

# 7 Norms of Collaboration

## 1. Promoting a spirit of inquiry

“I would like to know more about your idea/ position.” “Tell me more about...”  
(Seek first to understand before advocating for your own idea.)

## 2. Pausing . . .

“I am waiting a minute to allow time to think first.”  
(Pausing before responding and/or asking a question allows for think time for yourself and others.)

## 3. Paraphrasing

“So...” “As you are...” “You’re thinking...” “You’re wondering...” “The intention seems to be...”  
(Efficient paraphrases help all members hear and understand the ideas being presented.)

## 4. Probing for specificity

“Please say more...” “I’m curious about...” “I’d like to hear more about...”  
“Then, you are saying...” “Do you mean everyone?” “Specifically what...”  
(Asking questions to increase clarity and understanding as well as the precision of the group’s thinking.)

## 5. Putting ideas on the table

Label the intention of your comments: “Here is one idea...” “One thought I have is...” “Here is a possible approach...” “Here is one idea...” “Another consideration might be...”

## 6. Paying attention to self & others

How am I reacting to what is being said? How am I feeling? How are others reacting to what I am saying?  
Have I used possible charged language unintentionally?  
(Watch for body language and check perceptions by paraphrasing and probing for specificity.)

## 7. Presuming positive intentions

“I know we are trying to learn more about all angles so let me share...” “Knowing that we would like to make a decision that works for all of us, let’s...”  
(Thinking in your head thoughts like: “I am sure she didn’t mean to sound charged when she said that.”)

# Effective Collaboration Norms and Guidelines

In order to cultivate a climate where everyone is focused on ongoing, positive growth and improving student achievement, use the Seven Norms of Collaboration.

## Seven Norms of Collaboration

### 1. Promoting a Spirit of Inquiry and Balancing Advocacy

Exploring perceptions, assumptions, beliefs, and interpretations promotes the development of understanding. Inquiring into the ideas of others before advocating for one's own ideas is important to productive dialogue and discussion. Advocacy after thoughtful inquiry moves us towards decision-making. Groups take care to balance advocacy with inquiry, so as not to rush to decision-making nor leave issues without closure.

### 2. Pausing

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

### 3. Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a powerful way to indicate that you are listening to others and are trying to understand them. Maintain the intention and accuracy of what the speaker said as you recast their contribution in your own words or with an example. Using a paraphrase starter that is comfortable for you – “So...” or “As you are saying...” or “You’re thinking...” – and following the starter with an efficient paraphrase assists members of the group in hearing and understanding one another as they converse and make decisions.

### 4. Probing

Using gentle open-ended probes or inquiries – “Please say more about...” or “I’m interested in...” or “I’d like to hear more about...” or “Then you are saying...” – increases the clarity and precision of the group’s thinking.

### 5. Putting Ideas on the Table

Ideas are the heart of meaningful dialogue and discussion. Label the intention of your comments. For example: “Here is one idea...” or “One thought I have is...” or “Here is a possible approach...” or “Another consideration might be....”

### 6. Paying Attention to Self and Others

Meaningful dialogue and discussion are facilitated when each group member is conscious of self and of others, is aware of what (s)he is saying, and how it is said as well as how others are responding. This includes paying attention to learning styles when planning, facilitating, and participating in group meetings and conversations.

### 7. Presuming Positive Intentions

Assuming that others’ intentions are positive promotes and facilitates meaningful dialogue and discussion, and prevents unintentional put-downs. Using positive intentions in speech is one manifestation of this norm.

Adapted from CCE and the work of R. Garmston – November 2010