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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to increase the use of study skills of sixth-grade students in the social studies. Study skills pretests were administered to students with results showing student difficulties in acquiring the concepts of social studies and achieving passing scores on tests. A unit on study skills was integrated within each chapter with emphasis on using resource materials, interpreting data, and creating outlines for use as study guides. Individual projects, group activities, and games were used to reinforce each skill. Posttests at the end of the study skills unit indicated the majority of students learned how to effectively use resource materials, interpret data, and write outlines. Chapter test mean scores during implementation showed improvement of students' abilities in acquiring social studies concepts and in achieving higher test scores. (EH)

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Improving the Acquisition of Sixth-Grade Social Studies Concepts Through the Implementation of a Study Skills Unit

by Patricia J. Leland-Jones Cluster 76

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A Practicum I Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova Southeastern University 1997

SO 029 214

PRACTICUM APPROVAL

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Patricia J. Leland-Jones under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

August 22, '97 Setsuko Buckley
Date of Final Approval of Setsuko Buckley, Ed.D., Adviser
Report

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Abstract

Improving the Acquisition of Sixth-Grade Social Studies Concepts Through the Implementation of a Study Skills Unit. Leland-Jones, Patricia J., 1997: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Middle School/Social Studies/Study Skills/Test-Taking Strategies/Self-Regulated Learning/Independent Learning

This practicum was designed to increase the use of study skills of sixth-grade students. The writer administered study skills pretests to the students. The results revealed feelings of frustration when trying to study. The pre-implementation chapter test mean scores ranged from 61% to 74% indicating that students were experiencing difficulties acquiring the concepts of social studies and achieving passing scores.

The solution was to teach a unit on study skills integrated within each chapter, which included use of an index and a biographical dictionary; how to read graphs, maps, and keys; how to convert headings into research questions; and how to complete outlines for use as study guides. Individual projects, group activities, and games were used to reinforce each skill learned. The writer served as a teacher of skills, a facilitator, and sometimes a mediator.

Posttests administered at the end of the study skills unit indicated that the majority of students had learned to effectively use an index, biographical dictionary, read graphs, read maps and map keys, convert headings into questions, and to write outlines. Chapter test mean scores during implementation ranged from 80% to 88% which indicated students were acquiring the concepts of social studies and achieving higher test scores.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Description of Community

The middle school concerned in this practicum was located in the southeastern part of the United States. It was a suburban city with a population of 28,000 people within its incorporated area. The city was in a county that totaled 1.5 million in population. It was one of the many surrounding smaller cities attached to a larger metropolitan city. The community that encompassed the middle school was largely residential with small shopping areas located nearby. The housing was low-income rental apartments and townhouses. The majority of the renters were of varied ethnic backgrounds.

Writer's Work Setting

The middle school was divided into three smaller schools, each grade level with its own faculty, guidance counselor, and assistant principal. The principal guided the school from a global or whole perspective. There was a school improvement team (SIT) and a parent teacher organization (PTO) which involved faculty, support staff, and community leaders who met once a month to formulate ways to solve problems and enhance curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

The student population at the middle school was 1,668. Student registrations revealed a racially diverse population of 60% Caucasian, 22% Hispanic, and 18% African American.

Many were from single-parent families. The student mobility rate was 33% with low-income students moving from one apartment area to another. The number of students who received free or reduced lunch was 39% of the student population. Dropout prevention classes were 19% of the student population.

The racial/ethnic composition of the 68 instructional staff members was 81.4% Caucasian, 1.4% Hispanic, 15.7% African-American, and 1.5% Indian. The years of teaching experience for the middle school instructional staff included 29 with 0-3 years, 13 with 4-9 years, and 26 with 10+ years (Bell, 1994-1995). The teachers were committed to the county's mission statement:

A commitment to a philosophy of respect and high expectations for all students, teachers, and support staff; and, with community participation and partnerships, we will provide the process and support which will give our diverse, multicultural student population equal access to a quality education. (Petruzielo, 1996).

