

**The Adaptive School:
A Sourcebook for Developing Collaborative Groups
(Second Edition), 2009
By Robert Garmston and Bruce Wellman**

**Study Guide by
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About this Guide:

This Study Guide offers a structured journey through the concepts and strategies presented in *The Adaptive School: A Sourcebook for Developing Collaborative Groups (Second Edition)* by Robert J. Garmston and Bruce M. Wellman. Collaborative groups engage in two ways of talking, one of which is dialogue, which has understanding as an outcome. This Guide is intended to support study groups who are interested in extending their understanding and application of Adaptive Schools concepts and strategies, while deepening their dialogue skills.

The Study Guide is divided according to the *Sourcebook* chapters. Each Study Guide section is organized in three phrases: Activating and Engaging, Exploring and Discovering, and Organizing and Integrating. These function as a framework for the design of each Study Group session.

As you work flexibly with this Guide and the needs of the group, choose from the list of strategies in Appendix A of the *Sourcebook*. Page 172 begins a classification system which includes options for “Information Processing: Activating and Engaging,” “Information Processing: Exploring and Discovering,” and “Information Processing: Organizing and Integrating.” While each section of the Study Guide offers “Hints & Tips” of strategies to use, the group may choose from the many options in the *Sourcebook*.

Please be responsive to your group’s unique needs as you use this resource. You may for example consider the activities, questions and prompts as recommendations, modifying them as appropriate. You may decide to use the chapter guides sequentially, beginning in chapter one and continuing throughout the book or you may find certain chapters immediately compelling and want to go to those first. Should you choose the latter, be aware that the study suggestions for some chapters will refer you to earlier chapters,

In any event, consider this your personal resource. If you feel moved to offer comments or recommendations, we would be pleased to hear from you. Write Carolyn McKanders or Michael Dolcemascolo, Co-directors of The Center for Adaptive Schools should you wish to comment.

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Suggested Format for Study Group Sessions:

- Post a charted agenda for each session
- Post a chart of the 7 Norms of Collaboration (or the “Adaptive Schools Banners,” available from www.adaptiveschools.com)
- Begin with an “Inclusion Activity” to bring everyone’s voice into the room (*Sourcebook*, p. 103, “Developing Inclusion”)
- Set personal and group goals around practice of the Norms, for example focusing on one Norm for each session
- Use “Text as Expert,” referencing the *Sourcebook* whenever appropriate
- Assign readings and set next agenda at the conclusion of each session
- Engage in personal/group reflection on use of Norms.



CHAPTER ONE: WHAT IS AN ADAPTIVE SCHOOL?

Essential Questions:

What is an adaptive school?
Why is adaptivity important for us in schools?

Activating and Engaging:

When you hear the term “adaptive” what does it mean for you?

Exploring and Discovering:

Paired Reading, *Sourcebook*, pages 5 through 11

Whole Group Dialogue Prompts—

- What are you learning about the distinctions between the terms adaptive and adapted?
- As you examine the element of dynamical systems, pages 9-10, what are some examples you are experiencing in your work?
- As you review the three focus questions on “How Schools Become Adaptive,” pages 10-11, how might conversations around these questions support your school in becoming and remaining adaptive?

Organizing and Integrating:

- ✓ **What?**
What are we learning about adaptivity and nonlinear dynamical systems?
- ✓ **Why?**
Why is this important to us in the work we are doing?
- ✓ **How?**
How might we put these concepts into practice? Short-term? Over the long term?
What are our hunches about how we might apply the concept of adaptivity to our classrooms, schools and work settings?

Study Group Hints and Tips

Consider using the paired reading strategy of Key Concepts/ Key Ideas (*Sourcebook*, page 237) or First Turn/Last Turn (*Sourcebook*, page 212).

CHAPTER TWO: THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

Essential Questions:

What research supports the importance of professional community?

What are essential elements of professional community that support staff interactions to improve results for all students?

What are some adaptive frameworks, roles and self-renewing toolkits that schools need for collaborative practice?

Activating and Engaging:

How would you describe an effective professional community?

Exploring and Discovering:

A) After reading about the six essential elements of professional community on *Sourcebook* pages 15–18...

- What are some new ways you are thinking about professional community?
- What connections are you making between professional community and productive learning for all students?
- What aspects of this research are most important to you in developing professional community?

B) After reading about organizational and professional capacities on *Sourcebook* pages 19–23...

