

“Skill-Builders” Lesson Plans

Version: 9/07

“Skill-Builders” is a middle-school guidance curriculum that teaches study skills and adaptive learning strategies in mathematics. The curriculum was designed by Lia D. Falco, doctoral candidate, University of Arizona, as part of her dissertation study. Portions of the curriculum and lesson plans were developed in collaboration with her doctoral committee: Sheri Bauman, Ph.D., dissertation chair and Associate Professor of Educational Psychology, Ronald Marx, Ph.D., Dean and Professor of Educational Psychology, and Hugh Crethar, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology, at the University of Arizona, in Tucson, AZ.

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Skill-Builders

Grade 6 – Activity 1

Introduction to Time Management

Activity: Creating a “Time Budget”

Students will create a “time budget” which lists their daily activities and the amount of time it takes to complete each one. The time budget must add up to 24 hours. Counselor will facilitate discussion on the challenge of creating enough time to complete all the activities one has to do and wants to do in one day.

Implementation time: 30 minutes

Materials: Time Budget Worksheet

Objectives:

Self-efficacy Beliefs: Increase students’ perceived control over their environment (time). Class discussion should help them understand that their environment is changeable, and that they can determine the amount of time needed and spent to complete all of their activities.

Math Skills: Estimating time spent on daily activities. Adding or Subtracting time from budget in order to make it sum to 24 hours. Time is math! Days, hours, and minutes get divided up or added together to make the time budget.

Assessment:

Successful completion of a balanced “time-budget”.

ASCA Standard(s):

A:A2.1 Apply time-management and task management skills

A:C1.1 Demonstrate the ability to balance school, studies, extracurricular activities, leisure time and family life

Skill-Builders

Grade 6 – Activity 1

Lesson Plan: Introduction to Time Management

1. Begin class discussion by asking students to name one thing they feel they never have time to do, and list things on the board or overhead.
2. Ask the class to think of what is causing them to feel that they don't have enough time. Counselor should make note of any common themes in student responses.
3. Ask the class what can be done to create more time for the things they want to do. After students respond explain that, while we can't actually get any more time, what we CAN do is **manage time**.
4. Explain to class that, in order to manage time, we must:
 - Consider everything we HAVE to do and WANT to do during the day.
 - Understand how much time each activity in a day will take
 - Make a plan that helps us get through the day
5. End the introduction by explaining to students that, if they learn to manage their time, they might be surprised at how much they can get done. The real reward to time management, though, is feeling less stressed and more in control.
6. Give each student a copy of the Time Budget worksheet.
7. On the first page, students must list all their "Have-to's" and "Want-to's". Instruct students to write things that have to get done every day under the "Have-to" column, and all the things that they want to do but don't have to do in the "Want-to" column. Tell them they might want to start with what they listed in the beginning of class as the thing they feel they never have enough time to do. Ask them to estimate the amount of time each activity will require and write it down next to it on the list.
8. Now that students have looked at what takes up time in their lives, they can make a "Time Budget" to fit it all together.
9. Instruct students to turn their worksheets over to the second page, where they must fill in their time budget. They should list their activities from the "Have-to" and "Want-to" lists, and the time it takes for each activity. The time budget should add up to 24 hours (one day), so students might have to add or subtract time from some of their activities in order to "balance" their budgets. When students complete their time budgets, ask them to share what they learned with the class. Counselor should help students reflect on how they can control their time.

Skill-Builders

Grade 6 – Activity 2

Time Management – Daily and Weekly Planning

Activity: Weekly Planning

Students will learn strategies for better time management, including how to create a timeline and extend it beyond one day. Once students have balanced their time budgets and learned how to prioritize, the next step is to teach them how to plan and organize their time into a weekly schedule. Counselor will facilitate discussion on strategies for planning and remembering important dates and activities.

Implementation time: 30 minutes

Materials: Weekly Planning Quiz and Weekly Planning Worksheet.

Objectives:

Self-Efficacy Beliefs: Lesson should reinforce students' perceived control over time and ability to apply time management skills to planning their weekly math assignments. Class discussion and activity should help students understand the connection between thought and action through planning. Counselor can help students reflect on the affective (emotional) experience of learning to control time by asking them to share their feelings after trying the time management activities.

Math Skills: Understanding different ways to rank order activities (prioritizing). Students can prioritize (quantify) according to time, urgency, consequences, or the importance of each activity. Estimating the time required to complete each activity, making a timeline, and extending the plan beyond one day.

Assessment:

Successful completion of the Weekly Planning Worksheet

ASCA Standard(s):

A:A2.1 Apply time-management and task management skills

A:C1.1 Demonstrate the ability to balance school, studies, extracurricular activities, leisure time and family life

Skill-Builders

Grade 6 – Activity 2

Lesson Plan: Weekly Planning

1. Begin with a warm-up activity. Have students complete the Weekly Planning Quiz. Explain that this is a way to help them become more aware of their weekly activities.
2. When students are finished, the counselor should facilitate a class discussion on weekly planning. Ask students what strategies they already use for remembering important dates and assignments.
3. The counselor should give students feedback about their responses, pointing out the strategies that are most adaptive then give students some “rules” for weekly planning:
 - Be prepared for day-to-day changes – no matter how perfectly you have your time budget, there will always be unexpected changes and new responsibilities to fit in.
 - Think about what is urgent – which deadlines are coming up first? Is a big assignment due? Is there a test coming up? Knowing which tasks are more urgent is an easy way to help plan your time.
 - Think about what will require the most time – is there a project that is going to last for several days or weeks? How can you divide it up into manageable tasks in the time before it is due? Planning ahead will help you avoid cramming at the last minute.
 - Consider the importance of the activity. Is it an assignment that is worth a lot of points? Is it necessary to do in order to help you learn something else? Or is it related to an assignment in another class? You might find that some assignments are more important than others which can help you plan your time.
 - Consider the consequences for not completing something in your weekly plan. If you don't do it, what will happen? Can you live with the consequence? The possibility of negative consequences may also help you prioritize your activities and plan your time.

