Setting the stage for student collaboration
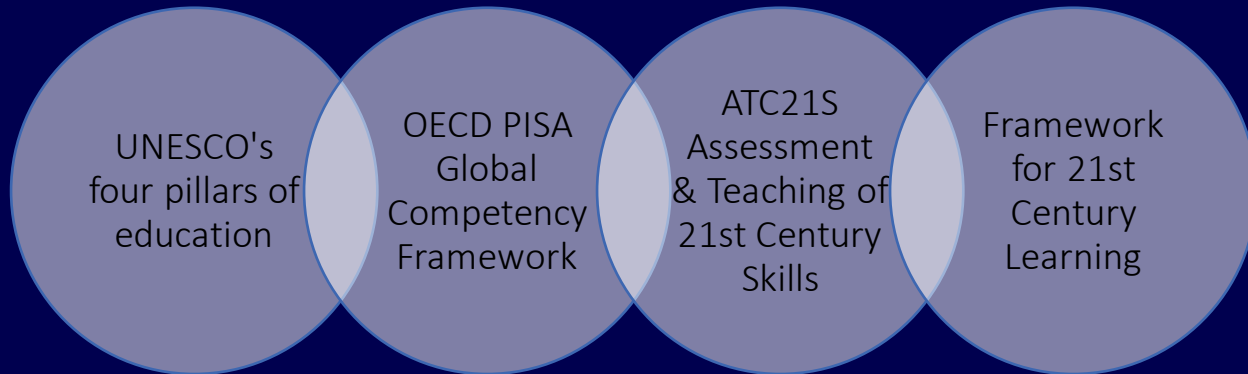
NFEAP - 4th June 2021

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Collaboration as a learning outcome (in HE)

- Collaboration is one of the Global Skills identified by OUP (2019).

- Built on

  - UNESCO's four pillars of education
  - OECD PISA Global Competency Framework
  - ATC21S Assessment & Teaching of 21st Century Skills
  - Framework for 21st Century Learning

- Collaboration can help in the development of other global skills.

What do we mean by collaboration?

"Collaboration" is open to misinterpretation and conflated with "group work", "peer feedback" and "cooperation" (Bolster & Levrai, 2019).

We proposed this definition:

Collaboration in EAP

A collaborative assignment is one where learners work together, making equitable contributions towards the development of an indivisible artefact for which they share responsibility and ownership. During the development of the artefact, learners may work synchronously or asynchronously, face-to-face or online, but there is interdependence between group members, drawing on all their strengths.

Overview

Collaboration in EAP

Why our interest?

Why collaboration in EAP?

4 stages of collaborative assignments
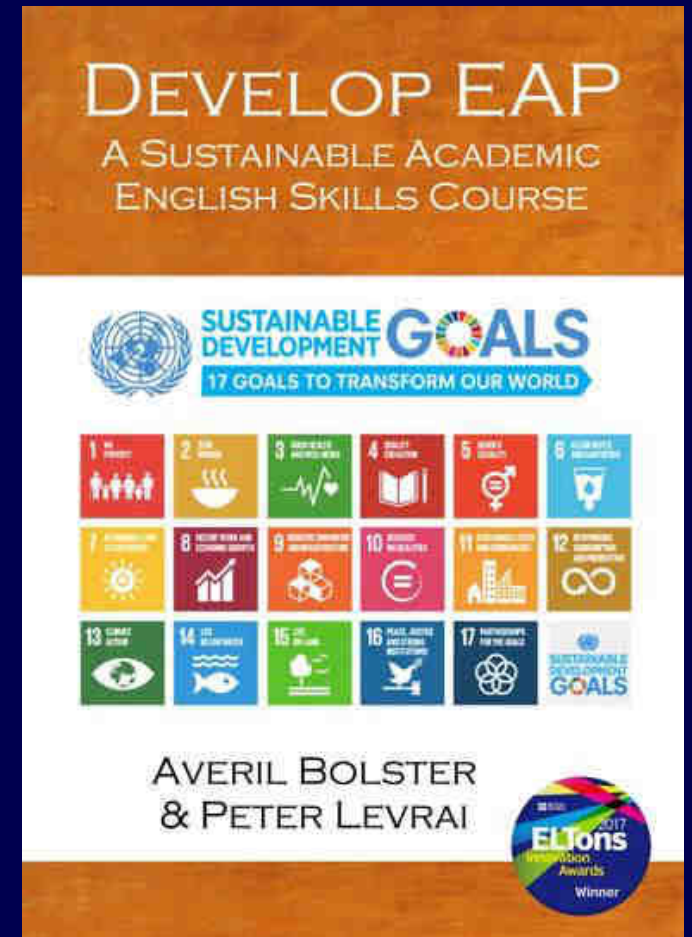
Preparation

Assessment

Set-up

Facilitation

Our interest in collaboration

- Experienced a learning curve of collaborative assignments as a novel assessment type.

