

Learning Resource Center Online Study Skills Handout

The Importance of Study Groups for the Online Learner

Education often looks like competition. Students compete for entrance into school, and for grades when they are in school. As a result, it is easy to overlook the power of cooperation. Aside from the camaraderie, the fellowship, and the fun, a support group can assist you by elevating your spirit. There will be days when you just don't want to work at your education. Other members of a study support group can give you encouragement. More importantly, you are more likely to keep an appointment to study with a group than to study by yourself. If you declare your intention to study with others and know they are depending on you, your intention will gain strength.

Online Students Have Plenty of Opportunities to Interact with Their Peers. Research has shown that online courses with high levels of student-to-student interaction have a positive impact on learning, as it builds community which supports productive and satisfying learning, and helps students develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills. Studying in groups helps ensure that you are all keeping each other in check as far as work goes. A study group can hold each other accountable.

When studying in groups it will be helpful to do the following:

1. **Test each other by asking questions.** Each group member can agree to have four or five test questions to share during online study group meetings. A good place to do this is in the student café which is found on your blackboard, and is used for students to chat with each other, out of their scheduled class time. However, your professor also has access to this venue and can chime in.
2. **Practice teaching each other.** Using the student café, online students can review the tests questions they created, and can use the venue to teach each other. Teaching is a great way to learn something. When you teach something you naturally take on a teacher's attitude of "I know this," as opposed to a student's attitude of "I still have to learn this." The vocalization involved in teaching further reinforces your memory.
3. **Compare notes** to make sure you all understand the assignments, and can move forward as a group. If you are not sure of what is expected or when an assignment or project is due, you can ask a question in the student café section, and your peers or professor will add clarity to your uncertainty.
4. **Unlimited groups support.** The nature of online classes makes it possible for students to automatically be a part of an online study group, which is open to all and to just post questions about assignments. Noticeably, when one student posts a question, as in a regular class setting many other students need the same answers. The advantage here is that all students have access to clarity.

5. **Take advantage of group support.** An advantage to online classes is that you may be taking the same elective online course as a peer who is at or near graduation. This will allow the novice online student to ask questions and develop a good idea of the course ahead, as well as resources they should have before taking their next elective course.

6. **Informal meeting.** The online experience allows the student to be flexible, and requires very little planning to work in a group. Most students simply check into the student internet café and start a discussion. The main issue for the online student is to know that these features are available and to make it a part of their online learning experience.

Remember, whether online or in a classroom, consistency is important in reaching your desired goal.

See Video Below on E-Classes Online Study Group: <https://youtu.be/q8RytopmABw>



*Ellis, David B (1985). **Becoming a Master Student** (p.164-165)*