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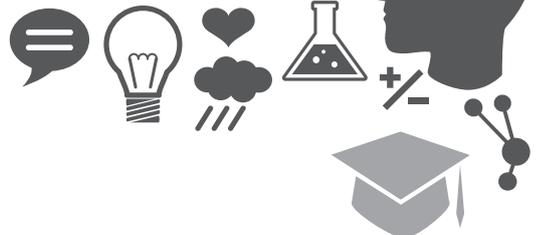
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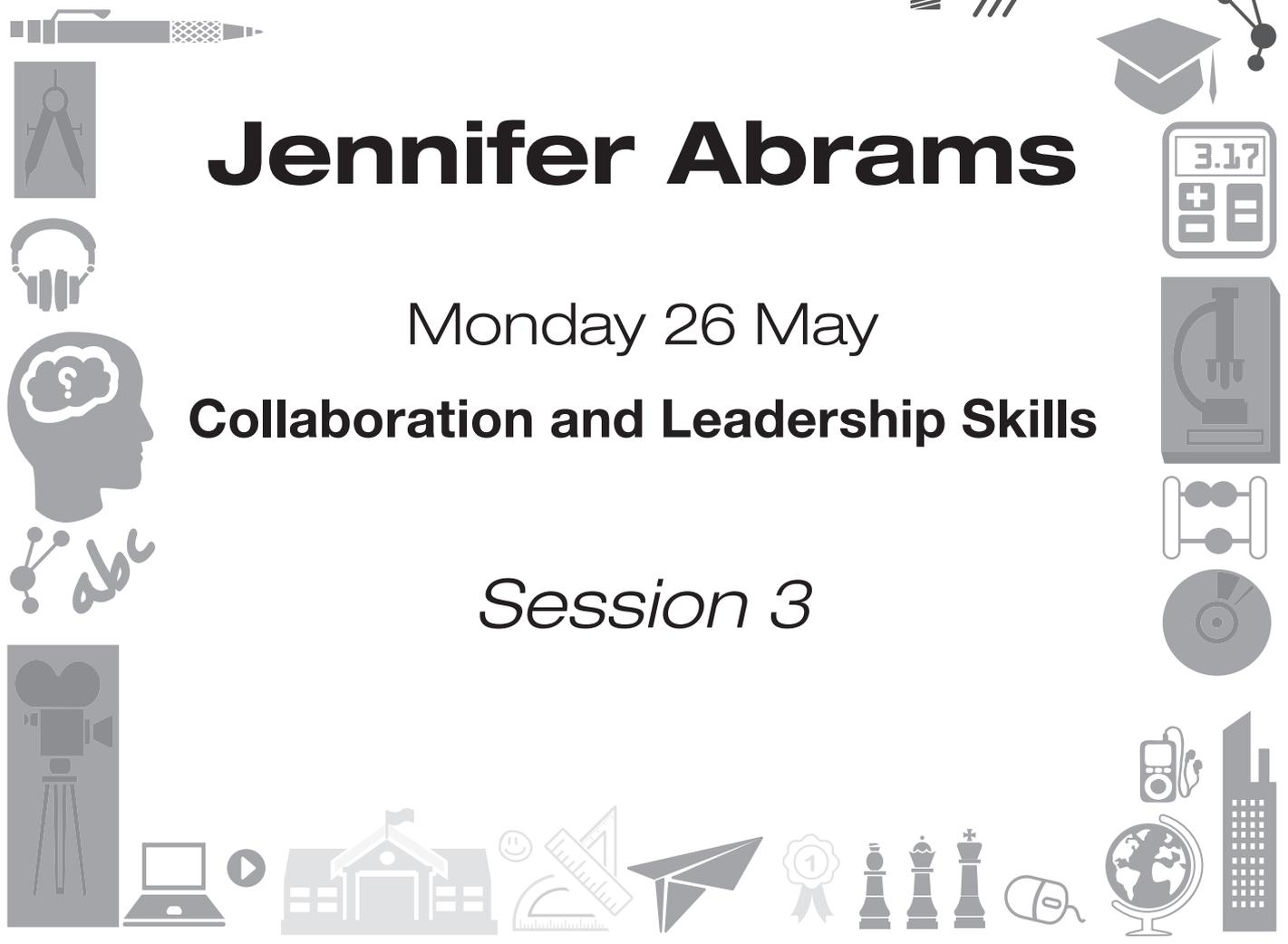


Jennifer Abrams

Monday 26 May

Collaboration and Leadership Skills

Session 3



JENNIFER ABRAMS



Jennifer is an international educational and communications consultant for schools, universities and non-profits. She trains and coaches teachers, administrators and others on successful instructional practices, new employee support, supervision and evaluation, generational savvy, having hard conversations and effective collaboration skills. Her publications include *Having Hard Conversations*, "Planning Productive Talk", her article for ASCD's 'Educational Leadership', her chapter, "Habits of Mind for the School Savvy Leader" in Art Costa's and Bena Kallick's book, *Learning and leading with Habits of Mind: 16 Essential Characteristics for Success*.