- Developed the award winning Develop EAP course, which scaffolded collaboration.

- Undertaking PhDs in Language Acquisition in Multilingual Settings with a focus on collaborative learning.

- Experience and early findings inform this talk.
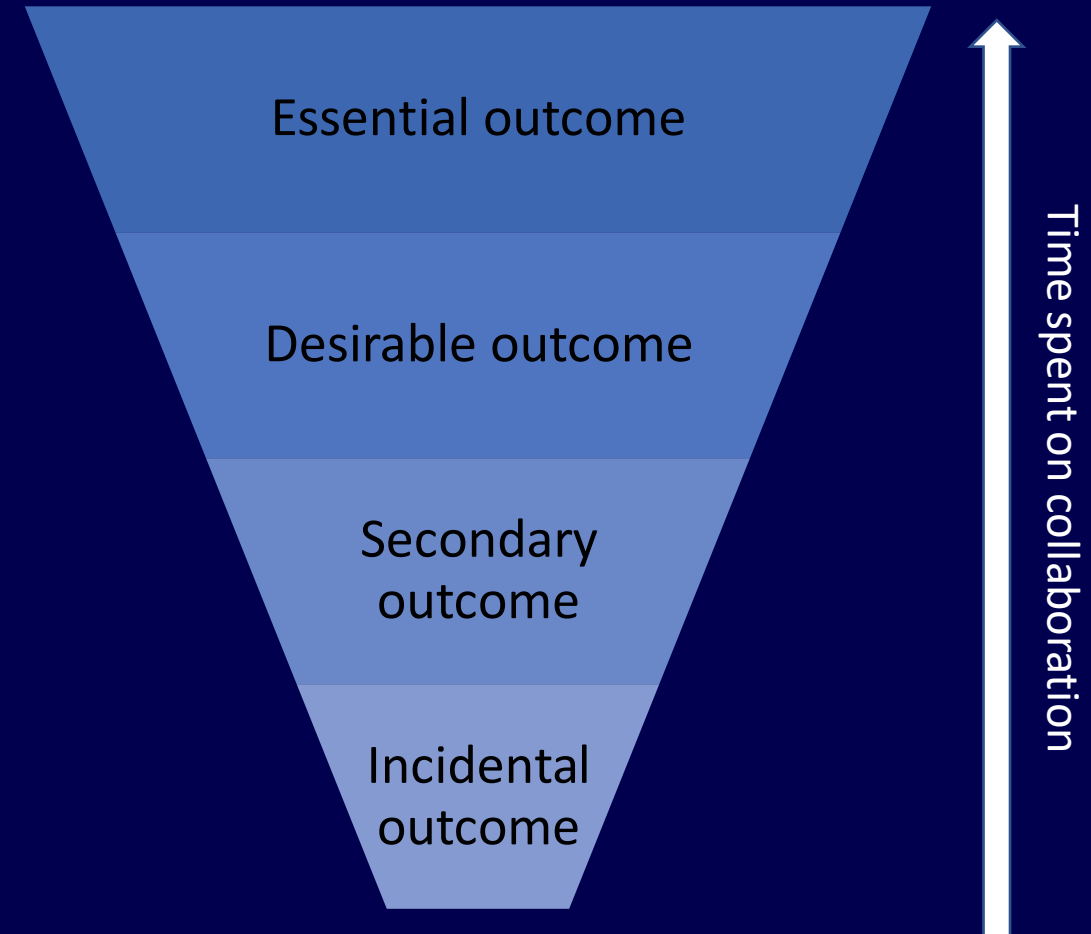

https://developeap.weebly.com/

Why collaboration in EAP?

- Student collaboration is a feature of Higher Education (Godwin-Jones, 2018; Levrai & Bolster, 2018; Storch, 2019) at different stages of a student's academic career.

- The role of EAP is to prepare students for their academic studies and beyond (Alexander, Argent and Spencer, 2008; Ding & Bruce, 2017; Gillet, 2017).

- Therefore, EAP has a role in preparing students to collaborate.

