



## Unlocking The Mind

Learning through study groups

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## Study Groups

- ◆ New term and concept in education
- ◆ Accomplishes goals for education
  - Professional development
  - Increased accountability
  - School restructuring

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## How they work

- ◆ Interaction with colleagues
- ◆ Learn and apply new ideas in teaching-learning experience
- ◆ Forum for different perspectives and ideas

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## Definition for Study Groups

- ◆ Collection of people
  - Gathered to examine a topic
  - Addresses need to be constantly learning
  - Creates a forum for
    - Learning together
    - Planning together
    - Testing ideas together
    - Reflecting together

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## General Characteristics

- ◆ Participants construct knowledge through
  - Research
  - Interaction with selected materials
  - Collegial discourse
- ◆ Every participant brings expertise and has a contribution to make
- ◆ Participants commit to create new knowledge and use their knowledge positively

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## Other Outcomes

- ◆ Engaging in meaningful activity for professional development
- ◆ Develop a sense of collegiality
  - Security to ask for assistance
  - Experiment with new ideas
  - Deep mutual respect for others
  - Support difficult to find in isolation of classroom

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## Getting Started

- ◆ Six people is an ideal number
  - Larger groups are more difficult to work with
  - Smaller groups require more participation from each individual
- ◆ Teaching the same subject is not a requirement
  - Criteria is
    - Interests and needs in common

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## Establishing a Schedule

- ◆ Regularly scheduled meetings
  - Once a week is common in the professional world
  - More than two weeks between meetings makes sustaining momentum difficult
  - About an hour allotted for each session

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## Establish group norms

- ◆ Collectively agree on acceptable behavior
  - Beginning and ending on time
  - Taking responsibility for one's own learning
  - Being an active participant
  - Confidentiality of group meetings
  - Respect for & nonjudgmental of others opinions
  - Completing assignments
  - Being open to change of status quo
  - Practice active listening

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## Determine action plan

- ◆ Clearly stated problem
- ◆ Intended results for members
- ◆ Intended results for students
- ◆ Timeline
- ◆ Resources

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## Content

- ◆ Using researched-based approaches
- ◆ Action Research
  - Collecting and analyzing data from own classrooms
  - Determine merits of each approach
  - Decide how to use information personally

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## Leadership

- ◆ Each member serves as leader on a rotating basis
  - Confirms that each member is a learner and leader
- ◆ Prompts individual group members
  - to look to themselves and each other for direction

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## Leader Responsibilities

- ◆ Gather materials for session
- ◆ Leading session
- ◆ Evolves into shared responsibility within group
- ◆ Communicate any assignments to group in advance of discussion

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## Needs of Pre-service Teachers

- ◆ Classroom management
- ◆ Maintaining an FCS Department
- ◆ Instructional strategies
  - Demonstrations
  - Differentiated instruction
  - Process skills

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## Success of study group

- ◆ Group has responsibility to manage itself
- ◆ Process observer(s) appointed at start of each meeting
  - Make observations during and at close of session
  - Allows objective comment on behavior without leader being “the enforcer”
- ◆ Members are in control of own learning

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## Success is Yours

- ◆ Your classmates are your support system
  - Communicate with WebCT and e-mail
- ◆ Everyone becomes the leader in turn
  - Everyone can provide helpful suggestions
- ◆ You are in control of your learning

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