Once students have balanced their time budgets and learned the “rules” for weekly planning, give them each a copy of the Weekly Planning Worksheet.

4. End lesson by asking students to share their feelings regarding the experience of time management. Possible processing questions: was this a challenge? Why or why not? What was it like to work through the weekly planner? How do you feel now that you've tried it?

Skill-Builders

Grade 6 – Activity 3

Introduction to Goal-Setting

Activity: Goal-Setting Practice Worksheet

Students will learn vocabulary and steps for goal-setting. Counselor uses a stair-case analogy to explain that setting and reaching goals are like climbing a staircase. Each step represents a small goal (objective) to be achieved on the way towards reaching the top (the goal).

Implementation time: 30 minutes

Materials: Goals-Setting Practice Worksheet.

Objectives:

Self-Efficacy Beliefs: Increase students' mastery-orientation towards problem-solving and proactive, self-regulated learning behaviors. Stair-case analogy helps students focus on achieved progress and provides them with a way to utilize feedback. Increase students' perceptions of ability to control desired outcomes.

Math Skills: Logic. Goal-setting involves strategy; breaking up the end goal into smaller objectives that progress in a logical order. It is also analogous to problem-solving – the strategies used to set goals can be applied to problem-solving in a number of situations.

Assessment:

Successful completion of the Goal-Setting Practice Worksheet

ASCA Standard(s):

A:A1.5 Identify attitudes and behaviors that lead to essential learning.

A:B2.5 Use problem-solving and decision-making skills to assess progress toward educational goals.

PS:A1.3 Learn the goal-setting process.

Skill-Builders

Grade 6 – Activity 3

Lesson Plan: Introduction to Goal-Setting

1. Ask students, “What is a goal?” Listen to students’ responses, and clarify when they are finished that a goal is: a desired position, accomplishment, or acquisition that you are striving for.
2. Ask students, “What is an objective?” After students respond, explain that objectives are the small steps you take to reach your goal.
 - After you set a goal, you move to setting objectives
 - To achieve your goal, you need to think about what resources you will need, what conditions will be necessary, what skills you should develop, and what knowledge you should acquire
 - What needs to happen before you reach your goal?
3. The counselor should explain that the process of setting and achieving goals can be visualized more clearly if you use a stair-case as an example.
4. Here are the parallels between climbing a stair-case and the process of setting and achieving goals:
 - The top represents your goal. This clearly defines what to strive for. The steps represent objectives; taking small steps instead of one giant leap will help you reach your goal.
 - As you climb each step, you move closer to your goal. Each step gives you feedback on how well you are doing; the number of steps you climb successfully (without losing your balance) helps you measure your progress.
 - After you climb each step, you will reach your goal!
5. Counselor should explain to the class that achieving your goals takes some work, just like climbing stairs, but that taking small steps along the way will help keep you from getting too tired and keep you motivated to continue to the top. Sometimes it might be necessary to go back a step and repeat it enough times so that you get “stronger” and can reach your goal more easily.
6. Provide each student with a copy of the Goal-Setting Practice Worksheet. Instruct them to think of a goal that they would like to achieve in their math class and to use the worksheet to help them plan out the necessary steps for achieving that goal.

Skill-Builders

Grade 6 – Activity 4

SMART Approach to Goal-Setting

Activity: Evaluate goals using SMART worksheet

Students will learn the SMART acronym. Counselor facilitates discussion about how to use the SMART approach to evaluate personal goals. The purpose of the SMART approach is to help students create goals that are effective and likely to be achieved.

Implementation time: 30 minutes

Materials: SMART Goal-Setting Worksheet

Objectives:

Self-Efficacy Beliefs: Reinforce mastery-orientation towards problem-solving. Provide students with a concrete way to generate feedback, so that they are able to increase self-reflection and ability to self-evaluate. Reinforce students' ability to control desired outcomes through planning.

Math Skills: Measurement. Students should learn how to quantify their objectives and goals so that they know when they have accomplished them; like an operational definition in science. Students should also use their estimation skills to create a realistic timeline for accomplishing their goals.

Assessment:

Successful completion of the SMART Goal-Setting Worksheet and Quiz

ASCA Standard (s):

A:A1.5 Identify attitudes and behaviors that lead to essential learning.

A:B2.5 Use problem-solving and decision-making skills to assess progress toward educational goals.

PS:A1.3 Learn the goal-setting process.