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Collaboration and Leadership

Collaboration Skills Self-Assessments

Trust – Bryk and Schneider
Adult Learning Assumptions-Lambert

Rapport & Non-Verbals
Listening Skills
Questioning Skills
Presuppositions
Suggestions

Collaboration Questionnaire

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About the Presenter

Jennifer Abrams is an international educational and communications consultant for public and private schools, hospitals, universities and non-profits. Jennifer trains and coaches teachers, administrators, nurses, hospital personnel and others on successful instructional practices, new employee support, supervision and evaluation, generational savvy, having hard conversations and effective collaboration skills.

In Palo Alto USD (Palo Alto, CA), Jennifer led professional development sessions on topics from equity and elements of effective instruction to teacher leadership and peer coaching and provided new teacher and administrator trainings at both the elementary and secondary level. From 2000-2011, Jennifer was lead coach for the Palo Alto-Mountain View-Los Altos-Saratoga-Los Gatos Consortium's Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program.

In her educational consulting work, Jennifer has presented at annual conferences such as Learning Forward, ASCD, NASSP, AMLE, ISACS and the New Teacher Center Annual Symposium, as well as at the Teachers' and Principals' Centers for International School Leadership. Jennifer's communications consulting in the health care sector includes training and coaching work at the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula and Stanford Hospital and Clinics.

Jennifer's publications include *Having Hard Conversations*, and the Corwin Press e-course by the same name, "Planning Productive Talk," her article for ASCD's *Educational Leadership* (October 2011), her chapter, "Habits of Mind for the School Savvy Leader" in Art Costa's and Bena Kallick's book, *Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind: 16 Essential Characteristics for Success*, and her contribution to the book, *Mentors in the Making: Developing New Leaders for New Teachers* published by Teachers College Press. Her book, with co-author Valerie Von Frank, *The Multigenerational Workplace: Communicating, Collaborating & Creating Community* was published by Corwin Press in November of 2013. Jennifer also writes a monthly newsletter/blog, *Voice Lessons*, available for reading at and subscribing to on her website, www.jenniferabrams.com.

Jennifer has been a featured interviewee on the topic of professionalism for ASCD's video series, *Master Class*, hosted by National Public Radio's Claudio Sanchez, and in the lead article, "Finding Your Voice in Facilitating Productive Conversations" for Learning Forward's *The Leading Teacher*, Summer 2013 newsletter; as a generational expert for "Tune in to What the New Generation of Teachers Can Do," published in *Phi Delta Kappan*, (May 2011), and by the Ontario Ministry of Education for their *Leadership Matters: Supporting Open-to-Learning Conversations* video series.

Jennifer considers herself a "voice coach," helping others learn how to best use their voices - be it collaborating on a team, presenting in front of an audience, coaching a colleague, supervising an employee, and most recently in writing for the stage, as she did in her tenure as a Board Member of the National New Play Network. Jennifer holds a Master's degree in Education from Stanford University and a Bachelor's degree in English from Tufts University. She lives in Palo Alto, California. Jennifer can be reached at jennifer@jenniferabrams.com, www.jenniferabrams.com, and on Twitter [@jenniferabrams](https://twitter.com/jenniferabrams).



Our conversations invent us. Through our speech and our silence, we become smaller or larger selves. Through our speech and our silence, we diminish or enhance the other person, and we narrow or expand the possibilities between us. How we use our voice determines the quality of our relationships, who we are in the world, and what the world can be and might become. Clearly, a lot is at stake here.

