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ABSTRACT

Three developments lend support to the idea that schools must help teach study skills: (1) advances in cognitive psychology that suggest children are active learners; (2) society's concern for at-risk students; and (3) growing demands for improved student performance. There is evidence that systematic study skills instruction does improve academic performance. Study skills entail a beneficial study environment, self-management, and time and stress management, as well as the more traditional skills of effective listening, reading comprehension, note-taking, and sophisticated writing skills. Motivation is essential for instilling study skills. Research suggests that behavioral self-management, mood management, and self-monitoring are successful tactics in developing motivation. Development of study skills should be addressed at every educational level. Programs to enhance teachers' preparation to teach study skills are important, because the perception they are unprepared negatively affects student performance. Efforts in Oregon demonstrate both the need to develop study skills and the outlines of some successes. Students' eagerness to acquire study skills dissipates quickly, demanding a strong commitment from school boards, administrators, teachers, parents, and students to make study skills instruction maximally effective. An appendix lists eight study skill programs. (Contains 21 references.) (TEJ)

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Preface

Marilyn Spencer has just finished a U.S. history lecture on the roots of the Revolutionary War, and her students have a few minutes before the end of class to begin reading tomorrow's assignment.

She looks around the room and observes various students tackling the assignment. Becky Jones is carefully reading and taking notes. She has divided her paper in half and written questions on the left side of the page. As she reads, she writes the answers on the right side of the page opposite the questions. The teacher recalls that Becky also carefully listened during the lecture and took notes when an important point was made.

Now the teacher's gaze settles on Bobby Smith. Bobby seems to be a bright student but was inattentive during the lecture. He's reading now, but the pages are turning quickly, and he is not taking notes.

Even though it is early in the year, Marilyn Spencer already has a pretty good idea how these two students will fare. Their study skills—or the lack thereof—are an indicator of their success.

Study skills are a relatively recent addition to schools' curriculum, and several school districts have already embraced the concept. But is it necessary? Can't students figure out how to study on their own? If they are taught study skills, will it improve their performance?

This Bulletin explores study skills—what they are, how they can be taught, and whether they work—and the implications such teaching has for public schools.

Anne Thomas has a master's degree in journalism from the University of Oregon. She has teaching experience on the elementary, secondary, and collegiate levels and has worked for the Cottage Grove *Sentinel*, Ashland *Daily Tidings*, and *Springfield News*.

Appreciation is due M. D. "Mark" Gall, professor of education, University of Oregon, for his contribution to the editing and revision of an earlier draft.

Contents

Introduction

It is not uncommon for students to progress through elementary, junior high, and high school with few hints about how to listen to lectures, take notes, write papers, or prepare for and take tests. When they reach college, these students often find themselves lacking essential skills needed for academic success. If they are unsuccessful in developing those skills, their college careers end abruptly.

Ron Johnson, superintendent of the Lowell School District in Lowell, Oregon, recalls that approximately ten years ago the district surveyed some of its graduates who had gone on to college and asked them what was lacking from their high school education. The answer: learning how to study. As a result, the Lowell district started a program called Study Technologies Equal Pupil Success (STEPS).

Many educators are wondering how schools can better help students learn. Researchers, too, have wondered why some students encounter academic difficulty during their school years or later in college. They are finding that a major reason is inadequate study skills for the learning tasks that students are assigned.

It is increasingly difficult for people to sort through and assimilate the amount of information available through advances in technology. Students who have learned how to learn—the essence of study skills—will be the ones who can process this information and use it in school, the world of work, and personal life.

As Sharon J. Derby (1988) says,

> Students who receive good strategy training during their years in school can acquire a form of knowledge especially useful in coping with the wide variety of learning situations they will encounter throughout their lives. Given the amount of time that people spend in school, in job-related training, and in acquiring knowledge associated with their interests and hobbies, the ability to find good solutions to learning problems may be the most important thinking skill of all.

In other words, students who acquire study skills are not just learning one particular subject, they are learning how to learn.

Chapter 1

Do Study Skills Help Children Learn?

Some educators may think that teaching study skills is just another fad. If such skills are so important, why haven't they been taught before? Further, how do we know that teaching study skills will help children achieve scholastic success?

M. D. "Mark" Gall, professor in the University of Oregon's College of Education and coauthor of *Tools for Learning* and *Making the Grade*, thinks one reason study skills have not been taught much is that teachers, lacking training in teaching study skills, feel uncomfortable teaching them.

Another reason is that teachers are expected to teach content, not skills. When George White and Scott Greenwood (1991) raised the question why many middle schools don't have adviser/advisee programs, they suggested one answer was that middle-school teachers have been trained to teach in secondary schools, and they see themselves as "content specialists." "These teachers typically believe that it is the job of the guidance counselor, not the teacher, to counsel students," they say. They further suggest the teaching of study skills as a good way to institute an adviser/advisee program.

Gall believes education needs to move from a model based almost exclusively on content to a model in which students are taught the skills and attitudes they need in order to master the content. He suggests that teachers and administrators often operate under the assumption that many students will fail. This attitude is not intentional, he says, but it has been imbedded in educational philosophy for decades. He points to education in the early part of the century when many youngsters lived on farms and the expectation was that they probably would not finish school. This deeply buried expectation remains, he says, because "systems are so slow to change."

Why Teach Study Skills?

In recent years, three developments have lent support to the idea that schools must take more responsibility for teaching study skills: (1) advances in cognitive psychology indicate that students are not passive but active recipients of information, and it is to their benefit if they know how they learn; (2) society has renewed concern for the at-risk student, especially as dropout rates climb; and (3) schools are pushing for higher standards of student performance (Gall and others 1990).

With all the recent attention given to dropout rates and a decline in SAT scores, the perception by taxpayers and employers alike is that many students are not equipped to perform meaningful tasks. Perhaps the acquisition of study skills can help students change these perceptions.

How Learning Occurs

Students learn through their senses, but in school the primary senses that are engaged are hearing and sight. Students listen to lectures and assignments; read textbooks, handouts, and what is written on the blackboard; and observe their teachers.

During their hours in school, students are besieged by information ranging from mathematics to history to vocational techniques such as shorthand or typing. How do they take it all in?

Psychologists acknowledge a difference between short-term and long-term memory, noting that information is first stored in short-term memory and more effort is needed to get it into long-term memory.

A telephone number, for example, is stored in the limited short-term memory. Once the number is dialed, it is forgotten, leaving room for more information to enter. Getting information stored in long-term memory requires the use of some kind of strategy to embed it. Repetition is one such strategy. Multiplication tables used to be learned by saying them over and over until they were ingrained in the pupil's mind. Such tasks as driving a car also rely on overlearning. After a person has driven the same car for some time, driving becomes second nature, and the driver doesn't even have to think about what to do next.

Much of the information students are exposed to in school does not lend itself to endless repetition. One can learn a few dates, but repeating the entire sequence of the Civil War is another matter. In addition, repetition does not encourage a student to relate one concept to another. Learning of relationships comes about only when a student has had the opportunity to analyze various pieces of information from several different angles.

Retrieving information from long-term memory is another acquired skill, and some psychologists believe the way information is stored will enhance the way it is retrieved (Gall and others 1990). For example, if students know they will be tested objectively, as with multiple-choice or true-false exams, they may want to focus on dates or simple facts that lend themselves well to such testing. If the test calls for essay answers that evaluate a student's understanding of a certain event, the student will prepare for the test in a different manner.