Skill-Builders

Grade 6 – Activity 4

Lesson Plan: SMART Approach to Goal-Setting

1. Begin by asking students to think about the goals they wrote for themselves during the previous lesson, and explain to them that today's lesson is to help them learn how to evaluate their goals so that they are effective and likely to be accomplished.
2. Introduce the "SMART" acronym, and explain what each letter stands for.
 - Specific
 - Measurable
 - Attainable
 - Rewarding
 - Timely
3. Counselor facilitates class discussion about each of the SMART guidelines. For example, begin by asking students what "Specific" means to them. Then, after they respond, clarify that with a specific goal you can clearly see what it is you want to achieve, and you have precise standards for that achievement. The more specific your goal is the more likely is your success. Give students tips for generating specific goals, such as writing them down. Have students give examples and use class discussion to point out goals that are specific. Ask students why they think specific goals work better than general goals.
4. Move through each SMART guideline in a similar way, until students are familiar with the process of evaluating goals using this approach.
 - Measurable = for a goal to be measurable you need a way to measure the progress and some specific criteria that will tell you when you can stop and the goal has been achieved. Ask students how they can tell if a goal is measurable. Ask students why they think measurable goals are more effective than ones that are not measurable.
 - Attainable = an attainable goal is a goal for which you see a realistic path for achievement, and reasonable odds that you will get there. This does not mean that the lower you aim the more likely your success. Goals that work best have a challenge in them; the trick is to make your goal challenging enough, but still reachable. This will give you more motivation and a sense of accomplishment when you get there.
 - Rewarding = when you have clear reasons why you want to reach the goal, when the goal comes from within you and your heart, when you know you will feel good about yourself when you achieve your goal. Ask students what makes a personally rewarding goal more effective.
 - Timely = a goal that has a specific time limit. (Introduce concept of a deadline) Goals that are timely will help prevent perfectionism and procrastination.
5. Hand out the SMART evaluation worksheet. Instruct students to re-examine their goals and evaluate them using the rubric on the worksheet.

6. End with a class discussion about the SMART approach. Processing questions: Did your goals change after using the SMART approach? How can you use the SMART approach in this class? Other classes? Outside of school? How do you feel now that you've tried evaluating your goals?

Skill-Builders

Grade 6 – Activity 5

Introduction to Math Study Skills – General Study Habits

Activity: Study Habits Checklist

Students will use self-reflection to examine their current study habits. Counselor facilitates discussion about integrating time-management and goal-setting skills into their study habits, and provides students with strategies for improved study habits.

Implementation time: 30 minutes

Materials: Study Habits Checklist Worksheet

Objectives:

Self-Efficacy: Self-reflection and accurate self-appraisal. Reinforce students' capability to exercise self-influence through purposive behavior (planning and managing study habits).

Math Skills: Dividing tasks into manageable chunks either by time (length of time necessary to complete), difficulty (easiest to most difficult), or quantity (number of math problems, e.g.). Introduce strategies for studying math.

Assessment:

Successful completion of Study Habits Checklist Worksheet and counselor should ask students to recall each of the "Tips for Better Study Habits" presented in class.

ASCA Standard(s):

A:A1.5 Identify attitudes and behaviors that lead to successful learning
A:A2.1 Apply time-management and task-management skills
A:B1.4 Seek information and support from faculty, staff, family, and peers

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Grade 6 – Activity 5

Lesson Plan: Introduction to Math Study Skills – General Study Habits

1. Begin lesson by asking the class to describe how they usually feel when it's time to sit down and study math, and make note of their responses. Common themes are likely to be:
 - Tired
 - Bored
 - Frustrated
2. Explain that studying math is different than studying for other subjects because you mostly learn from doing problems. Also, each concept in math builds on concepts you've already learned. Good study habits in math make you more efficient, so practice is key! You'll become faster and remember more if you make good math study habits a part of your life. Ask the class to take a few minutes to review their current study habits.
3. Ask students to complete the Study Habits Checklist Worksheet. Give students 3-5 minutes to complete.
4. Processing questions (after students complete the checklist):
 - How many of you learned something about yourself? Raise your hand if your current study habits are really good? So-so? Need improvement?
 - What are some of the things you do that keep you from having good study habits in math? (class discussion) Likely themes: boredom, frustration with difficult material, sleepy/tired, hungry, distractions/interruptions.
5. Use class discussion as a segue for class discussion on Strategies For Studying Math and Strategies for Math Test Taking
6. Explain to class that, in many ways, good study habits in math involve the skills that we have covered so far – time management and goal-setting play a big role in learning to study better. Tell students to turn over their worksheets where they will find seven strategies for studying math. Read through the strategies together as a class (ask students to volunteer to read each one), and ask students to pick one strategy that they can make a part of their daily routine. Explain that they should strive for all of them, but if they can incorporate even **just one** into their daily lives, they will see improvement in their math skills after not very long at all.
7. Read through each of the strategies for studying math and test-taking in math, and process with the class.
8. Ask the class to recall each of the strategies.

Strategies for Studying Math

- ✓ **Set aside a regular time and place to study.** Make sure your study space is a good place to get work done with plenty of space and good lighting - don't study on the sofa or in your bed. Make sure you have everything you need before you start – pencil, paper, calculator, notes and textbook - in order to minimize interruptions.
- ✓ **Set goals for yourself.** Break up your work into small chunks and take short breaks while you study. It's easier to get everything done if you don't try to do it all at once. For example, if you are working on math homework, and you have 30 problems to do – break them up into chunks of 10.
- ✓ **Prioritize.** Make a list of what you need to get done, and start with the most important thing on your list. Things that should be a priority are: studying for tests and quizzes, big projects, assignments that are due the next day or before the end of the week.
- ✓ **Set aside the things that are too difficult to do without help.** Come back to them later, and ask someone in your family to help. If no one can help you, try to find time before school the next day to ask your teacher for help.
- ✓ **Use flashcards.** Flashcards can help you memorize math facts such as multiplication and division so you become faster at doing them in your head. Flashcards can also be used to help you organize mathematical concepts such as fractions, decimals, and percentages. You can even color-code your flashcards to help you learn more complex problem-solving strategies. (Show examples of flashcards).
- ✓ **Try explaining out loud how to do different kinds of problems.** If you can teach it to someone else (like a brother, sister, mom, dad, or friend), chances are you understand it well enough for the test. If you get stuck on a test, you can go back and say it in your head to help you remember how to solve the problem.
- ✓ **Take a practice test.** Usually the book will have chapter reviews or quizzes that you can take to see how well you've learned the concepts. Get in the habit of showing all your work – don't skip steps.

