

Welcome to Our Schools Curriculum

The CCSD ELL Division is grateful for the generosity of The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance for providing us the rights to share their *Welcome to Our Schools* curriculum with our teachers. This curriculum was developed for New York Teachers of Refugee students. With this in mind, there are a few lessons that we will be offering adaptation suggestions to address the needs of Newcomer students living in Clark County.

When deciding what modules to teach, keep in mind who your students are and what they need to learn about being in a U.S. school. As they state in their materials, “Instructors should review the Modules and select the materials that would be most relevant to the refugee students (CCSD Newcomers) enrolled in their school system, and most useful when designing lesson plans and classroom activities.” Also, you may have English-speaking students who do not qualify as ELLs who could benefit from the acculturation pieces of this curriculum. A student coming from England speaks a different English and can experience culture shock as they begin living in the U.S. Please use these materials, as they seem appropriate for these students as well.

Please review pages 4-8, Background for Instructors. As you read any of these materials, remember that the authors are in New York, and programs mentioned do not align to CCSD programs. Reading considerations are also attached for you to review before reading each module. We are providing these materials as a starting point for you to be able to develop lessons to meet the acculturation needs of your Newcomer students. Thank you for looking at these materials. The CCSD ELL Division welcomes your feedback on this curriculum as we are offering it to our schools for the first time this year. If you have any questions or need additional supports for your Newcomer students please reach out to our Division at (702) 799-2137. Also, please look at the materials and links specifically provided to address newcomer needs found on our website at ell.ccsd.net. Most schools have an ELL Student Success Advocate. These staff members receive additional training from the ELL Division and can also act as a resource for you.

CCSD CONSIDERATIONS

Module 9: Study Skills

In this reading...

When it says ...	Think...
refugee	newcomer
Refugee Academy	school site
academic coach	mentor

- Consider teaching about device distractions v. devices as study tools.

WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOLS



BUREAU OF REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE

**NEW YORK STATE OFFICE
OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE**

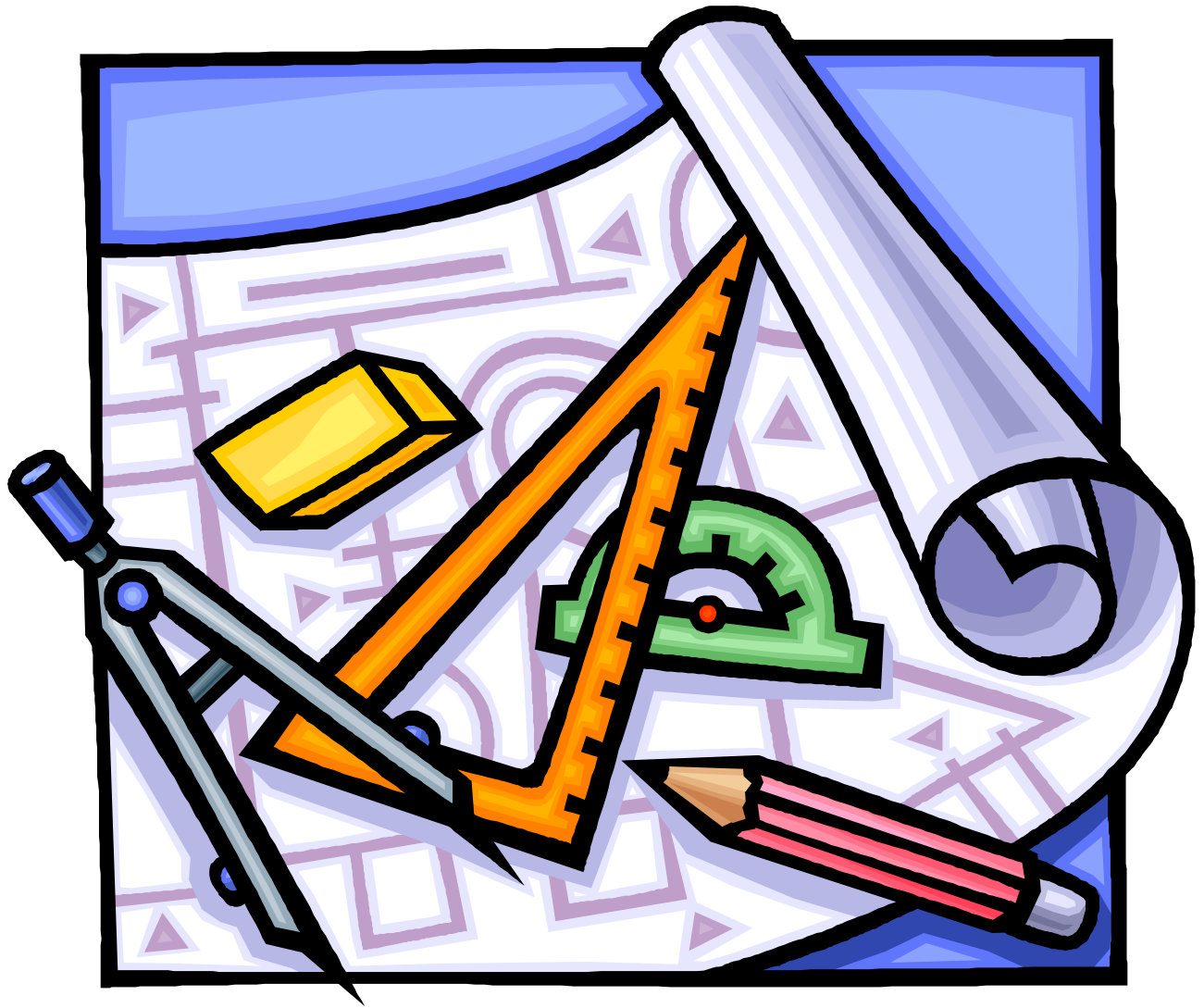
**REVISED 2011
ANDREW M. CUOMO, GOVERNOR**

