

Adaptive Schools Foundation Seminar *Learning Guide*

Robert Garmston and Bruce Wellman

Revised by

Michael Dolcemascolo and Carolyn McKanders

Illustrated by

Jerry Russell

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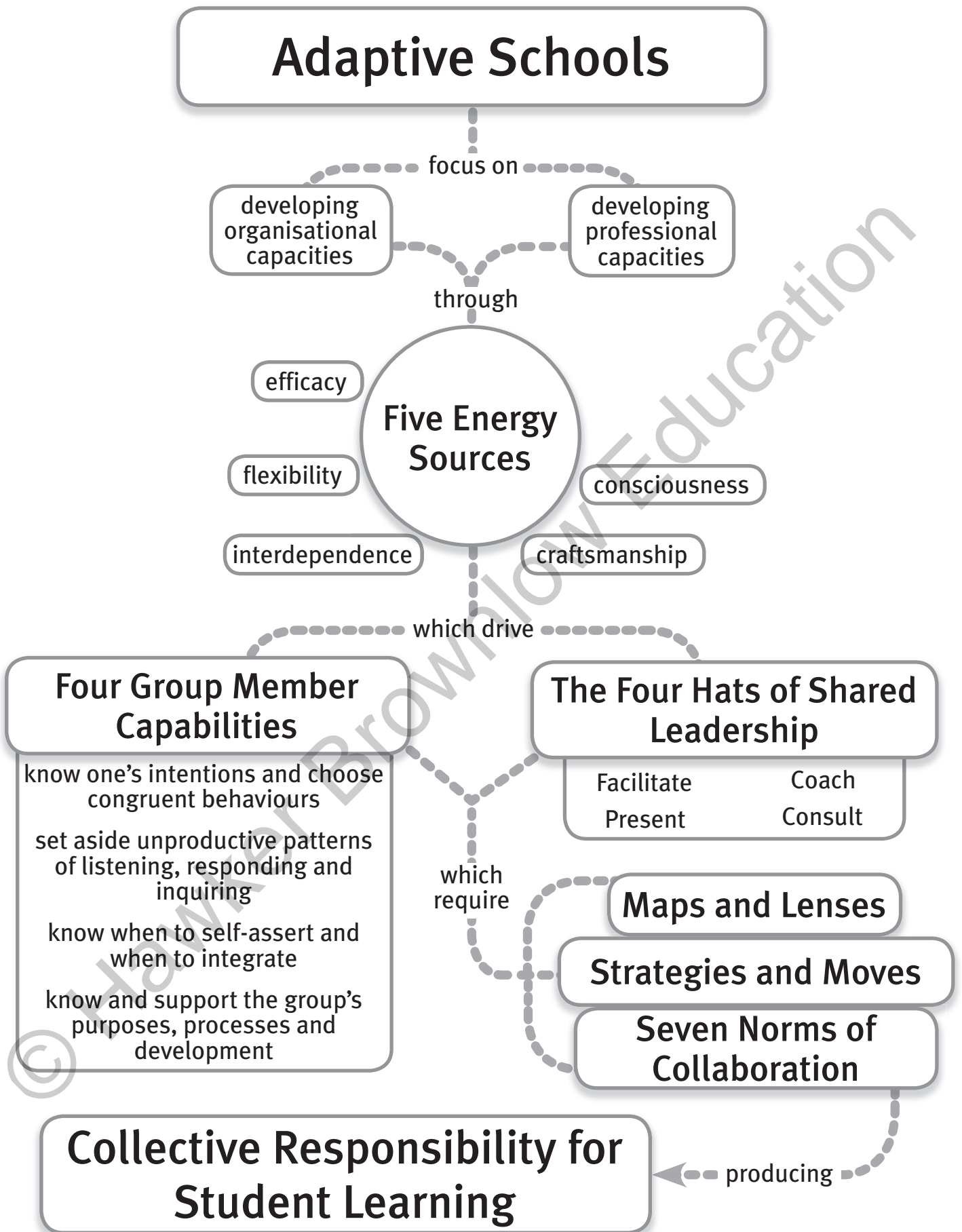
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Goal of Adaptive Schools Seminars:

To develop our collective identity and capacity as collaborators, inquirers and leaders.

Identity

Our identity, who we believe we are, drives our perceptions of the world, our interactions with others, our construction of meaning, our choices and behaviours and the way we fulfil the responsibilities of our many roles. How we carry out each role is influenced by the identity we develop for ourselves.

Our beliefs, values, capacities and behaviours are congruent with our sense of identity. As our sense of identity changes, so do our beliefs, values, capacities and behaviours. Most often, this sense of identity is held unconsciously, without calculation or deliberation. An identity carries with it goals and presuppositions that influence the setting of personal standards and criteria for interactions with others (Ellison & Hayes, 2015).

Capacity

Capacity is how much we can hold. Adaptivity – clarifying identity and changing form – implies building capacity. Technical solutions are about filling up a container; adaptive solutions expand the container.

Collaborators

Collaborators are people with different resources working together as equals to produce a meaningful outcome.

Inquirers

Inquiry presumes an openness to and an investment in the ideas of others. To inquire is to ask, be curious, invite the transmission of thoughts or feelings, confer, consult, wonder, request, examine and investigate ideas. Purposeful inquiry helps us to interpret personal and collective values and the implications of these as we live them out in our organisations (Garmston & Wellman, 2009).

Leaders

Traditional views of leadership are less and less useful given the complexities of our modern world. As both stability and change are needed, the adaptive leader is both a member 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 mobilise people to take on difficult challenges. 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. 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. (Selections from Garmston & Wellman, *The Adaptive School*, 3rd Edition, 2016, used with permission)

“All the good work in schools is just tinkering unless we clarify our identities as collaborators and inquirers.”

– Michael Fullan

“... the knowledge we need to solve problems (in schools) often doesn't reside close at hand; it has to be found through active inquiry and analysis.”

– Richard Elmore

Adaptive Schools and Professional Community