Strategies For Math Test-taking

- ✓ **Complete your homework on time.** Homework is the best way to practice solving math problems. As you do your homework, make a list of the types of problems you are solving and the techniques for solving each type of problem. Later, use flashcards to help you remember what technique to use to solve each kind of problem.
- ✓ **Read over the entire test before you begin.** Doing this will give you a sense of what problems you can do easily, what problems will be more difficult, and how long it will take to finish. You don't have to do the problems from first to last – do them in an order that suits you!
- ✓ **Make sure you read the questions carefully,** and do **all parts** of each problem.
- ✓ **Don't panic if you get stuck.** Practice stress management. If you start feeling anxious or frustrated, take several deep breaths and tell yourself that you can do it.
- ✓ **Verify** your answers - does each answer make sense given the context of the problem? If you finish early, **double-check** every problem.



Skill-Builders

Grade 6 – Activity 6

Math Study Skills

Activity: Exploration exercise. Students will learn to identify common errors in mathematics problem-solving. Class activity involves having students read through a recent math test or quiz to help them identify common errors. Students will categorize their most common errors then counselor will facilitate class discussion on identifying errors, correcting them, and improving math study skills.

Implementation time: 30 minutes

Materials: Students will need a copy of a recently completed exam, quiz, or homework assignment and a copy of the Common Errors Checklist.

Objectives:

Self-Efficacy Skills: Increase accuracy of self-appraisal and causal attributions (mistakes can be identified and corrected through purposive behavior; mistakes are not necessarily caused by personal deficiency or low ability). Focus on personal capabilities.

Math Skills: Evaluating and monitoring task performance through careful examination of the process of problem-solving.

Assessment:

Successful completion of the Math Study Skills Exploration Exercise

ASCA Standard(s):

A:A1.4 Accept mistakes as essential to the learning process

A:B1.2 Learn and apply critical-thinking skills

A:B1.6 Use knowledge of learning styles to positively influence school performance

Grade 6 – Activity 6

Lesson Plan: Math Study Skills

1. Begin lesson by asking students for a show of hands, “How many of you have ever felt overwhelmed by math at some point?”
2. Studying math is different from studying other subjects. Math is learned by doing problems – solving problems helps you understand the concepts that your teacher teaches you during math class.
3. Have you ever noticed that there are different *types* of math problems? Ask students to help list different types of math problems.
 - Problems that test your memorization (vocabulary)
 - Problems that test your skills (add, subtract, multiply, divide)
 - Problems that ask you to apply your skills to a familiar situation (word problems)
 - Problems that ask you to apply your skills to an unfamiliar situation (new problems like algebra equations)
4. Explain to students that studying for math may take more time than their other subjects because they will have to spend time solving problems. Tell them, “Make sure you give yourself enough time to do *all* your homework! If you skip parts or rush through it, you won’t learn important concepts as well as you should. Remember, math builds on everything you learned before – so it is important that you learn each concept completely, as you go.” Ask students to reflect on their beliefs about math learning. Ask them if they believe that a person has to naturally be very smart in order to learn math. Ask them if they believe that anyone can learn math. Explain that the latter is true, and that they can be actively involved in managing their learning process in math.
5. Begin exploration exercise. Ask students to take out a copy of a recently completed test, quiz, or math assignment (have teacher prepare these in advance). Explain to them that mistakes in math learning are usually made due to a few common errors. It is important to be able to identify these errors so that you can correct them and manage your math learning. Let’s practice now.
6. Hand out a copy of the worksheet. Instruct students to use the worksheet to help them analyze their tests/quizzes/homework as a way to identify **their** most common errors. To do this, students must look at each problem they got wrong, then identify the type of error, and see if there is a pattern.
7. For each of the six types of errors there is a strategy for correcting it. After students complete the activity, counselor facilitates class discussion about correcting each type of error.

Common Math Errors and How to Correct Them

Misread Direction Errors: Misread direction errors occur when students skip directions or misunderstand directions and continue to work the problem, for example when the student tries to solve a factoring problem thinking it is an equation. Another example of a misread direction error is when the test says simplify to lowest terms but leaves a fraction as $\frac{2}{4}$ instead of $\frac{1}{2}$.

Correction: Read directions carefully. Read the directions two times slowly before beginning to solve the problem.

Careless Errors: Careless errors are the type errors that a student would catch if he/she read over the problem. The best example is the student who is a sign dropper - a student who drops a negative sign (or any sign) and misses the problem. Another example is someone who adds numbers incorrectly usually in his/her head and doesn't use paper or a calculator. These careless errors once reviewed can be caught and immediately corrected. However, these students usually don't review the test questions.

Correction: After finishing, double-check each problem. Write down each step as you solve the problem. Don't do any step in your head.

Concept Errors: Concept errors are cognitive mistakes made when the student does not understand the properties or principles required to work the problem. For example, the student doesn't understand the concept of distributive property and cannot solve an equation that required the use of this property. Concept errors must be corrected to understand the next mathematics chapter. Once a student has too many concept errors, he/she will not be able to pass the mathematics class.

Correction: Ask a question as soon as you are confused – everyone needs help to understand math, and questions allow your teacher to identify what it is you don't understand so she or he can help you. Remember, any question is better than no question at all when you don't understand something.

Application Errors: Application errors occur when a student knows the concept but can not apply to the problem. Application errors usually are found when trying to solve word problems or graph equations. In solving word problems, the students understand how to solve the equation but cannot figure out what type of equation should be used. The next example is solving a problem correctly but not being able to graph it. Appropriate practice and insight can avoid most application errors.

Correction: Practice! When you study, make sure you do all the different types of problems you are learning, so that you can better recognize what math skill the problem requires you to use. Flashcards can help you do this too – make flashcards with different types of problems and have someone quiz you on how you would solve it.