Harriet Lerner, The Dance of Connection



**Skills and Capabilities
Of Effective Department Chairs,
Coaches and Teacher Leaders**

- ability to create trust and rapport – body language, tone, etc.
- ability to listen effectively, paraphrasing, pausing, etc.
- ability to ask questions effectively
- ability to collect and reflect on data and analyze student work
- ability to give thoughtful suggestions and feedback
- ability to facilitate groups
- ability to train adult learners/be a professional developer
- an ability to know how and when to have a hard conversation
- an understanding of adult learning theory
- an understanding of systems theory/change theory
- an understanding of micro-political literacy
- an understanding of coaching and supervision theories
- ability to use a variety of protocols such as:
 - Outcome Maps**
 - Critical Friends Protocols**
 - Curriculum/Assignment Review Protocols**
- an ability to advocate and speak in front of committees/parents

What Else?



Are Good Social Relationships Key To School Improvement?

Gordon, David T., *Fuel for Reform: The Importance of Trust in Changing Schools*, Harvard Education Letter, July/August, 2002, Vol. 18, #4

A lesson learned from Chicago's decade of school reforms, according to a new book by Anthony S. Bryk and Barbara Schneider. In Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement, the University of Chicago researchers examine the role of social relationships in schools and their impact on student achievement. Their conclusion? That "a broad base of trust across a school community lubricates much of the a school's day-to-day functioning and is a critical resource as local leaders embark on ambitious improvement plans."

Bryk and Schneider contend that schools with a high degrees of "relational trust," as they call it, are far more likely to make the kinds of changes that help raise student achievement than those where relations are poor.

Bryk and Schneider take the bold step of seeking empirical evidence that links trust and academic achievement.

Teachers' relationships with each other can often be more challenging than those between teachers and their bosses, the authors found.

The evidence from Chicago suggest that while not all schools with high levels of trust improve – that is, trust alone won't solve instructional or structural problems – schools with little or no relational trust have practically no chance of improving.

In top-quartile schools, three-quarters of teachers reported strong or very strong relations with fellow teachers, and nearly all reported such relations with their principals. By contrast, at schools in the bottom quartile, a majority of teachers having little or no trust in their colleagues, two-thirds said the same about their principals, and fewer than 40 percent reported positive, trusting relations with parents.

Bryk and Schneider found that schools with strong levels of trust at the outset of reforms had a 1 in 2 chance of making significant improvements in math and reading, while those with weak relationships had a 1 in 7 chance of making gains.

Good relationships and trust won't compensate for bad instruction, poorly trained teachers or unworkable school structures, as Bryk and Schneider are careful to note. But by the same token, reform efforts are bound to fail if they ignore the importance of how teachers, principals, parents and students interact.



Trust – Research by Bryk and Schneider

Schools with a high degree of trust are more likely to make changes that help students achieve.

According to these researchers, there are four vital signs for identifying and assessing trust in schools.

Respect: Do we acknowledge one another's dignity and ideas? Do we interact in a courteous way?

Competence: Do we believe in each other's ability and willingness to fulfill our responsibilities effectively?

Personal regard: Do we care about each other personally and professionally? Are we willing to go beyond our formal roles and responsibilities to go the extra mile?

Integrity: Can we trust each other to put the interests of students first, especially when tough decisions have to be made? Do we keep our word?

What are your thoughts about the degree of trust on at your school? What do you think are some of the things that could increase the trust in your school?



Guiding Questions – Participation in School Community

Participation in collaborative efforts to improve the school.

- Do I “show up”? Show up on time or late?
Show up at staff meetings? Department meetings? On Staff Development Days?
At team meetings? At events that are related to school improvement?
- Do I know, understand, respect and follow the learning outcomes/course descriptions of my classes? If so, how? Follow the objectives for the department? The goals of the school?
- If asked to complete some paperwork or attend a meeting on behalf of the department or do some work for the team, do I get it done?
- Do I share an enthusiasm for the “pursuit of teaching excellence”? If so, how?
- Do I look like I enjoy teaching? Enjoy the school? Enjoy my colleagues? If so, how?
- Do I communicate with parents in a timely fashion? If so, how? Answer calls?
Meet with parents? Show up to Back to School Night?
- Do I hold myself to a high standard for what I do and produce? If so, how?
- Do I continually refine lessons and units and work to improve my teaching? If so, how?

Demonstration of the interpersonal skills needed to work on a team with colleagues, and community members.

- Am I aware of the school values, norms, the way the school sees itself? Do I work well within those values? If so, how? Do I embody them or just give them lip service?
- Do I seem to understand the implicit or explicit code of dress for the teachers and other professionals in the school and wear appropriate clothing for the age of the students and the school culture? If so, how?
- Do I hone my communication and process skills as well as work on my classroom instruction? If so, how?
- Do I show consideration for the feelings of others? Say “Hello,” say “Thank you,” say “I’m sorry,” say “What can I do to help?”
- Do I gossip? Talk poorly of colleagues in front of others or to students?