- What are you discovering about the organizational and professional capacities that support schools in becoming more adaptive?
- How might you explain the importance of these capacities to your colleagues?

C) After reading about the Four Hats of Leadership, *Sourcebook* pages 23–24...

- What are some of the ways these “Hats” support professional community?

D) After reading about the five energy sources, *Sourcebook* pages 24 – 26 ...

- Reflect upon the following quotation from page 25:

Changing the structure of the group or teaching group members skills does not guarantee growth toward increased group performance. Helping group members to pay attention to basic energy sources within the group encourages the development of these resources and permits learned skills to be applied and structures to be reinvented for greater impact.

- How does this quote compare to your views of group development? What new perspectives are you gaining?

Organizing and Integrating:

✓ **What?**

What enhancements have been added to your picture of professional community?

What frameworks, roles and collaborative tools support professional community?

✓ **Why?**

What are some compelling reasons to focus on professional community in your setting right now?

✓ **How?**

How might you begin and grow conversations in your school about professional community?

How might the five energy sources be used as assessments and interventions for group development?

Study Group Hints and Tips:

Consider using Jigsaw (*Sourcebook* page 236) and Three Balloons (*Sourcebook* page 25) as information processing strategies.

CHAPTER THREE: DEVELOPING COLLABORATIVE NORMS

Essential Question:

How do we navigate the tensions between personal autonomy and collaboration?

Activating and Engaging:

When you are interested in learning a new skill or deepening an existing one, what are some of the approaches that work for you?

Exploring and Discovering:

Dialogue Prompts—

- A) After reading about the four group member capabilities on *Sourcebook* pages 27- 29...
- What are some examples that come to mind?
 - Which capability might have the most positive impact in your situation?
- B) After reading about promoting a spirit of inquiry on *Sourcebook* pages 30-31...
- What are some of the key distinctions between a culture of inquiry and a culture of advocacy?
 -
- C) After reading about the seven norms of collaboration on *Sourcebook* pages 31-39...
- What are the strengths and stretches for a key group with which you work?

Organizing and Integrating:

- ✓ **What?**
What are some of the important points we are learning about the collaborative skills of successful groups?
- ✓ **Why?**
Why is this important to the groups in which we participate?
- ✓ **How?**
How might we introduce, begin to practice, and monitor growth of these Norms?
How might we use them in a classroom setting?

Study Group Hints and Tips

Consider using the MIP strategy (*Sourcebook*, page 244), and Modified Jigsaw (*Sourcebook*, page 244). Use the “Norms of Collaboration Inventories” available at www.adaptiveschools.com

CHAPTER FOUR: TWO WAYS OF TALKING THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Essential Questions:

How do two ways of talking, dialogue and discussion, contribute to professional discourse and community that make a significant difference for student learning?

What approaches support groups in developing high levels of skills for engaging in dialogue and discussion?

Activating and Engaging

Recall a recent meeting. What conversation formats and member dispositions supported the group's ways of talking?

Exploring and Discovering

A) After reading *The Path of Dialogue* and *The Path of Discussion* on *Sourcebook* pages 48- 51 and studying the graphic on *Sourcebook* page 46...

- Craft a summary explanation of each way of talking. Then create a new graphic expressing key ideas and relationships.
- Preview an agenda for an upcoming meeting. Dialogue about which agenda items might be labeled “dialogue” or “discussion” and possible rationales.

B) After reading about consensus on *Sourcebook* pages 51- 53...

- How do these ideas compare to your thinking and experiences?
- What are some topics that using “opening” consensus would benefit your group? Which issues might be supported by “focusing” consensus?

Organizing and Integrating

✓ **What?**

In what ways might dialogue and discussion contribute to professional community?

✓ **Why?**

What might be the most important rationale for your group/staff to acquire these two ways of talking?

✓ **How?**

How do *The Seven Norms of Collaboration*, *Sourcebook*, Chapter 3, support the purposes and processes of dialogue and discussion?

Create a plan for introducing *The Two Ways of Talking* to a group/ staff.

Use tips from *Sourcebook* page 53, *Getting Started*.

Study Group Hints and Tips:

Consider using the Delve and Dialogue strategy, *Sourcebook* page 206 and the Four Box Synectics strategy, *Sourcebook*, page 219.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONDUCTING SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

Essential Question:

How might we conduct meetings that are productive, time-efficient, and satisfying?

Activating and Engaging:

As we reflect upon our past experiences of successful meetings, what made them successful, versus those that were not?

