

# The Seven Norms of Collaborative Work

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## **Pausing**

Pausing before responding or asking a question allows time for thinking and enhancing dialogue, discussion and decision-making.

## **Paraphrasing**

Using a paraphrase starter that is comfortable for you: “So...” or “As you are...” or “You’re thinking...” and following the statement with a paraphrase assists members of the group to hear and understand each other as they formulate decisions.

## **Probing**

Using gentle open-ended probes or inquiries such as, “Please say more...” or “Can you tell me about...” or “Then, are you saying?” increases clarity and precision of the group’s thinking.

## **Putting Ideas on the Table**

Ideas are the heart of a meaningful dialogue. Label the intention of your comments. For example, you might say, “Here is one idea...” or “One thought I have is...” or “Here is a possible approach...” or “I’m just thinking out loud...”

## **Paying Attention to Self and Others**

Meaningful dialogue is facilitated when each group member is conscious of self and of others and is aware of not only what s/he is saying but how it is said and how others are responding. This includes paying attention to learning style when planning for, facilitating and participation in group meetings. Responding to others in their own language forms in one manifestation of this norm.

## **Presuming Positive Intentions**

Assuming that others’ intentions are positive promotes and facilitates meaning dialogue and eliminates unintentional putdowns. Using positive presuppositions in speech is one manifestation of this norm.

## **Pursing a Balance Between Advocacy and Inquiry**

Maintaining a balance between advocating for a position and inquiring about one’s own and other’s position assists the group to become a learning organization.

# The Seven Norms of Collaborative Work Assessment

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