Lesson 1 – Why Do We Do Homework?

Materials: Lesson 1 Worksheet (Homework Contract) Notebook - Cahier (Journal Entries)

Skills to Build: Understanding the benefits of homework (knowledge and learning skills) Introducing the idea of student responsibility of completing homework

Vocabulary: Homework (teacher-assigned schoolwork to be done outside the classroom)

Learning Skills (skills that we use to improve how we learn)

Contract (agreement between student and teacher to do something)

NOTE: Throughout all classes it is important to constantly engage the students by asking them to provide examples and participate in discussion. Provide yourself and each student with the Lesson Worksheets package. Filling out the worksheets should not be silent, individual work. They should be completed as a class with each student providing their own personal examples.

LESSON PLAN

Part 1: Get student opinions on why we do homework – practical sense

 What are the benefit of doing homework (e.g., reinforces what we learn during the day, gives students extra time to practice, improves grades) – teacher can write down shortform answers on white/blackboard

Part 2: Another benefit to doing homework: Introduce idea that students also develop learning skills while doing homework. Learning skills are the skills that each student has to do in order to improve their ability to learn. Ask students to give examples of learning skills such as time management (creating homework schedule), organizational skills (agenda, graphing), concentration skills (setting up appropriate work space), and working independently. All of these examples will be taught in the next few weeks so that students complete homework consistently.

Part 3: Introduce responsibility. Ask students what responsible means (e.g., completing a job you have been assigned, completing something on time). Reinforce the idea that part of their job as a student is to complete homework.

Activity: Contract. Sometimes we sign a piece of paper so that there is an agreement between two people on something that needs to be done (e.g., when someone does repairs on your home, you sign a contract that says exactly what will be fixed, when it will be completed, and how much it will cost).

Have each student create their own homework contract in a Notebook/Cahier with appropriate information for upcoming lessons (e.g., setting goals, study space, use of agenda, planning, etc). Have them use the Lesson 1 worksheet as a guide for the upcoming lessons. Discuss possible rewards at school for doing homework consistently (e.g., extra credit for

courses, longer breaks). Once the students have completed their contract, ask students to share what they wrote in their contract.

Activity: Journal/Diary. The best method to increase how well you can do homework on your own is to monitor your school and homework habits. One way we will do this is we will keep journal accounts of our homework habits. At the end of every school day, I would like you to write a short paragraph on how long you studied that night, what kinds of breaks you took, what types of distractions were there when you were doing homework, whether you studied alone, whether you set goals or challenged yourself with homework, and where the studying took place.

Have students complete the journal every night and collect the journals at the end of the week to ensure they are keeping up with the writing. Monitoring their daily work habits is an effective strategy for increasing self-awareness and self-efficacy. Give praise to students who write a lot and have detailed accounts of their learning experiences and encourage those who do not write as much to set more challenging goals during homework time.

Take out Lesson 1 worksheet, check off "create homework contract in journal"

<u>Lesson 2 – Creating a Homework Space</u>

Materials: Lesson 1 and 2 worksheet

Skills to Build: Understanding the components of an effective homework space

Vocabulary: Homework space (a place to complete homework)

Kinesthetic learning (what type of learning suits you best)

LESSON PLAN

Review homework contract from previous lesson. Stress the importance of student responsibility and doing things that you have agreed to do. Now that you have created the contract, it is time to talk about each component of the contract. Today we start by talking about working in a space that is optimal for learning.

Part 1: What makes a classroom an effective place in which students learn?

- Ask students what things in the classroom help them learn (e.g., word wall, books, computer, blackboard, clock, light/windows)
- Ask students what things in/on their desk help them learn (e.g., materials, books)

Part 2: What makes a good homework study space?

- Ask students where they do their homework (e.g., desk in room, kitchen table ask specific questions about the room makeup of the room, who else is in the room when they do work, is music/television on, etc)
- Ask students to give examples (e.g., quiet space, well-lit, materials, no background noise to distract you like a TV)

Activity: Using worksheet 2, ask students to create their own personal study space

Have the students draw the study space in their home, and add appropriate words (e.g., quiet, no music, well-lit)

It is important to note that effective study spaces are locations that we are used to. For example, if you always study in your room, then keep studying in your room. If you decide to study in a library or a coffee cup, the newness of the environment will distract you because they are filled with stimuli that you are not used (e.g., people talking, room noises, lighting, paintings, etc.)

