



Special  
Points of  
Interest

- Conference 2009
- Group study tips
- Workshop Suggestion
- Learning Strategy
- Minutes from SIG meeting

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# Beyond the Baccalaureate

## Graduate & Professional Student Success SIG

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### Historic Richmond

The CRLA Conference in Richmond, Virginia this past fall was beneficial, as always. We had many opportunities to mingle with colleagues and share ideas, from formal presentations to our informal SIG meeting— we all walked away with at least one good idea— if not many more!

Laura Heidel represented the SIG and networked with Katy Lee Kemp, who works in a medical school setting, during our SIG meeting. Katy did a great presentation later that day!

Laura also found out that many in CRLA are confused about our purpose and thought the SIG was FOR graduate and professional students—

not for those who WORK WITH graduate and professional students. This is something she is working to remedy with an article in the general CRLA NewsNotes!

Also, our SIG requested funding to hire a student worker to research which institutional staff/faculty serve graduate and professional students, so that we can recruit them to join CRLA and our SIG. We need to reach out to those who could benefit from our group and for whom the group could benefit from. On that note, please encourage colleagues to join our SIG and please let us know how we can serve you better. Your input in our newsletters and conferences is vital to this SIGs continued success! .



*Join us every fall...  
at the CRLA Conference!*

### Do Your Students Work Well in Groups?

Too often graduate and professional students resist working and studying in groups. Group studying can be an effective tool to advance their understanding of terms and concepts in their coursework. Below are some tips we give our graduate students at UTSA:

Study groups help break the habit of self-study and create interdependence. Everyone in the group commits to studying because your group relies on everyone's input.

The best way to form a study group is to ask people in your class to join. Look for students who have strengths in different areas of your class and are

always taking notes. You want the group to have similar goals, but different approaches which can help round out your group.

Be careful and limit it to five to six people max. If the group is too large it can get hectic.

There are many ways you can approach the material your group goes over. First, hold a meeting to discuss times and approaches to solidify your group prior to studying. Set some ground rules, such as rotating group leaders and that there are no "dumb questions." This will help unify the group.

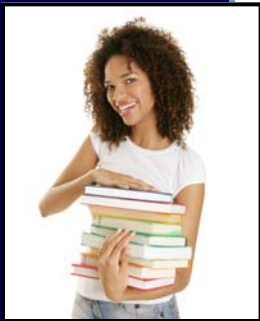
Set an agenda for each meeting. Most likely this will

be what you went over in class that week. Some helpful approaches are:

- ◆ Test each other on the material,
- ◆ Compare notes to clarify information,
- ◆ Practice teaching or lecturing concepts covered in class,
- ◆ Brainstorm test questions,
- ◆ Mindmap the course together, or
- ◆ Summarize readings and allow others to ask questions.

Your study group becomes a place where everyone can contribute and learn the material. Study groups help you stay focused, no matter what your assignment is.

# SIG Purpose & Student Needs



## What is the purpose of our SIG?

For those of us who PROVIDE services to graduate/professional students on our campuses, to share IDEAS about programming and marketing. (If you don't currently serve graduate/professional students, but would like to, we can help you with that as well.)

To give SUPPORT to each other in working with this often underserved population

To EXAMINE best practices and current research in working with this population

## What are the needs of graduate and professional students and how do they differ from undergraduate needs?

- Students are balancing school and life issues,
- They are understanding how to be more self-motivated than they were as undergrads,
- They are learning how to study in (perhaps) a new discipline and learning the corresponding cognitive schemas that go along with that discipline,

- They are learning how to manage a sometimes overwhelming amount of material,
- Students are not the "top dog" anymore,
- They are learning how to deal with professors on a collegial level as opposed to putting them on a pedestal as they may have done previously,
- They are dealing with career issues such as postponing earning an income for several years and learning how to market themselves effectively.

## Workshop Suggestion

Each semester we will focus on a particular suggested workshop that our SIG members could implement on their own campuses. Please submit your idea for the February newsletter by January 15th!

We have found great success in providing *in-class workshops* to graduate students through their graduate courses. At UTSA we have increased the number of students seen through in-class workshops from 69 in Fall 2006 to 628 in Fall 2009. Our reputation for providing substantial workshops on topics such as professional presentations, writing a literature review, developing a research focus, manage your research & readings, APA, and comprehensive exam preparation has grown considerably. Before each long semester we email professors to ask if and when they would like us to visit their class, offering to tailor our workshops to fit their course needs. Additionally, we offer a faculty support option on our website year round: <http://www.utsa.edu/trcss/gsla/facultysupport/facultysupport.cfm>

## Learning Strategy– Concept Mapping

Concept mapping, or webbing, is a great method for organizing material—taking notes, writing papers, or studying. Concept maps illustrate relationships between ideas and are helpful for understanding the

