



Mount Alvernia College
"Educating young women in the Franciscan tradition"

Achieving Excellence @ Mt A

STUDY GROUPS **Francis School** **Clare School** **Elizabeth Hayes School**



TIMES AND LOCATIONS

FRANCIS SCHOOL STUDY GROUPS - During Sem I For Year 8 students (by invitation)

When: Thursday afternoons 3:15 – 4:30 pm

Location: SEAC

CLARE SCHOOL STUDY

When: Thursday afternoons 3:15 – 4:45 pm

Location: iCentre

ELIZABETH HAYES STUDY

When: Tuesday afternoons 3:15 – 5:15 pm

Location: iCentre

FOR TEACHERS

Rationale

With the goal to increase our percentage of students achieving to their potential and in the higher percentages, to continue to improve student success into the new senior system, a strategy that has been shown to assist in improving student outcomes is the adoption of collaborative approaches to learning and study.

Research tells us:

“Over 40 years a number of systematic reviews and meta-analyses have provided consistent evidence about the benefits of collaborative learning. (Education Endowment Foundation, 2018).”

Chun Yun Lau (2006) concluded that the peer group learning approach had not only significantly enhanced and enriched students' learning experience, but also promoted a positive attitude towards the subject matter. Furthermore, this approach had been useful in further developing social interaction skills and improving communication skills among students (Chun Yun Lau, 2006).

Study groups have been found to enable students to improve notes taken, share talents, allow material to be covered more effectively, provide a support system for the students involved and can make the learning more fulfilling and enjoyable (Education corner, 2019).

Group dynamics and logistics

Collaborative learning has been proven to enhance academic success. Healthy competition benefits learners, particularly those who are motivated to achieve.

Students involved in these groups are aiming to realise their own potential and achieve the to the very best of their ability.

Groups will:

- set goals for the session,
- understand group dynamics and team building in order to establish effective study groups.
- access assistance with study plans
- be encouraged to question, speaking candidly and openly about their learning journey,
- develop greater confidence within themselves to take responsibility for their learning.

Communication will be a key component with students encouraged to articulate their own strengths and share these with their peers, regularly. This will enable the girls to develop a network of peers to call upon when they require assistance and guidance in particular subject areas and will allow like-minded girls to collaborate more confidently.

FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Study group format

“The ability of a student to either create a study group or join a study group is the single best predictor of success in college” (Light, 2001)

The following is a guide for establishing and working in study groups.

Using Study Groups

Forming study groups is a very effective strategy for enhancing learning. This is because groups share unique insights and learn from each other. Group members can also teach confusing concepts they understand to other group members. Study groups are particularly effective for completing projects, developing presentations and preparing for exams. The following are advantages of study groups and the strategies for making study groups effective.

What are the Benefits of Joining Study Group?

The following are the greatest benefits of joining a study group.

- **Improve your notes**
Study groups provide an excellent means for students to compare class lecture notes. Comparing notes allows students to fill in any information or important concepts they may have missed during lecture.
- **Sharing talents**
Since everyone has individual talents and unique insights, group members can learn from each other. Study groups provides students an opportunity to benefit from the talents and knowledge of the other group members.
- **Support system**
School can be very stressful, so it is advantageous to seek support from people in similar situations that can provide you support. Joining or forming a study group is a great way to give and receive motivation and support from fellow students and group members. And if you become sick or are unable to attend class, you can get notes from members of your study group.
- **Cover more material**
Working in groups makes it possible to focus on more concepts since multiple people can review more material than just one. Many groups decide to assign topics to individual group members to research and study and then provide a summary for the group. This strategy allows students to learn a lot more, in a lot shorter time, than if they were to study each topic on their own.
- **It makes learning fun!**
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 in the library. Joining a study group and studying in a group environment makes learning much more fulfilling and enjoyable.

Suggested approach for establishing groups and initial facilitation and discussion

How to Develop an Effective Study Group?