Some studies have found, however, that teachers seldom make suggestions regarding memory processes, and when they do, they rarely provide explicit instructions about their use (Rafoth and DeFabo 1990). In addition, although some teachers have recognized that failure to achieve can be tied to such problems as the inability to read the textbook, they do nothing to help overcome the problem (Gee and Rakow 1990).

Nor does it do any good to employ such strategies as teaching students from a basal reader to improve their scores on achievement tests. Such strategies, says Wayne Otto (1990), a professor in the Division of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, are like doing a chicken dance to get some dinner: "When the need arises you simply run through your entire repertoire and hope for the best."

Until students know how to use memory effectively, their education may continue to be a hit-or-miss affair.

Is There Evidence That Study Skills Help?

Research evidence that study skills instruction enhances student achievement is sketchy yet intriguing.

Suzanne Wade (1983) examined twenty-nine studies done between 1953 and 1980 related to reading and social studies. She found that although the studies reached various conclusions, substantial evidence suggested that "providing reading and study-skill instruction in the social studies can raise achievement scores in both reading and social studies to higher levels than what pupils would achieve without instruction."

In a study by Barbara Forsythe (1986), results showed that fifth-grade students who had received special instruction in organizing information and other study skills showed a significant increase in achievement over students who did not receive such instruction.

Many students develop their own skills that help them succeed. This phenomenon suggests that other students could succeed, too, if they used such skills. One such skill is taking notes from lectures.

A study by Thomas and Rohwer (1986) found that the percentages of students who took notes when the teacher emphasized a point in class were

50 percent in junior high school, 71 percent in senior high school, and 92 percent in college. The high percentage of college students who take class notes suggests the importance of this study skill. Perhaps more young students would be successful in school and go to college if they were taught to use this skill in junior high school or even earlier grades.

The most direct evidence that study skills help comes from research on the effectiveness of study skills programs. Gall and his colleagues (1990) reviewed this research and found that study skills instruction, if it is systematic, actually does improve students' academic performance. As one might expect, study skills instruction works best for students who are motivated to improve. For unmotivated students, study skills instruction must be supplemented by counseling or self-control training to be effective.

Study Skills Correlate with Achievement

Gall refers to a study by Zimmerman and Pons, who surveyed two groups of high school sophomores. One group of forty students was in an advanced achievement track because of high entrance scores, high GPA before entering high school, and recommendations from teachers and counselors. The other group of forty students was in the lower achievement tracks because of low performance.

The students were interviewed to determine how often they used "self-regulated learning strategies" (study skills) in six different contexts: in classroom situations, at home, when completing writing assignments outside class, when completing math assignments outside class, when preparing for and taking tests, and when poorly motivated.

The results showed that high-achieving students were much more frequent users than lower-achieving students of such skills as organizing and transforming information; goal setting and planning; seeking information; keeping records and monitoring; structuring their environment; establishing rewards or punishments for themselves; rehearsing and memorizing; asking peers, teachers, or parents for help; reviewing tests and textbooks; and systematically reviewing all materials before starting a special project. "These findings suggest that the systematic use of particular study skills, rather than willpower, is responsible for the success of high-achieving students," say Gall and his colleagues (1990).

More evidence comes from research that has used the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (SSHA). Researchers found that high scores on the SSHA generally correlate with better grades in both high school and college. "In other words," Gall says, "if two students have the same academic aptitude, the student with better study skills and attitudes is likely to have better grades."

Parents and Teachers Believe Study Skills Enhance Achievement

The belief that study skills will enhance student achievement is held by many parents and educators and shown in the success of such efforts as the Sylvan Learning Corporation and the hmNetwork, a study skills group sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

Esther Davenport, editor of the hmNetwork Newsletter, recently published a letter from a seventh-grade social studies teacher in Northboro, Massachusetts, that said, "Without question the single most important part of my curriculum is the hm Study Skills program." This teacher said that warnings issued to students in the D or F grade range had dropped from an average of twenty per semester to an average of one to three per semester. During the course of some semesters, the teacher added, no students received a grade below C.

Davenport says the hm Study Skills Group schedules several seminars each year. Each seminar is attended by staff from an average of fifteen schools. Many more seminars are held in individual districts.

All this would indicate that teachers are becoming more interested in instituting study skills programs for their students. Even so, the success of such a program depends on several factors such as student motivation, content, and method of instruction. Poor teaching methods will not provide much help. The next chapter examines several study skills and how they can be effectively taught.

Chapter 2

What Are Study Skills?

Study skills have been defined in a variety of ways. Here are some examples of definitions found in the literature:

- *Studying*: Learning, whether in school or somewhere else (Candace Regan Burkle and David Marshak 1989).
- *Study Skills*: The effective use of appropriate techniques for completing a learning task (Gall and others 1990).
- *Study Skills*: Generally associated with lists of techniques such as note taking, surveying, and skimming and scanning, or with general behaviors such as concentration, time scheduling, or organizing study ("Developing Strategic Learners (Secondary Perspectives" 1989).
- *Study Skills*: Those abilities that enable students to systematically organize, plan, and encode information they need to learn (Rafoth and DeFabo 1990).

Most authors differentiate between study skills and a learning strategy, the latter being a process or plan to use the former:

- *Learning Strategy:* A set of study skills used to solve a problem such as taking a test or remembering a long list of items (Rafoth and DeFabo 1990).
- *Learning Strategies*: The basic cognitive processes that effective students use during each phase of learning; a number of successful approaches that help students learn in a specific situation ("Developing Strategic Learners" 1989).
- *Learning Strategy:* A complete plan one formulates for accomplishing a learning goal (Derby 1988-89).

Study Skills Involve More Than Note Taking

Study skills encompass a wide range of skills and abilities that are applied both at school and home.

A Beneficial Study Environment

Creating a study environment free from distractions such as radio or TV and free from interference of family members and friends is key to developing good study habits.

In the hm Study Skills Program Level I text (Burkle and Marshak 1989), students are asked to compare two drawings of a girl studying. In one drawing, she is lying on the couch, wearing earphones that may or may not block out the background TV noise. The light is at the other end of the couch, and she is not taking notes.

In the other drawing, she sits at a table directly under a light. No earphones, no TV. She is taking notes.

After comparing these two drawings, students are asked which factors make for a better study environment.

Other techniques that can create a better environment include students keeping their desks in order and organizing a home study space in which the necessary materials are available and easily accessible (Gall and others 1990).

Self-Management

Perhaps the best thing students can do to help their academic achievement is to manage themselves. Attitude, for example, is important. Students who like school and their teachers and who are willing to give a particular subject, such as English, a chance whether they like it or not, will find studying easier.

A survey conducted in three urban high schools in a northeastern city resulted in a list of several "survival skills," such as: going to class every day; arriving at school on time; bringing pencils, paper, and books to class; turning in work on time; and talking to teachers without using "back talk" (Schaeffer and others 1990).

Other tips may also help students achieve better in the classroom: Do not try to be the class clown, do not start getting ready to leave until the teacher is finished, and do not ask questions that annoy teachers (Gall and others 1990).

Time Management

Time management is a lifelong skill that some people never seem to master, and they go through life chronically missing deadlines and appointments and generally irritating those around them.

Gall suggests several time management skills for students. One of them is teaching students to keep a daily assignment sheet in their three-ring

notebooks. They write each assignment on the sheet and when it is due. Thus, when they arrive home, they know just what homework they need to complete that night and can estimate the amount of time it will take. (Parents also can examine the assignment sheet for this information.)

