Collaborating in Our Virtual World

So you have been assigned to a team project in these unprecedented times... How do you effectively collaborate and communicate when you are in a virtual environment and may have never met any of the people on your team?

Plan it out

- Decide on what platform(s) your group wants to use for communication. These could include Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Slack.
- Create a schedule that breaks down the workload and keeps the upcoming deadlines in mind.

Be empathetic

- Remember that these are real people behind the screens. Check twice before saying or writing something.
- Problems, distractions, and conflicts are bound to arise. Try to be understanding and flexible in these trying times.

Listen, listen, listen

- Listen more than you speak. Your teammates will not feel heard if you are disrespectful and/or do not consider their ideas.
- When someone inevitably disagrees with you, keep an open mind and ask them questions before being defensive.
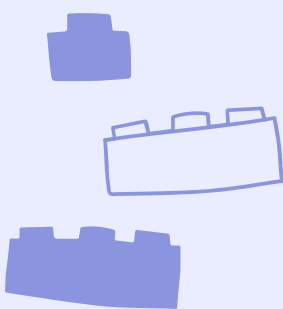
Build on each other

- Collaborate as much as possible on the main deliverables of the project. This way, everyone's voices are being heard.
- Be open to receiving feedback and be willing to give feedback on everyone else's work.
- Ask questions and bounce ideas off of each other.

Stick to a routine

- Plan out a weekly time for meetings. This allows the group to stay on the same page.
- In a virtual environment, it is all too easy to fade away and be inaccessible. Be accountable for your work, as your team is depending on you. Try to find a way to complete the work that is expected of you in a timely manner and communicate if you are having problems.