Along with the teacher commitment to the mission statement, there was a strong belief in the county's vision statement:

If we expect our students to compete in today's world, they must be prepared with far more knowledge, skills, and tools than students a decade ago. With the world spinning faster, we must help our children not only to keep up but to lead the way. (Petruzielo, 1996)

Writer's Role

The writer had a bachelor of arts degree in elementary education and a master of science degree in educational leadership. Teacher certification areas included all

subjects in grades 1-6; middle school social science, grades 5-9, English as a second language (ESOL), and educational leadership (administration). The writer had a total of 10 years classroom teaching experience in grades 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Two of the 10 years were spent teaching alternative dropout prevention classes to sixth-grade at-risk students.

The writer had been teaching sixth-grade social studies, five classes daily. The writer had gained experience in curriculum design and selection, test construction, individualized tutoring, lesson planning using the integration of multiple learning activities, classroom disciplinary techniques, behavior modification, resolution of dysfunctional behavior, and referral guidance. The writer's leadership experience included work as the faculty chairperson of the fourth grade, conducted two workshops on AIDS awareness, and the Myers-Briggs personality evaluation for teachers. The writer had also been a member of the PTA, PTO, and two SIT organizations for a total of nine years.

Chapter II: Study of the Problem

Problem Statement

The problem to be solved in this practicum was that sixth-grade students did not have study skills needed to acquire the concepts of social studies.

Problem Description

Many sixth-grade students were experiencing difficulty achieving success in acquiring the concepts of social studies. Only two of 133 students were able to use a textbook index, use a biographical dictionary, read graphs, use maps and map keys, use headings to narrow topic areas, and outline a chapter for use as a test study guide. The writer taught study skills which were incorporated into the textbooks and curricula throughout the elementary grades 1-5. Many students, however, developmentally were not ready to learn or to use these study skills.

Problem Documentation

The evidence that supported the problem statement was available through school and teacher records. All 133 students were individually surveyed by the writer asking the students to answer an open-ended question about why the student's individual test scores were low. The writer grouped similar answers together. The oral survey revealed multiple reasons for low test grades as well as feelings of frustration (see Table 1).

Table 1

Results of a Survey on Chapter Test Score

Students n = 133

No. Responses	Reasons for low test scores
107	Do not study for tests or do test reviews.
40	Not enough review time; need different review and test day.
30	Study groups needed.
17	Frequently absent or skipped school.
15	Classwork getting progressively harder.
14	Tests are too hard.
10	Excessive socializing and daydreaming.
4	Divorce situation - two books needed.
2	Good grades because of studying.

Note. Students gave multiple reasons for low test scores, therefore, the total does not agree with the number of students.

The student survey indicated that test scores were low for multiple reasons. The results revealed the need to work and study in groups in order to help one another on daily work and test reviews. Students admitted that the chapter reviews and concepts were difficult to comprehend, use, or remember for tests.

Further evidence was gathered from the 1995-1996 group of 133 students by the pre-implementation of a two-week oral demonstration test administered by the writer. Students were asked seven questions about each study skill. If a proper demonstration of the skill was attained for at least five of the questions, the student passed the skill. Only two of 133 students knew how to use an index, how to use a biographical dictionary, how to read graphs, use maps and map keys, how to use headings to answer questions, and how to write a chapter outline.

The number of 1995-1996 students who received failing grades (below 60% on a standard scale of 100%) were shown as mean score averages on the map-and-globe as well as 10 chapter tests. The pre-implementation mean test score averages for 1996-1997 indicated that the problem continued (see Table 2). Students were required to use an index, a biographical dictionary, read graphs, use maps, map keys, and headings to locate specific answers to lesson review questions throughout the chapters under investigation.

Table 2

Results of World History Tests

1995-96 Students n = 133
1996-97 Students n = 125

Tests	No. Failing Students		Test Scores <u>M</u>	
	1995-96	1996-97	1995-96	1996-97
Map-and-Globe	24	24	68	68
1	38	14	64	74
2	28	23	70	69
3	81	42	50	66
4	91	56	56	61
5	46		65	
6	56		61	
7	29		71	
8	33		68	
9	29		70	
10	25		70	

The chapters in the Houghton Mifflin social studies textbook were divided into three to four lessons. Each lesson required specific study skills involved in vocabulary definition and comprehensive reading as well as answering review questions. The review questions ranged from simple basic knowledge recall of facts to complex critical thinking and analyzing of facts as well as personal opinion. Students were unable to correctly answer lesson questions using a variety of required study skills.

