

The Value of Perspective Taking

Former Stanford EdLEADers participant [Eesir Kaur](#), Director of Schools and Director of Humanities at Rocketship Public Schools, discovered the value of *perspective taking* to improve collaboration among teams at her organization. Read her story and check out the perspective-taking exercise below!

Eesir's Story



“At Rocketship Public Schools, we use a net promoter score to help teams gauge their effectiveness around three different metrics: quality, reliability and collaboration. A while back, one of the teams that I lead had a rather low score. In fact, it was actually the lowest score around collaboration and I was really perplexed by this.

It was actually really fortuitous that I was taking the *Leading Effective Teams* course with Professor Brian Lowery at the time. One of the concepts that I was really struck by was this idea of perspective taking and perspective getting. So, that's exactly what I had my team do over the span of about a month. We connected with other cross-functional teams to better understand their experiences with us, what worked well around collaboration, and what we perceived to be desired from their experiences with us.

As a result of these conversations, which were really enlightening, we sat down to devise a series of next steps to ensure better collaboration with all teams. I'm really happy to report that this team realized one of the highest gains on the subsequent net promoter score, especially with respect to collaboration. And, I really do attribute that to the *Leading Effective Teams* coursework that I engaged in.”



Brian Lowery

Perspective-Taking Exercise

In the Stanford EdLEADers *Leading Effective Teams* course, Professor Lowery asks participants to analyze a current conflict situation by responding to the following questions.

- Think about a current disagreement/conflict on your team. What is it about?
- What do you want? Why?
- What do you think the other side wants? Create a list of at least 3–5 reasons why that might be important to them. Be creative about what the other side's motivation might be. Maybe something else in their life is creating stress or getting in the way? What else might be going on for them? Explore the range of possibilities of what might be driving the other person's experience.
- Considering the list you have generated, what new solutions/strategies can you offer that might work for both sides?
- What could be the positive outcomes for your team and organization if you address this conflict?

This practice of engaging with others results in a greater understanding on how they perceive working with your team. As a result, perspective taking can be a powerful tool to manage conflict more effectively.

Of note: Professor [Brian Lowery](#) currently has a [webcast series](#) on reimagining work after COVID, including an episode on [Education in a Capitalist Democracy](#).