIC **"YOU"**	*E.g. Karen, what concerns do you hold as we look at these layoffs?*	*E.g. I know that Karen thinks we should not cut any math teachers because that is the school improvement goal we have been working on for the last 2 years.*
MACROCENTRIC **"WE or US"**	*E.g. What are the shared concerns that will affect all of us?*	*E.g. We have to protect the special programs we just put in place for students. We have put too much time and energy into getting those in place.*

Conflict Management Tool developed by Jim Roussin (Generative Learning)
Thomas, K. W. (1992). *Making Conflict Management a Strategic Advantage.*

7 Listening Modes

Listening Filter	Definition	Listening Focus	High
Generative	Generative listening connects to a deeper sense of knowing. Scharmer suggests that this form of listening requires a shift in identity and self: 'Generative listening involves awareness of the deeper silences within, so that the mind can slow down and hear beneath the words to reach their meaning…' (2008:53). Nancy Kline suggests that when there is uncontaminated silence, listeners can activate generative attention. This attention creates an opportunity for the brain to explore itself and allows for its own inner critique or options for change (1999).	*The focus is on enhanced consciousness where listening is viewed as co-partnering for finding deeper meaning and understanding through the suspension of assumptions, beliefs & mental models.*	
Appreciative	The purpose of appreciative listening is for understanding another's experience, ideas, or points of view (regardless of whether we agree or disagree). In this type of listening we acknowledge in others their best positive self by acknowledging the positive, hearing what is working and identifying strengths. In appreciative listening, we embed positive presuppositions in our paraphrasing and questions.	*The focus is on a strength-based approach with the intent to expose the best in others and holding positive intentions.*	
Empathic	Empathy is derived from the German word *Einfühlung*, which means "feeling into." This type of listening communicates care and acceptance. It also acknowledges the other person's self worth through the act of listening and the expression of empathy. So at the heart of empathic listening is understanding.	*The focus is on clarifying what the other person has said and responding with empathy (Attunement).*	
Autobiographical	**Autobiographical** listening is relational listening. It is the means by which we connect to another person by finding something familiar in his/her life. It is probably the most common filter we use for listening. It is through this filter that we can begin to expose who we are and	*The focus is on the relationship by sharing personal experiences and/or common connections. The intent is to feel a sense of connectedness or*	

Mind Chatter of the Listener

	reveal some of our own vulnerability, tentativeness, and hope in a reciprocal relationship. This filter is often the first path to building trust.	*belonging*	
Analyzing	When we listen from the analyzing filter, we tend to offer an interpretation of what we heard. You might state to the speaker, "He is doing it because…" or "I think what is going on for you is…" The challenge with interpretive listening is that we often hold limited information in which to interpret another's situation.	*The focus is on interpreting the speaker's message and/or situation. The listener's interpretation is often grounded in his/her own world of logic.*	Mind Chatter of the Listener
Advisory	It is common from this listening position to want to help the person out of where he/she is stuck by offering a solution or crafting questions toward what we see as a possible solution. A consequence of this type of support listening is that the person does not identify her/his own internal resourcefulness in finding a solution that is self-directed.	*The focus is on identifying and then offering a solution for what isn't working or where there is a problem or challenge.*	
Evaluative	Carl Rogers has suggested that evaluative listening is reactive and influenced by emotion or preconceived notions. The listener tends to judge, approve or disapprove what the speaker is saying. Evaluative listening is often used to persuade others toward a particular view.	*The focus is on making judgments or using interpretive listening to weigh up the pros and cons*	**Low**

This information was modified & updated by James Roussin from the following source: *Guiding Professional Learning Communities: Inspiration, Challenge, Surprise, and Meaning* by Hord, S. M., Roussin, J. L., & Sommers, W. A.