Guiding Questions – Participation in School Community

- Am I aware of my assumptions and values and know when they are getting in the way of moving forward with my colleagues?
- Am I able to stand outside myself and see how I might be impacting others or be seen by others? If so, how?
- If I am given feedback, do I listen to it and react appropriately, changing behavior if necessary? If so, how?
- Am I open to rational and intuitive ways of thinking? If so, how?
- Am I open to doing things in a way other than my way?
- Am I open to hearing all perspectives? If so, how? And when hearing all perspectives do I honor them or shut down?
- Do I cooperate with special education staff so that services are provided to the students? Do I fill out the progress reports and do the required/suggested accommodations with a positive attitude?
- Do I work with counselors or administrator when there is a problem? Do I attend SSTs, etc. and do so in a “willing” way?
- Do I manage my anxiety in a way that is appropriate? Not yelling at or crying in front of all staff or students?
- Do I know of the hierarchy of positions in the school? Do I know where to go to the appropriate person for the appropriate concern? Do I look for solutions rather than sit with the problem and complain in the parking lot?
- Do I want to work in a group and do I show that through my body language, contributions, and attitude?
- When communicating with other adults, do I ask for other perspectives? Seek to understand the other’s point of view?
- Do I show an ability to listen for understanding and empathy?
- Do I manage impulsivity or interrupt more often than not, inserting my POV?
- Do I use positive presuppositions when coming together with a given group – presuming positive intention and potential?



Guiding Questions – Participation in School Community

- Do I seem to have a sense of humor? Can I laugh at myself?
- Do I have a sense of personal space, body language and appropriate sense of decorum in a given setting? With both adults and students?
- Am I aware that I am not allowing equitable participation by talking too much at meetings or talking too little and not contributing?

What Else?



Adult Learning Assumptions

- **Adults have a drive toward competence, which is linked to self-image and efficacy.**
- **Learning is enhanced when adults are active, involved and self-directed.**
- **What is to be learned must hold meaning; it must connect with current understandings, knowledge, experience and purpose.**
- **We don't learn from experience as much as we learn from processing our experience – both successes and failures. Self-reflection, self-assessment, and self-direction are critical to learning and development.**
- **Learning is both an opportunity and a risk; it requires dissonance and change.**
- **Learning is the continual process of identity formation, or growing into more of who we are becoming**

Adapted from the work of Linda Lambert, Professor, Department of Educational Leadership, California State University, Hayward



**Key Rapport Skills
For Better Colleague-Colleague Conversation**

Watch Your Rapport

Physical

Muscle Tension

Posture

Gesture (hands)

Eye Contact

Physical Space between you

Where you sit/stand in the room

Which room you are in

Vocal

Intonation/Pitch

(approachable vs. credible)

Pace

Word Choice

Breathing

Depth

Duration

Rate

Attend to Rapport If

You anticipate tension or anxiety

Tension or anxiety emerges

**You are having difficulty understanding the
other person**

You are distracted

Adapted from **Mentoring Matters: A Practical Guide to Learning-Focused Relationships** by
Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman

Be Aware of “I” Listening**Personal Referencing – autobiographical****Personal Curiosity – gossip, etc.****Personal Certainty – solution-oriented****Ask yourself: What are my reasons for saying this?
Does it serve for my colleague to hear this?**



Paraphrasing

Pause

Using wait time before responding to or asking a question allows time for more complex thinking, enhances dialogue and improves decision-making.

Paraphrase

Let's others know that you are listening, that you understand or are trying to understand them and that you care.

Inappropriate Paraphrases

- **No paraphrase**
- **Too often (too frequent)**
- **Too long**
- **Same words (parroting)**
- **Wrong pronoun (using "I" – so what "I" hear you saying is...)**

Possible paraphrasing stems...

So...

In other words....

What you're suggesting is...

You're saying...



Key Questioning Skills For Better Colleague-Colleague Conversations

Pause

Leave space after you ask a question

Leave space after they finish answering

Leave space before you respond

Have an Approachable Voice

Rise at the end of a statement

Use a credible voice when you are “consulting”

Use Plural Forms

To increase thinking and not block it use plural forms.

“What are some of your goals?”

“What ideas do you have?”

“What accommodations are you considering?”

