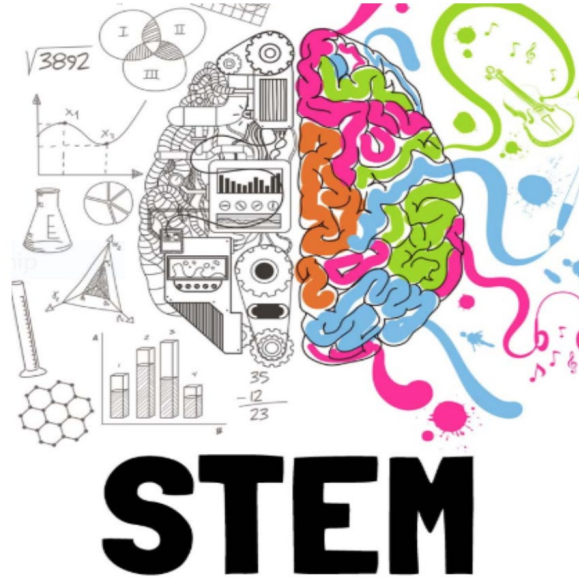


BIOLOGY 124 Study Skills Workshop



“The formula for success is simple: practice and concentration then more practice and more concentration”

Mildred Ella "Babe" Didrikson Zaharias (American gold medalist 1932 Track and Field)

How to be successful in Biology 124

In this workshop you will learn:

Why communicating with your instructor is beneficial for you both

How your thinking can prevent you from having successful communication with your instructor

Appropriate ways to communicate with your instructor

The importance of a study group

How to form, organize and maintain a study group



Getting to know your Instructor

Instructors encourage student success but also expect the student to take the initiative. Whether you are doing well or you are struggling, there are many benefits to getting to know your instructor.

Building a relationship with your professor:

- Notifies the instructor that you are interested in learning
- Indicates to the instructor that you take initiative
- Shows that you take control of your life and are self-advocating
- Can help clarify difficult concepts and aid in understanding the material better
- Can lead to a mentorship relationship with your instructor
- Can lead to a letter of recommendation for a job, scholarship, or research opportunity

To be successful in a STEM major, it is imperative that students communicate with the instructor by asking for assistance during class or lab hours, office hours, or by email.

What stops you from success?

Your negative thoughts can prevent you from open communication with your instructor

Some common negative thoughts are:

- I find the professor scary and intimidating
- The professor is too busy to talk to me
- My lack of knowledge will be revealed; I'll look like I don't know anything
- I feel inadequate not knowing as much as s/he knows
- I do not know how to approach the professor so forget it
- I do not feel confident enough with the material to ask an intelligent question
- I do not want to be a burden and waste the instructor's time
- The professor has more important things to do than to talk to me



What can you do differently?

A more positive approach to self talk could be:

- The professor is fully aware that I am in an entry level class and this information is new to me
- The professor holds office hours so I can talk about things when I need help
- I will be taken seriously if I put effort into the class
- I will learn the course vocabulary and theories over time
- The professor is here to teach me; s/he wants me to learn and to be successful
- Attending office hours can be both informative and gratifying, I'll do it!
- I will learn more if I ask questions



Get to know your instructor right away!

At the beginning of each semester make a connection with your professor so you will have more confidence to ask for help later in the term. A connection means:

- Email the instructor and introduce yourself

When emailing always include:

Class title - CRN days and times (ex: BIOL124 CRN 34148 M 1:30pm – 3:00pm)

Your name and student id number

- Attend office hours, they are meant especially for you
- If you cannot attend the instructor's office hours, ask about alternative times, be proactive
- Speak to your instructor after class if time allows (on Zoom ask in Chat)



How should you prepare for attending office hours?

Remember to:

- Formulate your questions beforehand so you are organized for your visit
- Bring class notes or study documents you are referencing to the appointment
- If you feel shy, bring a classmate and you will both benefit!
- Thank your instructor for their time, show appreciation
- When you attend a second meeting, it will be a lot easier



How do you phrase a question for a science class?

How you approach your question can create an impression on your professor. Your question should include some content knowledge of the material to show basic awareness of the topic.

Example:

Improper Question: “Oh man, I need help! I don’t get what DNA is at all. Can you teach it to me again?”
This question shows a lack of effort to study the material. Professors want a student who is interested in the subject and has attempted to learn something about the topic *before* seeking assistance.

Proper Question: “I need help to understand more about DNA. I know that it includes a sugar base, and a phosphate group, but I don't understand how the nucleic acids can be put together to make a code. Would you go over this with me?”

This question shows curiosity and attempted effort. It also indicates that you have actually learned some background knowledge, which gives the professor a workable place to start from in the conversation.

Have you tried a study group?

Why be in a study group?

- STEM study groups introduce students to emotional and intellectual support and development
- Study groups consist of committed people willing to learn the material
- Study groups help to understand the material by solidifying information for better retention
- All members are equal contributors to the group
- Usually, study groups meet to discuss topics on a weekly basis



The benefits to forming a study group

Advantages of a study group:

- Share resources and compare notes
- Support each other and make friends
- Reduce stress and gain confidence
- Learn new perspectives
- Reduce overall study time
- Decrease procrastination
- Increase motivation by creative problem solving
- Reinforce material, especially difficult concepts



Inviting students to join a study group

There are several ways to build a study group:

- Use Canvas to send out individual or group emails
- On Zoom send out individual inquiries or use a group Chat
- In the classroom circulate a sign-up sheet around the class
- 6 students is a good size for an effective study group
- Gather the following information: name, college email address and phone number
- Plan your communication platform, Zoom, WhatsApp, Messenger, Facetime, etc.