Generative Learning

Reactive learning is governed by habitual ways of thinking –"continuing to see the world within the familiar categories we are comfortable with and discount other options that are different from those we know and trust" (Presence: Exploring Profound Change in People, Organizations, and Society, Senge, et al. 2005)

Developing new perspectives and new knowledge is a non-linear two-fold process. Individuals must maintain a learner's perspective, and they need to have openness to exploring and shifting their mental models and understanding others. Both introspection and ongoing personal and professional development help to develop this. In separate studies on developing generativity within the education system, it was found that when teachers see themselves as ongoing learners and connect their personal and professional knowledge with that of their students, they were able create generative change within their classrooms and students (Ball, 2009; Franke, Carpenter, Levi, & Fennema, 2001).

By creating an environment that supports ongoing learning and willingness to question and explore new perspectives, new knowledge can be sought after and continually applied. This takes place in part by being curious and letting go of the "expert" stance and being willing to "access your ignorance" (Schein, 1999).

When we are able to shift mental models and open up to new perspectives and new knowledge we make room for new possibilities to occur. According to Franke et al. (2001),

> When individuals learn with understanding, they can apply their knowledge to learn new topics and solve new and unfamiliar problems…Knowledge becomes generative when the learner sees the need to integrate new knowledge with existing knowledge and continually reconsiders existing knowledge in light of new knowledge that they are learning (pp. 655-6).

Generative Listening

Carl Rogers suggested that when we are deeply listening, we are laying aside our own views and values in order to enter another's world without prejudice. And, research from neuropsychologists shows that we do our finest thinking when someone gives us their deep, uninterrupted, unquestioning attention, creating conditions of safety that liberate the mind.

Peter Senge has said, "To listen fully means to pay close attention to what is being said beneath the words. You listen not only to the "music," but to the very essence of the person speaking. You listen not only for what someone knows, but for who he or she is. Ears operate at the speed of sound, which is far slower than the speed of the light the eyes take in. Generative listening is the art of developing deeper silences in yourself, so you can slow your mind's hearing to your ears' natural speed, and hear beneath the words to their meaning."

Generative listening asks us to examine what lies at the heart of our work and our lives. Otto Scharmer has called generative listening a "means to form a space of deep attention that allows an emerging future possibility to 'land' or manifest itself… [great coaches]… listen deeply in a way that allows the coachee to connect to a future emerging self. This is very akin to Nancy Kline's concept of creating "generative attention in uncontaminated silence" through the structuring of time to think.

Listening Generatively is when you listen beyond the words and feelings. It is when you forge a connection with the person in such a deep way you become generative with your hearing–adding more, much more than what is being said. You are helping the other experience hearing themselves.

NOTES:

Liberating Structure: 1 – 2 – 4 – All

We know that the group is smarter than any single individual. The challenges are:

- How to tap into a group's collective intelligence and creativity when discussing an issue?
- How to prevent a conversation dominated by a couple of people?
- How to avoid a discussion that goes on, and on, and on?

1–2–4–All is one of the most effective methods for overcoming those challenges. It is so simple that it can be used anytime, anywhere, by anyone. Learning to use 1–2–4–All makes it easy to work your way into some of the other Liberating Structures.

1. **The invitation:** Reflect and share what questions, comments, or suggestions you have in response to a presentation or question.

2. **How space is arranged and what materials are used:** Participants must be able to be face-to-face in groups of two and then in groups of four. Small tables with four chairs are easiest but not indispensable—people may sit or stand. Microphones may be needed for groups of four to share with the whole group if it is large.

3. **How participation is distributed:** Everybody is given equal time.

4. **How groups are configured:** First alone, then pairs, then groups of four, then the whole group.

5. **Sequence of steps and time allocation:**

   - Reflect alone and write down your thoughts (1 minute)
   - Share/ compare/ improve/ expand in pairs (2 minutes)
   - Share/ compare/ improve/ expand in groups of four (2 minutes)
   - One group at a time shares one important answer with the whole group moving quickly from group to group and avoiding repetitions (3 minutes)

The whole cycle can be as short as three minutes and shouldn't be longer than fifteen minutes. If an issue warrants more time, it is more productive to do a second cycle. Two cycles of ten minutes are better than one cycle of twenty minutes.