- Here are some practical ideas.

Stage 1: Preparation

- The importance of collaboration as a learning outcome impacts how much time could / should be devoted to collaboration.

- Storch (2017) states that, *'collaborative writing activities need to be carefully designed and monitored. Simply assigning students to write in pairs does not mean that they will work collaboratively'* (p. 78).

- Decide on and become familiar with preferred tools for communication / collaboration.

Essential outcome

Desirable outcome

Secondary outcome

Incidental outcome
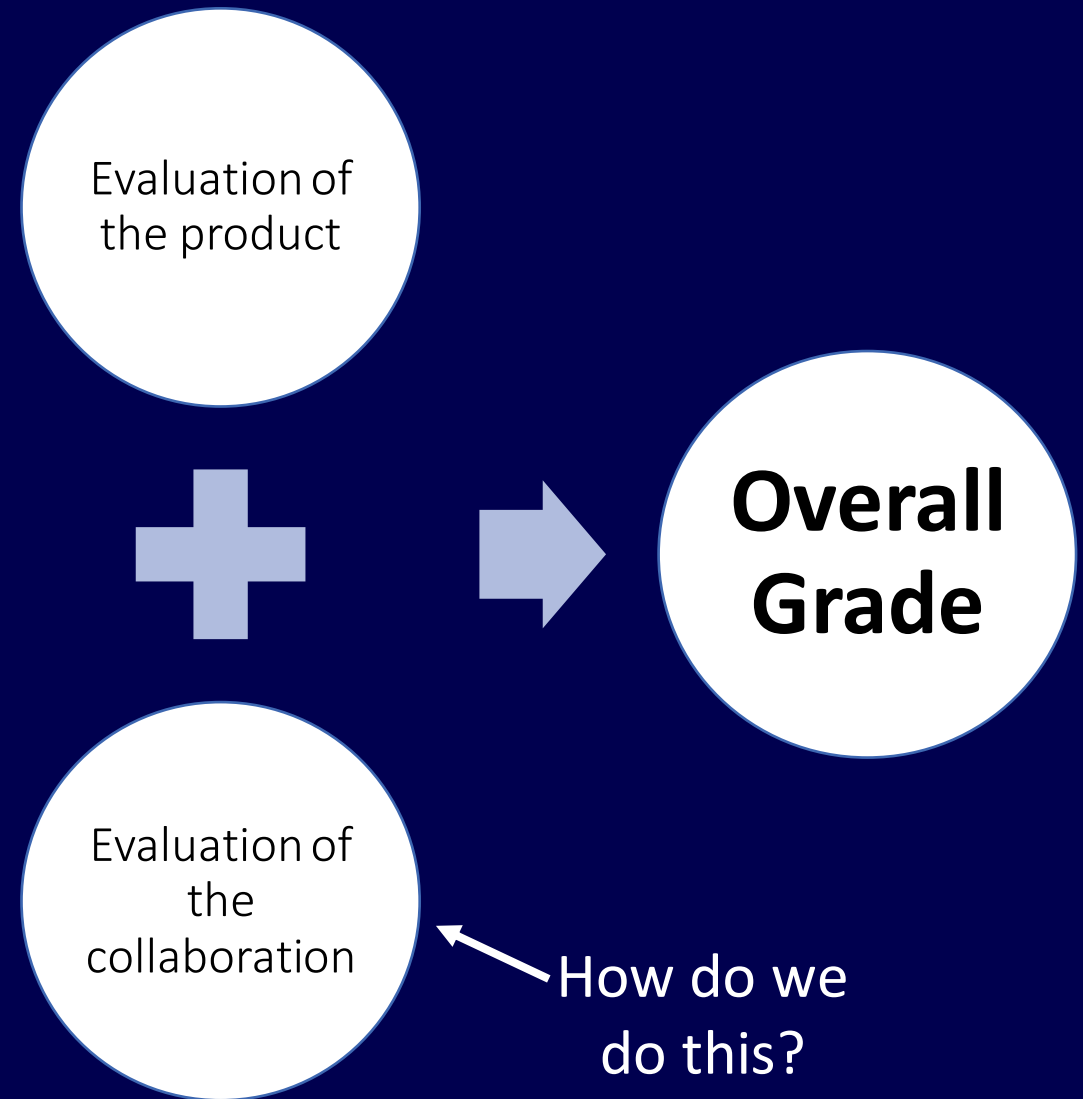
Time spent on collaboration

Stage 2: Assessment

- Following Backward Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), once the learning outcomes are decided, you need to determine acceptable evidence.