The Refugee School Impact Grant (RSIG) *Welcome to our Schools*, which includes Refugee Academy and Mini-Academy Curricula, Parent and Professional Development Programs, a Guide to Academic Coaches, a Guide to the Videos, and the videos *Refugee Student Interviews*, *Refugee Parent Interviews*, *A Day in Elementary School*, *A Day in Middle School* and *A Day in High School*, was developed by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (OTDA/BRIA).

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MODULE 9
STUDY SKILLS

MODULE 9: Study Skills

PURPOSE



The purpose of Module 9 is to assist students in developing study skills.

OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Learn basic strategies for developing study skills
- Learn techniques for organization and concentration
- Understand the significance of homework and strategies for completing homework successfully
- Understand how to establish a home environment for successful studying



SUPPLIES

Handout 9-1:
Homework

School Supplies including: pencils, paper, notebooks, folders, binders, and other resources to assist students in getting organized

Three file folders per student

Sample plain or decorated cardboard boxes filled with school supplies (see Activity #2)

Empty cardboard boxes large enough for school papers

Supplies to decorate boxes including: wallpaper books, markers, colored paper, tape, glue, scissors, wrapping paper, paint

Combination Lock

Access to student lockers, if appropriate (see Activity #2)

Piles of books and papers on table (see Activity #2)

Optional: small spiral assignment notebooks for all students, or school-assigned notebooks



MODULE 9: Study Skills

VOCABULARY

Elementary Vocabulary

I think I can
Concentrate*
Ask
Focus*
Organization
Pay Attention
Locker/cubbies
Where is it?
Study
Study Skills
Plan
Hard
Easy
Try

*Advanced vocabulary
often used by teachers

Secondary Vocabulary

I think I can
Concentrate*
Ask
Focus*
Organization
Pay Attention
Locker
Where is it?
Study
Study skills
Plan
Hard
Easy
Try

*Advanced vocabulary
often used by teachers



Key Points – Study Skills



1. *The keys to study skills are organization and time management.*

Even the most enthusiastic students may become overwhelmed by the number of school assignments that have to be juggled. The purpose of Module 9 is to assist students in planning for multiple tasks. They will learn about basic study skills that will help them stay on track and meet deadlines.