As students progress from one grade level to the next, they get longer assignments and due dates that may be a week or more off in time. By recording this information on the assignment sheet, students can plan each day how to spend their time to get these longer assignments done. A ten-page paper, for example, cannot be put off until the night before it is due if a student has a realistic expectation of receiving a good grade.

It helps to break a large task into several small tasks. Completing that same ten-page paper, for example, requires several separate tasks: gathering research, which may involve several trips to the library; reading several books, and perhaps conducting personal interviews; taking notes from research and organizing them into a coherent structure; writing and editing a first draft; getting feedback from the teacher or someone else about the paper; and writing the final paper.

MORE DEFINITIONS

Learning Task: A particular task to be done, such as writing a paper.

Study Techniques: Such things as brainstorming, library research, taking notes.

Study Skill: The ability to use study techniques effectively.

Study Strategy: The process of putting all the skills together to make it work.

(Gall, interview, 1992)

Estimating how much time all those steps will take is another skill a successful student must develop. An interview may require an hour plus the time it takes to drive or walk to the interview site.

A daily routine also helps self-management. If a certain time is set aside each evening for study, the student is more apt to use it for that purpose as opposed to a routine that varies daily and may result in a student having more activities than time to accomplish them.

Time management skills are of inestimable value. The student who knows how to schedule his or her time has taken a large step toward coping with the immediate demands of school and the future demands of a job.

Stress Management

Time management skills help reduce stress, but there are other things students can do to make learning easier.

One of the most stressful times for students is preparing for end-of-semester tests and papers. Students' performance on these tasks can literally make or break their future plans. Even adults get stressed out when they face do-or-die situations, but tension for the young person who does not know how to handle it can be devastating.

Again, time management helps. Planning for the end of the semester at the beginning of the semester will take away some of the stress. Other ways to combat stress are getting enough sleep and good eating habits.

Gall further suggests exercise, controlled breathing, deep muscle relaxation, positive thinking, meditation, and overpreparation. Exercise, particularly competitive sports, is especially helpful because it gets you out of the house and makes you think about something else.

Stress relievers the school can provide are study periods and a school lunch program; opportunities for recess and physical education; extracurricular activities and counseling; a pleasant physical environment; and a nonstressful school climate (Gall and others 1990). In addition, teachers can coordinate homework assignments with other teachers so that students are not overburdened with homework one night and have none the next. Such inconsistency can destroy the effectiveness of time and stress management.

Preparing for Class

One strategy to help students get ready for class is called PREPARE, which stands for Pay visits to your locker; Reflect on what you need; Erase personal needs; Psych yourself up for class; Ask yourself what will be going on in class today; Review your notes and study guide; and Explore the meaning of the class introduction (Rafoth and DeFabo 1990).

Academic Techniques and Skills

Finally, we get to what most people think of as study skills—the effective use of techniques for listening, reading, taking notes, writing, and taking tests. Each of these academic tasks requires using several study skills. Considerable research has been put into identifying these study skills and methods for teaching them to students; the main problem for teachers and administrators may be in choosing which ones to emphasize in a study skills program.

Listening

The hm Study Skills Program begins each of its various workbooks—whether the focus is science, mathematics, or grade levels—with listening

exercises. Because people think faster than they speak, listening exercises may prevent listeners' minds from wandering. The program emphasizes a technique called FACT (Focus, Ask, Connect, and Try to picture).

Gall and his colleagues (1990) point out that listening is the main channel of classroom instruction. Listening carefully is not enough. One must find a way to transfer information from short-term to long-term memory; otherwise, it will be lost. Taking notes is one way to stimulate long-term memory, as is participating in class discussion. Reading textbook assignments before class is also helpful, because it allows the student to better understand what the teacher is talking about (Gall and others 1990).

Reading

Probably no other task has as many suggested learning strategies as reading. Some teachers still swear by phonics, while others have developed different approaches.

In spite of the numerous strategies used to teach reading, illiteracy continues to exist. One major problem is that students are taught to read, but are not taught to comprehend. Several techniques have been developed to deal with this problem:

Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review (SQ3R). Developed in 1941, this reading strategy includes five steps: surveying the text headings to acquire a conceptual map of the material to be read; asking questions about the text by turning each heading into a question; reading to answer the question; reciting by making brief notes about the text or using self-recitation; and reviewing by rereading notes and answering questions of yourself (Gall and others 1990). A similar method is PA4R—Preview, Question, Read, Reflect, Recite, Review (Rafoth and DeFabo 1990)

Reciprocal Teaching. This strategy is divided into four activities: generating questions about the content of the text, summarizing the content, clarifying information in the text, and predicting upcoming content (Gall and others 1990).

Effective Reading in Content Areas (ERICA). Developed ten years ago in Australia, this method includes four stages: preparing for reading, thinking through information, extracting and organizing information, and transferring information. People espousing this strategy encourage writing in connection with reading material because, they say, a strong relationship exists between comprehending subject area material and writing about it (Jones 1988).

The hm Study Skills Program, Level I, teaches students how to read for meaning by surveying paragraph titles and first and last sentences, mapping the paragraph's main idea and supporting details, and checking themselves by using their notes to figure out what the paragraph means.

Note Taking

Research generally shows that merely listening or reading is not sufficient to send information into long-term memory unless some effort is taken to get it there (Gall and others 1990). Note taking is a skill used for that purpose.

Another major reason to take notes is to help students review material presented in the textbook and lectures. Notes that summarize material can be invaluable when studying for tests.

The trick is to take notes that are efficient. Writing down every word the teacher says is time-consuming and may not be helpful in the long run. Students must be able to distinguish between what's important and what is not.

Teachers can help students identify what is important. They will often write an important date or phrase on the blackboard, providing a clue to students that it is an important piece of information. Other clues are emphasis words such as "the chief cause was" (Gall and others 1990).

It is certainly helpful to the student if the teacher has prepared well. Lectures that are unorganized and rambling are difficult to follow and understand. Lectures that are divided into key points followed by supporting detail are not only easier to comprehend, they are easier to transfer to paper.

Study skills experts recommend that students paraphrase what the teacher is saying, rather than writing it down verbatim (Gall and others 1990). Students often develop their own shorthand for taking notes, and it is wise for them to review their notes as soon as possible after class to ensure they make sense. Illegible notes are not helpful.

The widely used Cornell method of note taking recommends that students use paper with wide left-hand margins. During lectures they take notes on the right-hand side of the sheet, then after class they review their notes and write key words or phrases in the left-hand column to help them recall what's written on the right (Gall and others 1990).

Another variation on double-column note taking that can be used with written material is scanning chapter titles and headings and formulating questions before students begin reading. Or, students can use the journalistic 4Ws and 1H to ask who, what, when, where, why, and how. Some educators have found this system works particularly well with remedial students (Josel 1990).

When taking notes on written material, the hm Study Skills Program recommends mapping and outlining. Main ideas are identified with numbers, and supporting details are listed with alphabetical letters.

Another method of transferring oral and written material into notes is to make tables or graphs. Elaboration—in which each new idea is linked with

prior knowledge so as to connect them—is another suggestion (Derby 1988-89).

Many students highlight written material in place of taking notes, but this method only works when the student does not have to return the textbook. While it is easier than writing, it may not embed the material as well in memory because the writing step is overlooked.

Writing

The importance of good writing skills cannot be overstated in today's Age of Information. Students who believe they can get through life without such skills are creating a large obstacle to success. Teachers need to point this out early and often.

Unfortunately, many teachers themselves are not good writers, and they feel uncomfortable demanding excellence in writing from their students. The first priority for teaching students how to write is to teach teachers how to write.