Lipmanowicz, H, McCandless, K. (2014). *The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures: Simple Rules to Unleash a Culture of Innovation*. Seattle, WA: Liberating Structures Press, Kindle Edition.

Thoughting and Thinking

Thoughting and Thinking
David Bohm, a philosopher and physicist, suggests we are deeply committed to thoughts we have previously developed. When exposed to new situations, we apply our past thoughts, repeating strongly held patterns of thinking and behavior. We are stuck in "thoughting" and are not really "thinking."

Thoughting is conditioning.
Bohm calls thoughting a conditioning. He calls it a conditioning because he believes that a thought is not exceedingly active. Thoughting is instead something we have been trained to do or something we have become accustomed to doing in a certain way. It is patterned behavior.

A prime example of thoughting is found in Pavlov and his dogs. Pavlov's dogs would naturally salivate when they saw food. This first reaction was a reflexive response—whenever food was present, salivation was also present. Later, Pavlov rang a bell when he fed the dogs and the dogs began to associate the bell with food. Ultimately, the dogs would salivate just by hearing the bell. The second reaction to the bell was a conditioned response—whenever the bell rang, salivation would occur.

According to Bohm, these are the two steps in the thoughting process. The first step, reflexive response, is built in and is a natural characteristic of humans and animals. The second step, conditioning, is something that might not be built in, but because of a certain development, it becomes a response in both humans and animals.

Thus, thoughting is nothing more than a form of *reflex* and *conditioning*.

When we say, "When X happens, we need to do Y," we really don't have to think because immediately when X happens, we are already doing Y. It is a reflex. That process, in essence, is the nature of thoughting because one reflex naturally leads to another.

So when we think we are thinking, we are actually thoughting—reflex and conditioning.

Thinking is an active verb.
Thinking is an active verb—think-ing. It means you are actively cogitating. For example, you analyze your thoughts to determine if they cohere. If your thoughts don't cohere, you begin to change them and experiment with other thoughts. As a result, you gain new insights…which is very different from thoughting.

Thinking requires us to respond to new experiences by developing new patterns and constructing new meaning. Thinking is generative, creating new ways of understanding and responding.

To stimulate thinking instead of thoughting, we can ask questions such as:
- What are some things you might need to learn to address this situation?
- In what new ways might you need to think in order to be effective in this time?
- How might others respond to this differently than you might? What does that mean for you?

Thinking Collaborative Sustaining the Journey, September 17, 2012
Beyond Limits: A Tribute to David Bohm. http://billangelos.typepad.com/my_weblog/beyond-limits-a-tribute-to-david-bohm/

The Structure and Flow of Effective Paraphrasing

Listen and observe carefully to calibrate the content and emotions of the speaker. Signal your intention to paraphrase. This is done by modulating intonation with the use of an approachable voice and by opening with a reflective stem. Such stems put the focus and emphasis on the speaker's ideas, not on the paraphraser's interpretation of those ideas.

For example, reflective paraphrases should not use the pronoun "I." The phrase, "What I think I hear you saying," signals to many speakers that their thoughts no longer matter and that the paraphraser is now going to insert his or her own ideas into the conversation.

The following paraphrase stems signal that a paraphrase is coming: You're suggesting… You're proposing… So what you're wondering is… So you are thinking that… Hmm, you're pondering the effects of… So your hunch is that…

> **Principles of Paraphrasing**
> - Attend fully.
> - Listen with the intention to under- stand.
> - Capture the *essence* of the message.
> - Reflect the *essence* of voice tone and gestures.
> - Make the paraphrase shorter than the original statement.
> - Paraphrase before asking a question. Use the pronoun "You, instead of I."

