

Navigate: Helpful Guidelines for Study Groups

In general, studying in partnership with a study buddy/group is a great way to share out the workload, save time, gain new perspectives and stay motivated. Research has demonstrated that those who learn together in small groups tend to have a better success rate than those who study alone. And, this is particularly true in the case of online learning. Mostly, best practices for studying effectively with someone else are the same whether you're meeting in person or online.

Whether you utilized the Study Buddies feature in Navigate or you simply have a group of peers in your class that are ready to get started, here are some tips to help you get started and on track for a successful study group.

Follow these guidelines to get the most out of working alongside a Study Group:

- **Choose the right person/people** – it's important that you select a study partner(s) you'll work well with. Not everyone learns in the same way, so make sure you are both happy with the learning methods you use. Discuss what works best for you and agree on a format that suits both your learning styles.
- **Your first meeting** – setting up a Zoom session for your first meeting can help it seem a bit less awkward. This is especially true if your study group is composed of students you don't know or don't know well. This will allow you to get to know each other before you decide to meet in-person (maybe you meet in a room in Mabee Library or the Memorial Union?) or continue using Zoom.
- **Keep study groups small** – you may wish to study with more than one person. This can be very effective so long as you don't have too many people (5 people or less is usually a good guide to keep in mind). While a larger group might reduce the workload, it can very easily lead to gossiping and procrastination.
- **Set a study schedule** – it's important to set time aside to interact with your Study Buddies in real time. Agree on set times and how to meet (mentioned above) and communicate – it is best to have regularly scheduled meetings that you can all stick to. Creating a shared study schedule that you can both access and edit is the best way of managing this. Discuss and factor in any potential dates or times when you may not be available.
- **Agree on how you will meet and communicate** – decide which method of communication works best for both of you and what channels you will use. Some people prefer to communicate via forums or live chat, others by video/conference call, or you may wish to use several methods depending on the focus of the meeting.
- **Share resources** – keep a note of any useful resources you come across that may be useful and share them with each other. Maybe you choose to create a SharePoint account for your group using your @washburn.edu email access. This way you can all edit the same working documents.

- **Talk to each other** – make sure you really interact and talk through topics and/or assignments together. There's no point "meeting up", if you'll all be reading in silence. Your impressions and opinions about the material might be different to those of your Study Buddies and you may gain a new perspective on a subject that you hadn't considered.
- **Come prepared** – make sure you have completed any tasks you agreed to do the last time you "met". Make a note beforehand of any questions or areas you wish to discuss.
- **Make clear study notes** - Sharing your study notes is a great way to deepen your learning. Make sure your own study notes are set out clearly and are legible so your Study Buddies can read and understand them.
- **Teach each other** – revising through teaching is a very effective way to make sure you have grasped the concepts yourself. Take it in turns to "teach" each other a unit or topic. Avoid just reading out your notes - try explaining in your own words.
- **Evaluate each other** – create quizzes or other ways to check your understanding of a particular topic. This is a great way for you to consolidate your own learning and to help your Study Buddies with theirs. Have you checked out the [Learning Scientist](#) resources?
- **Agree on deadlines** – if you are going to enroll in a course together, it is worth taking the time to go over the course curriculum and schedule beforehand and ensure that you can both stick to the deadlines. You may also wish to set your own deadlines and add these to your shared study schedule. Working to a common deadline will help you keep focused and on target.