Gall and his colleagues (1990) point out that teachers and students focus too much on grammar, punctuation, and spelling and fail to see the large scope that writing a major paper involves. They recommend a model that includes twelve stages: defining the writing task, specifying the paper topic, developing a writing plan, generating ideas, collecting information, organizing ideas into a plan for the paper, drafting the paper, getting feedback on the draft, revising the paper, editing the paper and producing a neat final copy, publishing the paper, and using a computer to write the paper.

Too often, the steps of revision and evaluation are overlooked, they say. One solution is to publish the students' papers, because "if students know their writing will be published, they will think and write like authors."

If the writing process is this extended, more time has to be spent teaching students how to go through each step. In too many of today's schools, such time is a luxury, and teachers with large numbers of students simply do not have time to provide assistance with each step. Nevertheless, teachers can provide incentives by allowing students to choose their own topics and by helping them break down the writing process into smaller tasks.

Finally, teachers can praise students' efforts while at the same time encouraging them to do better. For the most part, students care about what they have written. They have invested considerable physical and emotional energy into the project. Harsh criticism may make students afraid to reveal themselves through writing. Teachers need to learn and use the fine art of constructive criticism that leaves students' egos intact.

Test Taking

Although writing a major paper for a class can be stressful, the activity that probably frightens students more than anything else is taking a test. Even successful students become stressed when faced with final examinations.

Gall suggests that students prepare by reviewing assigned readings and notes, testing themselves through use of mnemonic techniques, forming a study group, and using self-monitoring to determine test readiness.

It is also important for students to allot sufficient time for study so they don't have to cram all night before a test.

During the test, students should read directions carefully, answer easy questions first, and use appropriate answering techniques (Gall and others 1990). Students answering essay questions should plan their entire answer before they begin writing and make a brief outline if needed.

Some programs are available to teach skills for taking essay and objective tests, but teachers can also help by letting students know what will be expected of them. For example, it is helpful to students to know whether it will be an objective test or an essay test, because each requires different test-taking and study skills.

Teachers can also let students know whether they will be asked to recall specific information on certain topics or whether they will be asked to relate that information to something else that has not been discussed. When teachers and students alike know what is expected, the outcome is more successful.

Teaching effective study techniques can be complicated and time consuming. How can it be done? The next chapter examines how educators, students, and parents can assist in the process.

Chapter 3

How Should Study Skills Be Taught?

Teachers and students alike may be overwhelmed at the scope of study skills. Students may say: "All this sounds like a lot of work. Why should I even bother?"

Motivation of students at all levels is a major challenge. To convince them that study skills are useful, teachers must know more about how motivation works.

Success Leads to Success

When a sample of students were asked what motivated them to complete a task successfully, three answers surfaced: One group of students said they were motivated by the hope of success; another group was motivated by fear of failure; and a third group of students said they learned about a particular subject because they were interested in it (Serna 1989).

To the hope-for-success students, grades were important for various reasons, so they approached learning with a strategy. The fear-of-failure students, however, were doubtful about their ability, but they hoped for the best. The personal-interest learners often combined operational learning (examining evidence) with comprehension learning (examining ideas), which resulted in more indepth learning.

However students are motivated, teachers must ensure that students retain information rather than discarding it after obtaining a grade. The task, then, is to use motivational techniques that encourage the positive aspects of learning rather than the fear of failure. This can be done in several ways.

Derby suggests three categories of tactics for developing motivation: *behavioral self-management* whereby students break down tasks into sub-

goals, and create goals and rewards; *mood management* whereby students create positive self-statements and avoid negative ones; and *self-monitoring* whereby students consciously check their moods and progress.

Other suggestions call for teachers to use humor in their classes, treat students fairly, and build relationships with their students (Serna 1989). Perhaps the best way to motivate students to use study skills is to show them that study skills can help them be successful.

However, study skills won't work for everyone. As Gall points out, study skills won't help the student who doesn't want to use them. "Many students at the bottom are unmotivated. Teaching study skills probably won't help them much, unless something is also done to solve the motivational problem," he says. "Kids at the top end will develop their own study skills. The kids in the middle will benefit the most from study skills, especially if they're motivated."

How Early Should Study Skills Be Taught?

To teach study skills effectively, teachers must know how *cognition* and *metacognition* work in children. *Cognition* is "one's awareness and understanding of a certain subject," whereas *metacognition* is "one's awareness of the depth and quality of knowledge"—in other words, the ability to see the big picture (Rafoth and DeFabo 1990).

Teachers generally believe study skills instruction should start at the earliest levels. The very young students may not have the ability to see the big picture, but they can memorize.

Gall and his colleagues (1990) recommend kindergarten students learn how to organize school papers, follow school rules and procedures, listen and participate in class, and do school projects. Other skills to be learned in the elementary grades are organizing a home-study space, managing school time, reading assignments, writing school papers, and preparing for and taking tests. Once students reach the middle and secondary levels, they are reviewing and refining study skills that apply to their particular levels. College-bound students, for example, will need to learn more about preparing for and taking tests that cover large units of instruction.

Should Study Skills Be Part of the Main Curriculum?

Once a district decides it wants to teach study skills, the next decision is whether to teach them separately or to include them within a subject-content class.

Study skills have traditionally been taught in a separate class, but many educators believe such training is not as effective as embedding study skills instruction within the regular curriculum (Rafoth and DeFabo).

A persistent problem educators have faced is that students do not apply tactics learned in one situation to a different situation (Derby). Unless they are explicitly taught through instruction, students often fail to realize that what works in one class may work in another.

Since subject matter varies considerably, study skills that work well in a science class may not be successful in a history or English class. To remedy the disparity, Gall recommends a combination of detached and embedded study skills instruction. Teachers of a separate study skills class are usually excited about the subject, and that excitement carries over into their teaching. Also, the fact that a school or district cares enough about study skills to teach them separately makes a statement to both students and parents. On the other hand, if study skills are taught within the general curriculum, the responsibility for teaching them (and ensuring that students use them) is spread among the departments and can get lost.

However they are taught, teachers and administrators should remember that "the closer the manner of encoding parallels the demands of performance, the more effective it will be in aiding retention and retrieval" (Rafoth and DeFabo 1990)

They must also ensure that students use the strategies often enough to become second-nature. This can be done by making the training so intensive it is overlearned, by ensuring that students know why the strategy is effective, and by stressing how the strategy can be used in other cases. In addition, students should be exposed to many strategies and the appropriate use of each (Rafoth and DeFabo).

The Role of Educators

Many teachers feel inadequately trained to teach study skills. A study of 37 elementary, middle, and secondary teachers revealed that 36 percent said they had received sufficient training to feel well prepared to teach study strategies, while 64 percent said they needed more training (Clift and others 1990).

The same study asked teachers to evaluate strategies such as elaboration, rehearsal, organization, visual imagery, summarizing, paraphrasing, generating questions, self-testing, and to state how much time was spent in their classrooms on each strategy. Results showed teachers frequently used the techniques of having students generate questions, summarize, and paraphrase. The study also showed, however, that while teachers considered elaboration to be very helpful, it was rarely used; rehearsal was frequently

used, "although it has been shown to be a relatively ineffective strategy" (Clift and others 1990). The implication is that teachers sometimes use or teach ineffective strategies.

In another study of 453 social studies teachers, respondents were asked to rate the value of thirty-six teaching strategies, the extent they were used by the teachers, and the amount of confidence teachers felt about using the strategies (Gee and Rakow 1990).

