

The Importance of Study Groups

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.

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 bring four or five test questions to each meeting. Then you can all take a test made from these questions.
2. **Practice teaching 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 heard the same thing in class and that you all recorded the important information. Ask other students about material in your notes that is unclear to you.
4. **Limit groups to five or six people.** Test the group first by planning a one-time-only session. If that session works, plan another. After several successful sessions, you can schedule regular meetings.
5. **Conduct open-ended discussions** and debates designed to produce understanding and insight.
6. **Take advantage of group support in personal areas.** Other people often have insight into your problems involving transportation, childcare, finances, time scheduling, or other barriers you may experience in getting what you want from school.
7. **Set an agenda for each meeting.** Select the items from the above list or create other activities that you will do as a group. Set approximate times for each agenda item and determine a quitting time. End each meeting with assignments for each member. Remember that consistency is important in reaching your desired goal.

Good Luck!

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