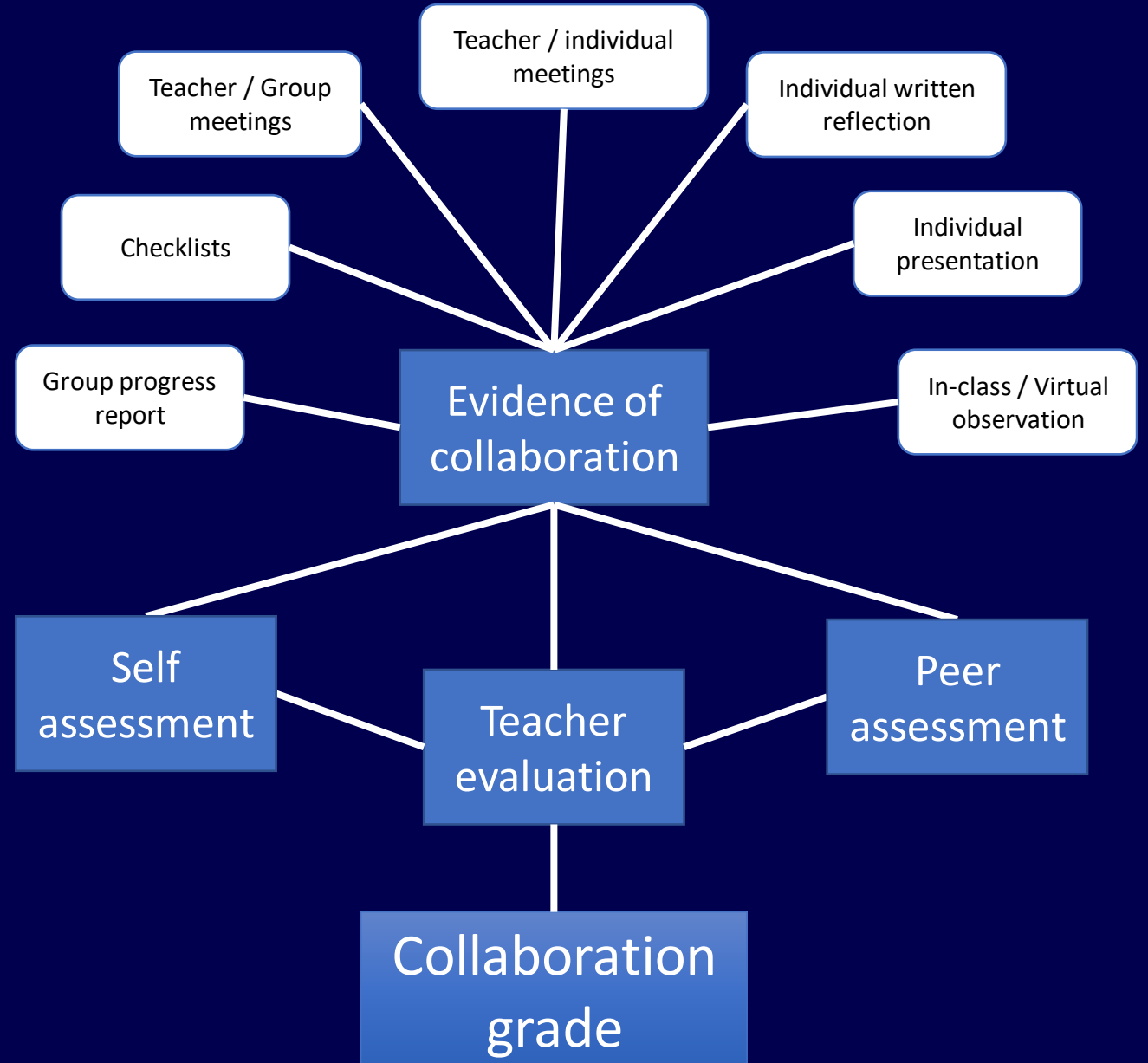**KEY QUESTION:** What does good collaboration look like?

- Consider assessing a group essay with collaboration as an essential outcome.

Evaluation of the product

+

Evaluation of the collaboration

How do we do this?

→

Overall Grade

Evaluating Collaboration

- Collaboration is a complex construct and cannot be viewed through a single lens.

- Even with all those (time-demanding) elements, some aspects of collaboration will be unseen.

