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# Learning to Do: Collaborative Learning - EAP meets ESD

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# UNESCO's key competencies for sustainability: Collaborative competency (Advance HE, 2021)

How key competencies align with ways of thinking, ways of practicing and ways of being as part of a transformative journey. Learning outcomes are presented aligned with the following key competencies for sustainable development:

- systems thinking
- anticipatory thinking
- normative competency
- strategic thinking
- collaborative competency
- critical thinking
- self-awareness
- integrated problem-solving competency

# What is collaborative competency?

Break out rooms - 5 minutes

Use this [Padlet](#)



# What kind of learning for the 21st Century?



- Identified as a key competency or 'survival skill' to be prepared for 21st Century life, work and citizenship
- Not 'new' but 'newly important'
- Importance of productive participation / active participation in society in 21st Century
- Highly regarded in adult world - workplace and public life
- Empathy and social skills carry significant value
- Communication skills are embedded: clear and effective communication and collaboration skills can help avoid misunderstandings and miscommunications
- Collaborating at a distance
- Collaborating across platforms, disciplines, cultures and boundaries - develop strategies to deal with people who have different perspectives and priorities
- Engaging in highly networked collaborations
- Importance of normalizing collaborative learning in learning environments, e.g. authentic tasks and assignments

(Scott, 2015)

# What is collaborative competency?



- Learn from others (including peers, and others inside and outside of their institution)
- Communicate effectively with colleagues, clients, stakeholders
- Understand and respect the needs, perspectives and actions of others (empathy)
- Understand, relate to and be sensitive to others (empathic leadership)
- Deal with conflicts in a group
- Facilitate collaborative and participatory problem solving

(Advance HE, 2021 - emphasised by UNESCO, 2017)





# Example

**Foundation module:** Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

**Assessment:** Group project (50% of module mark)

Students prepare an academic poster on a local and global problem they have selected utilising primary and secondary research as well as exploring design principles. Groups then take part in an informal module conference and talk about their posters.

**Learning outcome:** Work in teams in a variety of roles, forming, leading, building, problem solving and consolidating. Understand and respect the needs, perspectives and actions of others and if necessary be able to deal with conflictual situations.

# Collaborative competency: Possible learning outcomes

## Knowledge

A student with collaborative competency can:

- Understand the value of collaborating with others offering different knowledge, views and experiences
- Identify and critique differing approaches to collaboration
- Recognise group management strategies
- Recognise verbal and non-verbal communication skills and their role in group cohesion
- Recognise the goals, skills and needs of others as part of successful collaboration

(Advance HE, 2021)



# Collaborative competency: Possible learning outcomes

## Skills

A student with collaborative competency can:

- Communicate effectively through listening, clarity of expression and constructive inquiry
- Engage in interdisciplinary discussion to inform their thinking about sustainable futures and seek holistic, creative solutions to problems
- Identify the importance of encouraging and enabling individuals and organisations to work together to create new knowledge
- Clearly communicate complex sustainable development issues to others
- Facilitate and mediate progressive discussions among interested parties (stakeholders) to help resolve dilemmas and conflicts
- Listen actively and critically
- Connect, adapt and synthesise what they learn
- Address conflict and develop mediation skills
- Utilise appropriate leadership styles

(Advance HE, 2021)

# Collaborative competency: Possible learning outcomes

## Attributes and values

A student with collaborative competency can:

- Learn from others including peers, professionals, expert groups and communities
- Deal with conflicts in a group
- Facilitate collaborative and participatory problem solving
- Assist others through peer learning
- Question norms, practices and opinions
- Understand and respect the needs, perspectives and actions of others
- Empathise with the views and experiences of others
- Collaborate equitably across gender, ethnicity and other groups

(Advance HE, 2021)

# References

Advance HE (2021) *Education for Sustainable Development Guidance 2021*. Available at: [Education for Sustainable Development](#). (Accessed 1 February 2023).

Scott, C.L. (2015) *The Futures of Learning 2: What kind of learning for the 21st century?* UNESCO Education Research and Foresight Working Papers Series, 14. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000242996.locale=en>. (Accessed 1 February 2023).

UNESCO (2017) *Education for Sustainable Development Goals. Learning Objectives*. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247444>. (Accessed 1 February 2023).

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