Before discussing study skills, determine how the Refugee Academy students will be assisted in completing classroom and homework assignments until they are comfortable with the English language and can keep up with class work.

The first concept that the students of the Refugee Academy should learn is that there are “study skills.” Since many of the students will be adjusting to school for the first time in their lives, or at least adjusting to multiple classrooms and assignments, they may not know that there are systems to studying.

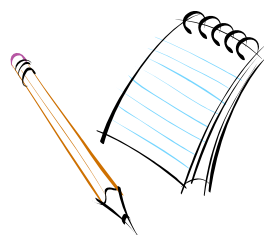


Some of the strategies for developing basic study skills such as making sure supplies are handy, making lists of tasks to be accomplished, and reviewing with a partner seem routine to most students, but can be new ideas for refugee students. They may not realize that they will be more successful if they study in short increments, rather than in one long session. They may not know that fatigue or emotions can impact on their ability to concentrate or that constant interruptions can result in mistakes.

Instructors should explain to students that there are three items that will be essential in helping them stay organized and focused: an assignment notebook, a specific storage place for supplies and papers (at home and at school), and a school calendar. Show them how each of those items can affect time management and organization.

Demonstrate how to fill out the assignment notebook. Show how a locker or cubby can be neat and accessible. Use a school calendar to show how due dates and reminder dates can be written in by the students.

Instructors should also explain to students that teachers will have different methods of alerting students about assignments. Teachers may write homework on the chalkboard, they may pass out a syllabus at the beginning of the year, or they may announce assignments at the end of the class period. Most elementary teachers have a routine system, but they still depend upon the students to keep track of their assignments.



No matter what the teacher’s system is, students should have *one place* to write down assignments. When they are given a due date that is days or weeks away, they should write down reminders in their assignment notebooks and on their school calendar. Writing it

down in a notebook is the first essential step to managing the time it takes to complete assignments.

The students should also be informed about the amount of time they could easily waste looking for textbooks, assignment sheets, and supplies in their lockers, at home, and in their desks. Stress that *one place at home and one place at school* should be designated for school resources. Point out that the one place should not be “the locker” but “the red notebook in the locker.”

It should be recognized that many refugee students will not have a separate room or desk at home for their study materials. In Module 9 students have the chance to make a box that is designated just for them at home. It should contain their papers, assignments, textbooks, and supplies. It will have to be cleaned out routinely, but should at least provide a central location that will save them time when they start to work on their homework.

It should also be noted that the concept of a calendar might be new. Take the time to show how the students can look at the date of assignments and connect to the dates on the calendar, writing down what is due. Reassure students that teachers in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and Academic Coaches and translators will assist them in keeping track of their assignments. Some students may be enrolled in classes that are specifically designed for helping students in staying organized and getting their work done on time.



2. Plan ahead for studying at home.

No matter where students live, they will be distracted when they try to study at home. They may have family members nearby, the television or radio on in the background, or headphones on with music playing loudly.



Students should be informed that they should turn off any electronics and try to ignore the sounds around them, but the reality is that they will be easily tempted to turn on their favorite television show, or listen to music as they study. Adults are usually more uncomfortable with the distractions than the students themselves. Many of the students are used to lots of background noise. Some students feel that they can study better if they are listening to music. Others cannot find a quiet place to study and can easily ignore the noise around them.

Instructors should explain to students that they will learn best when they can concentrate on their work. They will also save time and get the work done more quickly if they can resist being distracted. Recognize that students tend to prefer “multitasking,” for example, combining schoolwork while using electronic devices to listen to music and talking to friends by instant messaging. Keep emphasizing that they will do better work if they concentrate solely on the task at hand.

Instructors can help students plan for how they will study at home. Without asking about specific living conditions, ask students for suggestions about where they can study. How can they set up study areas that are not distracting? Where can they keep school supplies so that they are readily available? If home is particularly distracting, discuss different options such as the local library, after-school study time, and community centers.