Once they have completed their worksheet, have some students share their ideas about the ideal homework study space.

Part 3: Sometimes we need to know what type of learner we are. Some people need to read a page twice before they understand what they read, others need to do homework alone in their rooms. Finding the type of learner you are will help you create the ideal study space and will

help you come up with the right strategies to facilitate the learning process. Knowing what type of learner you are and applying those strategies that suit you best in the right environment is what we call kinesthetic learning.

Ask each student: "What type of learner are you? What is the BEST way that you learn?"

Take Lesson 1 Worksheet out, attach study space picture, and check off "create study space."

<u>Lesson 3 – Creating a Homework Schedule</u>

Materials: Lesson 1 and 3 Worksheet

Skills to Build: Understanding the benefits of using a schedule to complete your homework Increase self-monitoring

Vocabulary: Schedule (a series of things that need to be done or events that will occur in a particular time or period)

Self-monitoring evaluating your habits in order to make sure you do not deviate away from those healthy learning habits)

LESSON PLAN

Review homework contract from previous lesson, and remind students that they have already begun to take responsibility for their homework and learning by making sure that they have an appropriate place to do their work. This will help them keep their word (e.g., contract) and do their work more efficiently. The next goal of the contract is to create and follow a homework schedule.

Part 1: Review the idea of a schedule – ask the students to define what it means. Then have the students provide examples of their schedule or routine in the morning before coming to school, the school day, and in class. (e.g., wake up, eat breakfast, get dressed, brush my teeth, pick up my lunch box, go to school).

Part 2: Ask students if they have a certain time of the day they do homework – during class, after school, after activities, after dinner, before bed, etc.

Part 3: What are the benefits of having a schedule on paper? Ask students for their ideas and then provide any additional reasons they missed (e.g., visual representation, such as with the use of alarms or calendars on cellphones, so you can remember appointments and activities).

Activity: Creating a schedule that includes homework. Give each child a calendar that breaks down the time from 4:00pm to 9:00pm in half-hour increments. Have each student draw or write what they do in each section (e.g., soccer practice, play video games, surf the internet, watch television, eat dinner, shower, get ready for bed, etc). For each day, make sure that the student allots a specific amount of time to do homework (minimum one hour). When finished, have some students present their schedules to their class. Highlight that the student should hang their schedule in their homework space, so that they can see when they have scheduled to do their work.

At the end of the activity, take out contract and put a check beside "create and follow personal schedule."

Lesson 4 – Using Your Agenda

Materials: Lesson 1 worksheet, personal/school agenda

Skills to Build: Understanding how to use the agenda to effectively plan for doing homework

Vocabulary: Agenda (a special planner to help us organize our assignments and keep track of upcoming due dates and tests)

Self-monitoring (evaluating your own behaviors more effectively)

LESSON PLAN

Review homework contract from previous lessons. Remind students that they are building the contract together, and that they have already completed two activities that will help them stay on track with doing homework (homework space and homework schedule). Today, you will be talking about the importance of using the agenda.

Part 1: Why do we have an agenda? What is helpful about the agenda?

Ask students to give their opinions on the benefits of using an agenda (e.g., keep track of due dates, daily homework assignments, communication between parents and teachers). Reiterate the idea of responsibility and that by using the agenda, students become more aware of their responsibilities for the evening.

Part 2: How can we better use the agenda?

Have a discussion as to how students use their agenda (e.g., write homework and dates down). Then provide strategies about how to keep track of what they have completed (e.g., crossing off item, using checkboxes, etc).

Activity: In pairs, students will use their agenda (or if they do not have a school agenda, use the journal) to write down "math sheet" and create a checkbox beside it. After everyone has done so, handout a very short math worksheet (no more than 5 questions of simple math work that everyone in the class can do). Once they have completed the work, tell them all to use their agenda to put a checkmark in their agenda next to their homework. Review these three steps: writing down homework, completing homework, checkmark. This is done to get students into the habit of looking in their agendas and checking everything they have to do for homework.

Activity: Once the first part of the activity is completed, have the students write down their actual homework for the day. Encourage them to use checkboxes.

Take out contract from Lesson 1 and put a checkmark beside "use agenda to keep track of homework."

