



Collaboration

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Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning

Summer Series

Learning Skills



critical thinking



creativity



collaboration



communication

critical thinking • creativity • collaboration • communication



June: Learning Skills



6/7 – Critical Thinking

6/14 – Creativity

6/21 – Collaboration

6/28 – Communication

”

“The generic attribute of collaboration is now understood as an essential part of university education” (Ellis & Han, 2021).



Collaboration as HIP

“The Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) has identified the use of collaborative assignments and projects as a high-impact educational practice because these activities combine 'learning to **work and solve problems in the company of others**, and **sharpening one's own understanding** by **listening** seriously to the insights of others, especially those **with different backgrounds and life experiences**' (Kuh, 2008, p. 9).”



Collaboration includes:

- Collaborating with others
- Demonstrating ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams
- Exercising flexibility and willingness to be helpful in making necessary compromises to accomplish a common goal
- Assuming shared responsibility for collaborative work, and valuing the individual contributions made by each team member



Collaboration can mean:

- working constructively with others (Knight and Yorke 2004)
- group participants sharing unique ideas and experiences (Hathorn and Ingram 2002);
- 'working in a group of two or more to achieve a common goal, while respecting each individual's contribution to the whole' (Roberts 2004, 205).
- Collaboration and cooperation are distinct; the latter involves assigning tasks (see also Robertson & Riggs, 2018, p. 73-4).

Ellis & Han, 2021

...

**These
skills may
not come
naturally.**

- "Students have come out of a system where knowing meant repeating something an authority told them."
 - Felten & Lambert, 2020, p. 92

...

**These
skills may
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naturally.**



Jessamyn Neuhaus
@GeekyPedagogy



One reason we in [#HigherEd](#) have to help students understand why peer connections are important for academic success: previous school experiences often don't frame those relationships as part of learning.



Jay Wamsted @JayWamsted · Jun 8

We don't build any time into our school days for the kids to just visit with each other & then we wonder why they get off task so easily with their friends.

Don't say "they're there to learn not socialize." There's more to school than just downloading information.

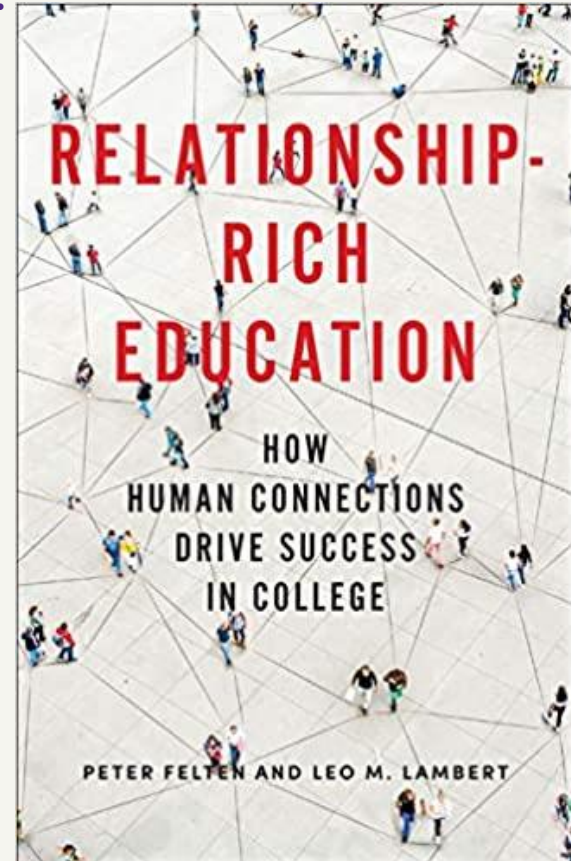
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"Our data raise the possibility that perhaps instead of students being lazy or unmotivated, students face barriers such as ...

- Anxiety about group work
- Low perceived value of peer discussion for their learning
- Contending with other students in the group who are dominating."