Encourage students to use their home study time to get their assignments completed, *and* to think ahead to the next day. They should routinely ask themselves if anything is due the next day; can they get part of a project done that has a long-term deadline; or are there supplies they are supposed to take to school the next day? Study time should include preparing for the next day at school.



3. Teachers respect effort.

Instructors should inform students that if they are struggling with an assignment or they did not have enough time to get it done, they should at least try to get some of it completed.

Teachers respect students who put forth effort. In fact, some teachers would prefer that students at least attempt to do an assignment even if it is difficult. That way the teacher can see why the student is having difficulty and can help the student better understand the assignment.



It is important to keep reinforcing that teachers would rather see a serious attempt at work, rather than see no work at all.



4. Save time by following directions.

The instructors should discuss the topics of directions and assignments with the English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers to determine the best process for helping students who do not speak English.



So much time is wasted when students cannot or do not follow directions. Instructors should inform students that they should not only write down assignments given by the teachers, but make sure that they understand what they are supposed to do. Encourage students to raise their hands and ask for clarification if they are not sure. Peers may be able to help them figure out what they are supposed to do for a class assignment or for homework. They can ask their ESL teachers or approach the teacher after class and ask for clarification.

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1: STUDYING AT HOME

Grades K-5 (45 minutes)

In this activity:

Students will learn more about homework.

They will discuss each item on *Handout 9-1: Homework*. For many students, the concept of homework will be a new one, and they will need specific guidance in how to prepare for studying at home.



Distribute *Handout 9-1: Homework*.

- Discuss each item, coloring as each is discussed.
 - Do not study in front of the television
 - Do not attempt to complete assignments in the morning before school
 - Plan on taking short breaks every 15 or 20 minutes, or if the work is too upsetting and frustrating.
 - The study area should be well lit, and, if possible, in an area with minimal disruption.
 - If possible, pick the same time every day to complete homework.
 - Some students like to tackle the hard assignments first and then quickly finish the easy assignments. Others like to get motivated by completing the easier assignments, leaving time to work on the harder ones. Remind students that they will make more mistakes if they are tired or hungry, and should plan to do their homework when they will be most alert.
- Students in grades 3-5 can practice organizing multiple assignments. Explain that they have a series of homework assignments and ask them how they would go about organizing their study time. They may tackle the tasks in a different order. The emphasis should be on planning and prioritizing. Ask students how they will decide what to do first. Assignments might include:

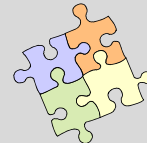
- Math worksheet
- 20 minutes of reading
- Diorama or other project

Grades 6-8, 9-12 (60 minutes)

Distribute *Handout 9-1: Homework* and ask the class what they think the pictures mean.



Discussion Questions



Why is it important to find a quiet place to study?

- Recognize that it may not be possible for students to find a quiet study place at home. Suggest alternative study sites such as a local library or community center. Encourage students to inform family members about how important it is to be able to work without being interrupted. Some family members, especially younger siblings, will not understand. Talk to the students about how to study without getting distracted.



Can your family help you study at home?

- Many family members will not speak English and will not know how to help the Refugee Academy students. Students can get help from their classroom teachers, peers, ESL teachers, Academic Coaches, and translators.

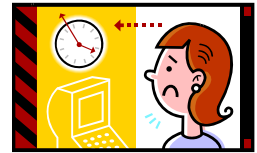
What will happen if you are successful in school?

- Discuss the feeling of pride from doing anything well, and how family members would be proud of student success. But also discuss the possible negative reactions to success, by people who may be jealous or afraid of the results of the success. Encourage students to stay on task and work for achievement.
- Some students may experience peer pressure to slack off or act out in class. Remind students that they will want to feel pride in their work, resulting in a sense of confidence and achievement. Hard work can pay off when they pursue employment or higher education. This may seem obvious to the instructors, but many students, not just refugee students, do not understand the impact of schoolwork on their future. Give the students examples of well-known, successful adults who believe that they succeeded because they worked hard in school.

