How to Form a Study Group

What is a study group?

A study group is a small group of students who meet on a regular basis to discuss course content and information. Students in these groups benefit from having a support system in place to get help on topics they may not fully understand. Research has shown that study groups are beneficial for students, especially when created in a meaningful and thoughtful way.

Four important initial steps in creating a successful study group:

1. Be certain that students in your study group are taking the same class with the same professor. If students are in different sections, you might find that assignments, due dates, and material covered are different.

2. Select dependable students who regularly attend and participate in class. Apps such as StudyRoom can be very helpful for finding other students.

3. Limit your study group to four or five students. This will make finding mutual meeting times much easier. Also, be sure to elicit comments, concerns, and suggestions from all group members so that everyone has a voice.

4. How often do you want to meet? Depending on if you are studying for a test next week, a test in three weeks, or a research project, your desired number of meetings will vary.

Now that you’ve created your study group, how can you make it successful?

Ideas for creating ground rules to help the group run smoothly:

1. Arrive on time and prepared to work.

2. Create and stick to an agenda for each study session.

3. Keep on task. You can be social, just make sure you can still cover the whole agenda.

4. Determine how long you wish each session to last and stick to that set time. An hour or an hour and a half is typically a good amount of time for a study group. If you are having long study group meetings, be sure to schedule breaks to stretch and move around.

5. When you select a meeting place, be sure it is free from distractions. Choose a quiet area where you will not be bothered, or bother others with your talking. University Library has rooms you can reserve that are great for group meetings.

6. Before you leave the study group, set a date, time, place, and goals for the next group meeting.

How do you now communicate with your group?

A few simple tips to help your group function well:

1. Set up a reliable mode of communication. Texting is the most popular, but emails can work as well. If using texting, set up a group chat. If everyone does not share the same phone manufacturer, group chat apps, such as WhatsApp, can be useful.

2. Practice active listening and let all members participate.

3. Always use constructive criticism.

4. Keep a positive attitude!

Adapted from: Elmhurst College Learning Center. Forming a Study Group. www.elmhurst.edu/library/learningcenter