Causative Analysis

There were several causative factors to the problem. One, sixth-grade students had not been taught study skills which would have helped with the acquisition of social studies concepts. Two, students were not motivated or interested in incorporating specific study skills into the daily work habits needed to acquire content knowledge. Three, sixth-grade students were not able to use specific study skills on a regular basis in order to become proficient in the use of acquiring the concepts of social studies.

Other factors which may have influenced or contributed to the problem included the 33% mobility rate and high absenteeism. The majority of these students were from low-income, single-parent home environments of varied ethnic backgrounds and exhibited inabilities to read and write on grade level.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Literature confirmed that academic problems arose for many students because teachers had not taught students learning skills and strategies which would have helped with comprehension and the acquisition of concept knowledge. The writer taught exceptional education students in mainstream classes on a daily basis. According to Mastropieri and Scruggs (1992), student achievement declines when study skills have not been taught on a regular basis, particularly to those with learning disabilities.

Koenke (1988) and Ritter and Idol-Maestas (1986) related that low achievement has been caused by a lack of proficiency in knowing how to learn and how to take tests. Devine (1987) revealed that students who do not understand how to learn have experienced lower scores on daily grades and exams. Devine also related problems to strategic inabilities in how to take tests.

Meier (1995) stated that learning and understanding how to learn has not been taught in most of today's classrooms. Irvin and Rose (1995) agreed that one factor of the problem has been the knowledge explosion crowding the curriculum to such an extent that for many teachers finding time to teach students skills and strategies to make learning easier has proven to be extremely difficult. When taught, this ability to learn has not been in an organized manner so as to be of continued use to students. In far too many classrooms, the

teacher has lectured from a textbook with students silently absorbing or ignoring.

After having reviewed 24 studies, Scruggs, White, and Bennion (1986) deduced that middle school was the developmental level where students experience more anxiety, lower self-confidence, negative attitudes, and for many, lower test achievement because of not comprehending what or how to learn. Irvin and Rose (1995) stated that problems also resulted from other elements, such as student environment, students' self-concepts, and the ability to understand what has been read.

Weiner (1994) explained that scholastic achievement or defeat has been centered around three attributes. The first attribute evolved from forces within each individual or from outside forces that have impacted each individual. The second attribute revolved around a reliable or unreliable environment. The third attribute involved a situation that was or was not governable. This has proven to be very important in the academic world where students did not feel confident in academic abilities, experienced environments which did not enhance the desire to learn, and felt powerless in individual abilities to change daily grades and exam scores.

The student survey revealed multiple reasons that contributed to the problem of not knowing how to learn and study for tests. When asked by the writer to explain

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The student survey revealed multiple reasons that contributed to the problem of not knowing how to learn and study for tests. When asked by the writer to explain

further, the majority stated that studying was hard work and very confusing. It was difficult to know what was important to retain for assessment purposes even after a thorough review had been conducted. Many students related the fact that parents had received bad grades in school, therefore, some felt the cycle of failure was expected and normal. For students who continued to fail, the attitude became a self-fulfilling prophecy of defeat and frustration.

Zimmerman, Bandura, and Martinez-Pons (1992) added to the attribution theory by explaining the importance of a governable position (locus of control) for each individual that has sprung from internal or external forces. That type of motivation was considered crucial to a student's success or failure academically. Students having a governable position within would know that individual achievement was due to personal attempts or learned skills and strategies. Students having outside governable positions many times blamed other elements as the cause of academic failure.

Ethington (1991) stated that students who continually fail because learning skills and strategies were not taught did not make an effort to correct the situation. Students having ingrained beliefs of failure were not motivated to complete daily classwork or to study for tests. This learned helplessness, according to Hokoda and Fincham (1995), may have derived from educators and schools. Adlerman (1990) added that schools and educators encouraged student

defeatist attitudes by continually focusing on higher grade goals rather than knowledge building skill goals. Wherever the origin, the damage has proven to be severe to a young learner. Many students stopped trying because thoughts of individual success did not seem achievable. Students not gaining study skills or test-taking strategies continued the feelings of failure, both academically and personally.

