

Study Groups

Objective: by the end of this lesson, learners will be able to form/ join effective study groups.

Task1: what are the reasons that make students form study groups?

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Task2: Identify advantages and disadvantages of study groups.

Advantages	Disadvantages

Task3: When can a study group turn into a negative experience?

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Task4: How can students ensure the effectiveness of their study group?

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Study groups are formed when 3-6 students agree to meet on a regular basis to study.

Types of study groups

1-A project group: this type is formed to create a joint product (research paper or presentation). Every single member of the group has to be willing to take responsibility for the group's joint work.

2-A discussion group: this group might meet with the purpose of discussing texts or lecture notes.

Forming a study group

Students need to think about the following aspects:

1-Group size

The ideal number of members in a group is four to five individuals. If it is less than this number, it could be affected by absenteeism. If it is more than this number, the workflow can be affected because it would be hard to coordinate and ensure the seriousness and the discipline of all members.

2-Location

An important consideration when forming the study group is the location where the members meet. Places such as canteens and cafeterias are inconvenient due to the noise level and interruptions.

3-Plan of work

When the group is formed, members need to discuss how the group is expected to act and work because not all group members share the same attitudes and expectations.

4-Preparations on an individual basis

Group members must prepare individually before joining the group. In discussion groups, all members have to read the texts beforehand. It may prove beneficial to make an agreement regarding distribution of work to ensure that at least one person has assumed responsibility for the review of a certain text or theme which is to be taken up for discussion. In a project group, each member has to complete their assigned task before meeting. Each meeting should end by agreeing on what each member of the group must prepare for the next one. A coordinator or a chairperson help to ensure that tasks are distributed between the group members. Taking turns at the role of chairperson ensure an even distribution of responsibility.

Conflict Resolution in Study Groups

Conflicts and misunderstanding may arise due to different reasons. They result in annoyance and unproductiveness. To prevent them make sure to:

- ✓ **Establish a joint level of ambition**
- ✓ **Agree on time spent**
- ✓ **Keep appointments**
- ✓ **Concentrate on academic matters**
- ✓ **Communicate in a proper manner**
- ✓ **Make ongoing evaluations – stop conflicts before they start**

Remark: Academic disagreements (as opposed to personal ones) can be a constructive way of reaching insight and understanding. They help students to ask relevant questions, reflect, argue for their points of view and see things from different perspectives.