

### *Student Support Services Suggestions for Forming a Study Group*

Study groups are a great way to supplement your individual study. Being involved in a study group provides you with the opportunity to get feedback on how well you know the material, as well as reinforcing what you have learned. In addition, a good study group gives you practice at working as part of a team, a skill that you will need in the world outside of school. Here are some tips for forming a good study group:

**Talk to other students before and after class and during breaks.** This will give you the chance to find out which students you can work well with, as well as which students know something about the material and work at succeeding in the class.

**Invite other students to study with you.** Make sure you have enough group members that you still have a functioning group if one member can't make it, but keep the group small enough that you are able to accomplish goals during study sessions. A group of 4-6, including you, is usually a good size.

An alternative to inviting others is to ask them a question about the material to start a conversation about the class.

If you are uncomfortable approaching other students, ask the professor or teacher if they can pass around a sign-up sheet.

Set a meeting time that works for everyone's schedules. Schedule enough time to cover material thoroughly.

Choose a location that will be free of distractions and interruptions. Make sure the environment is comfortable because you will be spending a great deal of time there.

**There are two ways to approach study group sessions, and you will need to take the approach that best suits your group.**

**Formal group** At the end of each study session, write an agenda for the next session. Assign topics or sections for each group member to present.

**Informal group** At the beginning of each study session, decide which areas will be covered. You can cover those by having group members present different areas or through group discussion.

**Staying on Track** At some point, every study group will start to veer off track. The following tips will help get the group refocused and prevent it from becoming a social group:

Set a schedule. Decide ahead of time when the study session will end. Schedule time for breaks, too. This makes it clear how much time is available to cover the material.

When students in the group begin venturing off track with their discussions, simply ask them if that material is on the test.

Don't allow group members to constantly come unprepared. Often, establishing preparation as a rule when forming the group will be enough. If not, explain that the group is not a tutoring session and the individual will not be welcome to continue attending if they cannot contribute.

Remember that the study group meets to study the material. Complaints about professors, teachers and classes should be saved for scheduled breaks.

A well-formed and focused study group can be a valuable tool for learning. The interaction and support from the group will help you stay motivated, and group feedback will help you discover your strong points and weak areas. In addition, study groups can make your learning experience a more enjoyable one.