

# Study Skills Group

Grade: 4<sup>th</sup>

Dates: 9/18/18 – 10/30/18

Leader: Alexis Thompson

# Session 1: Introduction

School Counselor: Alexis Thompson

Date: 9/18/18

Activity: Pre-survey and Establishing Norms

Grade(s): 4<sup>th</sup> (Study Skills Group)

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (Domain/Standard):

M-2: Self-confidence in ability to succeed,

M-6: Positive attitude toward work and learning,

B-LS 7: Identify long- and short-term academic, career, and social/emotional goals

B-SS 1: Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills,

B-SS 2: Create positive and supportive relationships with other students

Learning Objective(s) (aligns with competency):

1. Students will know what is expected of them in-group from both the facilitator and each other
2. Students will be able to discuss their current study habits
3. Students will reflect on which study skills they need to improve in

Materials:

Pre-surveys

Writing Utensils

Clipboards

Procedure:

1. Introduce self to the group. Ask each group member to introduce themselves as well.
2. Lead icebreaker: Counting Together. "To get started, let's try an icebreaker. We're going to see how high we can count together as a group. The one rule is that only one person can speak at a time. If two people say the same number at once, we have to start over."
3. After the icebreaker, reflect: What did you think of that activity? "Something that I noticed was that it could be a bit risky. You have to take a risk to say a number. This group is the same way – sometimes it may not be the most comfortable sharing how we're doing in class or how our study skills are going. No one will ever be pressured to share more than they are comfortable sharing. At the same time, I hope we can make this a safe enough space for everyone to feel free to share with each other."
4. Introduce the purpose of the group: "The purpose of this group is to work together and improve in our study skills. We will learn from each other and through activities what works and what does not work for us as individual learners."
5. Introduce norms: "In order for our group to be the best group possible, we should set some group rules, or 'norms' so all of us can do our best and be safe. Which rules would you like us to have in this group?" Examples include look at the speaker, one person talks at a time, keep the discussion relevant, stay in your seat, and pay attention.
6. Emphasize the importance of confidentiality: "One rule that I'd like us to keep is 'what we say in

here stays in here.' For example, if I mentioned while we were here at group that I failed the social studies test and you told your best friend as soon as we got back to class, I wouldn't feel so great about that. In fact, I might not want to share in group anymore. So for all of us to have the best experience possible, let's respect what each person says and not tell other people. There is one exception to this rule: if you mention hurting yourself or hurting others or someone hurting you or someone else, I have to tell another adult so we can keep you safe."

7. After all of the norms are agreed on, introduce the pre-survey. Give each student a copy of the pre-survey, a pencil, and a clipboard.
8. Explain the purpose and importance of the pre-survey: "Please fill out this form as fully as possible. It is important that you answer every question honestly so I have an idea of what we should focus on as a group. If you guys are already great at time management, then we don't have to spend a week reviewing that when we could be focusing on something everyone needs more help with."
9. Answer any questions about the survey and clarify any words or questions, if needed.
10. After everyone has completed the pre-survey, start a discussion: While filling out the form, did anyone learn something about themselves and their habits? What did you learn about yourself? What might be some good goals we can set for ourselves and the group? Which topics are you most interested in covering?

## Session 2: Study Skills (Superhero Version)

School Counselor: Alexis Thompson

Date: 9/25/18

Activity: How To Be A Study Skills Superhero (Study Skills – Group B: Session 2) (Original)

Grade(s): 4<sup>th</sup> (Study Skills Group)

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (Domain/Standard):

M-2: Self-confidence in ability to succeed,

M-6: Positive attitude toward work and learning,

B-LS 2: Demonstrate creativity,

B-LS 3: Use of time-management, organizational and study skills,

B-SS 1: Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills,

B-SS 6: Use effective collaboration and cooperation skills

Learning Objective(s) (aligns with competency):

1. Students will be able to name at least 4 new study strategies
2. Students will be able to identify which study approaches will work best for them
3. Students will develop and discuss a plan for applying new study skills to their routine.