Exploring and Discovering:

Dialogue Prompts—

A) After reading about the three meeting organizing principles: collaborative norms, positive relationships and collective energy sources, on *Sourcebook* pages 55- 57...

- How might each principle contribute to successful meetings?

B) After reading about the first meeting success structure on *Sourcebook* pages 57-59...

- Review some of the meetings we currently attend. What is our role in each, to inform, recommend, or decide?

C) After reading about the second meeting success structure on *Sourcebook* pages 59- 62...

- Return to the list of meetings reviewed in (A) above: What are some examples of items that are outside of our sandbox?

D) After reading about the third meeting success structure on *Sourcebook* pages 62-65...

- What are you noticing about our current meeting location? Choose an upcoming meeting and sketch an ideal design for its surroundings.

D) After reading about the fourth meeting success structure on *Sourcebook* pages 65-72...

- What are some examples we have experienced of each the 5 meeting standards?
- How might we distinguish “working agreements” (page 70) from what we understand as “norms of collaboration?”

Organizing and Integrating:

- ✓ **What?**
What are some of the important points we are learning about conducting effective and efficient meetings?

- ✓ **Why?**
Why are these points valuable in our work?

- ✓ **How?**
Using the Meeting Inventory (page 73), how are we doing?

Using the Meeting Inventory, what goals might we set for our next meeting?

Study Group Hints and Tips

Consider using the Meeting Inventory (*Sourcebook*, page 73) to assess and plan meetings. Have the group use the graphics in Figure 5-1 and Figure 5-2 to review chapter content. Use chart paper to create a physical design for the room set and surroundings for an up-coming meeting. Consider the “Recipe” strategy (*Sourcebook*, page 260) as a culminating activity.

CHAPTER SIX: DESIGNING TIME-EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

Essential Questions

What are compelling benefits of investment in effective agenda design?

What meeting design principles, templates and tips significantly economize time, maximize productivity and increase group-member satisfaction?

Activating and Engaging

Use the Swap Meet Strategy, *Sourcebook*, page 282 to surface beliefs and principles about meeting agenda construction.

Exploring and Discovering

Dialogue Prompts-

A) After reading Design Matters, *Sourcebook*, pages 75 -77...

- What connections are you making between groups' collective efficacy and well-planned meetings?
- Use the Jigsaw Carousel strategy, *Sourcebook*, page 235 to construct meaning for The Principles of Design, *Sourcebook*, pages 77-80.

B) After reading about Clear Outcomes, *Sourcebook*, pages 81-82...

- Construct outcomes for an upcoming meeting using the SMART acronym, page 82.

C) After reading the meeting planning tips, *Sourcebook*, pages 83 and studying the Agenda Formats, pages 84-92...

- Using the SMART meeting outcomes you created above, construct an agenda for your upcoming meeting.

D) After reading Posing Problems for Groups to Work On, *Sourcebook*, pages 92-94...

- Decide which of the questions in Table 6-7, pages 93-94, might be most appropriate for your meeting.

Organizing and Integrating

✓ **What?**

What new understandings, skills and refinements are you acquiring to plan effective meetings?

✓ **Why?**

- ✓ Develop a rationale for persuading a group or group leader to invest in meeting design work.

✓ **How?**

Make a plan for introducing the five design principles (pages 77-80) to a group. Commit to clarifying meeting outcomes and using design principles.

What might be some unique ways to use the Meeting Inventory, (*Sourcebook*, Appendix L, page 316) to design and access meetings in your setting?

Study Group Hints and Tips

To display public agendas and information, consider using the tips presented in Arranging the Charts, *Sourcebook*, pages 103-104.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE CONFIDENT AND SKILLED FACILITATOR

Essential Question:

How might we continuously develop craftsmanship, efficacy, and authenticity in our role as facilitators?

Activating and Engaging:

Recall the four leadership functions described in Chapter 2 of the *Sourcebook* pages 23 - 24. What are some of the key distinctions between facilitation and the other “hats”?

Exploring and Discovering:

Select from these Dialogue Prompts—

- A) After reading about the four currents of facilitation management on *Sourcebook* pages 96--59...
- What are specific strategies associated with each?
- B) After reading about The Five C's: The Qualities of a Good Facilitator on *Sourcebook* pages 97- 698...
- Create a rubric, Likert Scale, or growth continuum using the five qualities.
- C) After reading about the facilitation stages on *Sourcebook* pages 99-108...
- Capture essential points by crafting a flow chart or other graphic organizer.
- D) After reading about the Role of the Citizen Facilitator on *Sourcebook* pages 108-110...
- Draft a “Want Ad” that describes the role of a citizen facilitator.
- E) After reading about developing confidence as a facilitator on *Sourcebook* pages 110-111...
- Create a “To Do” and a “To Be” lists of key suggestions to build confidence a facilitator.

