

HSC: All My Own Work

Working with others

Introduction

This module considers how students can work collaboratively in their senior years while at the same time maintaining the academic integrity of their work.

Module Outline

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1. Is there a difference between collaborative learning, collusion and copying?
2. Is it appropriate for students to seek assistance from others with their assignments?
3. How can students appropriately acknowledge the support of others?
4. What are the benefits of producing your own work?
5. What strategies can be used to ensure appropriate collaboration in a group work context?

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Working with others - screen 1

Is there a difference between collaborative learning, collusion and copying?

Working with others is a fact of life whether you are at school or at work. Learning is an active process which involves talking to people, sharing ideas, clarifying thoughts and building your own knowledge.

In this module we will be considering how you can continue to work with others during your HSC years, acknowledging their work as appropriate, and working ethically with them. How can you continue to work with others and maintain the academic integrity of your own work?

It's easy to get confused about collaborative learning, collusion and copying. Take a few minutes to make sure that you really do know the difference. The following definitions and examples will assist you in making sure that you don't cross the line.

Collaborative learning

Sometimes called cooperative learning, this is where students work together in groups of two or more on a shared goal. You might be trying to deepen your understanding about an issue or brainstorm ideas in relation to a particular problem. Whatever the purpose, the collaborative effort is one in which all members of the group are expected to participate equally.

These groups are usually face-to-face but increasingly groups can operate online through discussion boards, chatlines, blogs and wikis.

Suppose in a Maths class, the teacher suggests that students work on a number of trigonometry problems in groups. There would be little value if each student chose to work on only one or two of the problems and then merely copied each other's answers. It would be much better if each member of the group worked each problem collaboratively and agreed that each person would undertake to explain their thinking to the group. This way, everyone has the potential to benefit.

Copying

When the teacher says, 'Go ahead and work together', the protocols of citation, referencing and acknowledgement still apply.

If you are like most other students, you would like to be sure that you get credit for the work you have done and not for what someone else has done. Having said that though, some honest and hardworking students have been found to copy out of ignorance. They are not aware of the correct citation or referencing procedures. However, this is not a defence. You should not allow others to copy your work. Allowing others to copy your work makes you as guilty of plagiarism as the person doing the copying. You may face the same penalties.

Copying is cheating. It is fooling a reader into believing that certain written material is original when it is not. Teachers and examiners treat copying or plagiarism very seriously. It may lead to a student getting zero for an assignment or a complete course being withheld.

For example, students are instructed to work as a group in a brainstorming session before moving to individual research for a PDHPE assignment. One student simply copies all the ideas of the other students and submits this work as his own, without additional work or attribution. This copying is cheating.

Collusion

In its simplest form, collusion occurs when two or more people work secretly for the purpose of deliberately misleading others.

Collusion is a form of plagiarism that can occur as a result of inappropriate collaboration during group work. It involves working with someone with the deliberate intention to mislead. This could involve working with someone else to produce work which is presented as your own when, in fact, it was the result of secretly working with someone else.

Sometimes it is difficult to know whether you are colluding or not during group work. One way to avoid collusion is to make sure that each member of the group takes their own personal notes of what is happening during the group work sessions.

An example of collusion would be if you helped out a friend and let him copy your most recent assignment, even if you remind him to change the words to make it look like his own before he hands it in.

Consider this situation

Ms Hopeton assigns a research problem in a Year 11 class. The assignment is to be handed in as a single

group assignment. The problem is quite difficult and will require the collaborative time and effort of a team. Ms Hopeton divides the class into groups of four students, gives them instructions, and tells them when the problem will be due.

Imran's group has an initial meeting and decides to divide up the work. Mia, one of Imran's group members, offers to write a particular section of the paper based on some great information she found on the internet. The other members of the group, including Imran, divide the remaining work and proceed with their respective research.

One week before the project is due, Imran finds out that Mia has chosen to 'copy and paste' most of her paper from the internet source. Imran picks up on Mia's plagiarism and knows it is wrong, but he needs a good mark on this assessment task. Imran confronts Mia and asks her to redo her paper without plagiarising, but Mia claims she is too busy with her other class work and her part-time job. She assures Imran that Ms Hopeton will never discover the plagiarism, and that if she does, she will take complete blame for it.

Imran finds himself in an extremely uncomfortable position. He feels partly responsible for the plagiarism because he has discovered it.

What should Imran do?

Should he confer with the other group members?