Materials:

Laptop with PowerPoint slides of characters

Worksheets for each student

Writing utensils for each student

Clipboards for each student

(Optional:) Blank sheet of paper for each students

Procedure:

1. Review norms from Week 1. Ask students to name them
2. Introduce the topic to the group (approaches to studying). Ask students: what is your current approach to studying?
3. “Today we are going to discuss some new approaches to studying. I have 12 tips that I wanted to share with you and afterwards, we can discuss if I missed any. Before I start, I was wondering, how do we feel about superheroes? Personally, I like superheroes and thought that we could learn something about study skills from some of them.”
4. Hand out one worksheet, one blank piece of paper, one clipboard, and one writing utensil to each group member.
5. Explain the activity: “I just handed you a worksheet that has 12 images on it. I am going to show you on my computer a picture of each superhero. When I show the picture, we are going to talk about possible study skills we could learn from that hero. Find the icon on your worksheet that goes with that hero (I will help you) and write down the skill and anything that jumps out at you from our conversation. Afterwards, we will have a discussion.”
6. Start PowerPoint presentation with images of each superhero. Facilitate a discussion and tell the group members the study skills listed for each hero.

7. Discussion questions: Which skills looked most interesting to you? Which do you plan to start using? How will you start using them? Do you anticipate any obstacles?
8. (If time) Have students use their blank sheet of paper to write down at least 4 skills that they plan to use. Have them write how they will use those skills and share out with the group.
9. Wrap up question: What did you learn today? How do you plan to apply it?

# Session 3: Note Taking (Superhero Version)

School Counselor: Alexis Thompson

Date: 10/2/18

Activity: Taking Clear Notes (Passages from [Mrs. Thomas's OWLstanding Class Blog](#))

Grade(s): 4<sup>th</sup> (Study Skills Group)

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (Domain/Standard):

M-2: Self-confidence in ability to succeed

M-5: Belief in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes

M-6: Positive attitude toward work and learning,

B-LS 3: Use of time-management, organizational and study skills,

B-SMS 2: Demonstrate self-discipline and self-control

B-SS 1: Use effective oral and written communication skills and listening skills

Learning Objective(s) (aligns with competency):

1. Students will be able to identify at least 2 note-taking strategies
2. Students will be able to determine which note-taking strategies will work best for them
3. Students will test their note taking skills and evaluate where they could improve.

Materials:

2 – 4 Passages (Passages from [Mrs. Thomas's OWLstanding Class Blog](#))

Writing Utensils

Clipboards

Example pages of note taking styles

Blank sheets of paper

Procedure:

1. Ask members what they recall from last week. Did they apply what they learned? Did it work?
2. One key part of study skills is taking good notes. You use notes to study what you discussed in class, understand what the teacher is saying, and remembering details. What is your current note taking strategy? How well is it working for you?
3. Today, I'm going to introduce you to a few note taking methods. You are welcome to use them in class, or stick to your old method, but we're also going to try out at least one of them during group today.
4. Explain each of the four types: Mapping, Outline, Charting, and Cornell
5. Cornell: "For the Cornell method, you divide your page into three parts like this. The biggest section is the notes section. Use the notes section to write what the teacher is covering in class. After class, read over the notes (like we spoke about last week) and write in the margin column the main ideas about what you wrote. At the bottom, you write a summary of the lesson or page." Review the benefits listed below and ask if anyone has questions about this type.
  - Helpful later for quick study (can scan the margin for the topic you want to go over/use it to quiz yourself)
  - Neat