Students today are faced with a myriad of negative factors, such as drugs, teen pregnancy, alcoholism, and AIDS. Maehr and Anderman (1993) stated that frustration levels increased when students did not understand how to learn and achieve success even at small endeavors. Eccles et al. (1993) added that students who have not achieved academic success have been known to find negative ways to succeed because learning was frustrating. Increased gang membership was but one example. Irvin and Rose (1995) stated that students often separated school from real life not understanding that learning how to acquire knowledge and using academic skills and strategies have proven helpful in various ways. These factors captured youthful minds so thoroughly that in many cases school finished last in a long line of attention gathering attractions on a daily basis. Fried (1995) confirmed that in too many cases students were not motivated or allowed to indulge a natural inquisitiveness about the subjects under study. When teachers had not motivated students to learn or created

real-life connections on a regular basis during the scholastic day, there was a detrimental effect on academic achievement.

Kahn (1992) revealed that students of all ages who had not been taught learning skills inhibited themselves from becoming life-long achievers. Young students especially seemed to lack the skills which effectively mastered content areas crucial for academic and future career success. Far too many educators had not incorporated learning skills and strategies into the curricula on a regular basis. Kahn concluded that if a variety of skills and strategies were not taught, the risk of graduating students unable to solve problems along life's varied career paths would continue to escalate.

Chapter III: Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

Goals and Expectations

The goal was that students will be able to effectively use study skills needed to acquire the concepts of social studies.

Expected Outcomes

The following outcomes were projected for this practicum:

1. At the end of the practicum implementation, at least 100 of 125 students will demonstrate the correct use of an index (see Appendix A).
2. At the end of the practicum implementation, at least 100 of 125 students will demonstrate correctly how to use a biographical dictionary (see Appendix B).
3. At the end of the practicum implementation, at least 100 of 125 students will demonstrate the correct reading of graphs and maps (see Appendix C).
4. At the end of the practicum implementation, at least 100 of 125 students will correctly demonstrate the skill of converting headings into questions (Appendix D).
5. At the end of the practicum implementation, at least 100 of 125 students will correctly outline a chapter (see Appendix E).

6. At the end of the practicum implementation, at least 100 of 125 students will increase the mean average chapter test scores by 20 percentage points.

Measurement of Outcomes

1. An Index Skill Test (see Appendix A) was used to assess Outcome 1. A passing score of 70% was required.

2. A Biographical Dictionary Skill Test (see Appendix B) was used to assess Outcome 2. A passing score of 70% was required.

3. A Graph and Map Skills Test (see Appendix C) was used to assess Outcome 3. A passing score of 70% was required.

4. A Headings Skill Test (see Appendix D) was used to assess Outcome 4. A passing score of 70% was required.

5. A Chapter Outline Skill Test (see Appendix E) was used to assess Outcome 5. A passing score would be achieved by writing an outline using Roman numerals for each lesson, ABC headings, and one-three details for each heading.

6. The mean average on chapter tests for all students was computed to assess Outcome 6.

Chapter IV: Solution Strategy

Statement of Problem

Sixth-grade students did not have study skills needed to acquire the concepts of social studies.

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The writer agreed with Bandura (1991) that it was important to help students become "self-regulated learners" (p. 250). That is to say, students who felt comfortable with the use of study skills, test-taking strategies, and considered learning to be stimulating. Students should get excited about learning because the logical and reasoning process works easily. Students must be taught how to learn, how to study, and how to gain knowledge independently.

Self-regulated learners must be taught to complete academic endeavors because (a) the reasoning ability breaks down into steps so that the problem can be solved, (b) skills are then applied and used that match or fit the problem because multiple skills have been learned, and (c) the student's academic journey is one of self-vigilance and diversity whenever the need arises (Butler & Winne, 1995).

Educators must help each student learn to be in charge of self-learning by teaching a variety of study skills and strategies so that students have choices and can use reason before attempting to solve any problem. Self-regulated scholars are stimulated by knowledge rather than by scores

or the approval of others (Boekaerts, 1995; Corno, 1992; Schunk, 1995).

Additional solutions gleaned from the literature were that specific study skills used to acquire knowledge can be taught. Students can also be taught to develop the kind of attitude that creates the success and confidence needed to tackle any academic study area.

