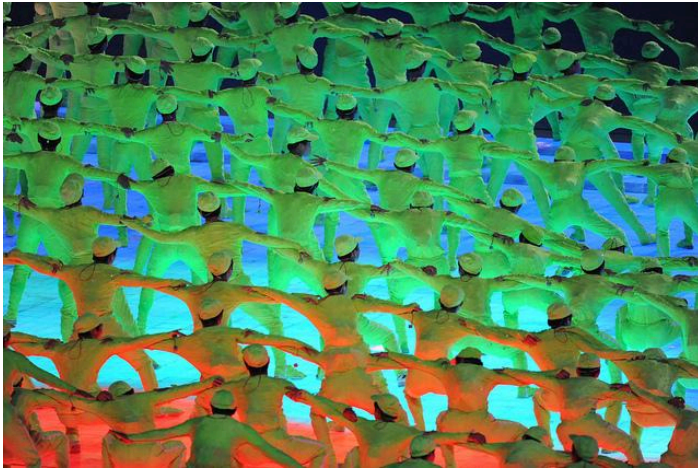


[See this page in the course material.](#)

When we explore relationships between people and groups of people, *interdependence* may well be one of the most meaningful words in the English language. It's meaningful because it speaks to the importance of connecting with others and maintaining viable relationships.



Interdependence is defined as the mutual reliance, or mutual dependence, between two or more people or groups. “In an interdependent relationship, participants may be emotionally, economically, ecologically, and/or morally reliant on and responsible to each other.”^[1]

An interdependent relationship is different from dependent and codependent relationships, though. In dependent relationships, some members are dependent while some are not (dependent people believe that they may not be able to achieve goals on their own). In codependent relationships, there is a sense that one must help others achieve their goals before pursuing one's own. Contrast these relationships with interdependent relationships, in which the dependency, support, and gain is shared for the enrichment of all.

Interdependence in College

Interdependence is valuable in college because it contributes to your success as a student. When you feel comfortable with interdependence, for example, you may be more likely to ask a friend to help you with a class project. You may also be more likely to offer that same help to someone else. You may be more inclined to visit a faculty member during office hours. You may be more likely to attend the tutoring center for help with a difficult subject. Perhaps you would visit the career counseling center.

Overall, when you have a sense of interdependence, you cultivate support networks for yourself, and you help others, too. Interdependence is a win-win relationship.

The following table illustrates how interdependence can play a role in college life.

Interdependence Struggle Mode	Interdependence Success Mode
Students in struggle mode maintain a stance of dependence, co-dependence, or perhaps dogged independence, but not interdependence	Students in success mode develop relationships that support themselves and support other people, too
Students in struggle mode may avoid cooperating with others in situations where the common good could be achieved	Students in success mode develop networks of friends, family members, professionals, and others as a support team
Students in struggle mode may be reluctant to listen compassionately and attempt to understand the perspective of another person	Students in success mode actively and compassionately listen to others as an action of support; they demonstrate care and concern

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interdependence> ↵

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