Test-Taking Errors: Test taking errors apply to the way the student takes the test. Some test-taking errors are working on a problem too long, not showing work, changing test answers and not completing the second step of a two step problem.

Correction: First, look over the entire test. Read each problem carefully. Calculate how much time you can spend on each question (for example, 40 problems in 50 minutes gives you about a minute and a half for each problem). If a problem is very difficult, move on and come back to it later. You don't always have to go in order – do problems in an order that suits you. Show all your work and don't skip steps. Check your work

Study Errors: Study errors occur when the student studies the wrong type of material and puts less focus on the focuses on the important material or crams for the test. For example, students may spend too much time reviewing their homework problems instead of reviewing the problems in their notebook. Or students may wait until the last night to study for their math test and expect to do well.

Correction: Ask your teacher what will be on the test, so you will know what to study. When you study, focus on the types of problems that are most difficult for you – the more you practice them, the better you will learn the concepts.

Some other tips for improved math study skills:

- When you are taking notes or doing homework, put a question mark next to anything that is confusing or that you don't understand. Write out a specific question to ask your teacher.
- Try teaching it to someone else (like your mom or dad) – sometimes explaining a math problem out loud helps you learn it better.
- Keep a folder or notebook that is only for math – if you take notes during class, use them to help you with your homework and to study for tests.

Skill-Builders

Grade 6 – Activity 7

Introduction to Getting Help

Activity: Getting Help Worksheet. Lesson begins with a self-reflection activity (questionnaire) to help students examine their beliefs about getting help. Counselor facilitates discussion about knowing when you need help and how to get it.

Implementation time: 30 minutes

Materials: Getting Help Worksheet

Objectives:

Self-Efficacy Beliefs: Increase students' self-reflection capabilities. Class discussion should help them overcome perceived threats to self-worth when asking for help. Increase students' sense of autonomy by learning instrumental help-seeking strategies.

Math Skills: Identifying skills, techniques, and strategies that can be elicited when needed. Recognizing when to ask for assistance during problem-solving.

Assessment:

Successful completion of the Getting Help Worksheet, and counselor should ask students to recall each of the Tips for Getting Help When You Need It.

ASCA Standard(s):

A:B1.4 Seek information and support from faculty, staff, family, and peers

A:A2.3 Use communication skills to know when and how to ask for help when needed

Grade 6 – Activity 7

Lesson Plan: Getting Help

1. Begin lesson with a self-reflection activity to help students reflect about their beliefs regarding help-seeking.
2. Provide each student with a Getting Help Worksheet and allow 3-5 minutes for them to complete it.
3. After students finish the worksheet, counselor should facilitate a class discussion focusing on a few key questions:
 - How many of you feel comfortable asking questions during class?
 - How many of you can think of a time when you have wanted to ask a question in class but didn't?
 - What prevented you from asking a question when you needed to?
4. Counselor should help students process their responses. Common themes are likely to be:
 - I don't want to seem stupid
 - I'm embarrassed
 - I can't seem to find the right time to ask
 - I don't know how to ask the right question
5. Explain to the class that these feelings are very common, and that almost everyone has been afraid to ask a question at some point during their life. The important thing to remember is that knowing when and how to ask questions might be the most important thing you'll ever learn in school. Not only will it help you learn, getting help by asking questions will help you accomplish your goals and feel good about yourself because you will gain insight, understanding, and skills that you can use in all areas of your life. Counselor should help students process their feelings regarding getting help, guiding them towards accepting the need for help as a positive instead of a negative. When a student shares his or her feelings, ask the class to give feedback. Allow adequate time for students to process, but try to stop 5-7 minutes prior to the end of the lesson. Let students know that they can continue their discussion next time.
6. End lesson by instructing students to turn over their Getting Help Worksheets to look at the five tips for Getting Help When You Need It. Read through each tip together, asking students to volunteer to read. Process each tip with the class.
7. Ask students to recall each tip.

Tips For Getting Help When You Need It

- ✓ In class, never be afraid to ask a question. Questions help **everybody** understand things better! Try asking questions that begin with: “why?”, “how?”, or “what if?” Instead of just saying, “I don’t understand.” Remember to keep asking questions until you understand – you don’t have to stop after asking once!
- ✓ Pay attention when other students ask questions. They might have the same question as you do! Also, hearing the answers to more questions will help you remember the material better.
- ✓ You can help yourself by “reflecting” on what you’ve already learned. Reflecting is when you ask yourself questions in order to help remember the material. You can do this by taking a practice test OR by trying to teach it to someone else (like a friend, brother, sister, mom, or dad).
- ✓ Ask for hints if you can do most of the problem but not all of it. A good question helps you get started when you are stuck – a bad question is to ask someone simply to do it for you.
- ✓ Read, think, then re-read the problem. If you are completely stuck on a problem, don’t guess! Ask your teacher, “How do I start?”

Always remember that getting help is an important part of learning. Knowing when and how to ask the right questions will help you reach your goals for the rest of your life!

Skill-Builders

Grade 6 – Activity 8

Getting Help – The art of asking questions

Activity: Small group role-play. Divide class into small groups of 4-5 students. Each group gets a “problem-scenario” to read over. Groups must use their worksheets to describe the problem, the feelings/emotions of the person experiencing the problem, and possible questions to ask in order to get help solving the problem. Then, each group shares with the class and counselor facilitates discussion about asking questions.

Implementation time: 30 minutes

Materials: Getting Help Worksheet and example “problem-scenarios” for each group.

Objectives:

Self-Efficacy Beliefs: Increase students’ situational adaptivity. Increase students’ self-reflection and metacognition as they learn to recognize the need for help. Reinforce students’ ability to overcome threats to self worth when asking for help, and increase feelings of autonomy through instrumental help-seeking behaviors.

