WL & Study Groups!

Introduction

My Journey

- My name is Elena.
  - Older student who created and managed the Web Lounge (WL) for two years.

Initial Challenges

Beginning with Doubts

- **Feeling nervous and overwhelmed.**
  - Reached out on Slack for advice.
  - Received a simple but impactful response: "Work together."

Establishing Study Sessions

Inspired Action

- **Proposed weekly study sessions.**
  - Initially a few participants.
  - Gradually expanded to daily sessions.

Creating a Study Environment

The Virtual Study Room

- **Transition from twice-a-week to daily sessions.**
    - Running from 8:00 a.m. to end of the day.
    - Space akin to a library study room.

Collaborative Routine

Engaging Interactions

- **Students worked in silence with cameras on (or off!).**
  - Only spoke if they wanted - for questions, problem-solving, or collaboration. Or just to hang out.

Adapting to Course Changes

Transition to "Mjukvara" Course

- **School shifted - we were divided into smaller, groups for the course.**
  - First official group project introduced at shcool.
  - Many students expressed feelings of loneliness from September to March - not having contact with other students.

Teacher's Suggestion

Building Community

- **Teacher approached me about our study group's success.**
  - Highlighted the gap in connection opportunities for distance learners.
  - Suggested creating a virtual space like a daily online coffee break (inspired by teachers online coffee break during the pandemic).

Distance Learning and Collaboration

Staying Connected and Building Community

- **Unique challenges of distance learning.**
  - Difficulty in staying connected.
  - Limited opportunities for collaboration.

WEB LOUNGE

Birth of the Web Lounge (WL)

Digital Hub for Connection

- **Established the Web Lounge as a casual, but regular, hang-out space.**
  - Drop-in option for chatting, talking about school or assingments, or hanging out.
  - Student space - they are the ones who decide, not the person holdng WL!

Web Lounge Leader Role

Fostering Community

- Leader of WL - be present & available; an anchor

- Help keep conversation flowing and respectful

- Not in charge of topics - WL is a space for students. WL leader is just holding the space.

- Aimed to replicate in-person camaraderie.

- Help students feel less isolated.

Web Lounge Features

Informal Gathering Spaces

- **Daily coffee sessions (15-60 minutes).**
  - Foster social connections.
- **Open-door policy for flexibility.**
  - Join late or leave early without obligation.

Impact of the Web Lounge

Community Success

- **Created a supportive network for students.**
  - Helped reduce feelings of isolation.
- **Improved academic outcomes reported by participants.**
  - Higher likelihood of continuing education.

STUDY GROUPS

Benefits of Study Groups p1

Key Advantages

- **A space to ask questions and get help.**

  - Immediate, low-pressure environment.

- **Teaching others solidifies your knowledge.**

  - Deepens understanding through explanation.

- **Collaborative Learning - Working Together**

  - Problem-solving in technical subjects.

  - Share code, debug, and learn new approaches.

Benefits of Study Groups p2

Motivation and Accountability - Keeping Each Other Engaged

- **Mutual motivation among peers.**
  - Helps combat isolation in distance learning.
- **Regular meetings provide structure.**
  - Helps maintain discipline and reduces procrastination.

Social Connections - Building Relationships

- **Study groups fulfill social needs.**
  - Share frustrations, celebrate successes, and bond.
- **Realizing you're not alone in struggles.**
  - Collective challenges bring support.

Tools for Collaboration

Utilizing platforms like Zoom and Discord.

- Structured study groups to stay engaged.
- Informal spaces like the Web Lounge for social interaction.

Creating a Collaborative Environment

- Regular virtual meetings and resource sharing.
  - Establishing consistent time slots for group work.
  - Open communication channels for participation.

Positive Space for Learning!

- Encouraging kindness and mutual respect.
  - Combats isolation in distance education.
  - Fosters meaningful connections and community.

Strategies for Effective Study Groups - PRACTICAL TIPS 1

Setting Up Study Groups

- **Create a consistent virtual study space.**
  - **Set up regular Zoom meetings.**
    - Post Zoom links in Discord.
    - Zoom allows simultaneous screen-share
  - **Create a dedicated Discord channel.**
    - Facilitate quick communication.
    - Easy access for all participants.
    - See who's online and share screens.

Structuring Time

- **Regular Study Times**
  - Establish dedicated time slots.
  - Encourage engagement and routine.
- **Accommodate different schedules.**
  - Introduce "Moon" (PM) and "Sun" (AM) sessions.

Strategies for Effective Study Groups – PRACTICAL TIPS 2

Create a Comfortable Environment

- Foster Inclusivity
  - Promote kindness and support.
  - Be respectful!

View the group as a "library study room."

- Encourage casual / easy participation
  - No pressure to speak or have camera on; flexibility encouraged.
  - Open door policy

Results of Study Groups!

Building a Sense of Community

- **Success through regular interaction.**
    - Formed a strong network of support.
    - Peers ready to help when someone struggled.

Improved Academic Outcomes

- **Collaborative environment eased individual challenges.**
    - Led to better study results for participants.

Engaged Education

- **Higher likelihood of staying engaged.**
    - Shared motivation and accountability.
    - Social connections were crucial for academic success and persistence.