

# Collaborative Learning (CL)

## 1 What is Collaborative Learning (CL)?

“Collaborative Learning (CL) is two or more students laboring together and sharing the workload equitably as they progress towards intended learning outcomes.” (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2014)

## 2 What are the Benefits of CL?

- **Creates Active-Learning Spaces:** Fosters dynamic environments where students can question, learn, and engage deeply.
- **Enhances Problem-Solving Skills:** Collaborative tasks foster critical thinking as students discuss, analyze, and solve problems together.
- **Boosts Communication and Social Skills:** Develops both verbal and non-verbal communication skills, enhancing active listening, empathy, and respect.
- **Promotes Diversity and Inclusion:** Unites students from varied backgrounds, fostering open-mindedness and acceptance through exposure to diverse perspectives.
- **Inspires Creativity:** Encourages innovative solutions by combining various viewpoints, which enhances creativity in problem-solving.
- **Builds Trust:** Requires reliance on team members, building trust and strengthening classroom bonds, beneficial for future professional interactions.
- **Develops Critical-Thinking Skills:** Enhances students' ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize ideas during collaborative tasks, crucial for conflict resolution and strategic thinking.
- **Fosters Relationships:** Strengthens both new and existing friendships and enhances student-teacher relationships through shared learning experiences.
- **Increases Academic Achievement:** Engaged students often demonstrate higher achievement levels, preparing them for real-world social and employment situations.
- **Prepares for Real-Life Situations:** Equips students to tackle real-world social and employment challenges by engaging with actual issues.

## 3 What are CL Challenges?

- Some students may dislike collaborative tasks due to negative past experiences.
- Without careful planning, a few students may end up carrying the majority of the workload.
- Students might view group work as unimportant or "busy work" unless the purpose and benefits of the tasks/activities are clearly communicated.

## 4 What are CL Key Design Elements ?

1. **Intentional Design:** Carefully plan activities to ensure meaningful interactions and equal participation.
2. **Active Collaboration:** Encourage dynamic engagement, idea-sharing, and joint problem-solving.
3. **Assessment and Feedback:** Continuously monitor progress and provide feedback to refine learning processes and achieve outcomes.

## 5 What are Some Types of CL?

- **Formal:** Students are assembled into groups, and are required to collaborate over an extended period, often weeks or months to work on projects. The goal of a formal group is to achieve a specific task such as a group project or paper.
- **Informal:** Groups are quickly formed during class or lab sessions to aid students in processing taught material, addressing questions, and summarizing key points. This approach reduces dependence on lectures, promoting active engagement and retention of content.
- **Base:** Long-term, heterogeneous cooperative learning groups with stable membership in which students provide one another with support, encouragement, and assistance to make academic progress and work towards shared goals.



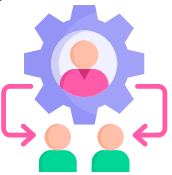
### Set Group Values and Norms

- Establish clear agreements from the start for accountability and inclusion.
- Display norms and rules prominently for easy reference.



### Design Interdependent Tasks

- Create activities where each member's role is vital, promoting reliance and active participation.



### Structure and Provide Feedback

- Divide tasks into distinct phases with deadlines and provide continuous feedback to guide group dynamics.



### Highlight the Importance of Teamwork Skills

- Integrate teamwork as a key course objective and structure activities to demonstrate its benefits.



### Cultivate Listening Skills

- Teach students to listen actively and use pauses after questions to foster thoughtful responses.
- Implement "Three, Then Me" to encourage balanced participation.



### Enhance Negotiation Skills

- Develop skills for effective group negotiation, emphasizing patience, flexibility, and collective decision-making.



### Observe and Guide

- Monitor group interactions and intervene with targeted questions or support to maintain focus and engagement.



### Reflect on Collaborative Contribution

- Allocate time for students to discuss and reflect on their collaborative efforts to enhance learning and interpersonal growth.