Math Skills: Monitoring task performance and recognizing conceptual difficulties. Identifying skills, techniques, and strategies that can be applied to solve new problems. Recognizing different problems and when to ask for assistance during problem-solving.

Assessment:

Participation in the small group role-play activity.

ASCA Standard(s):

A:B1.4 Seek information and support from faculty, staff, family, and peers

A:A2.3 Use communication skills to know when and how to ask for help when needed

Skill-Builders

Grade 6 – Activity 8

Lesson Plan: Getting Help – The art of asking questions

1. Begin lesson by asking students if they have any questions from last time. Allow for a few minutes of class discussion about getting help and the feelings they experience when asking questions.
2. Begin group activity by explaining to students that one of the best ways to learn how and when to ask the right question is to practice! Introduce the activity and explain the directions.
3. Place students into groups of 4-5 and give each group a copy of the Getting Help Worksheet. Give each group a “problem-scenario” and ask them to complete the worksheet. Allow 10-12 minutes for the activity.
4. When groups finish, ask each group to share their “problem-scenario” and the questions they created to help solve the problem. Counselor should facilitate the discussion by giving each group specific feedback about the questions they generated, emphasizing the importance of instrumental help-seeking behaviors. Examples are:
 - Not instrumental: “I don’t understand”
 - Instrumental: “I don’t understand why you did...”
 - Not instrumental: “Can you do problem 17?”
 - Instrumental: “Can you show me how to start problem 17?”
5. End the lesson with a class discussion on the importance of getting help when you need it. Counselor should validate help-seeking behaviors as an important strategy for managing the learning process. Distribute copies of the Help-Seeking Affirmations.

Possible “problem-scenarios”

- Gabriel missed a few days of school last week because he was sick. His parents picked up his homework for him, and he did most of it before coming back to school today. There were some things he didn't understand because he wasn't in class, and now he is even more behind today because the whole class has moved on to a new chapter.
- Amelia has always been really good at math and gets good grades. She got off to a good start this year, but lately the class seems to be moving kind of fast, and everyone else seems to be understanding things better than she is. Sometimes her teacher skips steps when showing the class how to solve new problems.
- Alex usually feels comfortable asking questions in class. Today, his teacher said something that he didn't understand, so he raised his hand and said, “I don't understand.” When his teacher explained it again, Alex was still confused.
- Rachel's class is learning to solve algebra equations. Rachel thought she understood everything the teacher covered last week, but when it came time to take the quiz Rachel couldn't remember the steps and didn't do very well. The test is at the end of the week.

Help-Seeking Affirmations

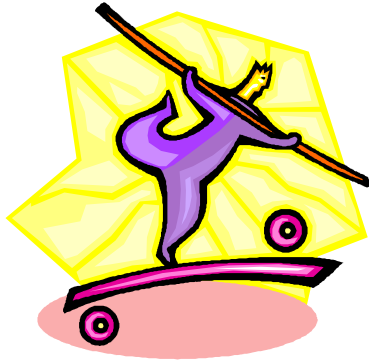
It is important to keep in mind that all learners have trouble understanding things sometimes. If this happens to you, make sure you get the help you need right away! Use these affirmations to give you the confidence you need to ask a question and/or get help.


- ✓ If you are having trouble understanding the book, solving problems, or completing your assignments – re-read more slowly, organize your notes, review your old homework/tests/quizzes, search for information on the computer.
- ✓ If that doesn't work, ask your teacher, parents, classmates, friends or parents for help.
- ✓ Getting the help you need will help you stay motivated and achieve more than you would be able to alone.
- ✓ When asking for help, ask questions that will give you hints to get "unstuck" when you are stuck – instead of asking someone to do it for you. Asking questions that start with "why?" or "how?" are good ways to do this.
- ✓ If you can't ask a question right away, write it down so you won't forget it later.

Worksheet 1: Introduction to Time-Management

Name: _____

Directions: In the left column, write down all the things you *have* to do each day and *estimate* how much time each activity takes. Do the same thing in the right column for all the things you *want* to do (watch TV, play video games, etc.).



Have-to's 	Want-to's 
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____
6. _____	6. _____
7. _____	7. _____
8. _____	8. _____
9. _____	9. _____
10. _____	10. _____


Name _____

Your “time budget”

Two rules:

1. Your budget has to include your “have-to’s” and your “want-to’s”
2. Your budget has to add up to *exactly* 24 hours (one day)!



Your job is to “balance” your time budget!	
Total time spent:	24 hours

Worksheet 2: Time-Management – Weekly Planning

Name: _____

Do you know what you're doing at different times of the day during different days of the week? Find out - quiz yourself!

What are you doing:



Monday

9:30am _____

Tuesday

12:00pm _____

Wednesday

7:00am? _____

Thursday

2:00pm? _____

Friday

4:00pm? _____

Saturday

1:00pm? _____

Sunday

5:00pm? _____

Now think specifically about Math class. What will you be doing each day of the week this week?

Monday _____

Tuesday _____

Wednesday _____

Thursday _____

Friday _____

Directions: Think specifically about Math class and all the things you will be working on this week. For each day of the week, list your class work, homework, tests, quizzes, and important assignments that you will be responsible for.



Day of the Week:	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Topic:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Class Work:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Homework:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Test:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Quiz:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Due Today:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Worksheet 3: Introduction to Goal-Setting

Name: _____



1. Here are some guidelines for helping you set attainable goals for yourself:

- Make the goal something you really want, not just something that sounds good.
- Write down your goals using the positive, not the negative. For example, instead of saying, "My goal is to not get a C in math" you can say, "I want to get at least a B in math".
- Think about the steps necessary to accomplishing your goal. What will it take to get there?

