



Collaboration

At a Glance

What is Collaboration?

Collaboration is one of the more elusive competencies because *true* collaboration, in which **a group generates ideas and products greater than an individual could alone**, is ambitious! It is difficult and time-consuming, but the fruits of co-labor are powerful.

Collaboration rarely (if ever!) occurs naturally. To attain this goal, it is essential to be deliberate in developing the moves of effective collaboration: practicing positive interdependence, giving feedback, and resolving conflicts. Strong collaborators nimbly navigate between strong leadership and followership, raising the ceiling of a team.

In the age of AI, which aspect of Collaboration should be emphasized?

For each competency, a modern emphasis is determined based on the relative importance of the competencies in an AI landscape, as well as the potential for the competency (and its subcompetencies) to be automated in an age of AI. AI can augment human collaboration in many ways, but it is still key to recognize its limitations and ethical considerations, including issues related to privacy, bias, and accountability. Effective collaboration still relies on human judgment, empathy, and interpersonal skills to cultivate trust, communication, and teamwork.

In the age of AI, education should **emphasize leadership**. Leadership cultivates the necessary skills to navigate, shape, and inform rapidly evolving social, environmental, and technological landscapes. Effective leadership fosters innovation, guides ethical decision-making, and prepares individuals to address complex challenges and opportunities presented by artificial intelligence and future technologies with others.

What other words and concepts are associated with Collaboration?

Cooperation, Teamwork, Group Cohesion and Chemistry, Goal- and Results-Orientation, Conflict Resolution, Relationship Skills, Social Intelligence, Negotiation, Delegation



How can I best teach Collaboration?



Tips to follow...	Pitfalls to stay aware of...
<p>Build collaborative activities so the success of the individual will relate to the success of the group. This might feature learners interdependently sharing goals, roles, resources, or rewards.</p>	<p>Do not expect learners to naturally know how to collaborate. They will need to be directly and explicitly taught how to collaborate effectively, even if group work is commonplace.</p>
<p>Not all conflict is bad or should be avoided! Task conflict is helpful, as it helps determine optimal approaches. On the other hand, relationship conflict (disagreements based on personality differences and interpersonal problems) is detrimental to collaboration.</p>	<p>“Just” assigning group work does not mean collaboration will occur. To create better conditions for collaboration, design tasks that are challenging or expansive enough to be worthy of working together, rather than just divide-and-conquer strategies.</p>
<p>Research illustrates pros and cons to different group formations and compositions, but it is all context-specific. One should ultimately make the decision that makes the most sense for learners in each unique setting.</p>	<p>The teacher’s role in the classroom will likely shift with collaboration, moving from the center of the classroom to its periphery. However, assigning collaborative work does not lessen the overall workload, so much as it changes the kind of work being done.</p>

To foster Collaboration, use language such as:

- **“We” and “ours” instead of “you” and “yours”** to invite students to participate and feel like they are part of a team.
- **“I am going to share some feedback.”** Labeling feedback, especially if it is positive or constructive, primes learners to receive it most constructively.
- **“Let’s hear from everyone before we make a decision”** to help learners consider different perspectives, especially those who are different from theirs.

And when focusing on Collaboration, avoid the following approaches:

- **“Everyone has to get along.”** Instead, remind learners that conflict is natural and can battle-test ideas. We may also disagree with ideas we should work to improve.
- **“This was really good” or “really bad,”** rather than demonstrating specific feedback. For example, “your imagery made me feel in the middle of the action!”
- **“I’m the teacher, and what I say goes.”** Though teachers must preserve classroom wellbeing first, seek ways to serve as a role model for open-minded leadership!



Subcompetencies

To create more targeted learning experiences for collaboration, teachers can use the following subcompetencies as specific learning objectives and areas. Classroom exercises and activities then can infuse subcompetencies into student learning to create deliberate, explicit, comprehensive, systematic, and demonstrable areas for growth. All subcompetencies in the CCR Framework are identified by a brief code for shorthand (i.e., COL1).

Subcompetency	Description
COL1: Taking and sharing responsibility with others	There is a delicate and dynamic balance to be struck between taking initiative in a group and expanding one's awareness to the functioning of the group as a whole, taking on responsibilities as needed. This includes working flexibly with others and allowing others to take responsibility for aspects of the work.
COL2: Optimizing team resources and unique skills and perspectives of individuals	Good collaboration requires seeing how people's perspectives, strengths, and weaknesses fit together. Strong collaborators check each other's biases, demonstrate different distinct critical and creative strengths, and benefit from task sharing in which each person's contributions are aligned with their unique skill set.
COL3: Navigating and resolving interpersonal conflict	Conflict can help teams get on the same page and perform collective cost-benefit analyses for group decisions —it isn't inherently bad! Teams reach their potential by working through conflicts healthily and constructively, rather than avoiding them.
COL4: Giving and receiving constructive feedback	To produce optimal work, individuals benefit from sharing and grappling with other perspectives. Both formulating precise feedback and receiving it gracefully require deliberate training and practice.
COL5: Actively supporting and showing compassion for team members	To foster honest communication about team processes, it is necessary to view collaborators as nuanced individuals. Deliberate steps and protocols can ensure all team members feel supported and can contribute their best work.

Growth Rubrics

The growth rubrics on the following page are a synthesis of the global research body on critical thinking and are designed to provide an opportunity for formative reflection on a competency based on performance in a specific context. They are not meant to be holistic or measure the worth of an individual in a high-stakes way, but rather to enable dialogues between educators and learners, creating space for feedback and opportunities for future improvement. **The rubrics are not age-specific, and progress through the levels will be slow and vary greatly depending on the context of the task.**



COL1: Taking and sharing responsibility with others

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
I struggle to be flexible in group projects and tend to try to do things my way.	I can follow clear instructions to do my work but find it difficult to contribute in other ways.	I effectively share responsibilities within a group to lead to a fair division of labor.	I am comfortable stepping up or stepping back to help meet team and individual goals and needs.

COL2: Optimizing team resources and unique skills and perspectives of individuals

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
I seek independent tasks during groupwork and struggle to recognize the value of working with others.	I let others contribute based on their preferences, recognizing that everyone has something to offer.	I call others in to bring their unique skills and perspectives to groupwork.	I facilitate all team members leveraging their unique perspectives, so we can co-design workflows that play to our strengths.

COL3: Navigating and resolving interpersonal conflict

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
I encourage groups to take paths of consensus and ease, preferring to work with friends.	Though conflict is inevitable in groups I try not to manage it, often placing the blame on others.	I create space for and engage in constructive discussion but try to avoid interpersonal conflicts.	I accept discomfort to face conflict and resolve problems, focusing on improving the team process.

COL4: Giving and receiving constructive feedback

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
I don't tend to see much value in feedback and don't engage heavily in giving it nor receiving it.	I am open to clear and well-phrased feedback. When I give feedback, I try to focus on specific things rather than the big picture.	I seek out feedback to improve my products and base my feedback on evidence and reasoning.	I support my group members by co-creating with them via clear feedback and believing in what we can accomplish.

COL5: Actively supporting and showing compassion for team members

Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV
I focus on myself and assume the worst of others, which limits my ability to help them.	I help others when asked but have a hard time following group norms or meeting our deadlines.	I prepare for collaboration sessions and offer to help others if I notice they are struggling.	I offer help to others if I anticipate a need and give them the benefit of the doubt.