Organizing and Integrating:

- ✓ **What?**

Which one of the four currents of facilitation management might have the greatest impact on your current facilitation work? What are some of the strategies you might use to attend to that current?

✓ **Why?**

For you, what are some of the important payoffs for attending to the strategies recommended in this chapter?

✓ **How?**

Use the rubric/scale you created to assess your growth in the Five C's.

Use your facilitation stages flow chart to reflect upon your last facilitation and to plan your next meeting.

Create a job application for the role of citizen facilitator.

Review the "To Do" and "To Be" lists you've created for confidence builders, and journal a goal for yourself, along with indicators of success, and steps for implementation.

Study Group Hints and Tips

Consider rehearsing the nonverbal tools from Appendix A (listed on *Sourcebook* page 100) with data from videotaping and/or a Cognitive Coach.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DEVELOPING GROUPS

Essential Question

What supports the development of successful groups?

Activating and Engaging

What might be some of the characteristics that make for a successful group?

Exploring and Discovering

A) After reading about six domains of group development on *Sourcebook* pages 113 – 116...

- What might be some connections you are making between complex and dynamical systems and the groups with which you are working?
- What links might you make between the effectiveness of the group and the deep to surface structures?

B) After reading about nested levels of learning on *Sourcebook* pages 121 – 126...

- Who are we as a group?
- Where do the things that define us as a group fit within the nested learning communities?
- What are the important shared characteristics of this group and where do the levels of learning live for our group?

Options: Choose and do one of the options under changing beliefs and challenging mental models (page 124).

C) After reading about intervening on *Sourcebook* pages 126 – 129...

- Assess where your group is in the five energy sources.
- As you develop and grow as a group, what might be some indicators of your success?
- How might the 6 domains of group development inform your growth as a group?
- In what ways might we use the “ways to intervene in the process of developing groups” to perform in even more effective ways?

Organizing and Integrating

- ✓ **What?**
Use “Assumptions Wall” to examine the group’s beliefs about the important points learned about the characteristics of effective groups
- ✓ **Why?**
Examine assumptions
Practice structured dialogue
- ✓ **How?**
Use the prompt: “What are the critical aspects of group development to consider when working toward a high level of success?” or one that the group develops

Study Group Hints and Tips

Directions for the Assumptions Wall strategy can be found on *Sourcebook* page 189. Have writing materials, sentence strips and tape available. Prepare a clear area of wall space that will accommodate the sentence strips of the study group. Use only enough chairs for the number of group members, and place them in a semi-circle so that all can clearly see all the sentence strips on the wall.

CHAPTER NINE: USING CONFLICT AS A RESOURCE

Essential Questions:

How might conflict be a resource for personal and group development?

How might we utilize energy to manage conflict?

Activating and Engaging

Take a moment to review and explore the Seven Norms of Collaboration with your group. Which norms are most valuable in constructively addressing conflict?

Exploring and Discovering

Dialogue Prompts –

- A) Referring back to Table 5-3 on affective and cognitive conflict in Chapter 5 on *Sourcebook* pages 69...
 - Considering groups you currently work with, what are some things you do to increase cognitive conflict and decrease affective conflict?
- B) After reading about the sources of conflict on *Sourcebook* pages 134 – 136...
 - In your own setting, which seem to be the primary sources of conflict?
- C) Regarding the work on social psychology on *Sourcebook* pages 136 – 138...
 - Which of these ideas might be most productive to introduce to your group?
- D) After reading the introduction on the 10 Energy Traps, *Sourcebook* pages 138 – 139, scan the list of common traps, page 139. Select two or three most relevant to your setting for exploration. Read about the selected traps, *Sourcebook* pages 139 - 148. Dialogue about what might be some resources to free the energy traps. Consider resources suggested in the text and others, such as knowledge, skills, behaviors, and structures. Set individual and group goals.

Organizing and Integrating

- ✓ **What?**
What are you learning about conflict as a resource for group development?
- ✓ **Why?**
Why is conflict essential for developing and sustaining professional community?