The strategy that ranked at the top of all three categories was the teacher conducting a discussion at the beginning of the year on how to use an assigned textbook. The second most selected strategy was the teacher asking questions about readings that called for students to respond at various levels of comprehension.

The study showed that while teachers believed certain strategies to be beneficial—such as assigning reading from a variety of sources to provide varying opinions or more indepth discussion—they did not use them very often. Sometimes teachers found themselves lacking confidence in a teaching strategy they believed had great benefit, such as assessing the appropriateness of the difficulty of the reading material. Or, they found themselves using strategies that did not have that much value, such as reviewing key vocabulary after reading the assignment (Gee and Rakow 1990).

Teachers sometimes use teaching strategies they don't have much faith in but know how to use, and they often don't use strategies they think are valuable because they don't know how to use them.

To acquire confidence in teaching study skills, teachers need more instruction about what does and doesn't work, and they need practice in using skills that work and replacing those that don't.

Teachers' Expectations

Students learn as early as kindergarten that one way to succeed is to figure out what their teachers want and give it to them. This in itself is a valuable skill because understanding other people is a lifelong challenge.

Meeting teachers' expectations can be frightening, especially in the early grades. Teachers can do several things to alleviate this tension and help students succeed, such as letting students know up front what their expectations are rather than assuming students can figure it out for themselves.

Because teachers' expectations carry a great deal of weight, whatever suggestions teachers make can encourage learning. Advice on how to select and organize important ideas from the textbook can be helpful at all levels. Teachers can act as models, keeping in mind that some students need more explicit direction than others to learn to study effectively (Schmidt and others 1989).

Unfortunately, teachers in upper grade levels sometimes assume that students already know various study skills and overlook giving such suggestions. Research has shown that such instruction tends to peak at the upper-elementary grades, just when students are ready to absorb greater study skills training (Rafoth and DeFabo 1990).

A study by Nolen and Haladyna (1990) indicates teacher expectations have an impact on student performance. They predicted that students seek information and form opinions based on what the teacher wants. If the teacher wants them to understand material and relate it to their own lives, "they will come to value strategies (like monitoring and elaboration) that lead to those goals." The researchers surveyed 281 high-school science students' perceptions of teachers' goals and concluded:

> Although the motivational orientation that a student brings to school in the fall seems to be a powerful predictor of later orientation and strategy beliefs, teachers may also be able to influence these outcomes by stressing the goals of mastery of content and independent thinking.

Teaching Strategies That Work

Programs such as those founded through the hm Study Skills Network follow a basic instructional technique focusing on listening, reading, writing, note-taking, and test-taking skills at various levels. Whatever level the student is on, the instruction is consistent with other levels. For example, both Level B, which is aimed at elementary students, and the Math Study Skills Program, aimed at higher grade levels, promote graphic aids, such as drawing a picture or a graph, as a way to organize information for solving math problems.

Although specific programs vary (see the Appendix for a more complete list of programs available), teachers and administrators should be mindful of the following:

- Students will benefit more if they use a study technique that calls for the same kind of thinking they will need to pass a test. For this to happen, teachers must share their own goals for student achievement and methods of testing.
- Teachers can play a powerful role in teaching study techniques by demonstrating how a particular strategy can be used (Schmidt and others 1989).
- Classroom teachers play a dual role: They spend a great deal of time thinking about what they are doing and use materials that will implement their goals; and they understand how students learn and which strategies will be most successful in their subject content ("Developing Strategic Learners" 1989).

The Role of Parents

Just as in so many other areas of education, the instruction of study skills is more successful when parents become involved. To do this, parents must know what is being taught and how they can help. One method found to be successful was a four-hour workshop that was developed in Illinois for parents of fifth- and sixth-grade students along with their parents or guardians (Allen and Freitag 1988).

The workshops were held in two-hour sessions on two consecutive evenings. Tips were grouped in ten categories—time management, goal setting, homework completion, organization, study environment, listening and following directions, note taking, reading and studying course material, test preparation and test taking, and suggestions for parents. A discussion of metacognition was also included. Parents believed the workshop was worthwhile, pointing out it offered concrete suggestions instead of vague directions.

Another suggestion is annual parent education sessions in which parents are taught the role of homework and how they can help their children complete assignments. Such sessions might focus on homework expectations, providing a proper study area, and building close relationships with teachers (Moskowitz 1988). Homework organizers are helpful, allowing parents to easily check what homework assignments must be done.

For overall effectiveness, these suggestions may be combined with further communication between the school and the home by the usual channels: conferences, home visits, telephone calls, notes, and even newsletters from the school to the home.

The Role of Students

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of students to learn, and they can do several things to improve their chances for academic success.

First, they can discover what their learning styles are. Do they study better with background music to block out other noise, or do they need complete silence to concentrate? Do they absorb information better in the morning or evening?

Students often need guidance to discover these things about themselves. One such possibility is an informal debriefing between students and teachers after an assignment. Such a debriefing might focus on students' frustrations and how they were overcome, and what approach they used to meet the assignment. If debriefings are done in small groups, students can hear how others have dealt with the same problems and frustrations, which may offer new solutions (Hand 1990).

To determine which learning style works best, students must experiment with various styles. In evaluating them, informal debriefings may have considerable value.

Setting Goals

The successful student has established goals other than just getting through school. Goals are important; however, students should not overwhelm themselves with impossible objectives.

Students must see some relationship between goals and academic achievement. One suggestion is to set three to five realistic and tangible goals—not necessarily academic—per grading period. Perhaps a student wants to lose five pounds. He can brainstorm with others about how to attain the goal and set up a reward for that happy time when the goal is accomplished (White and Greenwood 1991).

Monitoring Progress

Once their goals are established, students must move ahead to achieve them. In addition to implementing the various learning styles and study skills they have found to be helpful, they can call upon another important tool—monitoring their progress.

Self-examination should be a ongoing process. "How am I doing?" should be a constant question. If a paper comes back with a grade of C, the student should ask himself and the teacher why and what can be done to improve. If a particular reading assignment is difficult to understand, the student may want to stop and evaluate what may be wrong. Maybe the material is poorly written, or maybe the student is tired.

Chapter 4

What's Being Done in Oregon?

Study skills instruction is already happening in Oregon—with some programs more formal than others—but not to the extent that educators would like. Although state guidelines call for a study skills component in the Essential Learning Skills section of curriculum goals, those skills apparently have not been taught throughout Oregon.

In his coauthored book *Tools for Learning*, Mark Gall says that when he asks participants in teachers' workshops if they were taught such skills when they were going to school, "virtually no one raises a hand." Teachers who have not been instructed in study skills themselves will have trouble teaching them.

The state is now rewriting curriculum guidelines as it gears up for implementation of the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century. Lucinda Welch, who is working on the new standards for the state's Department of Education, says study skills will surely be a part of the new curriculum, but she does not know at this point how they will fit in.

The new curriculum will focus on state performance outcomes, and local schools and teachers will decide how to implement them. These outcomes will focus on concrete expectations for performance, which will lessen reliance on assumptions, she says.

Even though study skills probably will not be included in the curriculum at the state level, they are "absolutely critical because they enable the student to succeed," says Welch.

Currently, the state does not offer a study skills program and recommends the hm Study Skills Program as a good curriculum to follow.

