

Why is Collaboration Important for Students?

Collaboration has become a buzzword in many facets of academia, employment, and life. Collaborative education can be applied in any situation where teams work together to solve problems. Consider creative group assignments, self-led extracurricular projects, jobs, or volunteer organizations: these all involve communal, collaborative components.

Our hope is that, after reading through this webpage, you are prepared to engage in collaborative projects and understand the benefits of collaboration.

Overall, the main reason why collaboration is important is that **your work will be of a higher caliber than when you're not collaborating.** Here's why:

- **Diversity leads to more efficient work.**

When you work in a diverse group, each individual brings a unique skill set to the group. The diverse skills will be very useful in problem solving. It is more likely that a team member will possess the skill required to complete any given task, reducing the need for someone to learn how to do it first.

As a student, if it is within your control, try to work in groups that are academically and socially diverse. You will benefit from each other's different skill sets and be able to complete delegated tasks quicker.

- **Collaborative work is less biased.**

A diversity of backgrounds and upbringings helps to limit the effects of an individual's biases. With multiple different members examining your work, it is easier to point out accidental assumptions that you've made.

- **Problems get harder, so we need to help each other.**

Very few of today's complex challenges can be solved by an individual. Many groundbreaking pieces of work are the result of effective teams coming together to generate novel solutions to problems.

- **Collaborative work is more innovative.**

Collaborative projects may focus on an area that an individual may not have ideated on their own. When you have more brains working on a single project, there will be more ideas, and a higher chance of an innovative idea emerging. Taking ideas from multiple people leads to a product that is greater than the sum of its parts.

- **Collaborative work is stronger.**

Simply interacting with those different from ourselves encourages better preparation which will result in a stronger final product.

Working with others helps you learn to anticipate alternative perspectives and expect that you will have to disagree constructively to make progress. Your final result will be informed by anticipated counterarguments.

Another reason why collaboration is important is that **collaboration is the number-one-most-desirable skill sought after by employers.**

- **Collaboration is in demand.**

The ability to work in a team is listed as the number-one skill that employers are looking for! Practicing collaboration as a student makes you a more desirable employee.

Being a strong collaborator helps you integrate into a team quickly and effectively. Collaborative soft skills, such as effective communication, conflict management, and active listening are skills that will be useful for the rest of your life!

- **Group work is evidence of your abilities.**

Collaborative projects will be excellent verification of your skills and awesome interview talking points.

Having examples of your teamwork skills will go a long way to convincing a potential employer that you will work effectively in their team.

A third reason why collaboration is important is that **collaboration allows you to step outside of your comfort zone and become a better person.**

- **See life from another's perspective to understand them better.**

Appreciating another's perspective (particularly one significantly different than your own) helps to build empathy. You will relate to their decision-making process and you can better recognize their contributions as valuable.

- **There's always more to learn.**

New experiences, skill-sets, perspectives, and modes of thinking await you if you are willing to collaborate.

Combining the best individuals doesn't make the best team; there are always new things to learn, especially while part of a diverse team. The strengths of some members will overlap with the weaknesses of others. So, you can always teach others about your strengths while learning new skills to compensate for your weaknesses.

Making a genuine commitment to your group work is the best way to get more engaged, learn more, and approach the workforce with strong evidence of your abilities. If you want to get

more out of your collaborative learning experiences, make the effort to engage with them for an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

This list is well informed by our research and experience, but it is in no way exhaustive. Honestly, the best way to learn about collaboration and why it is important is from experience! Hopefully, this handout has given you enough motivation to be excited about collaborating with your peers.

Now that you've read about why collaboration is important, you might be interested in **learning some tips** about how to collaborate more effectively. **Find them [here](#).**

If you would like to **hear from students** who have collaborative experiences, **listen to our [podcast](#).**

Want to read more about **why you should collaborate?** Here are the **resources** we used:

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Phillips, Katherine W. "How Diversity Makes Us Smarter." *Scientific American*, 1 Oct. 2014,

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Tetlock, Philip, and Dan Gardner. *Superforecasting*. 1st ed., Random House Books, 2016.