Yes. Correct! Imran, and others in the group, all have a responsibility to ensure that the work they submit is original and that sources are acknowledged.

If Mia insists that she will not redo the work, then she is putting the work presented by the group at risk. According to the school assessment policy this could result in zero marks for the whole group.

No. Incorrect!

Should Imran talk to Ms Hopeton about the situation?

Yes. Correct! In this situation, Imran does need to speak to Ms Hopeton because if he does not he could be found to have colluded with Mia about the plagiarism. By knowing what Mia is intending to do he could be seen to be part of the problem. He knows that what Mia is doing is wrong and compromises the overall work of the group.

No. Incorrect!

Consider these situations

Are they examples of collaborative learning, copying or collusion?

Mary has access to a tutor who regularly rewrites whole paragraphs of Mary's assignments, or tells Mary what to write.

Collaborative learning Try again!!

Copying Try again!!

Collusion Correct! Mary accepts this support in the full knowledge that the assistance of the tutor is not her own work. In effect, this is a form of cheating.

Riva logs on to a blog and finds some information which is relevant to her current assessment task. She exchanges information via the blog and tests some of her ideas out through an online discussion board.

Collaborative learning Correct! Riva is reading and contributing to the blog. Her responses extend the

thinking of others and have the potential to contribute to others' learning. It is collaborative activity. Riva should cite the blog if she uses information sourced through it in any work she submits.

Copying Try again!!

Collusion Try again!!

In Sam's class there is a small group discussion on a particular issue. The discussion is to assist students in the preparation of their reports. Sam takes detailed notes of others' contributions, especially Ahmed's. He copies all of Ahmed's notes because Ahmed knows this topic really well. Sam uses the notes word for word in his report and submits it without any citation.

Collaborative learning Try again!!

Copying Correct! This is an example of copying as Sam has used Ahmed's ideas in his piece of work without acknowledging Ahmed as the source. Collaborative or cooperative learning is where lots of ideas are shared and tested with each other with the intention of extending everyone's thinking on the topic.

Collusion Try again!!

Working with others - screen 2

Is it appropriate for students to seek assistance from others with their assignments?

We learn all the time and from all sorts of people. When studying for the HSC and presenting our work for marking, it is important to understand what external help is appropriate and what is not.

There are lots of people in your life at this time - your teachers, members of your family, friends, neighbours, members of your sporting teams, even people you work with at the weekend. You need to consider the type of help which might be appropriate and the type of help which is not. Some types of 'help' could lead to claims of copying or collusion and compromise your marks.

Any help from other people that can be considered as cheating, collusion or copying is inappropriate.

Make sure you don't accept inappropriate help when completing your work for the HSC

Consider these situations

Your brother did the same course as you two years ago and offers to help you with an essay. In fact, he remembers working on a similar assessment task himself and finds it for you. You decide to copy parts of his essay in your own assessment task.

Q: Is this appropriate?

A: Appropriate? Incorrect!

A: Inappropriate? Correct! This is an example of collusion. You have accepted your brother's support intending to use his work and present it as your own original work. In effect, this is cheating.

You have spent a lot of time working on a digital media assignment for Visual Arts and have run out of time. Your girlfriend has had to do a similar project for Drama and you decide to use her work and submit it as your assignment. Her teacher is better than yours and has given her more help. No-one will ever know.

Q: Is this appropriate?

A: Appropriate? Incorrect!

A: Inappropriate? Correct! This is cheating. You are presenting your girlfriend's work as your own with the intention of misleading your teacher.

Your Dad is a professional plumber and is great at welding. In your Visual Arts Body of Work, you are making a sculpture that requires welding. Your Dad demonstrates welding and supervises your welding. You record this in your Visual Arts Process Diary.

Q: Is this appropriate?

A: Appropriate? Correct! You have recorded the help given in your Visual Arts Process Diary.

A: Inappropriate? Incorrect!

What help is okay?

Think of the following people or places where you might seek help with your school work. Make sure the help you receive is appropriate and the work you submit is your own original work.

Family and friends

Family and friends should be supportive of your study but that does not mean that they do the work for you. They might like to talk about what you are doing and that's fine but be careful that it is your own work that you are presenting.

External tutors

External tutors want the best for you and have your interest at heart but that should not extend to them actually doing your work for you. They might discuss your work with you, even model some problems, for example, but then it should be up to you

Coaching colleges

Again, the staff at coaching colleges are there to help you, to unpack issues which you are finding difficult in much the same

way that your teachers do at school. Listen to their advice but do not allow them to write your answers for you otherwise you will be found to be acting inappropriately and you could put your whole HSC at risk.