The following lesson, praise those students who used their agenda correctly and encourage those who did not to try again that night.

<u>Lesson 5 – Planning Ahead for School Assignments/Tests</u>

Materials: Lesson 1 and 5 worksheet, personal/school agenda

Skills to Build: Understanding how to plan ahead for upcoming tests/assignments

Vocabulary: Plan (a method to do something or get something done; developed in advance)

LESSON PLAN

Teacher should continue to reinforce/encourage the students' attempts to use their agenda and graph their homework.

So far, we have learned many ways to get ready to do our homework. We have made ourselves good work spaces, made time to complete our homework using a schedule, and started using our agendas to write our homework and graph our efforts when we finish. Today, I would like to talk about using our agenda to plan for upcoming tests and assignments.

Part 1: Discussion on WHY we plan for things (e.g., birthday party)

We plan for things so that we have enough time to get ready for them. If we told people that we were having a birthday party tomorrow, we may not be able to prepare for them or finish the things that we need to do for it (e.g., buy presents, plates, cake, candles, clean the house, etc.)

Part 2: In the same way, we have to plan ahead for assignments and tests. If you don't, what may happen? Ask for students opinions (poor grade, parents/teacher/student are disappointed).

Activity: Teacher and class work together to plan a study schedule. Refer to Case 1 and 2 and Lesson 5 Worksheet. Assume that today is Monday morning for the activities.

Case 1: Katie has a math worksheet due Wednesday and a spelling test on Friday. Her teacher also wants her to read 10 pages for her book report due Thursday during the week. Let's plan her schedule for the week together.

- 1) Write due dates in agenda for the week.
- 2) Prioritize write down what needs to be done in order for this week.
- 3) Break down assignments into smaller parts e.g., read a few pages a day, study a number of spelling words a day, study specific chapters for math a day, have days for review of all materials, etc.
- 4) Fill out homework in agenda and check off homework once completed.

Case 2: Students work in pairs to work together to create a study schedule for case 2 in Lesson 5 Worksheet. Once finished, have groups present ideas to class.

Take out contract, and check box "use agenda to plan ahead"

<u>Lesson 6 – Strategies While Completing Homework</u>

Materials: Lesson 1 and 6 worksheet; agenda

Skills to Build: Using strategies that are helpful while completing homework

Vocabulary: Strategies (use of a plan in order to obtain a specific goal)

LESSON PLAN

Review the first four items on the contract and congratulate students for implementing and using these ideas when completing homework (work space, homework schedule, using agenda, and graphing homework completion). Now sometimes, students have difficulty staying motivated to do their homework. They often want to play or watch TV or do anything else except their homework. So today we are going to talk about some strategies to use WHILE you are doing homework.

Part 1: It's often hard to stay focused on schoolwork when you think it is boring or you find it to be too hard. So let's talk about some strategies that you can use:

- 1) Make sure you have all of the materials you need (e.g., book, pencils, calculator, clean work space).
- 2) Prioritize homework (which subject is easier for you do it first). Ask students for examples.
- 3) Time have clock facing towards/away from you. Set time increments (e.g., 20 minutes) for you to do work. Then take a two minute break (e.g., get a drink, do some jumping jacks, go to the washroom). Then return and continue the task until the next break/you are finished. For every 1 hour of concrete work you do, you can allow yourself a 10 minute break to draw or play a game. If you decide to do this, remain loyal to your homework and do not procrastinate or go over the time allotted on your break.
- 4) Drink lots of water. Water helps you function properly and being hydrated will help reduce tiredness. Remember, coffee is a diuretic. Meaning, it dehydrates you! It may give you an initial boost to work, but the crash phase will make you really tired afterwards.
- 5) Put your cell phone on silent, and do not have any internet browsers open. This will allow you to focus better on the task at hand.
- 6) Goal set a goal or fun activity for you to do after your homework (e.g., playing a board game, playing outside, baking cookies). Ask students to give examples.
- 7) Make it fun use manipulatives (e.g., candy, marbles, play chips) to make tasks more enjoyable. Have students generate some examples (e.g., drawing out a scenario from the book you are reading, role-playing of the characters you are studying, quiz yourself)
- 8) Get motivated! Use self-talk or encouraging words (e.g., good job! only a few more to go!)
- 9) Record yourself (selfies, movies)

Activity: Lisa is a student in Grade 11. She likes going to school, and enjoys reading, writing, and spelling, but she struggles with math. On Wednesday, Lisa's teacher gave the class the

following homework assignments: make sentences using 5 weekly spelling words, finish math worksheet, and read 7 pages of the monthly novel for the book report due at the end of the month. Using what you have learned so far, what would you suggest for Lisa to do during homework time? Have students begin with outlined steps and give examples.

