

Tips for Online Study Groups



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Keep it small

Try to keep the group to a small manageable number where everyone can contribute equally and schedules are easier to coordinate. Around 3-5 people is recommended for a productive, effective group.

Keep it short

If a course has extensive material or a looming deadline, it may seem like a good idea to do marathon sessions. However, regular, weekly study sessions (no longer than 45 to 60 minutes) are more effective and prevent disruptive latecomers, early departers, and no-shows. Make a commitment to come prepared and the group will be much more successful.

Keep it focused

Online study groups benefit from having a moderator (members can take turns) to manage sessions and keep everyone's attention focused on the subject at hand. This person can set a group agenda for the session and steer the group away from tangents. Set session goals.

Keep it quiet

Log in from somewhere that's relatively quiet and conducive to learning, such as a bedroom or home office as background noise like you will find in a café can distract group members. Also resist the urge to check e-mail or engage in similar distracting activities.

Keep to a plan

Decide as a group what you would like to cover in a session (via an e-mail facilitated by the moderator ahead of time or at the end of your meetings). It's easy to focus on just completing practice questions or remediation questions, but also take time to identify and understand key concepts that are more difficult.

- Pick a certain unit to review (e.g., pharmacology), divide among members past lectures that apply to that unit and have each member provide a page of bulleted notes/questions on the most challenging material that can be shared online. Members can work together to answer these questions for the first half of the session.

Adapted from:

Duke Academic Resource Center. (n.d.). How to form a successful study group: tips and strategies. Retrieved from: <http://duke.edu/arc/documents/How%20to%20Form%20a%20Successful%20Study%20Group.pdf>

Littlefield, J. (n.d.). 5 Internet savvy study tips for online learners. Retrieved from: <http://distancelearn.about.com/od/studyskills/a/StudyOnline.htm>

Moran, J. (2011). Channeling Jeff Winger: Create your own "community" online study group. Retrieved from: <http://www.schools.com/articles/create-your-own-community-online-study-group.html>