- Lets you study a little each day/review the lesson after class
  - Allows you to pull out major themes, ideas, and concepts
6. Mapping: For mapping, the page is organized by topic, like this. The main topic branches out into a subtopic and detailed information about each. See if anyone has any thoughts or questions
    - Great for visual learners
    - Shows the connection between topics
  7. Charting: For charting, you divide the page into columns, which are labeled by category. Then, you put the details that go with each category in its column. See if anyone has any thoughts or questions
    - Separates topics for quick review
    - Highlights key information for each topic
    - Organizes facts
  8. Outlining: For outlining, each section starts with a main topic and the subtopics go underneath and are indented. This is a bullet point method and easy for in-class note taking
    - Easy to organize (don't need to prepare before class)
    - Usually lines up with teacher's PowerPoint presentations
    - Neat
    - Shows how topics are related
  9. Have students look over each type of note taking style and consider which they like best.
  10. Split the group in half or let members work individually. Give each group/member a passage to take notes on. Each person is allowed to use any of the note taking styles.
  11. Set a timer for 5 minutes as they take notes
  12. After 5 minutes have passed, have the groups/individuals trade notes. Read the notes.
  13. Have each group or individual explain what the other group read about.
  14. Discussion: What was clear in this activity? What was harder to understand? Do you see yourselves using any of these note-taking styles? Encourage students to try one for the week if they'd like
  15. Wrap up question: What did you learn today? How do you plan to apply it?

# Session 4: Organization

School Counselor: Alexis Thompson

Date: 10/9/18

Activity: Backpack Organization Game (Found at [School Counselor Blog](#), Adapted from *Creative Approaches for Counseling Individual Children in the School Setting* by Diane S. Senn)

Grade(s): 4<sup>th</sup> (Study Skills Group)

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (Domain/Standard):

M-5: Belief in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes

M-6: Positive attitude toward work and learning,

B-LS 3: Use of time-management, organizational and study skills,

B-SMS 1: Demonstrate ability to assume responsibility

B-SMS 2: Demonstrate self-discipline and self-control

Learning Objective(s) (aligns with competency):

1. Students will be able to identify the key components to being organized
2. Students will be able to explain the steps it takes to organize a messy backpack.
3. Students will develop a plan for applying organizational skills to their routine

Materials:

Two backpacks filled with supplies (one neat, one messy)

Two pieces of paper with X's on them

Organization tips handout

Procedure:

1. Before: Prepare two backpacks, one organized, one disorganized. Put a piece of paper with a big "X" marked on it in each backpack. Zip the backpacks so no one can tell they are different inside
2. Ask members what they recall from last week. Did they apply what they learned? Did it work?
3. Introduce today's topic: While note taking is incredibly important, they can't help you much if you don't know where they are. So today, we're going to talk about staying organized.
4. Choose two volunteers to play the game. Choose a third person to time the activity. Ask the remaining member(s) to take note of what is going on, how each person is reacting or feeling, what strategies each person used, etc.
5. Ask the two volunteers to each choose a backpack. Explain that the students will be racing to look through their backpack to find a piece of paper with an "X" marked on it. Students will not know before opening the backpacks that one is organized and the other not. Have students predict who will find the paper first.
6. Start the timer and watch the students search for the papers. The messy backpack will have it shoved at the bottom, while the neat backpack will have it in a binder or folder.



7. Discuss with the group their impressions of the game. What did you notice? Who had the easier time? How did each person seem to feel – relaxed? Anxious? Why is it important to be organized? How does it affect study skills? **Which backpack looks more like yours?**
8. Discuss how we can start to organize the messy backpack. Have the last group member(s) begin to organize the messy bag as the group directs.
9. Distribute a handout with organization tips: “I am handing out some organization tips so you can remember what we talked about today. For next week, I'd like you to take time to organize your backpacks like we did in group. If you can, bring in a picture of your neat backpack.
10. Discuss: What is one organization habit you are going to start this week?
11. Wrap up question: What did you learn today? How do you plan to apply it?