STEM research by Eddy et al,
2015, qtd in Felten & Lambert,
2020



Hilliard, et al, 2020, p. 7

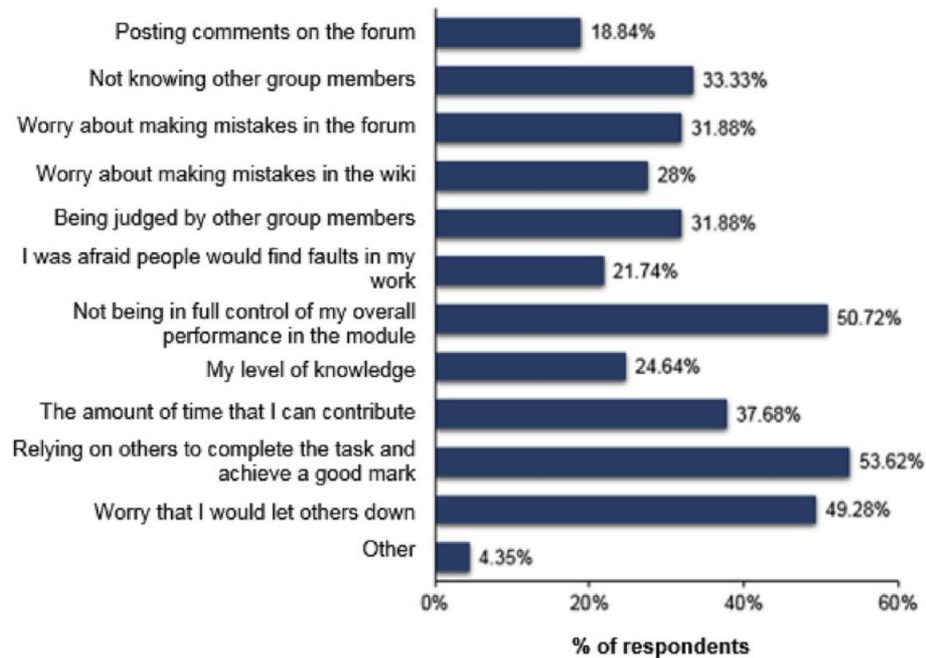
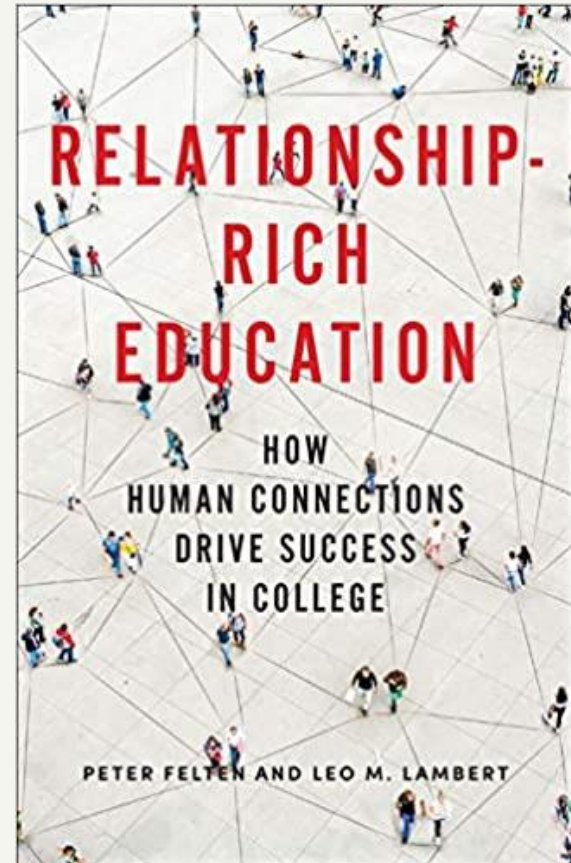


Fig. 4. Perceived reasons for anxiety before or during the online collaborative project.

"Purposeful peer classroom interactions not only enhance learning and belonging, but they also contribute to student confidence and self-efficacy" (94).



”



- **How do we design for collaboration?**

Collaboration as a continuum



Individual Conference

Build relationship and confidence in 10-15 minute conference early in semester. In office or virtual office.



Think-Pair-Share & Breakouts

Students practice sharing with one other person or small group during a class session. In class or virtual class.



Shorter-term projects

Unit or module project producing a product (group narrated ppt presentation, group essay). In and out of class; synchronous and asynchronous.



Longer-term group projects

Semester-long process producing a product (community intervention plan, prototype).