Ghost writers

This is where you get someone else to write an assignment or assessment task for you - usually paying them to do so. This would be seen by the Board of Studies as a serious breach of trust and is highly unethical practice.

Assignments online

There are many websites now where you can go to buy assignments - you can even commission people to write your assignments for you. Don't do it. The risks for you are too great and don't think that your teachers are not aware of these sites - they are. In fact, there are many additional sites now against which your teachers can check your assignments for plagiarism.

Make sure that the work you hand in for your HSC is all your own work!

Working with others - screen 3

How can you appropriately acknowledge the support of others?

This really is about respect - respect for the ideas of others and not claiming others' work as your own. There is no problem referring to the ideas of others as long as you acknowledge them appropriately. You need to be clear about your referencing, the way in which you acknowledge others' work and/or ideas and the way in which you cite your sources, whether they are written or not.

What do you need to cite when working in groups?

The following types of source materials should be acknowledged:

advertisements	other students' work	others' ideas	blogs
encyclopedia articles	personal interviews	CDROMs and DVDs	letters
pictures	magazines	maps	TV programs
pamphlets	journals	newspapers	movies
artworks	teachers	lecturers	books
websites	emails	discussion groups	music

The following types of sources do not need to be acknowledged:

- Your own experiences
- Your own experimental results
- Common knowledge

Common knowledge includes:

- facts that are commonly known (eg there are twelve months in a year)
- facts that are so well known that they are easily available in a number of different kinds of sources (eg World War II began in 1939)
- commonsense observations (eg interest rates going up will affect mortgage payments).

Working with others - screen 4

What are the benefits of producing your own work?

If you are like most students, you want to develop your skills and knowledge and gain credit for what you have done, not for what someone else has done.

The benefits of producing your own work are that you:

- gain credit for what you have done, not for what someone else has done
- learn new skills that will benefit you in future study and work
- take pride in achieving and submitting your best work
- gain satisfaction in knowing that the work submitted is your own
- demonstrate that you value honesty and ethical practices.

Working with others - screen 5

What strategies can be used to ensure appropriate collaboration in a group work context?

- **Understand clearly what the group is to do** - often a task set for a group is about how the group operates as a group, as well as about what the group produces. Check this out with your teacher before you begin.
- **Group projects require careful division of responsibility** - it is not about how little work you can get away with. Group work requires maximum effort from everyone. Ask your teacher to advise you on individual responsibilities.
- **Discuss the group's expectations for work quality** - identify what the group is working towards - the final product.
- **Make sure that all members of the group know about appropriate citation, referencing and acknowledgements** - don't assume that everyone knows this already.
- **Each group member could be encouraged to keep a personal journal which records contributions to the work of the group** - this can be used to inform the teacher of individual contributions.
- **Everyone checks the final draft for citation and attribution errors before submitting it for marking** - this helps to maintain consistency in citation formatting, ensures there are no unnecessary duplications and is a final check to ensure appropriate acknowledgement of sources.
- **Communicate frequently with your teacher** - if there are problems with unequal contributions to the overall group task, discuss this with your teacher.
- **Seek support from your teacher or school counsellor if you are being bullied into unethical behaviour.**

Summary of this module

Key information

- Collaborative learning is sometimes called cooperative learning and is where students work together in groups of two or more on a shared goal
- Copying is cheating. It is using others' work as your own without adequate acknowledgement or attribution.
- Collusion is a form of plagiarism. It usually involves working with someone else to produce work that is presented as your own independent work.

Issues

- Make sure you don't accept inappropriate help when completing your work for the HSC.
- Be clear about referencing, the way in which others' work is acknowledged and the way in which sources are cited.
- Remember the benefits of producing your own work.

Strategies/handy hints

- Complete all work on the basis of ethical scholarship principles.
- Ensure that the use of others' ideas and information is appropriately acknowledged.

Make sure that the work you hand in for your HSC is all your own work.

FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How can students who are working in groups or receiving help from others ensure that the final, individual work they submit is all their own work?

