COLLABORATIVE (OR GROUP) WRITING

The Writing Center at UNC Chapel Hill. “Group Writing.” http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/group-writing/
BEST PRACTICES FOR COLLABORATIVE WRITING

Pre-writing Stage:
• As a group, work on understanding what the assignment is asking for. Make sure everyone is clear about what the assignment is supposed to look like.
• Brainstorm together. Agree on central ideas.
• Formulate or draft a thesis statement together.

Planning Stage:
• Plan the sections together by breaking down the requirements of the paper. Decide as a group which parts of the project will be written by whom.
• Arrange frequent meetings—once a week is best for semester-long papers—even if just for check-in.
• Set mini-deadlines for the group. Leave time for group revision and editing.
Research Stage

• Decide as a group where you will get appropriate sources. Decide on the parameters and scope of each member’s research.
  • *Who will read and process the information? Group? Individually?*
• Think critically about your evidence & what they contribute to your topic.
  • *What do you need to exclude? What do you need to include?*
• Analyze the data.
**BEST PRACTICES FOR COLLABORATIVE WRITING CONT’D.**

**Drafting/Writing Stage:**

- If writing separately:
  - Make sure each writer is clear on central ideas and everyone understands their section.
  - Meet consistently to make sure the paper reads coherently.
  - Make sure everyone knows the rhetorical expectations of the paper (how formal it needs to be, etc.)

- If writing as a group (which is best):
  - Identify goals for the writing session *before* you start writing
  - Draft ideas on paper first, *before* addressing exact phrasing
  - Clarity over style. Though everyone has a different writing style and voice, make sure all your sentences are clear to your reader first.
Revision Stage:

• Combine all your documents in one file, first.
• Prioritize looking for a logical progression of ideas. Address the flow of information first before anything else.
• Focus on structure and ideas of the paper first before turning to stylistic issues.
• For stylistic issues, address the most obvious shifts in tone and register (formality) first and make sure they all relatively match.
BEST PRACTICES FOR COLLABORATIVE WRITING, CONT’D.

Editing and Proofreading Stage:

- Divide and conquer. Every member could be tasked to look for certain issues (ex. APA formatting, commas, sentence structure, typos).
- Be patient and schedule time for this stage.
# THINGS TO REMEMBER

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>DO’S</strong></th>
<th><strong>DON’TS</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Start early and allow time for revisions</td>
<td>Procrastinate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plan a reasonable schedule</td>
<td>Immediately divide sections to individual members</td>
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<td>Find a way to share docs (Google docs, Dropbox, OneDrive, etc.)</td>
<td>Leave the work to one person</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be constructive</td>
<td>Give entirely negative critiques.</td>
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WORKS CONSULTED


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