

Key elements of a strong collaboration style you may not have thought of on your own...

1. Take a deep breath and eliminate the temptation to make an emotional or personal attack
2. Remind the team of shared goals and criteria
 - Making sure you fulfil all of the assignment criteria
 - Ensuring a good learning experience
 - Meeting the client's needs
 - Having a high quality project
 - Using everyone's time efficiently
3. Be supportive
 - Focus on what's right as well as what's wrong
4. Offer specific solutions with clear procedures
 - Formal brainstorming followed by systematic evaluation of pros and cons
 - Make list of information needed, assign tasks, meet again
 - Assign early deadlines and multiple review points; document these in the task schedule
 - (Agree as a group to seek out and abide by an outside opinion)
5. Support each other's development with a well-designed task schedule

What is a task schedule and why is one key to effective collaboration?

A task schedule is a list of **who** should do **what** by **when**. This schedule is developed at the beginning of the project and continually updated as the team encounters new challenges or changing criteria. The task schedule should be highly visible to the team.

A task schedule helps teams by

- Holding team members accountable
- Forcing the team to confront different understandings of the project early
- Helping the team anticipate potential problem
- Ensuring that team members review each other's work
- Allowing team members to develop new skills with the knowledge others will "have their back"

Task schedules should build **review points** into the schedule. A review point is simply time dedicated for team members to provide feedback on one another's work (and time to implement those changes). Review points greatly increase the quality of the project because team members can catch errors and suggest improvements in one another's work.

Below is an example of a task schedule with review points built in.

Deadline	Who	Task	
9/04	Bryan	Write topic proposal and bring to group meeting.	
9/04	Everyone	Review and discuss topic proposal at in-class meeting.	
9/06	Bryan	Turn in revised topic proposal to instructor.	
9/09	Chuyen	Draft methods and results for pressure tests	
9/09	Everyone	Discuss Chuyen's draft	
9/12	Amy	Implement changes to methods and results Add intro and conclusion	
9/12	Everyone	Discuss Amy's draft	
9/15	Bryan	Implement changes to draft Add abstract	
9/15	Chuyen	Write appendices	
9/16	Amy	Compile and edit entire draft and submit to instructor	

Review points

Building in review points helps depersonalize feedback because the group has clarified up front that everyone's work will be critiqued and improved upon.