

To associate with other like-minded people in small, purposeful groups is for the great majority of men and women a source of profound psychological satisfaction.

*– Aldous Huxley (1894–1963),
British author*



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Study Groups

Share

Question

Challenge

Learn



Guidelines for Successful

Study Groups

Goals of Study Groups

Students will take ownership of the course material while helping each other master it.

Benefits of Study Group Learning

#1: Verify with others any confusing or complex material.

#2: Improve understanding and retention.

#3: Dialogue with classmates and feel less isolated.

#4: Increase confidence in your learning.

#5: See yourself as a tutor, not just a recipient of someone else's knowledge.

#6: Learn new study habits from peers.

From: <http://math.yorku.ca/new/undergrad/sgGuide.htm>

Forming A Study Group

- Go to class 10 minutes early. Ask other early birds to join your group.
- Ask your instructor to announce that a study group is forming or to directly recommend students. Meet after class.
- Invite students who are majoring in the subject to join your group.
- Keep the group small (2 to 5 members).
- Don't split up class assignments among members; tempting as this may be, it creates many problems and may be considered academic dishonesty.

Set a time and location for each meeting. Consider the library, cafeteria, or other public place.

At Your First Study Group Meeting

- Share your names, email addresses, phone #'s (optional), and available times. Each member should have contact info for every other member.
- Get to know one another. Ask what your majors are, what other classes you've taken, what you do for fun, where you work, etc.
- Make a firm schedule for meetings for the whole semester.
- Discuss what you hope to gain from the study group.

At Each Study Group Meeting

- Begin with a summary of the previous meeting.
- Discuss class notes and assignments.
- Make practice tests for each other based on course materials. Write the correct answers and where you found the information. Take each other's tests and discuss confusions, differences of opinion, etc.
- Tape record meetings. At the end of each meeting summarize the main topics discussed and assignments you give each other for the next meeting.
- Bring large paper or use white board to show concepts visually for all.
- Take turns verbally quizzing each other. Try a game show format such as Jeopardy or Name That Tune.
- Use flashcards/notecards to check memory and understanding of facts.

Common Problems and Solutions

Problem #1 – The group doesn't accomplish much

Solution: Make an agenda of goals to accomplish at each session.

Solution: Assign tasks to all members to do before the next meeting.

Solution: Have a meeting about the group, not about the academic subject.

Solution: Take turns facilitating.

Problem #2 – Some members don't speak much

Solution: Take turns speaking and listening. Wait for quieter members to form their thoughts.

Solution: Don't criticize. Challenge what someone says, not the person.

Solution: Use games and other activities that involve everyone equally.

Problem #3 – Some members monopolize discussions

Solution: Create activities that share "air time" like practice tests, verbal quizzes, flashcard review, ask-it basket, etc.

Solution: Ask the more verbal member to summarize what others said, rather than speaking first.

Problem #4 – Some members need more help than the group can give

Solution: Recommend tutoring and instructors' office hours for those who need more individualized help.