2. Using these guidelines, think about a goal you'd like to accomplish in math. Below are some examples. You can choose one or write your own.

- ✓ Turn in all assignments this week
- ✓ Complete all assignments on time this week
- ✓ Study math for 30 minutes each day this week
- ✓ Ask more questions in class this week
- ✓ Improve my grade on the next test or quiz
- ✓ Other _____

3. Why is this goal important to you? _____ _____ _____

Directions: Create a plan for accomplishing your goal. Think about the small steps (or objectives) that you can take to make it happen and write them down.



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

How will you know when you've accomplished your goal? _____

How will you feel when you've accomplished your goal?



Quiz

Fill in what each letter stands for:

S _____

M _____

A _____

R _____

T _____

Worksheet 5: Study Habits Checklist

Name: _____

Study Habits Checklist

Directions: Read each statement carefully and circle the response that is true for you.

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. I set aside a regular time for studying every day. | YES | NO |
| 2. I give up if an assignment is difficult. | YES | NO |
| 3. I study best with the stereo or TV on. | YES | NO |
| 4. I waste time because I am not organized. | YES | NO |
| 5. I enjoy learning. | YES | NO |
| 6. I focus entirely on my work when I study. | YES | NO |
| 7. I study before I do anything else. | YES | NO |
| 8. I could get better grades. | YES | NO |
| 9. I get distracted when I study. | YES | NO |
| 10. I have trouble finding enough time to study. | YES | NO |
| 11. Good grades are important to me. | YES | NO |
| 12. I try to find a quiet place to study. | YES | NO |
| 13. I spend too much time on some things and not enough on others. | YES | NO |
| 14. I tend to put off studying. | YES | NO |
| 15. I get tired/sleepy when I study. | YES | NO |

Strategies For Studying Math

- ✓ Set aside a regular time and place to study. Make sure your study space is a good place to get work done (don't study on the sofa or in your bed) with plenty of space and good lighting. Make sure you have everything you need before you start in order to minimize interruptions.
- ✓ Set goals for yourself - break up your work into small chunks and take short breaks while you study. It's easier to get everything done if you don't try to do it all at once.
- ✓ Make sure you aren't hungry! Eat a healthy snack before you study. Don't skip meals during the day - this can prevent you from concentrating when you study.
- ✓ Get plenty of sleep each night so you aren't tired at the end of the day when you need to study.
- ✓ Prioritize! Make a list of what you need to get done, and start with the most important thing on your list.
- ✓ Set aside the things that are too difficult to do without help. Come back to them later, and ask someone in your family for help. If no one can help you, try to find time before school the next day to ask your teacher for help.
- ✓ Practice stress management! If you are getting tense or frustrated when you study, stop and take several deep breaths. Take a short break - get up and go for a walk, stretch, and come back to your studying once you feel more refreshed and relaxed.



Strategies For Math Test-taking

- ✓ **Complete your homework on time.** Homework is the best way to practice solving math problems. As you do your homework, make a list of the types of problems you are solving and the techniques for solving each type of problem. Later, use flashcards to help you remember what technique to use to solve each kind of problem.
- ✓ **Read over the entire test before you begin.** Doing this will give you a sense of what problems you can do easily, what problems will be more difficult, and how long it will take to finish. You don't have to do the problems from first to last - do them in an order that suits you!
- ✓ **Make sure you read the questions carefully,** and do **all parts** of each problem.
- ✓ **Don't panic if you get stuck.** Practice stress management. If you start feeling anxious or frustrated, take several deep breaths and tell yourself that you can do it.
- ✓ **Verify your answers** - does each answer make sense given the context of the problem? If you finish early, **double-check** every problem.



Worksheet 6: Common Errors Checklist

Name: _____

Math Study Skills

Directions: Many students have difficulties learning math because they make a few common mistakes when they are solving problems. This worksheet is designed to help you figure out what kind of mistakes you typically make. Look at your test/quiz and, for each problem you got wrong, make a check mark in the box that describes what kind of mistake it was.

Misread the Directions (didn't follow the proper directions)	Careless Mistake (added instead of subtracted, for example)	Didn't Understand the Concept (Didn't know how to solve the problem)
Application Mistake (Knew how to solve the problem but used the wrong steps or procedure)	Test-taking Mistake (ran out of time or didn't show work)	Study Mistake (didn't study or practice the right concepts)

Which box(es) has the most checkmarks? _____

Strategies For Improving Math Study Skills

These tips address each of the common mistakes students make when solving problems. Think about what mistakes you typically make, and use these tips to help correct your mistakes. Remember, you can take control of your own math learning!

Misread Direction Mistakes: Misread direction mistakes occur when you skip directions or misunderstand directions and continue to work the problem, for example, when the test says simplify to lowest terms but you leave a fraction as $\frac{2}{4}$ instead of $\frac{1}{2}$.

Correction: Read directions carefully. Read the directions two times slowly before beginning to solve the problem.

Careless Mistakes: Careless mistakes are the type of mistakes you would catch if you read over the problem. The best example is the student who is a sign dropper - a student who drops a negative sign (or any sign) and misses the problem. Another example is someone who adds numbers incorrectly usually in his/her head and doesn't use paper or a calculator. These careless errors once reviewed can be caught and immediately corrected.

Correction: After finishing, double-check each problem. Write down each step as you solve the problem. Don't do any step in your head.

Concept Mistakes: Concept mistakes are mental mistakes you make when you don't understand the properties or principles you need to solve the problem. For example, when if you don't understand the relationship between fractions, decimals, and percentages. Concept errors must be corrected in order to understand the next mathematics chapter. Once you have too many concept errors, you won't be able to learn new material.