Part 2: Have students write down their homework for the day in their agenda. Encourage them to prioritize what they will do first by writing a '1' next to the most important homework to do first, and then a '2' in descending order of priority. Have students fill out Lesson 6 Worksheet with strategies they usually use while doing homework, and then strategies they will use tonight while doing homework by giving particular examples of their breaks, goals, and self-talk strategies for the evening.

Upon completion of the activity, check off "use study strategies while completing homework"

Lesson 7 – Paying Attention to Detail

Materials: Lesson 1 and 7 worksheets

Skills to Build: Continue to work on strategies that encourage attention to detail

Vocabulary: Attention (to focus or concentrate on a particular thing)

Attention to detail (paying attention to small things or items that are easy to miss)

LESSON PLAN

Teacher should praise students for their continued efforts in homework completion, use of agenda, and graphing.

Last time, we learned about some strategies that we could use WHILE doing homework. Can anyone name a few? Has anyone used any this week?

Today we are going to continue to talk about strategies and particularly ones that help you pay attention.

Part 1: Attention.

When I say attention, what does that mean to you? Have students give opinions. Attention is when we are able to focus or concentrate on something and not become distracted. When you watch a movie, you have to pay attention, or you may miss an important part of the story. When you are crossing the street, you have to pay attention to traffic or you could get hurt. Attention also involves a selective process. Meaning, we select things we want to pay attention to. Other things we don't pay attention to, are sometimes missed.

Note-taking: Attention is important when you are taking notes in class. For lesson 7, I would like you all to take notes on what we will be discussing (have students follow the Lesson 7 Worksheet as guidance). By taking careful notes, we can review a lot of the material we go over in class. By reviewing and taking careful notes, we grasp a lot more information than we would normally while only listening .If you don't have enough time to write down all the notes, write down only the significant portions that you hear, only the most relevant notes so that you can go back to those notes and know exactly what the subject is about.

Part 2: Attention to detail.

Sometimes our homework has so many parts, it is easy to miss or skip a few of them. For example, when we are doing math, sometimes if you are not paying attention, it can be easy to mistake a + sign for a - sign. When we are reading, we can sometimes read "on" instead of "in". This can totally change the answer or meaning of what we are doing. (e.g., 6+2 vs 6-2, The cat went in the house vs The cat went on the house).

Why do we pay attention to detail? Get class opinions. By paying attention to detail, we make less careless errors and therefore do not lose marks on our homework assignments. We make sure our homework is complete. Let's create a checklist on the board of what we need to pay

attention to when completing our homework (e.g., answered all questions, name and date on sheet, read instructions slowly and carefully, printing neat and legible, etc).

Have students review strategies below.

Other strategies to pay attention:

- 1. Use verbal cues that re-direct your attention to the homework and encourage yourself to stay true to the task at hand.
- 2. Minimize electronics and distracting stimuli (ideal environment is essential)
- 3. Having a timer to remind you to pay attention
- 4. By reviewing your answers on a test or on an assignment in backward order (end → beginning), you tend to catch silly mistakes faster.
- 5. Systematic relaxation (see activity below)

Activity: Systematic Relaxation. Sometimes in order to concentrate, we need to listen to how our bodies are feeling. If we ate too much, or if we did not get enough sleep the night before, or if you are feeling anxious because of an upcoming test or personal problems, these may all be factors that will affect us during homework time. So, the point of this activity is to show you all how we can relax before sitting down and doing some concrete work.

What I would like you all to do, is to sit quietly, close your eyes, listen to the beat of your heart while breathing in from your nose and out from your mouth, relaxing all your face muscles, neck, chest, and back. When I say go, you can start and then I will tell you when to stop. Ready, go (allow 1 minute to pass).