The following were recommended by Kahn (1992):

- (a) a self-evaluation checklist of factors involved in reading, writing, and studying (see Appendix F);
- (b) a self-evaluation checklist regarding test-anxiety (see Appendix G);
- (c) a formula and a checklist for mastering textbook key chapter concepts, "PQ6R-Preview, Question, Read, Recite, Write, Review, Reflect, Review" (p.29) (see Appendix H);
- (d) learning to take notes from textbooks using the "history narrative form vs. the analysis form" (p. 42-43); and
- (e) "a graphic summary of the four basic methods to study effectively" (p. 76) (see Appendix I). Kahn stated,

Studying efficiently is like swimming efficiently; the activity becomes easier to do and accomplishes much more than merely keeping you afloat. The sooner you learn better ways to study, the more you'll enjoy learning, the more time you'll save, and the more confident and successful you'll be.
(p. xiv)

According to Kahn, there were also six ways for students to improve concentration, motivation, and willpower:

1. Look for opportunities to exercise personal choice in learning activities . . .
2. Clarify interests and values in relation to immediate and long-term goals . . .
3. Study actively and efficiently . . .
4. Provide favorable study conditions . . .
5. Keep a memo book or pad handy to note any ideas that come to mind . . .
6. Give attention to possible psychological causes of inadequate concentration, motivation, or willpower (pp. 107-110)

Kahn concluded that studying should become easy and natural if study skills and test-taking strategies are learned. Study skills can be taught and test anxiety can be reduced or even eliminated in many cases by learning realistic and useful skills with which to study new material or review old material for assessment purposes.

Irvin and Rose (1995) believed that problems with exam scores were the result of many elements. These elements included student environment, students' self-concepts, and comprehension. Irvin and Rose stated, "All of these factors being equal, which they never are, test-taking skills can help students reflect what they really know" (p. 205).

Collins (1992) revealed that students must understand the value of learning how to learn specific study skills and strategies needed to succeed in academic life. These valuable study skills must become second nature to them so that when academic problems arise, the understanding is clear, thus allowing the student to choose the correct individual learning path to success. There are no students who must fail. All students can be taught to succeed if

motivated. All have the potential to learn and become successful.

Robinson (1993) interviewed hundreds of students and learned that all successful students, consciously or unconsciously, shared 12 beliefs or principles about school and the learning process (see Appendix J) and asked 12 basic questions when learning a subject (see Appendix K). Robinson described this new way of learning and entitled it CyberLearning. Cyberlearning is a process that allows students to be in control of the individual's education. Robinson stated, "All tests . . . measure not just what you know but how well you prepare for and take them" (p. 185). There were five steps to successfully taking many types of examinations, according to Robinson:

1. Catch your breath and take a couple of minutes to write down anything you are afraid of forgetting . . .
2. Read the directions carefully and listen to the directions given by the teacher . . .
3. Skim through the test to get an overall sense of the questions and their difficulty . . .
4. Budget your time by determining how much time you have for the entire exam, the total number of questions, the type and difficulty of each question, the value of each question, and how much you know . . .
5. Attack the questions by reading them again carefully looking for any key words
(p. 187-189)

These were just a few of the many skills available to help all kinds of students experience academic success. As progress was made, more complex skills were taught. Once

students gained self belief, then excitement and curiosity would follow. It is that spark of curiosity that can ignite the fires of potential knowledge seekers the business world is always searching for and complaining that schools are not producing.

Description of Selected Solution

The literature revealed that all students could learn skills and strategies that would allow them to become life-long achievers. Students could also be taught to develop the kind of academic competence in how to learn that creates the success and ability to tackle any academic study area.

All students could develop individual potential with skills, encouragement, knowledge, and practice. Students could foster individual success in learning by asking questions about the subject in a content area. Students could learn ways to master test anxiety. Students could also learn techniques for answering questions and improving performance on tests. The teaching of specific study skills and test-taking strategies could result in students having less anxiety, higher self-confidence, more positive attitudes, and higher test scores.

The writer implemented a 3-month practicum in which a variety of study skills and strategies were introduced, practiced, and evaluated. The learning of these skills helped to create an understanding that students must become life-long learners to succeed in short- and long-term goals.

The writer taught students study skills and strategies that enabled them to become information detectives. After examining 24 studies, Scruggs, White, and Bennion (1986) concluded that sixth- through eighth-grade students were more developmentally ready to learn and use study skills and test-taking strategies. Many times study skills and strategies were introduced in elementary school, however, the conclusion by these authors was that middle school is the better place to begin teaching these skills.