Skills Assessment Survey Results

In 1991 the state surveyed students in the third, fifth, eighth, and eleventh grades to determine their skills in these areas:

- *Clarifying assignments.* Did students determine the purpose of the assignment, ask clarifying questions, and identify concepts addressed in the assignment?
- *Using resources beyond the classroom.* Could students locate and did they use media materials and library services required to complete assignments?
- *Using appropriate study techniques.* Were students able to follow a study plan, use study techniques appropriate to learning tasks, vary reading rate according to purpose, keep study materials organized, turn in assignments on time, and use appropriate test-taking techniques?
- *Practicing appropriate and positive health behaviors to enhance learning.* Did students understand and apply knowledge regarding the effects of nutrition, substance abuse, stress and physical fitness on physical and mental performance?
- *Self-questioning and monitoring of learning process.* Did students understand the purpose of an assignment, relate new knowledge to old knowledge, reflect upon and improve one's own reasoning?

A formal report is being prepared and some informal conclusions have been reached by members of the Study Skills Interpretive Panel.

The panel recommends that study skills instruction be integrated with other curriculum areas, rather than relying on "canned" or discrete study skills units.

Overall, the panel expressed disappointment over the results of the survey. For example, 30-45 percent of the students in grades 8 and 11 scored at the basic level in the areas of clarifying assignments and using resources beyond the classroom.

Other findings reported by Stephen Slater, assessment and evaluation specialist in the Department of Education's Office of Assessment and Technology, were as follows:

- A large number of Oregon students don't engage in study habits and behaviors that support academic success.
- Students tend to lose interest in reading and math as they progress through school.
- The number of students who read something daily just for fun drops from 49 percent in third grade to 30 percent in the eleventh grade.
- Forty-nine percent of the third graders said they like math "a lot." The number drops to 39 percent for fifth graders, 27 percent for eighth graders, and 21 percent for juniors.

- When asked if they were good in math, 41 percent of the third graders answered "very true." That answer drops to 34 percent for fifth graders, 30 percent for eighth graders, and 24 percent for juniors.

One interesting area was pupils' interaction with teachers. When asked: "What do you do when a teacher questions you on a decision you have made?," 6 percent of eighth graders said they ignored what the teacher said; 31 percent said they listened and then did what they know is best; 55 percent said they listened and talked to the teacher about their decision; and 8 percent said they did exactly what the teacher said. For eleventh graders, 4 percent ignored what the teacher said; 31 percent listened, then did what they thought was best; 63 percent listened, then talked to the teacher about their decision; and 2 percent did exactly what the teacher said. Apparently, the majority of students felt comfortable enough with their teachers to talk about differences of opinion.

Trouble with Time

Students at all levels reported some difficulty in time management skills. Nearly 54 percent of third graders in one group and 55 percent in another said they hardly ever or once in a while checked the clock to see how much time was left when they were working on an assignment.

More than 88 percent of the fifth graders surveyed said they hardly ever or once in a while wrote down when an assignment was due.

Nearly 58 percent of eighth graders surveyed said they almost always or a lot of the time waited until a test was scheduled to review their notes or textbook.

When eighth graders were asked what they would do if they were told they had a week to read *Huckleberry Finn* before making an oral book report on it, 49 percent said they would read it over the weekend (the assignment being due the next day). Another 31 percent said they would start the book when they were in the mood and read as much as they felt like reading at the time. Six percent said they would ask an older brother or sister about the book and report on what they said, and 14 percent said they would rent a videocassette movie about the book instead of reading it.

Three tendencies are evident: (1) students may seriously underestimate the time required to do assignments, (2) they may believe that reading is something you do when you are in the mood, and (3) they may seek shortcuts when completing assignments.

Juniors also need to be "in the mood" when it comes to studying. In response to the question "How often do you wait until you're 'in the mood' to begin working on an assignment?," 31 percent answered "frequently," and 45 percent answered "occasionally."

Two other areas of note are some reluctance toward revising work and poor organizational skills.

When eighth graders were asked: "When I am revising something I have written, I fix the spelling, grammar, and punctuation, but leave most of the ideas the way I first wrote them," 23 percent they almost always did this, while 39 percent said they do this a lot.

On the other hand, the majority of juniors were amenable to suggestions from the teacher about their writing. When asked if they would follow such suggestions, 20 percent said they almost always do, and 49 percent said they do a lot of the time.

Organizational skills also posed a problem. When eighth graders were asked why they usually lost important notes or papers, 39 percent said they had forgotten to put them where they were supposed to be; another 24 percent said they weren't paying attention when they set them aside.

Good News

Some survey results were encouraging. For example, when asked which strategy they followed when presented with a new learning task, many students said they tried to remember other similar things they had already learned (42 percent for fifth graders, 47 percent for eighth graders, and 61 percent for eleventh graders), indicating that students make an attempt to transfer what they have learned from one situation to another.

Also, many students said they reviewed test questions they missed to see what went wrong (66 percent of eleventh graders said they almost always did this or they did it a lot of the time).

Other Factors Affecting Use of Study Skills

The survey also asked students about their beliefs and practices concerning eating and drinking and how many hours they worked outside school.

Fifty percent of eighth graders and 48 percent of juniors said they skipped lunch at least twice a week. Thirty-seven percent of eighth graders and 60 percent of eleventh graders said they slept seven hours or less each night. Forty-six percent of the eighth graders said they "always" or "usually" exercised, while 75 percent of juniors said they "frequently" or "occasionally" exercised. Thirteen percent of eighth graders and 31 percent of juniors said they worked eight hours or more during the school week.

Finally, teenagers said things outside school affect their performance in school. When asked their response to the statement "I often find it difficult to do my schoolwork because other things are bothering me," 59 percent of the eleventh graders said they strongly agreed or agreed. Another 24 percent

said such things did not bother them, while 18 percent were unsure how to answer the question.

Two Examples of Local Programs

This section and the following one report on the efforts of several Oregon schools to provide instruction in study skills.

Lowell School District

Lowell School District in Lowell, Oregon, developed its Study Technologies Equal Pupil Success (STEPS) program ten years ago after some Lowell high school graduates who were asked what would have helped them in college responded: "Learning how to study."

School Superintendent Ron Johnson said the next fall he asked five volunteers (he calls them the "Fabulous Five") to write a comprehensive study skills program, which was then instituted.

The program calls for testing of eighth-graders' ability to use study skills. If they pass, they don't need to repeat such instruction in high school, but if they fail, they take a nine-week course in high school.

The K-12 program focuses on time management, listening, note taking, the SQ3R reading method, written communication, interpretation of graphic aids, use of the library, and test taking.

Johnson says the program lacks a parent component. The district did not receive special funding to institute or continue the program, which is supported by funds in the regular budget.

Cottage Grove High School

A four-year school located at the southern end of the Willamette Valley, Cottage Grove High School may provide a typical example of the kind of study skills instruction going on in Oregon schools.

English teacher Donna Long taught a study skills class in the 1970s that covered six areas: reading, vocabulary, spelling, test taking, locational skills, and speed reading. The class was taught separately as an elective. It began as a semester class, then was broken down into quarter classes based on individual skills. After the South Lane School District was closed for five weeks in 1976-77 due to failure of an operating tax levy, the curriculum was pared back and several electives—including study skills—were eliminated.

The class had already encountered problems. Students were unenthusiastic toward it, and study skills were not being carried over into other classes. "It seemed as though it should be taught in context," Long says.

Some study skills are now taught at the high school as part of the curriculum. Vocabulary is included in literature and writing classes; note taking is taught in college prep and composition classes; and test taking is taught in sophomore composition classes.

