

Group study: dos and don'ts

COUNSELLOR **MEERA RAVI** GIVES YOU TIPS FOR STUDYING IN GROUPS

- **Select people who seem to share your desire to reach your academic goals.**

This will act as a great motivator. Even with two people, if one person is ambitious and the other chilled out, somewhere along the way, there could be a negative influence and the group effort may get affected. But if all have a common goal, it helps.

- **Look for people who stay alert in class, take notes, ask questions.**

This is not a judgmental statement, but generally those who are interested in class are those who are keen to change themselves and set themselves goals to do well. If everyone in a group is careless, there is little learning.

- **Limit your group to four or six people. Larger groups are cumbersome. Small groups can too easily get off track.**

This is because if it is too large a group and each one wants to have a say, not much learning occurs. Also, large groups may break up into smaller sub-groups with differing ideas. If the group is too small, and one of the two is not motivated enough, there is no one to correct them when distracted.

- **Schedule a meeting to "test the waters" and see how you get along together.**

This is to see how you relate to others or how all members relate to the rest of the group. Make it clear to every one that this is just a trial. So, if the group dynamics don't work positively, you can change the group members. If the group chooses the right people, there is room for



benefiting mutually.

- **Take turns 'teaching' each other.** One of the benefits is that you will

reinforce your own knowledge. Also, if you have not understood a concept, others will help you. Likewise, if a member teaches you something that is wrong, you can correct him or her. As long as all the members are comfortable in a group, they will not mind being corrected.

- **Make sure someone takes the role of a leader.**

Because the leader makes sure there are no distractions. He or she can set goals as in the syllabus to be covered that day. If the goal has not been reached, the leader can inform the others and tell them not to spend too much time on a particular topic. You can change the leader every week.

- **Compare notes.**

You can then see how others have understood a concept or lesson. They bring their inputs, you bring yours, there is sharing. You learn different perspectives.

- **Take a few minutes at the end of the session to evaluate what you have achieved.**

Have you left topics out? How far ahead have you gone — these are questions you can ask others and analyse whether the time spent was worth it.

- **Plan the next meeting, give group assignments.**

The group can decide, for example, that when it meets next, the members must have studied a set number of topics. It helps to have a common commitment because you are answerable to the group or the leader. On your own, there may be no commitment.