

Sama's Project

1 - University, Field of study, Year?

William Carey University, Medicine, Year 2

2 - How often do you study (days per week)? For how long? In a group? Alone? If alone: Have you ever thought about/ tried working in a group? If no: Would you like to? Would it bother you?

I study everyday, averaging 4 hours. I study alone for most classes that are focused on content memorization but benefit from group studying for courses that require conceptual thinking and skill development. For example, anatomy is one course that is understood so much better in a group setting as opposed to studying it alone.

If in a group: With how many people? How Often? Do you know these people? Would you like to work with people you don't know?

I study with 1-2 other people, usually during the week leading up to exams for conceptual courses. In other times, my friend and I work separately but we share our notes on the Notion app and we divide the lectures amongst us so it's more manageable. I usually study with the same 1-2 people, because we understand each other and have demonstrated our ability to work well together.

3 - When was the last time you studied in a group? Where? Why? At what time?

Right now it's the start of the new semester, so I haven't had much time for group study yet. However, last semester during exam season, I got together with my usual group of 1-2 people and we studied on campus. We usually meet in the evening and depending on the amount of work, may stay up till late at night. During first year of this program, it was unfortunately not uncommon for us to pull all-nighters before major exams.

4 - Have you ever had questions to which you couldn't find an answer? (From someone or on the internet)

Absolutely! All the time! If I can't find an answer in my books/lectures, I discuss it with my friend. If we both don't know, we approach an instructor for further clarification.

5 - Have you ever worked with people you didn't know? Were there any problems? Would you have changed anything?

Yes! My clinical skills class follows a rotating pattern in which I get to work with new people every week in class/labs. I usually welcome these opportunities to make new connections and learn from new perspectives. However, it is easier to work with some classmates than others, and the level of efficiency varies depending on the group. Still, I think it is good to keep this rotating pattern so that I get more experienced working with different people.

6 - Have you ever had trouble finding a place to study? A space other than a University Library / Library? Alone / In a group?

Yes. I currently study in my dorm room. However, last semester, my dorm room did not have the proper lighting/desk conditions and I was forced to study in the library or in medical buildings. I usually enjoyed being at the library, but the hours did not always align with my needs. As a medical student, you are not happy when the library closes at midnight, because you still have so much work to do! Moreover, the library had reduced hours during the weekends, and that was especially challenging for me because I would have to look for alternative, less optimal places to study over the weekend. Another challenge with the weekends is that the university buildings are mostly empty and you may not feel safe spending long hours there, or if they are occupied, they may be too noisy (e.g. the student center has chairs for sitting, but it is not meant to serve as a quiet study space). I would much rather study at the library if it had extended hours!

7 - Difficulty in finding availability? see above

8 - Before / After the work session? (As a "reward" for work, after the effort, the comfort!)

I'm not sure about this question, but I assume it is asking about what I do before/after work sessions. I usually have class until 5 pm everyday, but I do not attend every class in person because I learn some courses better on my own. That means that I spend the mornings/early afternoons either in class or self-study. Evenings are usually spent at my desk. Things I have tried that give me a break after a work session include cooking a meal, talking to family/friends, watching a show, listening to a podcast or more recently, taking daily walks to energize myself.

9 - Do you take breaks during your work sessions? (For a coffee, a small snack, other...)

Yes, I usually follow the pomodoro technique to avoid burnout. I get up after a 25-min study/work session, stretch, use the washroom, rehydrate myself, check my phone, ...

10 - How would you like to study?

I like having some kind of schedule to keep me accountable, but enough flexibility to plan how I like to learn the material on my own. I'm currently preparing for a boards examination and I've been advised to study using practice questions. I find them very effective. Also, flashcards and videos are a lifesaver! I don't always get to study the "optimal" way, but something that has worked for me in the past includes watching a short video about a topic before actually reading the lecture slides, the going over the big terminology in the slides, make charts to summarize the information, and used "spaced repetition" to remember. Doing 3-5 practice questions per lecture is a good goal as well.

11 - Would it bother you to work with people you don't know?

Not necessarily. I might find a new awesome study partner. However, I prefer to spend time with my own friends because studying together is fun and we also get to talk and share the time together.