✓ **How?**

Review the energy trap *The Myth That Problems Require Solutions*, *Sourcebook*, page 146. Identify a dilemma and use Polarity Mapping, Appendix A, *Sourcebook* pages 256 – 257, to explore the issue from multiple perspectives.

Study Group Hints and Tips

Consider using the *Existing State-Desired State Map*, *Sourcebook*, Appendix A, page 210 -211, to support dialogue and goal setting about the Energy Traps.

Encourage use of the Norms of Pausing, Paraphrasing, Probing and Inquiring.

Note: Polarity Mapping requires attentive, neutral facilitation and recording. For more information, read Appendix M, *Sourcebook* pages, 317 – 322.

CHAPTER TEN: CAPACITIES FOR SCHOOL CHANGE

Essential Question:

How might the twin goals of developing organizational and professional capacities work in tandem within a system?

Activating and Engaging:

What capacities need to be present in a system for a system to be adaptive?
What capacities need to be present within an individual for an individual to be adaptive?

Exploring and Discovering:

A) Using Figure 10.1 on p. 153 and 10.2 on p. 157, write a sentence explaining the meaning you are gleaning from each of these figures. Or... write a question to stimulate dialogue around these two figures.

B) After reading about the six organizational capacities, *Sourcebook*, pages 152 – 156, how might you rate your organization (department, school, system, etc.) with respect to each capacity? Dialogue about your assessments.

C) If you could address only one of the six organizational capacities, which might give your organization (department, school, system) the greatest leverage related to student achievement?

D) Read about the six professional capacities, *Sourcebook* pages 156 – 161. Create behavioral examples of what each capacity might sound or look like in your setting. What might you see and hear as indicators of each capacity?

E) After exploring both organizational and professional capacities, complete the following similes:

Organizational capacities are like _____ because _____.

Professional capacities are like _____ because _____.

Organizing and Integrating:

✓ **What?**

To what might we consistently pay attention to make a difference in student learning?

- ✓ **Why?**
Why is it important for systems to pay attention both to organizational and professional capacities?

- ✓ **How?**
How might we lead within our system to keep the focus on organizational and professional capacities?
What are some ways to introduce these capacities to our community?
Create ways to assess these capacities in your setting. Dialogue about the meaning of the data.

Study Group Hints and Tips

Consider using the strategies, *Jigsaw Carousel*, and *Read and Example*, *Sourcebook*, Appendix A, page 235 and 260, for collaboratively constructing meaning and exploring the concepts in this chapter.

Facilitate dialogue and discussion for making decisions about improving student learning.

Consider using the *Focusing Four* strategy, *Sourcebook*, Appendix A, pages 215 – 216, to support decisions about which capacities might receive priority status in your setting.

Note: The *Focusing Four* strategy, facilitated by Bob Garmston, is available on DVD. Visit www.adaptiveschools.com to order.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: COMMUNITY DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN

Essential Question:

What are the essential ingredients and values that ensure that community, once established, is sustained?

Activating and Engaging:

As you think about groups that are true communities, what are some of the indicators/criteria that you notice?

Exploring and Discovering:

Dialogue Prompts –

- Think about how each of the following groups would complete the stem, “Community is important in our system because . . .”
 - Parents
 - Community members
 - Teachers
 - Administrators
 - Students
- After reading about the Principles of Community on pages 164-168, engage in a dialogue about the degree to which each principle lives in your system. Examine the indicators that the principle is present and what might need to happen if the principle is not present.
- Create a Likert scale using the Principles of Community and apply it to a group with which you work
- What might be some mental models that get in the way of community in our system or a system with which we are working?
- What might be some mental models that support community in our system or a system with which we are working?
- What connections might you be making between “Widening Our View” (pages 168-169) and your community?

Organizing and Integrating:

What?

Identify some of the “music” being played and “dances” being performed in your district. How do they blend to create and sustain community? What might be the song of our community? Consider how you as an individual honor the beat, add your voice, and dance in your system.

Why?

Organize and Integrate concepts and ideas from all the chapters of the *Adaptive Schools Sourcebook*.

How?

Use the “Song Writing” strategy, *Sourcebook page 273*.

Study Group Hints and Tips

An alternative strategy to consider is the “Sound and Motion Symphony,” *Sourcebook page 275*.

Consider having the Adaptive Schools concepts and strategies further come alive for the study group by attending an Adaptive Schools seminar or Leadership Seminar. Visit www.adaptiveschools.com for information.