

H. CONFLICT IN TEAMS

Conflict in teams is natural; it's neither positive nor negative. It just is. Conflict can improve team effectiveness. The key is to maintain *cognitive* conflict, rather than *affective* conflict.

COGNITIVE CONFLICT	AFFECTIVE CONFLICT
<p>Disagreements about fundamental differences of opinion can enhance team effectiveness by eliciting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved decisions• Raised commitment levels• Stronger cohesiveness• Enhanced empathy• Deeper understanding	<p>Disagreements over individualized personally oriented matters diminish team effectiveness and lead to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Destructive conflict• Less effective decisions• Diminished commitment• Reduced cohesiveness• Limited empathy

Source: Adapted from Garmston and Wellman (1999).

Teams that use cognitive conflict without producing affective conflict develop capabilities that other teams do not have. PLCs that encourage cognitive conflict are:

- **More focused.** They are less likely to allow distractions to interrupt their momentum.
- **More creative.** These teams encourage expanded thinking and listen to voices that may have been marginalized in the past. They are inclusive of different perspectives and apply new approaches to problems of practice.
- **More expressive.** They maintain open communication and challenge each other's assumptions. They seek out opinions and democratize each person's contributions.
- **More inclusive.** They have a culture that encourages equity—your voice without the threat of anger, animosity, or punishment.

Note times when cognitive conflict promotes team learning. When is a team learning challenged?

CURRENT APPROACHES TO TEAM LEARNING

IDEAS TO STRENGTHEN