Use Tentative Language

To reduce need for absolutes/surety

“What hunches do you have?”

“What might be some of the possible solutions?”

“What may the students think of this idea?”

“How might you go about doing that?”

Use Positive Presuppositions

Presumes our colleague is capable of thought and is willing to reflect.

“As you think about this with your content expertise...”

“Considering you know the students well....”

“As you plan for this class, what are some of the things that are important to you?”

“As you move through the lesson, what are some of the indicators you will look for to see students are progressing?”

“What do you make of...”

“What leads you to believe...?”

“What are some other ways you have thought about looking this challenge?”

“How do you see/envision this working out....?”



Presuppositions Exercise

Identify the presupposition(s) in each question. Describe the possible impact on the person's (a) feelings and (b) cognition. Then write an improved question.

1) Why did you do that?

2) What could you have done to make it more successful?

3) Why don't you try?



Open Suggestions – Consulting Stance

- **Are offered in the spirit of support and are expressed with invitational, positive language and voice tone**
- **Offer choices to encourage ownership**
- **Are often expressed as a question or include a “tag question” to invite further thinking**
- **Are achievable and offered in brief – enough to encourage but not to overwhelm**

Suggestion stems

- **One thing I’ve noticed is....**
- **Something to keep in mind when dealing with....**
- **There are a number of approaches....**
- **From the work I have seen others do, one thing I think has worked for others is...**

Try following a suggestion with a question that invites the teacher to imagine/hypothesize how the idea might work in his/her context.

- **How do you think that would work?**
- **Which of these ideas do you think makes most sense for you?**
- **What do you think of trying that idea out in class?**

Adapted from New Teacher Center and Lipton and Wellman



Collaboration Questionnaire

WORK STYLE

- Describe your work style. Are you a 'get things done right away' or a 'give me a day or two to think about it' kind of worker?
- Which tasks do you enjoy doing with others? Which tasks do feel better doing things on your own?
- What are your strengths as a worker? What about as a co-worker? What do you feel are your learning edges?
- What motivates you at work?
- What situations/challenges/work assignments do you find fun? Which ones challenge you?
- How do you handle interruptions or a change of plans? How might someone work best with you in those types of situations?

COMMUNICATION STYLE

- What are the best ways to communicate with you? Text, email, in person, phone?
- What is one thing about how you communicate that you would like to improve?
- Do you tend to write in brief or be detailed? What types of direction do you need when you go off and do an assignment? A bulleted list of to dos with deadlines or just the gist of what is to be done?
- How will others know you are hurt or upset? If you are upset, how do you want to be treated?
- How do like to handle mistakes? Yours or others?



Collaboration Questionnaire

TEAMING

- In a group situation, what are your strengths?
What can you be counted on for? Keeping others on track, always bringing in another perspective?
- What types of acknowledgements do you like?
Public or private praise, tangible gifts, etc.
- In what situations do you ask for help? How do you feel about asking for help?
- How would you like to receive feedback? In what forms?
- What does the ideal team member look like to you?
- What are your pet peeves in terms of team work/working with others/collaborating?

PERSONAL LIFE/PROFESSIONAL LIFE

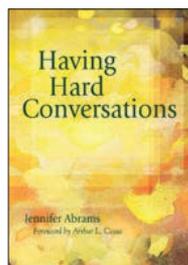
- How much of your personal life do you like to share with those at work?
- Are you someone who socializes with colleagues from work?
Lunch with those while at work?
- Anything else in any category above or any new category of info you would like to know in order to collaborate most effectively with your colleagues?

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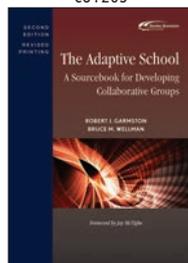
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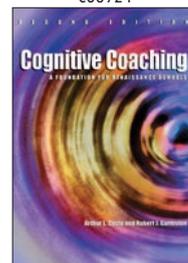
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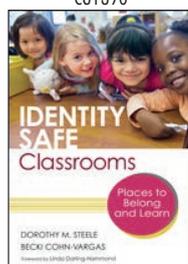
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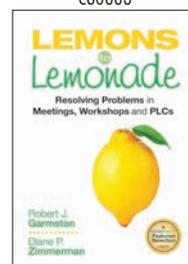
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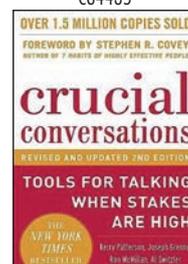
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