Recommendations

- **How many?**
It's recommended to keep study groups between 4 to 6 people. People often socialise too much and cannot cover as much material in smaller groups. In bigger groups, some group members do not contribute as much, and organisation can be a problem. With 4 to 6 people in your group you'll minimise socialisation and maximise individual contribution.
- **Who?**
The most effective study is completed in study groups comprised of members with the common goal of earning good grades. Students dedicated to succeeding in school usually complete assigned reading, take extensive notes, and clear up confusion by asking questions and contributing to the group. Depending on the subject matter, sometimes it's advantageous to select group members with unique talents or knowledge. It is wise to have a leader in your group to ensure you stay on track. This could be someone different each time?
NB – You choose your own group!
- **Where?**
It is best to study in environments without distractions and areas where group members can communicate freely. Most college libraries contain group study rooms. Studying out in the open can work, if your group isn't going to become a distraction to others.
- **How long?**
It is best not to study more than 2 to 3 hours at a time when studying in a group. During long sessions, group members tend to socialise more and do not study as productively. However, study sessions under an hour tend to be rushed and unproductive since only a few subjects can be discussed.
- **When?**
If you plan to meet regularly with a study group, organise sessions at the same location and time. This way, individual members can have time to properly prepare prior to meeting with the group. Having your study group at the same time each week allows students to fit it into their permanent schedule at time when they're going to be available the entire year.

Maximising the Value of Study Group Sessions

The following are strategies for maximising the effectiveness of time spent studying in groups, that is – How to ensure that the day is successful?

- ✓ **Create clear objectives and goals**
Prior to each session, group members should discuss what they hope to achieve, so the session is productive and stays on track.
- ✓ **Be prepared**
Group study can be very ineffective if individual members come unprepared for sessions. Each member of the study group should review lecture notes, complete select readings from the textbook, and identify specific subjects to study.
- ✓ **Ensure participation**
Every member of a study group should actively participate. A great way for each member to contribute is to assign specific topics and have each member instruct the group. Teaching is a great way for individuals to retain information.
- ✓ **Stay focused**
Before each session, someone should be assigned to manage it. The person charged for leading a session must ensure it is productive, stays on track and all necessary material is covered. The person responsible for managing the session should also schedule breaks to avoid getting burned out.

Taken from Educorner.com., (2019). Using study groups., Retrieved from <https://www.educationcorner.com/study-groups.html>

Some strategies that work in Study Groups

Keep the goal of learning in mind. Setting an agenda for the group study will keep the group on task and provide structure. Some activities may include testing each other by asking questions, peer teaching each other concepts, peer reviewing written work, comparing notes, and brainstorming test questions.

Sample Agenda

1. Introduce the topic to be covered
2. Review/compare/update class notes
3. Discuss readings/concepts – take more notes
4. Questions?
5. Work through a sample problem (math/science)
6. Develop potential test questions for practice test
7. Plan for next meeting

“WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A STUDY GROUP:

- A supportive environment where you feel comfortable contributing.
- A place where it’s okay to say that you don’t understand and not be criticized for it.
- A place where you are expected to come prepared, contribute meaningfully, and respect your peers.
- A group that meets reliably once a week.
- A group of peers equally dedicated to understanding the material as a group.
- A group that challenges you to look at material from different angles.
- A place to review material covered in class, exams, and readings, ask questions and practice problems.

WHAT NOT TO EXPECT FROM A STUDY GROUP:

- A substitute for going to class or doing the homework.
- A guaranteed A.
- A place to have the answers given to you or your work done for you.
- A place to have the material “taught” to you. That’s what class is for.
- That someone will have the answer you’re looking for. Often, the group will have to struggle through a concept together, but many minds are better than one, right?
- A place to vent about the professor, class or classmates. No one likes hard work but complaining about it won’t get the job done.
- Do not expect to receive judgments about the fairness or validity of grades.

Excerpt from: The Study group toolkit, Retrieved from
gs.columbia.edu/files/gs/study_group_toolkit.pdf

For further information, access the Study Skills Handbook on the iCentre Website. Students and teachers have access to information through the section – Working better at School Units; Group work Skills; Then topic 4 Study Groups.

Study skills handbook website – through iCentre website – quick links
https://www.studyskillshandbook.com.au/inside/inside_content/school5.html

Other References

Chun Yun Lau, C., (2006), What effects does peer groups studies have on students' learning in commerce mathematics? A case study of diverse ethnic learning., Edith Cowan University Research Online., Retrieved from <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1084&context=ceducom>

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