Name of group: Building Skills for Academic Success

Focus of the group: Loyola Academy has high academic expectations and some new students feel stressed and overwhelmed with the work load. According to the needs assessment, 43% of the freshmen class spends 11 or more hours a week studying outside of class. In fact, 11% spends 16 or more hours a week or a little over two hours a day studying. Some freshmen may have difficulty adjusting to this new commitment, especially because 32% of students felt their middle school did not adequately prepare them for high school. *Building Skills for Academic Success* will provide a safe and trustful space for students to learn and grow from one another.

Goal: Students will explore study strategies and test-taking skills to assist them in achieving their idea of academic success.

Number of Students: 8-10

Grade Level: Targeted group is high school freshman students, but it is appropriate for all grades levels.

Adult Leader: A professional school counselor familiar with the academic challenges of the freshman class.

Number of Sessions: There will be 5 sessions. The group will meet Fridays from 10:00am to 11:00am during formation class, once a week starting January 11th and ending February 8th, 2013.

Standards:

I-A-5. Individual counseling, group counseling and classroom guidance programs ensuring equitable access to resources that promote academic achievement; personal, social and emotional development; and career development including the identification of appropriate post-secondary education for every student.

Materials:

Informed Consent Form

Learning Style Inventory Handout (Separate document)

Here & now handout

3R’s & SQ3R Handout

Cornell Note-taking Handout (Separate document)

Pre-test/post-test

Description:

**Session 1 (Introduction)**

Introduction of group members with icebreaker; ask members to state their greatest strength

Goal of the group is communicated to the members by the co-facilitators

The co-facilitators will have a student read the informed consent out loud and ask for questions.

Administer pre-test

Hand-out the learning styles inventory and explain for next week

**Session 2 (Learning Styles)**

Check-in with each student to see how they’re feeling in the present moment

Students will have taken the Learning Style Inventory

Specific strategies are discussed based on their learning style

Ask students to implement one new strategy based on their results

**Session 3 (Study Strategies)**

Here & now handout: Have students write and/or draw topics that may be preventing them from being present in the group. After they’ve completed this, tell each student to crumble the sheet of paper up and throw it behind them outside of the circle.

Discuss study skills and strategies by explaining the two handouts

-Cornell Note-taking

-SQ3R Reading/Study strategies

Finish with asking students which Loyola academic resource they’ve used or hope to use in the future

**Session 4 (Test taking skills)**

Start with deep breathing exercise while peaceful music is played in the backgroundBegin discussion with asking students to identify obstacles they have had in the past in terms of taking tests

Ask members to share in ways they have dealt positively with test anxiety and preparation

End with deep breathing exercise while peaceful music is played in the background

**Session 5 (Celebration of Success)**

Discussion of what went right and wrong for the semester

Celebration of student accomplishments

Closure activity: Have each student identify a strength in the member to the right of them

Take post-test

Evaluation:

**Process Data:** Freshman Class

**Perception Data:** Pre-test and post-test will be administered to all group members

**Outcome Data:** Student’s grades will be observed at the start date and at the end of the semester to see if a change has occurred.

**Group Counseling Informed Consent Form**

I, ­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, agree to adhere to the following norms and expectations of this group:

* I will not discuss anything shared in group with others outside of group.
* I will strive to be on time to each session.
* I will be respectful of others’ thoughts, emotions, and behavior.

It is essential that members know that whatever they say or how they act in group remains in the group and that members will not discuss these things with anyone outside the group. I understand that this is the best way to create a safe and inclusive space and where members can trust one another. I understand that the co-facilitators will break confidentiality under the following circumstances:

* Indications of harm to self or others
* Awareness of harm being done to child, elder, or a person with a disability

In signing this consent form, I acknowledge that the co-facilitators have provided the opportunity for group members to discuss and ask questions about the importance of confidentiality and expectations of the group.

Student Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Leader Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**HERE & NOW**

3 R's for Academic Survival

Here is a lean and wiry system containing all the essential techniques for mastering textbook assignments. This is an "exam passer".

**. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**

R1 **READ.** Read the chapter paragraph by paragraph. Read and re-read until you can answer the question: "What did the author say in this paragraph?"

R2 **RECORD.** Once you are able to **describe** what is in the paragraph, you will want to retain that learning by **underlining, making notes in the margin,** or **making notes in your notebook.**

R3 **RECITE.** Cover up your notes or printed page and **recite** aloud. Remember! If you can't say it now, you won't be able to say it tomorrow in class, nor write it in a week on an exam; so while you still have a chance, try and try again, until you can say it.

**. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .**

# SQ3R Method for Thorough Study

Step 1: SURVEY - Look over material critically. Skim through the book and read topical and subtopical headings and sentences. Read the summaries at the end of chapters and books. Try to anticipate what the author is going to say.

WRITE these notes on paper, in sequence; then look over the jottings to get an overall idea or picture. This will enable you to see where you are going.

Step 2: QUESTIONS - Instead of reading paragraph headings such as "Basic Concepts of Reading," change to read, "What are the Basic Concepts of Reading?" These questions will become "hooks" on which to hang the reading material.

WRITE these questions out; look over the questions to see the emphasis and direction; then attempt to give plausible answers before further reading.

Step 3: READ - Read with smoothness and alertness to answer the questions. Use all the techniques and principles demonstrated in class.

WRITE notes, in your own words, under each question. Take a minimum number of notes-use these notes as a skeleton.

Step 4: RECALL\*\* - Without looking at your book or notes, mentally visualize and sketch, in your own words, the high points of the material immediately upon completing the reading.

a. This forces you to check understanding.

b. This channels the material into a natural and usable form.

c. This points up what you do not understand.

d. This forces you to think.

Step 5: REVIEW - Look at your questions, answers, notes and book to see how well you did recall. Observe carefully the points stated incorrectly or omitted. Fix carefully in mind the logical sequence of the entire idea, concepts, or problem. Finish up with a mental picture of the WHOLE.

\*\*Note: More time should be spent on recall than on reading.

Adapted from F.P. Robinson. *Effective Study*. New York:Harper and Bros. 1946. Chapter II.

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**Pre/Post-Test for *Building Skills for Academic Success* Small Group**

Please answer the following questions:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Always | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never |
| I feel prepared before I take a test. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I use my learning style to inform my study habits. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I feel comfortable taking notes in class. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I am satisfied with my grades on tests. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I utilize academic resources at Loyola. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I feel comfortable asking for assistance with homework. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I feel stressed when taking a test. |  |  |  |  |  |

(Pre-survey) What would you like to learn from this group?

(Post-survey) What would you change about this group?