

COLLABORATION

How can we work as a group online?

Collaborative learning is essential for good citizenship education. Now, with the coronavirus pandemic, when citizenship education can no longer be pursued in the classroom, young people are having to learn new ways of collaborating with their peers. This lesson looks at how working together to agree digital learning rules can help young people create on-line learning spaces accessible to all learners.

Learners will be able to:

- ▶ Reflect on the benefits of learning in groups;
- ▶ Analyse the obstacles to learning in groups on-line and how these can be overcome;
- ▶ Identify rules to facilitate on-line group working that is accessible to all;
- ▶ Develop their co-operation skills and critical understanding of the self.

STIMULUS

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3YnWgZ-0Ds>

Explain that, in spite of social distancing and being forced to live in isolation at home, thanks to digital technology we can still get together in groups to help each other and solve problems. However, supporting each other in this way does not always come easily. We need to learn how to collaborate. This is especially important when we are at home and working alone.

If your learners are not advanced in English, find a picture that illustrates the power of collaboration, or a motivational quotation.

Alternatively, if it is an English class, learners can translate the poem one lesson and have the discussion next.

DISCUSSION

After the video:

- ▶ What are the advantages of learning in a group instead of studying by yourself? Can you give any examples of these from your experience at school?
- ▶ Now you are out of school and working at home, what opportunities are there for learning in groups? How can technology help?
- ▶ What obstacles might prevent some young people from being able to work in groups in this way?
- ▶ What can be done to overcome these problems?
- ▶ What can you do to make sure all the members of your group can participate equally?
- ▶ Would it help if there were rules for on-line group learning? If so, who would make the rules and how?

Give some examples to help the learners what you mean by learning in a group, e.g. discussions, joint tasks, brainstorming.

Make sure that the issues of access to technology and digital skills appear in the discussion.

CONCLUSION

Emphasize the need for rules to create an open and inclusive learning environment for everyone, which is a must for collaboration on-line as it is for face-to-face.

Outline three steps for drawing up group rules:

1. Think what you need from the others to be able to co-operate in the group;
2. Tell the others about your expectations and listen to their expectations;
3. Negotiate together and agree on 5 rules.

ASSIGNMENT

Individual work:

- ▶ What behaviour from your peers is likely to motivate you to work with them?
- ▶ What should you do if you do not have access to some equipment you need to join in, or are not familiar with the technology used?
- ▶ What should you do if some of your peers are not familiar with the technology used?
- ▶ What can you do to ensure everyone has an equal chance to express their views?

Small group work:

- ▶ Share your expectations and listen to the expectations of the others in your group.
- ▶ Decide together on 5 rules that will be useful for all.
- ▶ Decide how to present your rules so that all groups members are involved.

You may need to simplify some of these questions for younger learners.

Assign the learners to groups so that they include learners who seldom work together.

Encourage new and interesting forms of presentation, e.g. Google Slides, Visme Basic, Zoho Show.

FOLLOW-UP

The small groups present their rules.

The rules of the small groups are put together to create a set of e-classroom rules.

Rules common to all groups are put on the list at once. If a rule is unique, the group has to justify it and a vote is taken.