Long thinks this will change as the school moves into the new curriculum required by the state, which calls for more emphasis on problem-solving. She believes study skills should be taught in lower grades and reapplied in the upper grades and high school.

She admits to being frustrated with minimal assignments such as worksheets for reading assignments because students will "just skim until they find the answer." On the other hand, she thinks that new high school text materials are better organized and often include such study helps as lists and timelines. Computerized texts are even more helpful.

She finds that many high school students are not interested in such things as study skills if it makes them appear to be "schoolboys" to their peers. "It's cooler to hang out in the hall" than to spend free time in a classroom or library, she says.

Experimental Programs

Study Skills Across the Curriculum (SSAC), a two-year experimental program, has been instituted at two Oregon schools—Daly Middle School in Lakeview and St. Mary's School in Stayton.

Under the leadership of Patricia Olson, the project's director and author of the SSAC program, teachers at both schools attended workshops last summer and will return to workshops this summer. Upon completion of these workshops, teachers at both schools will become certified trainers of the SSAC program, and both schools will be SSAC demonstration sites.

Other states participating in the experimental program are Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Nevada, Oklahoma, Utah, and Washington. Funding is provided by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education/ Fund for Innovation in Education.

Strategies taught in the program are textbook format, time management, SQ3R reading techniques, note taking, semantic mapping, highlighting, test taking, test preparation, library skills, and listening. The finale is a summary unit on becoming a selective viewer of television that provides an integration of all the study skills.

Parent involvement is a major component of the program. Both Oregon schools send newsletters home to parents. A newsletter that was sent out to Daly Middle School parents at the beginning of the school year explains what SSAC is and includes a checklist for parents to gauge their knowledge of their children's study habits.

Daly Middle School

Last summer, teachers Becky Duffy and Marcia Nichols received two weeks of intensive study skills training at Willamette University. In summer 1993, they will receive further training, and upon completing it, both will be certified trainers for other schools in Oregon.

Nichols, an English teacher, says that so far, a study skills team has created ten major units divided across the curriculum, and several units have already been taught. Nichols says the school is on target as far as implementation goes, and she thinks the majority of students are learning skills and carrying them over into other classes. In addition, some high school teachers are beginning such instruction.

Time management has been an important component, allowing students to look at their procrastination habits and do other self-analysis. Not only has such training helped them manage their time better, she thinks they feel better both physically and emotionally because they now have more time for other activities.

Each student is provided with a homework book, and students are expected each period to write down assignments, due date, and estimated time needed to complete the assignment. Space is provided at the bottom of each page for students to indicate when they plan to finish the assignment at home. In addition, in one column students enter a mark when the assignment is done, and in another column they indicate whether they correctly estimated the amount of time needed. In math class students also learn to calculate how long they must read a book nightly to finish it by the deadline.

Nichols admits that not all students are welcoming the new curriculum. She hopes that as they become more familiar with it and see how skills such as organizing their notebooks can be beneficial, they will become more motivated. She notes that a computerized reading program has greatly increased library usage.

Nichols believes the strength of SSAC is that the curriculum is emphasized and reinforced in all areas of instruction, not just in isolated classes.

St. Mary's School

Principal Joan LaChappelle says she has been greatly pleased with the success of the SSAC program at St. Mary's, which has 270 pupils in grades 1-8. She believes such instruction makes "good teachers out of teachers."

Currently, study skills are being taught in grades 5-8, and her hope is to extend them down to the lower grades. Several teachers are responsible for teaching each particular skill. For example, one teacher will teach mapping, but all other teachers reinforce the skill by including it in their classes.

Debilyn Janota, a music and religion teacher who attended last

summer's workshop along with Jo Barsotti, says St. Mary's's program is also on target, and she is pleased with its reception, especially among the faculty.

She says the time management component was an eye opener for St. Mary's's students, just as it was in Lakeview's Daly Middle School. They discovered, for example, just how much "dead" time—that period between when they arrive at school and when classes begin, plus the five-minute breaks between classes—they had. Teachers have tried to show that such time can be used more efficiently, such as for reviewing notes, instead of "just staring into space," she says.

Highlighting has been a popular skill for students, she says. She and fellow teacher Barsotti keep track of whether students are actually using various study skills they have been taught.

Students are asked to set four study skills goals every nine weeks and ask themselves: "How am I going to be successful using these goals?" Such goals might be to use dead time more wisely or to keep binders organized.

"We don't want them to set goals that they will fail at," Janota says. A student earning Ds, for example, probably will not succeed at getting straight As. A more realistic goal would be to make C grades.

Parents seem to like the program. They are urged to check student binders daily for homework assignments, but this practice is not as popular with students, Janota says, as they can no longer deny having homework. Nor can they get out of performing a study skill in one particular class because all classes in school are involved.

Even so, students can see that study skills help them. Janota tells about one class taking a test on material the students had not spent much time on. When they received poor grades, they admitted they should have spent more time on mastering the material.

Some teachers offer incentives to students, such as giving extra-credit points to students who carry their binders from class to class. Another incentive might be to extend free time a few minutes. Such incentives work well, Janota says, because students who see someone else getting extra-credit points or some other privilege want the same perks for themselves.

Chapter 5

Where Do We Go from Here?

At first glance, instruction in study skills appears to be boring or unnecessary. After all, many students have been going through public school systems successfully for years without being taught such skills. Why start now?

The assumption has been that brighter students will figure it out for themselves, and indeed many of them do. In years past, it was not uncommon for students to go all through grade and high school and then on to college with little if any instruction about how to study. Too often, they did not know exactly what teachers expected of them other than to behave themselves and do their best.

Although these students may have coped satisfactorily while they were in high school, college was often a shock. The serious college student learned to take notes, go to class, and study for tests. Those who fell along the wayside were thought to be goofing off or unsuitable for college.

The suspicion arises, however, that many of these dropouts were not prepared for college. Even such rudimentary skills as knowing how to write an essay answer may have made considerable difference to the student who wanted to succeed but didn't quite know how to go about it.

Not Everyone Goes to College

While study skills may be perceived as most beneficial for college students, educators point out they can help anyone at any age level. Listening, reading, writing, and time management are lifelong tasks, and the person who can do these things well is ahead in both the academic and the vocational world.

Mark Gall suggests the major reason for such instruction is to help students be more successful. He emphasizes that study skills instruction is not a panacea but rather part of the total approach. The starting point, he

says, has to be teachers and administrators asking themselves: "What can we do to help these kids be successful?"

Establish a Policy

When a district or individual school decides to begin study skills instruction, a first step is to form a committee to develop a comprehensive plan.

Gall suggests such a committee at the school level should include several teachers and at least one administrator. At the secondary level, various department heads should be included. If the program is to encompass the entire district, representatives from each school should sit on the committee.

One of the first questions the committee will have to address is whether the instruction should be taught in a separate class or embedded within the curriculum. As mentioned earlier, each method has advantages and disadvantages, but several educators advocate teaching both ways if resources allow. Students who learn various study strategies in a separate class and are then shown how to adapt them for use in other classes are better prepared to carry them over to other situations.

The committee also has to determine the scope of the program. Does it start in kindergarten? What can be learned in first grade? Educators need to understand children's maturity levels and recognize they can't learn everything at once.

On the other hand, even the youngest children can learn to keep their desks organized and to carry their papers home in a binder. They may not be able to visualize Friday when it's Monday, but they know that recess is only a few minutes away, and they can learn to use that time wisely. In short, some level of study strategies can be taught at almost any age.