Choose a type of paraphrase with which to respond. There are three broad categories of paraphrase types, each with a specific function. We have refined our thinking about these since the last edition. One discovery is that sometimes people infer that the three types should be used in sequence. This is not the case, though it is not unusual to begin conversations with the intention of acknowledging the speaker.

1. *Acknowledging*. If the paraphrase is not completely accurate, the speaker will offer corrections. "So you're concerned about the budgeting process and ways to get input early."

2. *Organizing*. Offer themes and "containers" to organize several statements or separate jumbled issues. This is an especially important type of paraphrase to use when multiple speakers contribute to a topic. "There appear to be two issues here. One is resource allocation and the other is the impact of those decisions on student learning."

3. *Abstracting*. Listen deeply for meaning then shift to a higher or lower level of abstraction. This paraphrase invites the speaker to think at levels either more abstract or concrete in a manner congruent with the *Ladder of Abstraction* (Hayakawa, 1939).

"So a goal for you is…" or "An assumption you have is…" Paraphrasing within a flow of discourse often moves through a starting point of acknowledging, then using each of three forms of paraphrase depending on intention in the moment. Paraphrases move to a higher level of abstraction when they name concepts, goals, values, and assumptions: "So a major goal here is to define fairness in the budgeting processes and compare those criteria to the operating values of the school." "So you are valuing depth over breadth." Paraphrases move to a lower level of abstraction when concepts require grounding in details: "So fair might mean that we construct a needs assessment form for each department to fill out and submit to the site council for public consideration."

Learning Styles and Paraphrasing

Paraphrases that summarize or shift the abstraction level of discourse support and stretch the thinking styles of different group members. Global thinkers appreciate paraphrases that separate

and organize "thinking in progress." At other times the shift down in level of abstraction grounds global thinkers in specific examples and concrete details. Concrete, highly sequential thinkers learn from the shift up to higher levels of abstraction. This helps them to explore a bigger picture and creates a wider context for thinking.

Garmston, R., & Wellman, B. (2016). *The Adaptive School: A sourcebook for developing collaborative groups.* Lanyard, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Notes:

Norms Dialogue

Initially...

1. Select a Process Observer who will gather data.
2. Dialogue on a topic.
3. Data collected by the Process Observer will focus on the Norms the group may be interested in.

After the initial dialogue...

4. Group members predict what the group's Norms data will show while process observer is plotting data on chart.
5. Process Observer offers the data on the Norms chart, with no comment.
6. Each group member speaks his or her response to the data in round robin with no cross talk.

Reflection...

7. Determine a facilitator, then dialogue as a group about this question:

   "Given these data and impressions, what do we need to do to heighten our consciousness of the Norms of Collaboration the next time we talk?"

Notes:

Meeting Feedback Data

Pausing	
Paraphrasing	
Posing Questions	
Putting Ideas on the Table	
Providing Data	
Paying Attention to Self and Others	
Presuming Positive Intentions	

Decide on Decision Making	
One Process at a Time	
One Topic at a Time	
Balance Participation	
Agree on Meeting Roles	
Design the Surround	
Dialogue	
Discussion	

Process Observer's Data

Pausing

_____ after questions are asked
_____ after others speak
_____ before questions/paraphrases
_____ whole group

Paraphrasing

_____ acknowledging: _____for group _____for individual
_____ organizing: _____for group _____for individual
_____ abstracting: _____for group _____for individual

Posing Questions

_____ Explore perceptions, assumptions and interpretations
_____ Inquire before putting ideas on the table and advocating
_____ Seeking specificity of data, assumptions, generalizations and the
meaning of words

Putting Ideas/data/perceptions on the table and pulling them off

_____ State the intentions of communications
_____ Provide relevant facts, ideas, opinions and inferences
_____ Remove or announce modification of ideas, opinions and points of view

Providing data to structure conversations

_____ Present specific, measurable, observable information
_____ Present data without judgments, opinions or inferences
_____ Offer multiple types of data to broaden understanding