Planning a study group

Weekly Meetings

- Plan meetings for the same day and time each week
- The duration of the study sessions should range from 1.5 - 3 hours
- A 3 hour session can be scheduled before a presentation or exam

Setting the Climate/**Inclusive and Supportive:**

- Online, it's okay to interrupt discussions when someone is not fully understanding the content
- Verbal interruptions should be kept to a minimum to avoid confusion, use the “raise your hand” emoji
- It is beneficial to find a way to draw diagrams and share them on screen



What are the group rules?

Group rules:

- Be on time
- Have an open mind
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Attend study sessions regularly
- Come prepared to contribute to discussions
- Respect group member's opinions and contributions
- Do not monopolize the group
- Do not gossip
- Have the ability to accept constructive feedback
- Treat others with equal consideration and respect
- Minimize distractions



Study group assignments

Facilitating a session can be done in several ways. Each group member is still responsible to read all of the chapters indicated in the syllabus. Study groups can be used to synthesize information or/and teach each other content.

Splitting Chapters:

- The science chapters are split among group member
- Each week a different member is in charge of preparing a detailed outline of the assigned chapter and distributing the information to everyone in the group.
- The member responsible for creating an outline for that chapter can also be responsible to facilitate the discussion that particular week



Everyone has a job to do!

Study group roles – 6 students in a group, everyone has an important role for group success

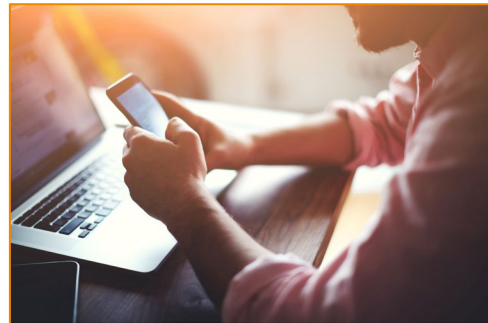
1. Agenda creator:

- Creates agenda which dictates the topics to be covered during each study session
- The weekly agenda reviews study session expectations
- Keeps track of upcoming tests and quizzes and alerts members accordingly
- May collaborate with the professor for guidance on creating the agenda
- Collaborates with the communication monitor to send the weekly agenda via the specified communication mode

2. Communication monitor:

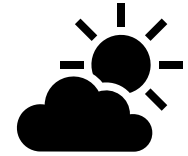
The group agrees on utilizing a communication app to keep in touch

- Sets up the group account
- Reminds members of important information on a weekly basis
- Sends tutorial links, documents, worksheets, and the agenda to the group



3. Group leader:

- Reminds the group of the current study topic and any additional information
- Makes sure all the agenda topics get covered
- Keeps the group on track (but is flexible if a topic takes over)
- Reminds the group of rules and agreements whenever an issue arises
- Makes sure there is communication between all members
- Diffuses conflicts and calls people out if the language is not respectful



4. Gossip monitor:

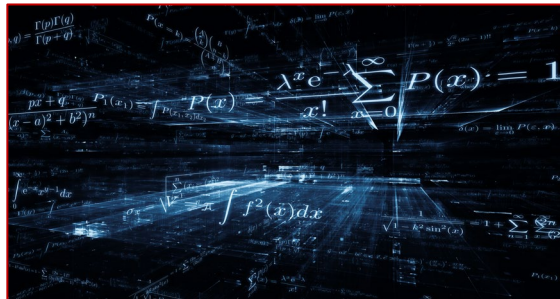
- Keeps the group focused by re-directing the group whenever it is off topic
- The gossip monitor can also suggest a break to keep the momentum steady and remain focused
- Keeps time and brings people back to the group to begin studying again

5. Material monitor:

- Has white board markers to write on the board (when on campus)
- Has access to extra copies of worksheets in case group members forget
- Brings the book to every session for content reference

6. Reserve location monitor:

- Group members decide the application/location of the study sessions
- Makes sure each person knows how to operate the application the group has decided to use
- Makes sure the application works and has a backup app set up in case a problem arises
- If on campus, reserves the study space the group has agreed to (STEM Center, Library etc.) on a weekly basis



Activity - Form Your Own Study Group

Directions: This activity is to practice study group development skills. Gather in groups of six and brainstorm how you will create a successful study group, using yourselves as an example.

As a group determine:

- How will you communicate as a group (email, text, group apps)?
- How will you meet as a group? (What application everyone can use (include backup appl. or a location?))
- What day and time can the group meet each week?
- How long will your study sessions be? Will you consider longer sessions before a test?
- Who will be the group leader?
- Identify and allocate the roles for each group member. (fill out sheet on the next page)
Ask- does the role play to a strength of the group member? (read descriptions on prior pages)
- Will you commit to the success of this study group?

Activity-Pick the study group roles

Leader _____

Agenda creator _____

Gossip monitor _____

Material monitor _____

Reserve location monitor _____

Communication monitor _____

Click here for the pdf: <https://tinyurl.com/studyrollsform>

BIOL124 STUDY GROUP (please print)

NAME

E-MAIL

PHONE #

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Get Help When You Need It

Center hours are:

Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Friday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Sign in for STEM tutoring

[Microsoft Word - Logging in to Microsoft Teams.docx \(citruscollege.edu\)](#)

[Drop-In Tutor Schedule](#) available online

[STEM Center Study Sessions](#) available on line

Check out Stem Center at: www.citruscollege.edu

Or contact them through: mycitruscollege.edu

For more information, contact the STEM Center coordinator at (626) 914-8724