What if you can't concentrate or focus on your work?

- Students should balance studying with a special activity or reward for hard work. Give examples of how students can break up the study time with a snack, exercise, or other activity before returning to their homework.
- Procrastination can be a problem for a lot of students particularly with subjects that they do not enjoy. Procrastination can be battled by completing one step at a time. Discuss the importance of *getting started* on assignments that may seem hard or boring. Even if students just organize their papers, work one or two problems, or make an outline, they will discover that they will be more motivated to continue the work because they have managed to get started on it.
- Sometimes students are so stressed about their homework that they cannot concentrate and may get frustrated or upset. *Module 14: Coping with Stress* provides ideas about overcoming anxiety about schoolwork. Some tips include working on an assignment with a friend, family member or tutor; exercising every 10 minutes to break up the study time; establishing a reward chart for completion of phases of an assignment; and writing or drawing pictures about personal goals and how to achieve them.

If you have a test on Friday, when should you start studying?



- Before discussing this question, make sure that students understand what a “test” is and why teachers take them seriously. *Module 10 Taking Tests* addresses strategies that can be used to prepare for taking tests.
- Discuss the importance of planning ahead and not “cramming” for an exam. Assignment notebooks should include times for studying well before the exam.
- Encourage students to use Study Hall, study groups, ESL classes, and other opportunities to prepare for tests, in addition to individual review of study material. Ask students to explain how they would plan to study for:
 - A Math test every Friday
 - A Social Studies unit test
 - A test on a book discussed in English class.

Remind students about teachers who can help them prepare for upcoming tests.

ACTIVITY #2: GETTING ORGANIZED

Grades K-5, 6-8, 9-12 (45 minutes)

In this activity:

Students will prepare a storage box to keep at home. It will be a central location for their school assignments and supplies.

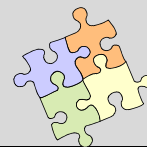


The activity will also allow the students to work together to create a Study Box that appeals to them. Although this may seem like a craft project, encourage the students to start thinking about where they will keep the box so that it will not be disturbed, and how they will keep it organized.

- Show students a plain cardboard box filled with schoolwork (pencils, notebooks, textbooks, homework). Tell them they are going to make a “Study Box.”
- Show the students how they can decorate the box so that it is their own personal home storage box for school supplies and assignments.
- Provide paints, stickers, glitter, colored paper, markers, and other craft supplies.
- If possible, provide assignment notebooks, file folders, pens, or other supplies to get the students started in filling their Study Boxes.



Discussion Questions



Where will you keep your Study Box at home?

- Discuss how to keep the Study Box accessible yet away from other family members, pets, etc.
- The Study Box should be kept in the same place so that it will be used routinely by the students. Suggest that they discuss the location with their family members.
- The box can also be used as a communication tool for parents. The students can put assignments, notes from the teacher, school announcements, and other

forms of communication in the box. The family can go through the backpack and the box every night to see what is going on in school. For older students, a separate folder of school announcements can be established to be shared with parents.

What will be in the box?

- Students should identify what should always be in the Study Box, such as pens, pencils, paper, calculator, etc.
- The contents will change, but students should clean out the Study Box routinely so that everything is up to date.
- Students should keep teacher classroom rules and assignment sheets (or syllabi) in the Study Box for future reference.

How will you organize the box?

- Discuss various ways of organizing the box so that papers will not get lost.
- Set a day of the week when the Study Box will get cleaned out.

How is the box different from your backpack?

- Explain that the backpack is for storage in school and transporting paperwork and textbooks. Assignments should either be in the locker, cubby or student's desk; in the backpack; or in the Study Box at home.

How is the box different from your locker or cubby (or space assigned to the students)?

- Discuss how the locker or cubby should be organized.
- Discuss how students may not have access to their locker during the school day, and will have to plan when they can easily exchange books and papers in their lockers. The Study Box will contain papers and supplies that are needed for homework.
- Many refugee students find lockers frustrating, when they should be a good resource for storing and organizing schoolwork. If it has not been done before, help students to practice using a locker combination. Practice storing items in the locker so that they can be found and removed easily.