This is one method of relaxing our bodies before doing homework. Another relaxation technique we can try is I want everyone to clench their both fists really really tight and flex your muscles for 30 seconds. Ready, go (allow 30 seconds to pass). And now slowly open your fists. This is another relaxation technique that will help reduce anxiety by increasing blood flow in your body and give you the energy you need to start work. You may refer to the Lesson 7 worksheet for other relaxation activities you can do to decrease tension and anxiety before homework.

On contract, check off "use checklist to help pay attention to small details".

<u>Lesson 8 – When to Ask For Help</u>

Materials: Lesson 1 and 8 worksheet

Skills to Build: Initiative to work independently

Staying motivated to do as much work as you can do by yourself

Vocabulary: Independent (doing something on your own or by yourself)
Initiative (starting something on your own terms or schedule)

LESSON PLAN

Teacher should praise students for their continued efforts in homework completion, use of agenda, and graphing.

In the last few weeks, we have learned how to schedule time for homework, use our agendas, graph our homework completion, and use strategies while doing homework. Today we are going to talk about when and how to ask our teachers or family members for help when we get stuck on homework.

Part 1: Defining vocabulary terms. What does initiative/ independent mean? Ask class for examples of doing things independently or showing initiative. Being independent means that you are able to do things by yourself without asking for help. This is especially important when you are going to start your homework. You show initiative when your parents don't have to remind you to begin your homework, you just know that you have to start doing it on your own. You look at your schedule, you get your workspace in order, you prioritize your homework, and you try as best as you can to do it by yourself. We have talked about all of these skills, right? But sometimes, we get stuck on a problem. We can't figure out the instructions of the homework or don't understand what to do. So let's talk about some strategies that we can use before we ask for help which will improve our independent learning:

- 1) Do as much of the work as you can before you ask your parents/sister for help.
- 2) Take the initiative to look online for some methods that are related to the assignment without copying or plagiarising any work (by seeking methods and answers yourself, you teach yourself the subject).
- 3) If you still do not understand some of the problems, try to guess some answers (this will force yourself to learn and remember things you may have forgotten).
- 4) Ask yourself, on a scale of 0 to 100 ($10 = not \ sure$, $40 = somewhat \ sure$, $70 = pretty \ sure$, $100 = very \ sure$) "How sure are you that you will be able to solve these math problems?"
- 5) Call a friend or ask your brother/sister for an explanation or to help you.
- 6) Ask your parents to check over the homework you have completed.

Part 2: Asking a teacher for help: Our goal is to encourage students to come to a teacher for help with solving a problem. However, they need to be able to explain what they DO understand and they need to explain how they tried to solve the problem first. Teacher may clarify, give hints/cues, or find other words they might use to help solve the problem.

Activity (**Lesson 8 Worksheet**): Let's look at the case with Bryan who had trouble completing his Geometry homework. What do you think are some of the steps he could have taken before asking his parents for the answers? (revise his work, guess some of the answers, look for answers or methods online, call up a friend for an explanation) When do you think Bryan should have asked for help? (when he was really stuck and had no other options left). Have students begin with outlined steps and begin examples on the worksheet. Discuss answers together.

Activity 2: Let's now look at the problem Bryan could not solve in class. Looking at the problem that Bryan could not solve, what are some questions he can ask the teacher in order to get clarification? (What does product mean? Are there different ways I can derive a product? If I multiply these two numbers, because one is positive and one is negative, does that mean that the answer will be negative?). Have students discuss their answers.

On contract, check off box "work independently and only ask for help if necessary"

Remind students to bring their journals into class for Lesson 8, check off box "bring journals to Lesson 8"

<u>Lesson 9 – Students teaching their Peers</u>

Materials: Lesson 1 and 9 worksheets, journals

Skills to Build: Share reflections and responses with peers

Oral presentations in front of peers

Vocabulary: Oral (saying something rather than writing it)

Reflections (looking back at something you have already done)

LESSON PLAN

Teacher should praise students for their continued efforts in homework completion, use of agenda, and graphing.

In the last few weeks, we have learned how to schedule time for homework, use our agendas, graph our homework completion, use strategies while doing homework, learning how and when to ask for help, and learning what behaviors independent students should express. Today we are going to talk about taking the opportunities to share reflections and responses with classmates (through talking about the independent learning journals) and how to give oral presentations.

