



Study Group Strategies

Studying with other people can help you interact with the material for better comprehension and retention. But study groups that are not structured, organized, and focused can end up wasting precious time. Here are some suggestions to consider for optimizing your study group sessions.

Agenda

Decide on a realistic and achievable agenda in advance of the meeting. The agenda should include content and time limits for various parts of the meeting and/or the whole session. Do your best as a group to stick to the agenda and the times.

Ticket of Admission

As you know from PCL, study groups function most effectively when every member is prepared and ready to contribute. To encourage that, each member is assigned questions, a problem, or some other written proof of critical preparation of the material to be studied and discussed (think LO) and brings it as a ticket for admission to the study group.

Designated Listener

Assign a “designated listener” for each study group session. At various points during the study session, the DL summarizes the main points and poses follow-up questions or calls for further clarification. The DL also can take and distribute notes and help keep the group focused and on track.

Round Robin

Go around the table taking turns explaining different aspects of each topic or concept. Correct, clarify, and/or talk about conflicting information. Or each member identifies the “muddiest point” for them in a lecture/reading/system/topic. Other group members help clarify the muddy point.

Hypotheticals

Hypothetical questions ask group members to consider how changing the circumstances of a case might alter the outcome. It requires students to apply their knowledge to a new situation.

Rotating Record

Break a large study group into group of two or three. Place each small group at a station around the room where members have five or ten minutes to discuss/explain/graph/illustrate/concept map/etc. a topic or problem and record their answers on a whiteboard or large piece of newsprint. When time is up, each small group rotates to a new station and continues the conversation by reading, responding to, and adding to the previous groups' information. Continue rotating until each group has left remarks at each station.