COLLABORATIVE WRITING

Group Efforts

Group work and research collaboration is a common occurrence in the STEM field. Collaborative writing involves a piece of work in which there are multiple contributors and authors. The process of group writing varies depending on context and specific field.

Approaches to Collaborative Writing

Single Author Writing

The single author approach involves one person managing and writing the project based on the ideas of a group. One author writes the entirety of the work. In this approach, the author may or may not ask for edits from the group upon completion of the work. This approach works in academic research when the single author utilizes data from the other group members.

Sequential Writing

In sequential writing, every person in the group is assigned a task in sequential order and upon completion of their task, they hand off the work to the next person. The next person completes their task and reviews the prior work to ensure that the tone and goals align. This style requires preparation to determine the order of each task or section and to determine which group member or members will be responsible for editing the entirety of the work for cohesiveness.

Reciprocal Writing

This method of collaborative involves concurrent work efforts from all group members, meaning the entire group works on writing simultaneously. This method of writing involves group members editing one another’s work while the work is still in progress. This approach is ideal for time constraints, but requires close attention to detail and agreed upon work conditions.
Approaches continued

**Parallel Writing**

Parallel writing divides the project to have each individual work independently on sections, and then the work is compiled at the end. This method saves more time than methods such as sequential writing, but this method also requires editing to ensure cohesion after compilation. Final edits should always be accounted for when planning to use this approach; sometimes, one member of the group is not assigned writing and is only assigned the final edits.

**Skill-based Division Writing**

This approach is similar to parallel writing, but the tasks are divided by skill set. The responsibilities of the work may be divided based on skills and may utilize other approaches such as sequential or parallel writing. This approach is ideal if certain members have specialized skills, or when research and writing tasks can be divided by specialty.

**Steps to Working on A Collaborative Writing Project**

1. Assess group needs and deadlines
2. Consider purpose of writing and group skills
3. Evaluate approaches and choose what works best for the group
4. Create a project timeline
5. Begin writing
6. Assess approach as needed and modify depending on group needs