Correction: Ask a question as soon as you are confused - everyone needs help to understand math, and questions allow your teacher to identify what it is you don't understand so she or he can help you. Remember, any question is better than no question at all when you don't understand something.

Application Mistakes: Application mistakes occur when you know the concept but can not apply to the problem. Application errors usually are found when trying to solve word problems or graph equations. For example, in solving word problems, you understand how to solve the equation but cannot figure out what type of equation should be used. The next example is solving a problem correctly but not being able to graph it. Appropriate practice and insight can avoid most application errors.

Correction: Practice! When you study, make sure you do all the different types of problems you are learning, so that you can better recognize what math skill the problem requires you to use. Flashcards can help you do this too - make flashcards with different types of problems and have someone quiz you on how you would solve it.

Test-Taking Mistakes: Test taking errors apply to the way you take the test. Some test-taking mistakes are working on a problem too long, not showing work, changing test answers and not completing the second step of a two step problem.

Correction: First, look over the entire test. Read each problem carefully. Calculate how much time you can spend on each question (for example, 40 problems in 50 minutes gives you about a minute and a half for each problem). If a problem is very difficult, move on and come back to it later. You don't always have to go in order - do problems in an order that suits you. Show all your work and don't skip steps. Check your work

Study Mistakes: Study mistakes occur when you study the wrong type of material, put less focus on the important material, or cram for the test. For example, you may spend too much time reviewing your homework problems instead of the cumulative review. Or you may wait until the last night to study for the math test and expect to do well.

Correction: Ask your teacher what will be on the test, so you will know what to study. When you study, focus on the types of problems that are most difficult for you - the more you practice them, the better you will learn the concepts.

Some other tips for improved math study skills:

- When you are taking notes or doing homework, put a question mark next to anything that is confusing or that you don't understand. Write out a specific question to ask your teacher.
- Try teaching it to someone else (like your mom or dad) - sometimes explaining a math problem out loud helps you learn it better.
- Keep a folder or notebook that is only for math - if you take notes during class, use them to help you with your homework and to study for tests.

Worksheet 7: Getting Help

Name: _____

Directions: Read each question carefully, and give the answer that describes you best.

1. I am comfortable asking a question in class when I don't understand something.

A = never true B=sometimes true C= mostly true D = always true

2. In class there have been times when I have wanted to ask a question but I don't.

A = never true B=sometimes true C= mostly true D = always true

3. In class I don't like anyone to know if I don't understand something.

A = never true B=sometimes true C= mostly true D = always true

4. In general, It's better to try to work on my own than to ask for help.

A = never true B=sometimes true C= mostly true D = always true

5. When I ask for help, I ask questions that help me understand the material.

A = never true B=sometimes true C= mostly true D = always true

6. When I ask for help, I just want to get the right answer so I can finish my assignment.

A = never true B=sometimes true C= mostly true D = always true

7. At home, I can ask someone in my family for help if I don't understand how to do something.

A = never true B=sometimes true C= mostly true D = always true

8. I give up if an assignment is too difficult to finish on my own.

A = never true B=sometimes true C= mostly true D = always true

Strategies For Getting Help When You Need It

1. In class, never be afraid to ask a question. Questions help **everybody** understand things better! Try asking questions that begin with: why?, how?, or what if? Instead of just saying, "I don't understand." Remember to keep asking questions until you understand - you don't have to stop after asking once!
2. Pay attention when other students ask questions. They might have the same question as you do! Also, hearing more questions will help you remember the material better.
3. You can help yourself by "reflecting" on what you've already learned. Reflecting is when you ask yourself questions in order to help remember the material. You can do this by taking a practice test OR by trying to teach it to someone else (like a friend, brother, sister, mom, or dad).
4. Ask for hints if you can do most of the problem but not all of it.
5. Read, think, then re-read the problem. If you are completely stuck on a problem, don't guess! Ask your teacher, "how do I start?"

Always remember that getting help is an important part of learning. Knowing when and how to ask the right questions will help you reach your goals for the rest of your life!

Worksheet 8: Getting Help Practice Worksheet

Name: _____

Directions: Read over your "problem-scenario" with your group, and answer the questions on the worksheet. Remember to use your "feeling" words to describe emotions.

1. What makes this situation a problem? _____

2. How do you think this person is feeling? _____

3. What can this person do to solve the problem? _____

4. Give one or two examples of questions this person can ask to get help. _____

Test your study skills!

Directions: Complete as much of this worksheet as you can, and see how many study skills you can remember.

TIME MANAGEMENT

1. The first step for planning your time is to list your _____ to's and your _____ to's.

2. In order to get everything done in a day, you should:

- a) sleep less b) skip dinner c) prioritize d) watch TV

3. An agenda or weekly planner helps you:

a) remember important assignments b) keep track of due dates

c) plan out your time d) a, b, and c

4. How else does your agenda help you with your time management? _____

GOAL SETTING

5. The SMART method of goal-setting stands for:

S _____

M _____

A _____

R _____

T _____

GETTING HELP

6. Which one was **not** a tip for getting help when you need it?
- a) pay attention when other students ask questions b) ask for hints
c) ask questions that start with "how" or "why" d) try to figure it out on your own

7. What should you do if you don't understand what your teacher just taught the class, and she or he has already moved on to the next topic? _____

STUDY HABITS AND MATH STUDY SKILLS

8. Write down three study habits that you remember (hint: don't study in bed or on the couch)

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

9. Which one is a **not** a common mistake that we learned about?

a) careless mistake b) concept mistake c) application mistake d) general mistake

10. Name one common mistake that students make when doing math, and tell how to correct it: _____

CONGRATULATIONS! IF YOU ANSWERED MOST OF THE QUESTIONS CORRECTLY, YOU ARE OFFICIALLY A SKILL-BUILDER!!