Paying attention to self and others

_____ Statements that open opportunities for others to contribute and respond
_____ Reactions/responses/rebuttals at appropriate times and in effective ways
_____ Statements that maintain awareness of the group's task, process and
development

Presuming positive intentions

_____ Communicate respectfully whether agreeing or disagreeing
_____ Embed positive presuppositions in paraphrases and comments
_____ Embed positive presuppositions in questions

Facilitator Moves

Facilitators make a number of subtle "moves," perhaps not noticeable unless one is looking for them, that increase or deflect group energy, direct attention, affect information flow, promote memory, communicate respect, and create psychological safety. These are largely nonverbal. We classify them as moves in contrast to a strategy when they are unplanned, executed spontaneously and have no more than one or two parts to them. "Choose Voice," "Visual Paragraph," "Finger Minutes," and "Most Important Twenty Seconds" are examples in this appendix. These, and the majority of nonverbal ideas in this collection emanate from the work of our friend and mentor Michael Grinder (Grinder, 2007). Facilitation Moves and are labeled as:

Focus and Maintain Attention	Manage Energy	Grouping

Facilitator moves that can redirect the group to one topic:

Relevancy Check. Offer a relevancy check by asking, "Please help us understand, Sam, how your comment relates to the topic that we are discussing."

"Cape" comments. Use the flip chart like a bullfighter's cape. Sam makes a comment (e.g., about cleaning the supply room), and the facilitator moves to the flip chart and writes "supply room" while saying to Sam, "Sam, I know there are several people interested in this. Let's put it here so we don't lose it. We'll come back to it later." See appendix A for this procedure.

Facilitator moves that help groups be clear about and honor a process.

PAG/PAU ensures that members under- stand the process correctly. It stands for Process as Given, Process as Understood. The facilitator communicates each of stage in three different mediums: space, voice, and language (figure 6.4).

Stop and Redirect is a facilitator move to correct deviations from a process.

Facilitator moves to balance participation:

"Take a moment and jot down your ideas on this before we begin sharing."

"Turn to your neighbor and generate a few more ideas. You've got thirty seconds."

"In the context in which you are working, what is the difference between interrogate and inquire? Tell your neighbor." (sixty seconds)

The Seven Norms of Collaborative Work

Pausing

Pausing before responding or asking a question allows time for thinking and enhances dialogue, discussion and decision-making.

Paraphrasing

Using a paraphrase starter that is comfortable for you "So…" or "You're feeling…" or "You're thinking…" and following the starter with a paraphrase assists members of the group to hear and understand one another.

Posing questions

Two intentions of posing questions are to explore and specify thinking. Questions maybe posed to explore perceptions, assumptions and interpretations and invite others to inquire into their own thinking. For example, "What might be some outcomes we are envisioning?" Use focusing questions such as, "Which students, specifically?" or "What might be an example of that?" to increase the clarity and precision of group members' thinking. Inquire into the ideas of others before advocating for one's own ideas.

Putting ideas on the table

Ideas are the heart of a meaningful dialogue. Label the intention of your comments. For example, you might say, "Here is one idea…" or "One thought I have is…" or "Here is a possible approach…"

Providing data

Providing data, both qualitative and quantitative, in a variety of forms supports group members in constructing shared understanding from their work. Data have no meaning beyond that which we make of them; shared meaning develops from collaboratively exploring, analyzing and interpreting data.

Paying attention to self and others

Meaningful dialogue is facilitated when each group member is conscious of self and of others, and is aware of not only what he or she is saying, but also how it is said and how others are responding. This includes paying attention to learning style when planning for, facilitating and participating in group meetings. Responding to others in their own language forms is one manifestation of this norm.

Presuming positive intentions

Assuming that others' intentions are positive promotes and facilitates meaningful dialogue and eliminates unintentional putdowns. Using positive intentions in your speech is one manifestation of this norm.