A: Students should:

- know the difference between collaborative learning, collusion and copying
- know that collusion is a form of plagiarism that can occur as a result of inappropriate collaboration during group work
- realise that copying is cheating
- show respect for the ideas of others and not claim others' work as their own
- acknowledge appropriately the ideas of others
- be clear about referencing methods - how to acknowledge others' work and ideas and how to cite different types of sources (written and non-written)
- be honest and ethical in all aspects of the work they submit.

Q: Why is it important for students to submit work that is all their own?

A: Students can:

- gain credit for what they have done, not for what someone else has done
- learn new skills that will benefit them in future study and work
- take pride in achieving and submitting their best work
- gain satisfaction in knowing that the work submitted is their own
- demonstrate that they value honesty and ethical practices.

Note: Teachers want to reward original work and are responsible for supporting honest, responsible scholarship.

Q: What is appropriate and what is inappropriate help from others for students doing an assignment?

A: Any help from other people that can be considered as cheating, collusion or copying is inappropriate.

Q: How can students guard against receiving help from others that is inappropriate?

- A:
- While help from others in the form of discussion or advice can be appropriate, students should ensure that the work they submit is all their own.
 - Students should ensure that help from others does not overstep the mark and lead to collusion or copying that is cheating.

Q: What strategies can students use to ensure that group work is an effective, ethical learning method for all group members?

- A:
- Understand clearly what the group is to do.
 - Have a clear and fair division of responsibility for each group member.
 - Discuss the group's expectations for work quality and identify the group's final goal.
 - Make sure that all members of the group know about appropriate citation, referencing and acknowledgements.
 - Encourage each group member to keep a personal journal in which they record their contribution to the work of the group - this can be used to inform the teacher of individual contributions.
 - Check the final draft for citation and attribution errors before submitting it for marking.
 - Communicate frequently with the teacher - if there are problems with unequal contributions to the overall group task, discuss this with the teacher.
 - Seek support from your teacher or school counsellor if you are being bullied into unethical behaviour.

HSC: All My Own Work

Module 5 - Working with others

1. Is there a difference between collaborative learning, collusion and copying?

True or False?

1. A situation where all students in a group are expected to participate equally is called collaborative learning.
2. If collusion or copying have taken place, students may be given zero marks.
3. There is usually no penalty for a student who allows others to copy his or her work.
4. Collusion can happen when students collaborate inappropriately.
5. It is collusion if I allow another student to copy my work.

2. Is it appropriate for students to seek assistance from others with their assignments?

True or False?

1. It's okay for external tutors to do your assignments for you.
2. Coaching colleges are not permitted to assist you with your work at all.

Yes or No?

1. You are working on a research project and the deadline is approaching. Part of your research involves getting information through a survey but you only have a few days to access respondents and get them to complete the survey. You ask four friends to complete three surveys each and pretend to be other people in their households. Do you think this is acceptable?
2. You have a friend who has an out-of-school tutor. You know that your friend seeks her tutor's advice several times when doing assessment tasks before submitting them to be marked by the teacher at school. She even told you that, with the last assessment task, the tutor actually wrote one of the paragraphs for her. Can this be right?

3. How can students appropriately acknowledge the support of others?

True or False?

1. It's fine to use the ideas of others as long as you acknowledge them appropriately.
2. You must give references for your own experiences and your own experimental results in your work.
3. Information that is 'common knowledge' needs to be cited.
4. A commonsense observation is an example of "common knowledge".

Yes or No?

1. I let my sister who is in Year 12 read my recent English assignment. She advised me to change the structure of it and showed me one of her Business Studies assessments from last year. I studied the structure of her assignment and could see its advantages. On the basis of this learning, I revised the structure of my own assignment. Is this an example of copying?

4. What are the benefits of producing your own work?

True or False?

1. Correct citation will help to avoid any accusation of plagiarism.

2. Teachers are not concerned about whether or not your work is original. They are only interested in marking it.
3. Students develop new skills through producing their own work.
4. It is impossible to know how well you understand a subject if you plagiarise.
5. It is not possible to give credit for an individual's contribution to a group project.

5. What strategies can be used to ensure appropriate collaboration in a group work context?

Use the following words to fill in the blanks below:

unequal	citation	responsibility	understanding	journal
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1. Group work contexts require a clear _____ by students of what the ground rules are.
2. Careful division of _____ is necessary in group work situations.
3. Your teacher can help if there are problems with _____ contributions in completing a group task.
4. Keeping a personal _____ can help each group member to identify the contribution each person has made.
5. Checking the final draft is important for each group member. This helps to ensure that there is consistency in _____
____ formatting.