Is this a good storage system?

- Show storage systems that are not effective, such as:
 - A coat with papers in pockets
 - A parent handout at the bottom of a backpack

- A messy locker
- An overflowing Study Box
- Piles of books, papers on a table
- Stuffed file folders
- A blank calendar

ACTIVITY #3: FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

Grades K-5 (60 minutes)

In this activity:

Students will have the opportunity to experience following directions. The instructors will point out how much time is saved when students follow directions closely.

Instructors should also show students how to record directions on paper so that they can be followed later.

Emphasize resources for clarifying directions, such as peers, ESL teachers, Academic Coaches, and classroom teachers.



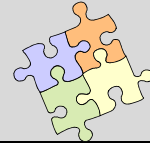
- Ask the students to follow the instructor's directions. Give simple tasks to complete in the room, gradually adding more and more tasks.



- Tell the students that they are allowed to ask for clarification. For example, ask one student to open a window, another to open the door, another to close the window, two others to sharpen pencils, and the entire class to put their hands in the air.
- Follow those directions with a series of directions that would require concentration. For example, ask the class to stand up, walk around the room, pick up a textbook along the way, and then replace it when they reach the same spot again, while saying the words "here we go" as they are walking.
- As the students are following directions, provide occasional distractions. After a few directions, speed up the process.
- The purpose of the activity is to show students that they may receive many different directions at once in confusing circumstances. The exercise should be fun, so instructors should watch for students getting stressed or frustrated.

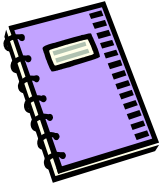


Discussion Questions



Was it hard to concentrate?

- Discuss the impact of distractions and the pressure to speed up when following directions.
- Point out the importance of asking for clarification.
- Discuss how difficult it may be at times to understand the directions and to get help with clarifications in time for completing an assignment. Encourage students to call peers after school, to e-mail teachers if they have access to teacher e-mail addresses, and to at least make the effort to try the assignment. Remind them that teachers appreciate initiative and effort and, as long as the student concentrates in class and writes down assignments, the teacher will assist students in completing work successfully.



JOURNAL TOPIC

Grades K-5

Draw a picture of your personal study area.

Grades 6-8

Draw or write about your plans for studying at home and at school. Explain who you will go to if you need help with schoolwork.

Grades 9-12

Draw or write about how you will organize your study time. What will you do if you don't understand something?



SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Organize a school locker or cubby.
- Purchase assignment notebooks on a field trip to a local store.
- Practice combination locks.
- Practice prioritizing sample assignments, especially at the secondary level. Ask students to think about why they would tackle one assignment earlier than another, and how they can be prepared for a test by studying well in advance *and* the night before.
- Teachers of English as a Second Language can discuss the role of ESL in helping students with organizing and completing schoolwork.
- Help students to set up a filing system for multiple subjects. Provide file folders and markers. Students can learn the names of the subject areas and establish file folders for “homework,” “projects,” and other assignments.

- Invite successful community members who have come to America from a variety of countries to talk about how they adjusted to American schools. Ask them to emphasize the systems that they set up to stay organized, and how they managed to concentrate on schoolwork while adjusting to a new environment. If the adults struggled in adjusting, they should share what they would recommend for coping and adjusting, now that they look back at their experiences.
- Discuss specific strategies for developing study skills that help students concentrate. For example, students can make flash cards, checklists, and practice tests. They can highlight notes, outline reading material, discuss possible test questions with peers, and study old exams. These and many other strategies may be new to the students, so include even the most basic approaches to help them study more effectively. Encourage ESL teachers to incorporate study skills in their lessons.
- Instructors can use the activity *Completing Assignments is Rewarding!* Found in the **Mini-Academy Curriculum** on page 37. In this activity create a personal assignment notebook that will help them organize their studying.
- The video ***A Day in School*** (Elementary, Middle or High School) shows students using school supplies in their classrooms.

HOMEWORK