Part 1: Defining vocabulary terms (oral expression) and applying how independent learning is involved with oral expression. What does oral expression mean? Have class define what oral expression means and what independent learning skills are necessary in order to be well-prepared to present an oral presentation (write answers in Lesson 9 Worksheet). Being independent means that you are able to set realistic goals, manage your time well, plan ahead, motivate yourself, and to concentrate on the task at hand. These are efficient ways in making sure that you are well prepared for individualistic classroom presentations.

Part 2: Defining vocabulary terms: Reflections. What are reflections? Have class define reflections and write how reflections are good source of improvement and sharing knowledge (Lesson 9 Worksheet). Reflection is a way to look back at things you have already done. The reason we reflect on past events is because it is a neat way to fix or improve things for the future. Whatever you do in the past will definitely reflect what you do in the future. By looking back at things you have already done, this can assure you do not make the same mistakes again. So, because we are interested today in communicating to peers, we will use the journals to reflect on our learning habits and then we will communicate them orally to classmates.

Activity: I would like you all to take 2 minutes to prepare a short presentation on one of your daily journal entries. I would like you to pick a journal entry and reflect on the homework habit/routine of that day and then come up with ways you could have improved it. Once you have a short (2min) presentation prepared, we will get into groups of twos and you will present to a classmate.

Have students take 2 minutes to formulate ideas and prepare their presentation. Once they are ready, divide them into groups of two, and have them present on their journal entries. Each student is to present to their partner. Have students write notes in the worksheet when listening to their partner's oral presentation (refer to Lesson 9 Worksheet). Once everyone has presented to their partner, have students exchange conversations on the ways they would improve their partner's school work habits.

On contract, check off box "express and share reflections with peers"

Lesson 10 – Group Work and Review

Materials: Lesson 1 and 10 worksheet

Skills to Build: Collectively make a choice in a group

Contribute effectively in group work

Vocabulary: Collective (working as a group)

Collaborative (two or more people working together)

Unanimous (collective agreement)

LESSON PLAN

Teacher should praise students for their continued efforts in homework completion, use of agenda, and graphing.

In the last few weeks, we have learned how to schedule time for homework, use our agendas, graph our homework completion, use strategies while doing homework, learning how and when to ask for help, learning what behaviors independent students should express, and how to share reflections and responses with your classmates. In today's last lesson we are going to talk about how to use independent skills to contribute to group work and make collaborative decisions.

Part 1: Defining vocabulary terms. What is group work? What is a collaborative decision? Ask class for examples of doing things in a group and making a collaborative decision. Doing group work is sometimes a very efficient way in getting a lot of work done in a shorter amount of time. This is because group work allows us to divide the responsibility to do work among the members of the group. Working as a group is also referred to as collective. Sometimes, in order to work collectively in groups, there needs to be collaborative decisions. A collaborative decision is a decision involving two or more people working together. This is especially important when individuals in the group do not agree on everything. Ask class for examples of scenarios in which a group will not necessarily agree on the same things. When all members of a group agree on something and make a decision, this is called a unanimous decision.

Activity: We will now do an activity so everyone get into groups of 3-4. In your groups, you will be completing worksheet Lesson 10. Please read Damian's case in the handout and divide the reading among your group members. Once it is read, you will collectively discuss Damian's study habits and you will come up with efficient independent learning strategies to help improve Damian's study habits. In your groups, you must come to a unanimous decision regarding the direction you would like Damian to go and the strategies and tools he can use to improve his independence during school work. Once completed, you will communicate your decision to the rest of the class. I expect every member of each group to put the same amount of work into this activity as the other members. This also includes speaking up when time to present your ideas to the rest of the class.

Have students get into groups of 3 or 4 and complete the Lesson 10 worksheet within 5-10 minutes. Once completed, have groups informally present their ideas to the rest of the

class. Ensure that each student in the group have an equal responsible part in sharing and communicating ideas. Keep discussions for after each group presents to the class, if time permits.

Thank the students for participating in the activities for the last 10 weeks. On behalf of McGill University's The Connections Lab, we deeply appreciate the teacher's time in implementing these lessons and we hope that the teachers also learned new strategies they can use to increase independent learning among their students.

On contract, check off box "work in groups and make collaborative decisions" and check off "completed Independent Learning module"