Teacher / individual meetings

Teacher / Group meetings

Individual written reflection

Checklists

Individual presentation

Group progress report

Evidence of collaboration

In-class / Virtual observation

Self assessment

Teacher evaluation

Peer assessment

Collaboration grade
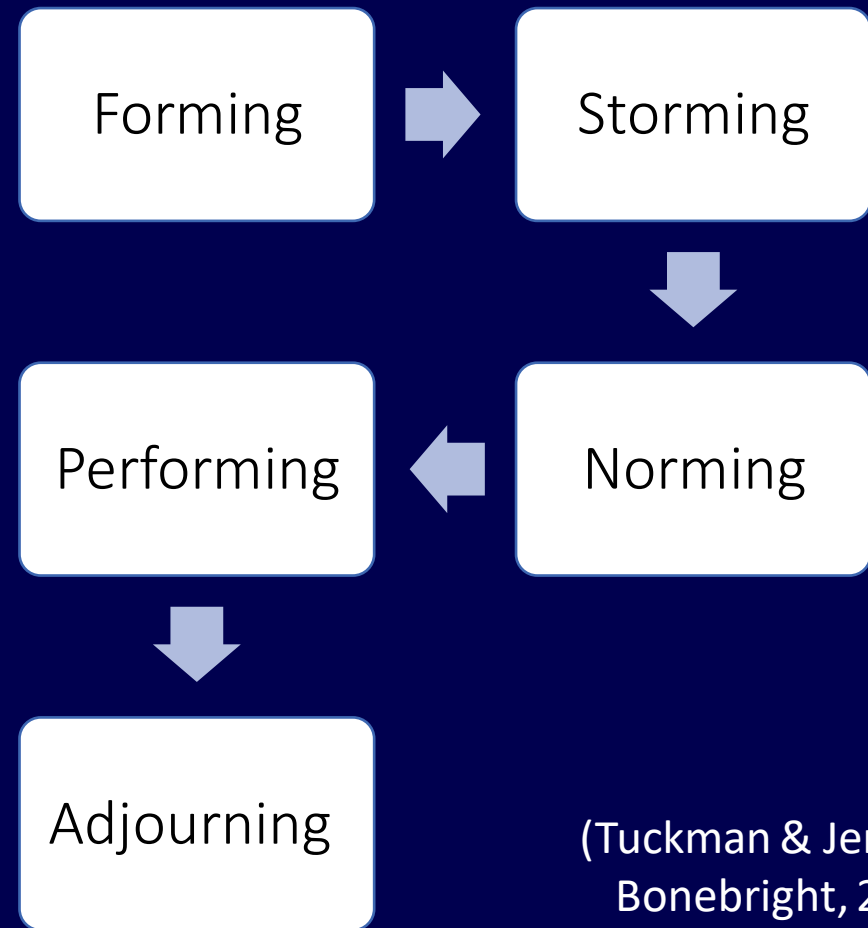
Stage 3: Set-up – Awareness raising

- Awareness raising is important at the start of a collaborative assignment.

- Depending on your assessment, it could take considerable course time.

Collaboration training

Stage 3: Set-up – understanding collaboration

- Raising students' awareness of collaboration can help them navigate the process.

Forming → Storming → Norming → Performing → Adjourning

(Tuckman & Jensen in Bonebright, 2010)

Stage 3: Set-up – understanding collaboration

- Raising students' awareness of collaboration can help them navigate the process.

Team formation

Stage 3: Set-up – understanding collaboration

- Raising students' awareness of collaboration can help them navigate the process.

Team formation
Team roles

High Mutuality

Expert / Novice

Collaborative

Low Equality

High Equality

Dominant / Passive

Co-operative

Dominant / Dominant

Dominant / Withdrawn

Dominant / Defensive

Low Mutuality

(Storch, 2002; 2013, Li & Zhu, 2013, 2017; Edstrom, 2015)

