

Discussing Collaboration with Students: Suggestions for Instructors

A vital component of the Honor & Integrity System at Kansas State University is the inclusion of the Honor Pledge that applies to students' work on all assignments, examinations, or other coursework. The Honor Pledge is implied, whether or not it is stated: "*On my honor, as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work.*" This means that all academic work should be accomplished individually, unless the permission of the instructor is given in advance. Though this statement is in the Honor Pledge, many students find it difficult to know how much collaboration is too much when the instructor has given them permission to work together. It would be helpful to clarify with the students how much collaboration, if any, is permitted or expected when working on assignments, projects, papers, or exams. Though different academic disciplines often have unique expectations concerning collaboration due to the nature of the academic work in each, the following are sample questions that could apply to most academic disciplines and that can be discussed in class with your students in order to communicate your parameters for collaboration:

Written Papers and Projects

- A) Is it okay for students to receive assistance from others with the organization of a paper?
- B) Is it okay for students to receive assistance from others with the ideas/content of a paper?
- C) Is it okay for others to correct the grammar and/or spelling in a student's paper? If so, how much of the grammar and spelling may they correct?
- D) Is it okay for others to help students identify sources/references for a paper or project?

Homework Assignments

- A) Is it okay for students to work with others to determine their responses on assignments?
- B) Is it okay for students to share responses to assignment questions with each other after having completed the assignments individually?
- C) Is it okay for others to let students know when one or more of the responses to assignment questions are incorrect? If so, is it okay for them to let students know exactly which ones are incorrect or to give the correct answers?
- D) Is it okay for others to share former or current assignments with students to use as study guides?

Take-Home Exams

- A) Is it okay for students to work with others to determine their responses on take-home exams?
- B) Is it okay for others to assist students with take-home exams by helping them understand the terminology used in the questions?
- C) Is it okay for others to assist students in identifying course material relevant to the answers of the exam (e.g., the answer to that question is in the textbook on page 68.)?

See the Honor & Integrity System website (<http://www.ksu.edu/honor>) for more information.