Another argument for starting such instruction early is if students grow up with some knowledge of study skills, they accept them more willingly as they travel through school. High school students who are suddenly thrown into a full curriculum of study strategies may react with alarm or even with scorn: "If this is so good for me, why didn't you tell me before?"

Nevertheless, a program that is well thought out and well planned may benefit everyone who comes in contact with it—even teachers and administrators, who may find themselves learning a few new strategies, too.

Teach the Teachers First

Many teachers have never received instruction about various study

strategies; therefore, they are unable to practice or pass on what they do not know.

If a study skills curriculum is to be instituted, the first students will be the teachers. It is important for them to understand various kinds of study strategies to be able to show students how and when to use them.

It helps if teachers see themselves from the students' viewpoints. They can alleviate some problems by asking themselves: Are my directions clear? Are my lectures organized? Just what are my expectations for this class?

Teachers also need to examine their behavior when giving tests. Do they provide students with advance information about what will be on a test or do they simply say, "Read the book." If teachers know what they're looking for on a particular test and pass that knowledge on to the student, both will have a better idea about what the expected outcome should be.

Enthusiasm Motivates

No matter how good it sounds or how well the program is planned, the instruction of study skills will fizzle unless teachers and administrators are enthusiastic about the program.

But offering study skills instruction to teachers in view of the effects of budget cuts—when teachers already face increasing class sizes and teaching loads—may be difficult. Anything that looks like more work may not be welcome.

One motivator for school districts, however, is the new curriculum guidelines that will be instituted under the Oregon Educational Act for the 21st Century. Surely, now is a time to consider starting such a program when changes are already under way.

Student motivation continues to be a major challenge, and it is unrealistic to think that students will jump into such a curriculum with unbridled enthusiasm. It is interesting to note, for example, that some students at St. Mary's School are grumbling because—due to assignment sheets—their parents always know how much homework they have. Students can no longer blithely tell parents, "I don't have any homework tonight," when a parent can look at the assignment sheet and say, "Yes, you do."

Parents play an important role, too. They must become acquainted with the various study skills being taught so they can reinforce them at home. The three-way partnership between school, parent, and student can be strengthened through workshops, newsletters, and conferences.

Conclusion

The 1991 survey that assessed study skills practices of third, fifth, eighth, and eleventh graders offers considerable food for thought, and educators will probably want to study its results carefully (see chapter 4).

One implication that emerges from the survey is that while young students are often eager to learn study skills, that eagerness has dissipated by the time students enter high school. If that is the case, the early grades may indeed be the best time to emphasize study skills that can then be carried into high school. Certainly, young students who are proficient at using study skills should be better prepared for success in later grades than students without such training.

Whether such instruction will work depends upon how much commitment the school board, a study skills committee, administrators, teachers, parents, and students bring to the task. Unless such commitment is strong among all factions, study skills instruction will be less than maximally effective.

As Oregon schools prepare to enter the twenty-first century with a new curriculum, this is the golden moment for study skills instruction to become an active component of every classroom.

As Rafoth and DeFabo conclude:

> The integration of study skills into the context of the regular classroom and across the curriculum is essential. Strategic learning is the greatest tool of educators for making every student successful, regardless of ability level. An effective study routine and increased metacognitive awareness are the greatest gifts teachers can give students because they empower them, allowing them to manage their learning and to succeed.

Appendix

Study Skills Programs

Developing Effective Study Skills. Grades 5-7. Includes six filmstrips on the topics of taking notes in class, taking notes at home, writing reports, following directions, developing listening skills, and learning memory aids. Also included are cassettes and teacher's guide with materials for duplicating. Available from: United Learning, Inc., 6633 W. Howard St., Niles, IL 60714-3389; phone, 1-800-424-0362.

Effective Study Strategies. Grades 9-up. Based on the Readak Developmental Reading and Study Skills Program. Emphasizes taking notes from a lecture or written material and examines the importance of recognizing teacher personality signals and review techniques. Also included is a section on SQ3R. Materials offered are a three-part video and extensive student workbooks. Available from: United Learning, Inc., 6633 W. Howard St., Niles, IL 60714-3389; phone, 1-800-424-0362.

hm Study Skills Program. Level A (grades 1-2), Level B (grades 3-4), Level I (grades 5-7), Level II (grades 8-10), Level III (grades 11-13), Math Study Skills (grades 6-10), Science Study Skills (grades 7-10). Includes student text, teacher's guide, and workshop kit for each level. Study Skills Inventories are also available for grades 4-7 and grades 8-12. Available from: hm Study Skills/NASSP/NAESP, Box 95010, Newton, MA 02195-0010; phone, 617-965-0048.

Listening and Note-taking Skills. Grades 7-12. Consists of ten cassette tapes and activity books that teach students how to prepare for listening, grasp main ideas, and write summaries and outlines. Available from: Educational Activities, Box 392, Freeport, NY 11520; phone, 516-223-4666.

STEPS: Study Skills Scope and Sequence K-12. Focuses on skills involved in time management, listening and note taking, the SQ3R reading method, written communication, interpretation of graphic aids, use of the library, and test taking. Materials include teacher's guide, teacher checklists, an eighth-grade competency test, and wall charts. Available from: Lowell (Oregon) School District, Moss Street, Lowell, OR 97452; phone 937-2105.

Study for Success Teacher's Manual (3rd rev. ed), by Meredith (Mark) and Joyce Gall. Manual includes twenty-three lesson plans and parent involvement activities organized into eight units. The lesson plans, parent involvement activities, and reproducible handouts can be used as is or adapted for different content areas. Available from: M. Damien Publishers, 4810 Mahalo, Eugene, OR 97405; phone, 503-687-9055.

Study Skills Across the Curriculum. Grades 5-8. Consists of a series of units that target skills in textbook format, time management and goal setting, learning from textbook materials, note taking, test preparation, test taking, underlining and highlighting, listening, and library and research skills. A summary unit, "Becoming a

Selective Viewer of TV," provides a model for integration of skills. Available from: Patricia S. Olson, Project Director, West St. Paul Community Center, Room D101, 1037 Bidwell, West St. Paul, MN 55118; phone, 612-451-0489 or 612-898-3002.

Test-Taking Techniques. Grades 6-12. Consists of four cassette tapes and ten activity books that teach strategies for approaching test situations and help establish positive attitudes toward taking tests. Available from: Educational Activities, Box 392, Freeport, NY 11520; phone, 516-223-4666.

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M. D. "Mark" Gall, Professor, College of Education, University of Oregon. Personal interview, November 16, 1992.

Debilyn Janota, Teacher, St. Mary's School, Stayton, Oregon. Telephone interview, December 8, 1992.

Ron Johnson, Superintendent, Lowell School District, Lowell, Oregon. Telephone interview, November 10, 1992.

Joan La Chappelle, Principal, St. Mary's School, Stayton, Oregon. Telephone interview, December 8, 1992.

Donna Long, English Teacher, Cottage Grove High School, Cottage Grove, Oregon. Telephone interview, December 13, 1992.

Marcia Nichols, English Teacher, Daly Middle School, Lakeview. Telephone interview, November 10, 1992.

Stephen Slater, Assessment and Evaluation Specialist, Oregon Department of Education, Salem, Oregon. Telephone interview, December 14, 1992.

Lucinda Welch, Reform Specialist, Oregon Department of Education, Salem, Oregon. Telephone interview, November 25, 1992.

Barbara Wolfe, Curriculum Coordinator, Oregon Department of Education, Salem, Oregon. Telephone interview, November 10, 1992.

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