Stage 3: Set-up – understanding collaboration

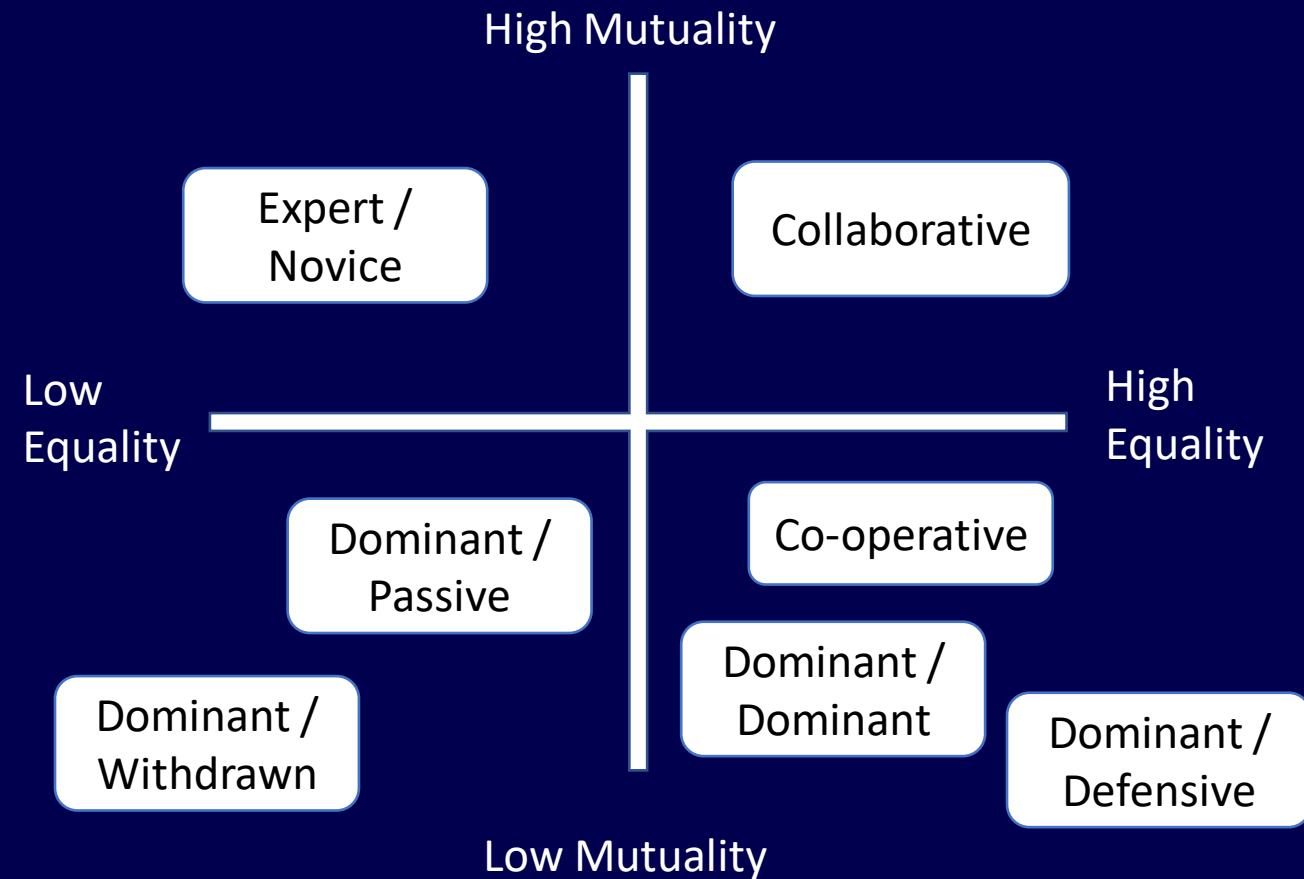- Raising students' awareness of collaboration can help them navigate the process.

Team formation
Team roles
Interaction patterns

Stage 3: Set-up – understanding collaboration

- Raising students' awareness of collaboration can help them navigate the process.

Team formation
Team roles
Interaction patterns
Ways of working

Vignette 2
An essay group needs to produce a first draft by the end of the week. Student A suggests meeting online to discuss it on Wednesday afternoon and Student C agrees. They do not hear from Student B and it is Wednesday morning. topic and doesn't contribute much to the process.

Stage 4: Facilitation

- A clear set-up and scaffold eases the process and guides students, encouraging them to work together autonomously.

- During the task, teacher presence is needed to maintain a sense of community and engagement (Johnston & Lawrence, 2018).

- Principal teacher role is monitoring (in-class and virtual) and stepping in as solution of last resort if needed.

Conclusions

- Collaborative tasks are an important part of HE and EAP has a role in helping students collaborate with each other more effectively.

- Good collaboration doesn't just happen.

- Developing student collaborative and associated skills can be time intensive.

- Focusing on collaboration at the beginning can help the whole process.

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Thank you!

Any questions or comments?

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