# Session 5: Test Anxiety

School Counselor: Alexis Thompson

Date: 10/16/18

Activity: Caterpillars to Butterflies

Grade(s): 4<sup>th</sup> (Study Skills Group)

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (Domain/Standard):

M1. Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional and physical well-being

M2. Self-confidence in ability to succeed

M5. Belief in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes

M6. Positive attitude toward work and learning

B-SMS6. Demonstrate ability to overcome barriers to learning

B-SMS7. Demonstrate effective coping skills when faced with a problem

Learning Objective(s) (aligns with competency):

1. Students will be able to identify the negative self-talk they partake in before tests.
2. Students will be able to combat negative self-talk by transforming it into positive self-talk.
3. Students will develop skills to address their test anxiety

Materials:

Test Anxiety Tips handout

Caterpillars to Butterflies worksheet

Writing utensils

Clipboards

Procedure:

1. Ask members what they recall from last week. Did anyone organize their backpack, room, or folder? How did it go?
2. Introduce topic: We've spent the last few weeks discussing ways to prepare for tests and quizzes. Today, we're talking about what to do when we get to the test and how to cope with test anxiety. Test anxiety has a lot of different symptoms. Which ones do you experience when taking a test?
3. First, we are going to watch a video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kO1kgI0p-Hw> (The Power of Positivity | Brain Games | National Geographic)

*The video compares two people trying to throw free throws – one who missed ten baskets and one who made 9 out of 10. They had both of them try to shoot baskets while blindfolded. The first person, the crowd cheered for and convinced her that she made the baskets, the second person they were less encouraging. When they tried again without blindfolds, the first person made 4 shots while the second missed three out of four shown.*

4. Discuss: What were the differences between the two people? What happened when the people watching said good things and were encouraging? What about when they were discouraging and negative?

5. During tests, there aren't people around us saying things, but what you do hear is the voice inside your head. Sometimes your thoughts might go unnoticed, but you have control over them and they make a difference.
6. We are going to focus on the thoughts that run through your head while taking a test. Sometimes when we're anxious about the test, we can have trouble focusing or negative thoughts can run through our head. Would anyone like to share some negative thoughts that might come to mind during a test? You don't have to use personal examples, just use general ones that might pop into someone's head.
7. Those negative thoughts do the same thing that the crowd did in the second example in the video. Even if you know everything on the test, the negative thoughts can throw you off your game.
8. So now that we know what the negative thoughts are, we can catch them the next time those or similar thoughts pop into our heads. Because the thing with negative thoughts is, they aren't true. They exaggerate and oversimplify things. When we catch these negative thoughts, we want to confront them and speak the truth to them.
9. Pass out the Caterpillars to Butterflies worksheet, writing utensils, and clipboards to each group member.
10. "Take a look at the Caterpillars to Butterflies worksheet. We can think about negative thoughts kind of like a caterpillar – you don't think much of them, they're just there. But when you look at them a little closer, you might notice they're not so nice. They're kinda hairy and slimy. But caterpillars can transform into butterflies, and we can transform our negative thoughts the same way!"
11. "The worksheet lists examples of possible negative thoughts that might pop up while taking a test. Like I said, these are our caterpillars. It's our jobs to help transform them into butterflies, or more true, positive thoughts." Go through the examples with the group members. "Does anyone have any questions about the examples?"
12. "Now it's your turn. Take the other negative examples and make up your own positive responses that you can say back to that negative thought. For the last two questions, think of the negative thoughts that you might have to face and come up with positive responses to those."
13. After everyone has finished the worksheet, discuss with the group: "What were some of the positive responses you wrote down? What did you think of this activity? How might you apply it the next time you have a test?"
14. "Finally, before we leave, I have also given you a worksheet with other tips for addressing test anxiety. Look it over and see which tips are most helpful for you. Which jump out?"
15. Wrap up question: What did you learn today? How do you plan to apply it?

