

**Build a culture  
that nurtures  
productive  
conflict**



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# Download the article and accompanying tools

This presentation is a supplement to the full article. Download more information, resources, and tools to help you implement these ideas in *Tools for Learning Schools* (Winter, 2014).



Available at [www.learningforward.org/publications/tools-for-learning-schools](http://www.learningforward.org/publications/tools-for-learning-schools).



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“If you have learned how to disagree without being disagreeable, then you have discovered the secret of getting along – whether it be business, family relations, or life itself.”

— Bernard Meltzer



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# Shared purpose

“Everything we do emanates from our ‘why,’ our deeper purpose for existence. If there is a belief that the kids will do better if the team works together, productive conflict has a healthy place to grow and breathe and thrive. ... It compels us to engage in the productive conflict we need.”

-Kenneth Williams

Source: **Armstrong, A. (2014, Winter)**. Build a culture that nurtures productive conflict. *Tools for Learning Schools*. 17(2). (pp. 1-3).



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# Norms

Norms guide the work towards a common goal and move confrontations away from the personal and toward alignment with a school or system's larger purpose and goals.

Source: **Armstrong, A. (2014, Winter)**. Build a culture that nurtures productive conflict. *Tools for Learning Schools*. 17(2). (pp. 1-3).



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# Accountability protocols

What happens when someone violates a norm?

Use accountability protocols to

- Depersonalize accountability;
- Create consistency;
- Establish predictability; and
- Hold each other accountable in a respectful and dignified manner.

Source: **Armstrong, A. (2014, Winter)**. Build a culture that nurtures productive conflict. *Tools for Learning Schools*. 17(2). (pp. 1-3).



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# Clear communication

Strong communication creates cultures that facilitate productive conflicts.

Include teacher and principal voice.

Source: **Armstrong, A. (2014, Winter)**. Build a culture that nurtures productive conflict. *Tools for Learning Schools*. 17(2). (pp. 1-3).



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# Positive attitude

Leadership outlook and perspective is important — a negative attitude will trickle down.

## Positive conflict

- Spurs innovation;
- Brings disparate ideas together; and
- Helps mitigate risk.

Source: **Armstrong, A. (2014, Winter)**. Build a culture that nurtures productive conflict. *Tools for Learning Schools*. 17(2). (pp. 1-3).



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# Valued contributions

Be open to perspectives that may bring alternative ideas, even if they do not come from someone traditionally thought of as an “expert.”

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