Individual Conference

- Students "report being 'intimidated' and 'kind of scared' by the requirement to meet individually with faculty members."
- However, "having to have that meeting creates a relationship that you can build on later in the semester if you ever need to talk to them about a problem. **And it makes it easier to speak up in class as well.**"
- Faculty report it takes up time but "enhances student motivation because students know [they]cares about their learning"

Felten & Lambert, 2020, 86-87

Think-Pair-Share & Breakouts

- Include a "collaboration" or "group work" statement in your syllabus detailing:
 - What collaboration might look like
 - The importance of collaboration to student success
- Establish group work norms & expectations as a class
 - "Norms that engender a supportive learning environment include acting and interacting responsibly, treating others with respect and concern, and fostering a learning orientation" (Everson & Poole & the IRIS Center, 2003, p. 2).
- Think-Pair-Share is a gentle start
- Establish & begin working in groups early in the semester

Shorter-term Projects

- Unit or module project producing a product (group narrated ppt presentation, group essay, group model or prototype).
- In and out of class; synchronous and asynchronous.
- When designing shorter & longer-term projects, look for ways to facilitate "collaborative learning" and not just "cooperative learning"

Longer-term Projects

- Similar to preparing for shorter-term projects, except:
 - Provide/encourage a teamwork contract – I have two examples I can share
 - Group Work Evaluation Form: "Everyone loves each other, then differences start to appear, then the surveys start getting honest"
 - Provide prompts for reflection: what did you learn about being on a team?

Hilliard, et al., 2020, p. 10

- More guidance and support could have been provided in the following areas:
 - advice on best practices for online group work (i.e. from tutors or past students)
 - information on using additional communication tools
 - help with encouraging engagement and participation of group members
 - changes in the assessment marking [grading], predominantly the group mark [grade] element
 - One survey respondent wrote: 'I think the [university] could have pushed at the start to get everyone involved rather than just leaving it to the group'.
 - The marking [grading] criteria were not clear and further clarification of these would have helped reduce anxiety.

TABLE 5.1

Scaffolding Examples for Collaborative Learning to Assist With Team Learning Beliefs, Values, and Skills

<i>Collaborative Project Scaffolding</i>	<i>How It Works</i>	<i>Intended Collaboration Effects</i>
Two Truths and a Lie Activity	In small-group discussion, each member shares three personal “facts,” two of which are true and one of which is a lie. Group members post their guesses about which facts are actually lies. After a fixed interval, members self-disclose which fact was a lie.	Builds social connections, demonstrates accountability, models the use of interim milestones in longer projects, and begins to establish psychological safety
Valuing Constructive Conflict	Teams share examples of conflicts in past experiences with group work, perhaps from childhood, professional, or college experiences. Teams discuss when conflicts have yielded positive outcomes and then compare and contrast constructive and destructive conflict.	Builds group potency, establishes boundaries for acceptable communication, creates group value of diversity, identifies benefits of constructive conflict, and creates a shared and nuanced vocabulary about conflict
Reflecting on Strengths and Challenges of Group Work	Before the project begins, group members brainstorm a collaborative document expressing strengths and challenges of group work, noting specific strengths and challenges for online, asynchronous group work. Teams generate a list of strengths and concerns and then collectively prioritize them based on degree of severity.	Builds task cohesion, increases psychological safety, establishes the value of proactively avoiding problems, builds awareness of role responsibility, and establishes group values about which behaviors are most undesirable for the team
Preventing and Addressing Team Problems	Building on the prioritized list of concerns, teams discuss strategies for preventing problems and dealing with them if they do arise. Teams produce a strategy document that helps teams agree on a plan for preventing concerning situations and responding to concerns as they arise.	Reduces apprehension, builds team and task cohesion, increases psychological safety, creates a shared understanding of team dynamics, and builds team interdependence
Advice for Future Groups	At the conclusion of the group project, teams can create a letter or video message for students in future terms providing advice for approaching collaborative work productively. These artifacts can be used in future terms to orient students to collaborative work.	Provides authentic student-to-student feedback on collaborative work, introduces nuances specific to the context of the class itself, and normalizes collaborative work as a valuable educational practice



Evaluating Collaborative Projects

With a subtitle

Evaluation considerations

- For longer term projects, include multiple submission & grading checkpoints.
- Solo grade only?
- Group grade only?
- Some combination of the two?
- Include a reflection piece



Thank you!

What ideas and questions do you have?



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