

STUDY SKILLS HANDBOOK NEWSLETTER ITEM FOR SEPTEMBER

Learning Collaboratively

We are all different in the way we prefer to learn. Some students like to work in groups, and others prefer to work alone. Some students like to discuss things over Skype or messenger and some like to work together in person. There is a reason why we have the saying 'two heads are better than one', so let's see how this applies to different types of students.

If you think you always prefer to work alone:

- It is great that you are very self-sufficient. Students who prefer to work alone are often confident in their own abilities. However sometimes these students make it more difficult for themselves by not asking for help when they need it. So if you are this type of student, don't struggle on alone when you get into difficulties or don't understand something. Being able to ask for help when you need it is an important skill for academic success. Just become more aware that you don't always ask for help and instead try reaching out a little more when you need help.
- The other area to consider is that when you talk about things with other people it can often help you to see things from a different perspective. By discussing ideas with another person, you also may find you clarify your own thoughts. By not being open to collaboration, you might not develop your ideas as well as you could or you might not see potential issues that a fresh pair of eyes and ears might discover. If you haven't done much collaboration, give it a try and you might find yourself surprised at how valuable you find the experience.

If you already love working with other people:

- Make sure that you always contribute equally and don't expect other people to do all the work for you.
- Collaboration doesn't mean cheating. For example, it is ok to discuss an assignment and what you think it is about and how you might approach it, but it is not ok to write the assignment together and hand in similar pieces of work.
- Collaboration also doesn't mean wasting time. If you are working with other people make sure you are staying on task and not getting distracted.
- Every now and then you have to do things on your own. If you always do your Maths homework with your friends, you might not really know what you can and can't do on your own. The first time you find this out could be a test which could be a big issue. Always ask yourself if the work you are doing is going to be enhanced by collaboration or if it is more appropriate to try the work on your own.
- It is important each night to have a certain amount of homework time on your own. If you want to collaborate when you are working at home, make specific times to do this. Don't skype the entire night with your friends. Instead have set times for collaboration and set times for independent work.

You and your parents can learn more about groupwork skills at www.studyskillshandbook.com.au by logging in with the details below and working through some of the units.

Username:

Password: