

## Study Groups – Another YC Resource to Support Student Academic Success

Would your students benefit from participation in a study group? Are you too busy to organize and supervise study groups for students in your courses? I'm guessing the answer to both questions is yes. The Prescott Learning Center provides resources for Study Group formation and support.

Here's an explanation of study groups from the book, *Becoming a Master Student*, 2009, p. 181, "As social animals, humans draw strength from groups. In addition to offering camaraderie, study groups can lift your mood on days when you just don't feel like working. If you skip a solo study session, no one else will know. If you declare your intention to study with others who are depending on you, your intention gains strength."

There are many benefits of a well-structured study group. We reviewed many other college study group web pages and came up with a comprehensive list of benefits. The important piece is that there is a structure provided for students to engage in a study group; without a structure, study groups are not necessarily beneficial to the participants.

We at the Learning Center strongly encourage you to invite your students to form intentional study groups and to allow us to assist in making the groups as effective as possible.

Interested students can come see us in the LC, call 928.776.2085, or email [prescott.lc@yc.edu](mailto:prescott.lc@yc.edu) for assistance to get started.

If you as a faculty or instructor do not permit collaborative work on homework problem sets or projects, please let us know so that we can support your choices.

Study Group Packet:

- Benefits of Study Groups
- Study Group Contract Form
- How to Form and Participate in a Study Group
- Study Group Session Report Forms

We would love any feedback you might have to make Study Groups a strong resource here at YC



*Here's a study group from spring 2017 prepping for a BIO 201 final using one of the large group study rooms in the LC.*



*MAT 220 Study Group doing final prep – spring 2017*

## 10+ Benefits of Study Groups

### 1. Support

When students work together in groups toward common goals of learning they can provide encouragement to each other to keep motivated toward the goals. It can be a positive and enjoyable experience.

### 2. Commitment

As each member of a study group commits to participate fully in the group, students tend to stay up-to-date with class assignments and this helps to be well prepared for quizzes and tests without cramming, as well as turning in projects in a timely manner. Being part of a study group learning team helps to avoid procrastination.

### 3. Discussions and Communication

Study groups can help you develop as a student, person, and professional. Study groups encourage members to think creatively and build strong communication skills which also help in refining understanding of the material. It has been proven that those who participate in study groups feel more confident and comfortable about reaching their academic goals. Overall, most professional careers require collaboration with colleagues on projects, so study groups are excellent practice in preparation for the work world.

### 4. "Two heads are better than one."

- Students tend to learn faster working within a group versus working alone. If a student was working on his/her own, there would be a lot of time wasted puzzling over any difficulty. However, when students work in groups, they have the opportunity to explain concepts, review material, exchange ideas, and disagree/reason with one another about why one person's answer differs from another. Thus, one can seek clarification and learn faster working in a group.
- Since everyone has individual talents and unique insights, group members can learn from each other. Group members can also teach confusing concepts they understand to other group members.
- Working in groups makes it possible to focus on more concepts since multiple people can review more material than just one.
- One or more group members are likely to understand something you do not. They may bring up ideas you never considered.

### 5. Learn New Study Habits/Skills

There are always ways to enhance your studying methods/techniques in your study skills. Joining a study group will provide you the opportunity to observe a wide variety of study methods and incorporate them into your regimen. Note-taking and organization skills are two major study components that continue to be improved through study groups.

### 6. Compare Class Notes

You can compare your class notes with those of the other group members to clarify important concepts and fill in any gaps.

### 7. Teaching concepts to the other group members

Teaching/explaining information and concepts to the other group members will help you reinforce your mastery of the information and concepts.

### 8. Interaction – enjoyable learning

Studying with a group is a great way to liven up your study sessions. It can be very monotonous and draining to spend long hours alone somewhere. Joining a study group and studying in a group environment makes learning much more fulfilling and enjoyable.

### 9. Different Perspectives

Each group member has different qualities/ideas to offer to the study group. Studying by yourself will always get you one perspective; yet, in groups, you may receive various viewpoints which can assist in helping you reach your own conclusions. Listening and asking questions will provide more food for thought while developing your critical skills.

### 10. Other Benefits

- You may be reluctant to ask a question in class. You will find it easier to do so in a small study group and eventually in the classroom.
- Listening and discussing add a strong auditory dimension to your learning experience.
- Being in a study group with motivated classmates is often helpful to reduce test anxiety.

## Study Group Contract

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Members:

Name	Signature	E-Mail	Cell Phone/Phone Contact

### Get Organized

Why are you forming this study group?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When will you meet (day and time)? \_\_\_\_\_

Where will you meet?  Learning Center  Library  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How will you remind each other of your meeting?  E-Mail  Phone  Text  Facebook

What responsibility will each group member assign herself?

Name	Responsibility

Remember to:

1. Set goal(s) for each session using the Session Report on the back of the contract.
2. Discuss openly and respectfully; listen to each other.
3. Reflect on how you met your goal(s) for the study group session.
4. Set responsibilities for each group member.
5. Assign a rotating group leader, who will remind members of the session meeting time and location.
6. Set your next meeting day and time.

## How to Form a Successful Study Group

*Posted on June 24th, 2014, Updated on September 15th, 2014 by College Atlas*

### 1. Forming the group:

- The ideal study group is comprised of 3 or 4 students. It's not recommended to form groups of 5 or more students.
- Determine ahead of time how long each study session will last and meet once weekly at a minimum.
- Every group member should be committed. In other words, they should show up on time, prepare for study sessions, and refrain from distracting the group when studying. Group members who are unprepared often do not contribute to study sessions.
- It's recommended to select a group leader to ensure sessions start on time, members remain focused, and all important concepts are covered. Each week a new leader could be assigned, so no one gets overwhelmed. The group leader should send emails to each member prior to study sessions with details about where sessions will be held, when they will begin, individual assignments, and other relevant information.

### 2. Preparing for sessions:

- Group members should work together when determining what concepts should be studied during sessions. Plans for upcoming study sessions can be discussed after sessions, in emails, and before or after class. Groups that meet on a weekly basis often cover concepts discussed in class during the week.
- Although homework problems are often worked on during sessions, it's important to cover basic concepts, so each member will have a better understanding of the underlying principles that must be understood to solve individual problems. The following are tips for maximizing group study efficiency:
- Assign each member to review key concepts covered during weekly lectures. Each member should develop a summary or outline to provide for all group members.
- At the beginning of each session, individual group members can teach other members about the concept they were responsible for summarizing, or the group can participate in a group discussion.
- Since group study sessions cannot last indefinitely, it's useful to select a few homework problems to review during subsequent sessions. Group members should work together to determine what problems to cover. This way, group members can work through problems by themselves and discuss insights with the group during sessions.

### 3. Session structure:

Organize structured sessions to maximize efficiency, cover large amounts of material, and keep the group focused. The following are helpful tips for organizing sessions:

- Decide in advance the length of study sessions and the day to hold them on.
- At the beginning of sessions, set time aside to review the previous week's session. During these brief reviews, group members can discuss confusing concepts and concerns, and members familiar with complex topics can explain them to confused members. In fact, one of the best ways to better grasp a concept is to teach others.
- During the remainder of the session, spend time reviewing new homework problems. Plan in advance the problems that will be covered.
- Group members should take turns leading discussions while working through problems. This is especially effective when some members better understand concepts than others.
- Those in classes without assigned homework problems should work through problems listed in the textbook. Most textbooks contain problems at the end of chapters. Review problems and decide which ones to work on during subsequent sessions.
- If there are not enough problems in the textbook, search the Internet for relevant ones. If you're unsure of a problem's relevancy, show it to the course instructor. Students familiar with the concepts can develop problems for the rest of the group to review.
- During the last 10 minutes of a study session, briefly review the concepts discussed during the session. Also take time to identify concepts and problems that need to be reviewed during subsequent sessions.

***Study tip: think about including the following things when answering questions:***

- Confirm that you understand what is being asked to solve in a homework problem.
- Jot down all the steps taken to solve a problem.
- Identify the main concepts underlying homework problems.
- Challenge yourself while working through homework problems. Create your own problems or alter ones you've solved to better understand the basic concepts.

## Study Group Session Report

Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Date & Time of Session: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Sign-In

Name	Responsibility

Study Session Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Study Session Reflection:

What content did you cover in this session?

Describe the group interaction. Give examples of positive interaction and ways you can improve.

Do you feel that you gained a better understanding of the material from participating in this study group session? Why or why not?

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