

## Part Six Edits – Academic Integrity – Improper Collaboration

Another type of academic dishonesty is Improper Collaboration. This means working together with other students, when you should be completing tasks independently. Sometimes students find the difference between proper, and improper collaboration confusing. After all, there are many benefits to collaborative learning, and indeed, many of your assignments will encourage you, or even require you to work together with other students, comparing notes, proofreading content, or building on each other's work. Yet some assignments are designed to make sure you apply skills independently, and that you use your own resourcefulness to solve problems. It's important that you pay attention to the parameters of each new assignment or task. Unless an assignment explicitly encourages you to work together with other students, it's probably safe to assume that your instructor expects individual completion.

One place where some confusion arises is peer editing. On some types of individual written or research assignments, you might be encouraged to use a proofreader, or peer editor. When instructors suggest that you use a peer editor, they almost certainly mean that you should research, think through, and write a draft of your work, all on your own, and then go through your own work to polish it. Only after this is done should you ask a friend, or colleague, to read through your work to check for clarity, grammar, and polish – or to give feedback. Peer editing does not mean that your friend, or cousin, or your Mom should re-write your introduction or conclusion, or tweak your writing all along the way. Instead, make sure that your peer editor limits themselves to pointing out issues and perhaps suggesting the kind of changes that you could consider making yourself. So, if your Dad writes or overhauls your paper for you, it's really he that will be earning your mark for you, and you'll never develop those polishing and editing skills yourself.

Peer editing is just one example of how the territory between good working habits and improper collaboration can be murky. But if you use your good judgment, and aim to work independently as much as possible, you'll likely be able to identify the line between appropriate, and inappropriate help. Of course, where there is doubt or uncertainty, the best thing to do, is ask your instructor, or TA, for guidance.