



An Overview of the Taxonomy of Collaboration

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The *Taxonomy of Collaboration*sm offers a new conceptual framework for understanding levels of collaboration and ways to organize learning activities so participants learn to achieve collective outcomes. Collaborative e-learning is defined as:

Constructing knowledge, negotiating meanings and/or solving problems through mutual engagement of two or more learners in a coordinated effort using Internet and electronic communications.

The Taxonomy of Collaboration is a tool for designing, planning, teaching and assessing curricula, courses, projects and learning activities. In addition to the central model included above, related materials include:

1. *A Typology of Learning Milieux*, which describes learning environments in and out of the classroom or course management system;
 2. *A Typology of Collaborative E-Learning Assessment*, which describes assessment approaches for individual and collective processes and outcomes;
- and
3. *The Collaborative Integration Paradigm* (developed with Lynn Wilson, PhD) which describes strategies for interdisciplinary collaboration.

The Taxonomy describes six dimensions of collaborative activities: 3 essential processes and 3 progressive levels of coordination, integration and trust. They can be combined in various ways depending on the nature and complexity of the project.

While learners may complete parts of a project independently, when they integrate their efforts into one outcome, we can describe their work as "collaboration." When people collaborate, they think together as well as work together. Whether in the classroom or the workplace, collaboration provides opportunities for people to acquire new skills together, learn from each other or transfer knowledge. Together participants can generate innovative new ideas or approaches, or new applications for best practices.