# Session 6: Learning Styles

School Counselor: Alexis Thompson

Date: 10/23/18

Activity: Kids2College Learning Styles Inventory

Grade(s): 4<sup>th</sup> (Study Skills Group)

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (Domain/Standard):

M2. Self-confidence in ability to succeed

M5. Belief in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results

B-LS 2. Demonstrate creativity

B-LS 4. Apply self-motivation and self-direction to learning

B-SMS 2. Demonstrate self-discipline and self-control

B-SMS 3. Demonstrate ability to work independently

Learning Objective(s) (aligns with competency):

1. Students will be able to identify the learning style that best suits them
2. Students will be able to describe study methods that match their learning style

Materials:

Kids2College Learning Style Packet (pg. 32 – 35)

Paper for each student

A laptop with Internet (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBCthMtkFIk>)

Pencils

Clipboards

Procedure:

1. Ask members what they recall from last week. Did anyone get the chance to talk back to their test anxiety? How did it go?
2. I wanted to mention that today is our second to last session. I really hope that the topics we've been talking about are helping you and that you're applying them in your classes.
3. Introduce topic: Today, we are going to focus on learning styles. Learning styles are different ways that each person learns best. Everyone has a different learning style and there's no right or wrong way to learn. There are many different types of learning styles, but today we are going to focus on three main ones: Visual, auditory, and physical. 'Physical' goes by a few different names, so you may hear it referred to as 'tactile' or 'kinesthetic'. It just means you do best by touching, moving, or doing.
4. We're going to do an activity to introduce the different learning types. The video does not have a lot of sound, so you have to pay close attention to what it says. The video is going to give you four different examples of how to do a task. Pay close attention and follow the directions. We'll discuss it afterwards.

5. Play the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBCthMtkFIk> (Learning Styles Activity)

The video gives directions in four different ways – written instruction and example (showing a photo and instructing students to copy it), verbal instructions, instructions to draw a shape as it is shown (following along), and written description of what to draw.

Through this 2-minute video, students begin to develop an idea of how they learn best.

6. Which example was the easiest for you to do? Which was the most difficult?
7. “So that video might give you a slight idea about what learning style works for you, but we’re going to back that guess up with a survey. The first page of your packet is titled ‘Learning Style Inventory’ Read each statement and write ‘1,’ ‘2,’ or ‘3’ next to it depending on whether that is often true, sometimes true, or never true for you. Everyone can go at their own pace, but I am also going to read each statement aloud in case that helps anyone. When we finish, we will add up the numbers for each section and that will tell you which learning style you are. The other pages in the packet describe each learning style and possible ways you can learn.”
8. Go through the Learning Inventory packet with the group.
9. Which learning styles did you get? Do you think that is accurate?
10. What are some ways you can practice your learning style this week?
11. Wrap up question: What did you learn today? How do you plan to apply it?

# Session 7: Termination

School Counselor: Alexis Thompson

Date: 10/30/18

Activity: Post-Survey/Creating a Game Plan Moving Forward

Grade(s): 4<sup>th</sup> (Study Skills Group)

ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors (Domain/Standard):

B-LS 7. Identify long- and short-term academic, career, and social/emotional goals

B-SMS 1. Demonstrate ability to assume responsibility

B-SMS 5. Demonstrate perseverance to achieve long- and short-term goals

B-SS 4. Demonstrate empathy

Learning Objective(s) (aligns with competency):

1. Students will be able to identify their goals and growth edges moving forward from group
2. Students will be able to work independently toward their academic success independent of the group.
3. Students will be able to reflect on and utilize the study strategies that work best for them.

Materials:

Post-group surveys

Writing utensils

Clipboards

Optional: treats for the group

Procedure:

1. Ask members what they recall from last week. Who used their learning style strategies to study? Who can name at least one strategy for their learning style?
2. Today is our last session. We are going to focus this session on looking back, looking forward, and saying goodbye.
3. To help us look back, I am giving everyone a few questions to fill out. Please answer them honestly and thoroughly. Notice that it asks for two things that you learned and two things you plan to work on moving forward.
4. After everyone has completed their surveys, ask the group: what did you learn from this group? What are you taking with you moving forward?
5. What do you plan to work on for your study skills after this group ends? What obstacles might get in the way of that?
6. Now that our group has ended, is there anything else you would like to share about your experience?
7. Collect post-surveys and end the group