



Working in Groups: Strategies and Tips for Successful Collaboration

Benefits of a Study Group

- A support group can "pick you up" when you find that your motivation to study is slipping. The other group members can be a source of encouragement.
- You may be reluctant to ask a question in class. You will find it easier to do so in a small study group.
- Group members will listen and discuss information and concepts during the study sessions. These activities add a strong auditory dimension to your learning experience.
- One or more group members are likely to understand something you do not. They may bring up ideas you never considered.
- You can learn valuable new study habits from the other group members.
- You can compare your class notes with those of the other group members to clarify your notes and fill in any gaps.
- Teaching/explaining information and concepts to the other group members will help you reinforce your mastery of the information and concepts.

Getting Your Study Group Started

- Get to know your classmates by talking with them before class, during breaks, and after class. When selecting a classmate to join your study group, you should be able to answer YES for each of the following questions:
 - Is this classmate motivated to do well?
 - Is this classmate dependable?
 - Would this classmate be tolerant of the ideas of others?
 - Would you like to work with this classmate?
- Invite enough of these classmates to work with you in a study group until you have formed a group of three to five.
- Decide how often, for how long and where you will meet.
Places to Meet:
 - Visor Center
 - Residence Hall Study Rooms
 - Dining Centers
 - Bone Student Center
 - Library
- Decide on the goals of the study group and who will serve as leader.
- Clearly decide the agenda for the first study session and the responsibilities of each group member for that session.
- Develop a list of all group members that includes their names, telephone numbers, and email addresses. Make sure each group member has this list and update the list as needed.

Possible Pitfalls of a Study Group

A study group can be a very positive learning experience. However, there are some things to avoid. Here are some cautions:

- Do not let the study group get distracted from its agenda and goals.
- Do not let the study group become a social group. You can always socialize at other times.
- Do not allow group members to attend unprepared. To stay in the group, members should be required to do their fair share.
- Do not let the session become a negative forum for complaining about teachers and courses.
- Do not allow one or two group members to dominate the group. It is important that all members have an equal opportunity to participate.

Conducting a Successful Study Group

Test Each Other by Asking Questions: Bring 4-5 sample test questions to each meeting.

Practice Teaching Each Other: Turn the material that you are studying into a list of topics and assign a specific topic to each person, who will then teach it to the group.

Compare Notes: Make sure that you all heard the same thing in class and that you recorded the important information. Ask others to help explain those things that are confusing to you.

Brainstorm Test Questions: Set aside 5-10 minutes to create test questions.

Set an Agenda for Each Meeting: Select activities or create ones to do as a group. Set time limits for each agenda item and determine a quitting time. End each meeting with assignments for each member.

Sources

- <http://www.how-to-study.com/study-skills/en/studying/38/study-groups/>
- http://www.transitioning2college.org/working_with_groups.html
- <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/high-school/50432.html>
- <http://www.d.umn.edu/kmc/student/loon/acad/strat/grpstudy1.html>