The writer encouraged students to gain an "I can do it" study attitude because students continually complained that the tests were difficult and informed the writer of the inability to remember all the necessary information for testing. The writer agreed with Scruggs, White, and Bennion (1986) that the teaching of specific study skills and test-taking strategies could reduce anxiety, create positive self-concepts, and better attitudes toward testing.

The writer conducted a total of four 15-minute seminars on study skills to 15 faculty members who taught social studies. The writer believed that study skills should be a part of all subject content areas (Irvin & Rose, 1995; Kahn, 1992; Koenke, 1988), thus ways to implement study skills throughout were elicited.

The writer implemented the steps of the 3-month practicum as follows:

1. The writer introduced activities and skills involved for the acquisition of social studies concepts being studied within each chapter.

2. The writer reviewed, practiced, evaluated and retaught, if necessary, after the skills were introduced.

Report of Action Taken

Month 1: Week 1

The writer administered study skills pretests (see Appendices A-E) to sixth-grade students. The writer had the students designed individual folders which contained individual study skills test results, chapter tests scores, notes and game results of learning to be an "Information Detective." The writer explained to students knowledge about how to use the Houghton Mifflin Social Studies textbook effectively (Armento et al., 1994).

The writer presented four 15-minute seminars to 15 faculty members who taught social studies. The writer demonstrated how to teach students the following study skills: the use of an index, how to use a biographical dictionary, how to use graphs and maps, how to use headings to answer questions, and how to write a chapter outline. The writer encouraged teachers to implement the study skills that applied to the curricula.

Month 1: Week 2

The writer explained the different study skills sections of the textbook and taught the use of an index. The

writer used index items from the chapter currently under study in a game format using an overhead projector.

Month 1: Week 3

The writer continued to teach the importance of study skills. The writer taught the skill of using a biographical dictionary, which included examining famous historical figures in a game format using an overhead projector.

Month 1: Week 4 and
Month 2: Week 1

The writer taught the skills necessary to read and understand information contained in graphs and maps. The writer had the students create a graph detailing students' weekly interests and the individual time involved. The writer also had students answer world location and natural resource questions using maps and graphs.

Month 2: Week 2

A delay occurred in implementation because of Stanford Achievement Tests (SAT) which were administered by the writer. The writer taught students how to turn a heading into a question and search for the answer to that question.

The writer introduced Robinson's (1993) 12 principles that all "Smart Students" share (see Appendix J). The writer taught students how to complete a poster detailing the use of these principles in a future academic career and personal life, which was presented to others.

The writer introduced students to Robinson's (1993) 12 basic questions all "Smart Students" ask when learning a

subject (see Appendix K). These questions were applied to the chapter currently under study in social studies. The writer introduced students through lecture to the concept of CyberLearning. The writer taught the students how to discern the difference between good and bad study habits (Robinson, 1993).

Month 2: Week 3 and
Month 2: Week 4

The writer taught students how to write an outline using a blank outline form. The writer had the students practice outlining using chapters previously studied.

The writer taught students the five steps to successfully taking many types of examinations, which included "catching your breath, reading the directions carefully, skimming through the test, budgeting time, and attacking the questions" (Robinson, 1993, p. 187-189).

Month 3: Week 1

The writer taught students how to practice ways of completing a variety of exams including essay, multiple choice, short answer, and true-false (Robinson, 1993). The writer taught students how to make up true-false questions and multiple choice questions using qualifying words that became distracting choices or made items true or false. The writer taught the students how to write clear statements with a missing word(s) to complete a concept or phrase. The writer placed students in collaborative groups. The six groups in all five classes created one exam type based on a

social studies chapter which was exchanged, completed, and corrected for in-depth understanding of the various types of exams.

Month 3: Week 2

The writer explained to students how to learn key chapter concepts of textbook material through the use of the formula entitled, "PQ6R-Preview, Question, Read, Recite, Write, Review, Reflect, Review" (Kahn, 1992) (see Appendix H).

The writer conducted a class discussion previewing a chapter using the PQ6R formula. The writer taught the students in collaborative groups to review other chapters using this formula.

Month 3: Week 3

The writer explained to students the four basic methods, called "preview, select, chunk, process," (Kahn, 1992, p.76) of how to study effectively (see Appendix I). The writer had the students use these methods to review the chapter under study. The writer discussed with students the need to become life-long, self-regulated learners for future success.

The writer discussed with students the need to match the acquired study skills and strategies to the completion of assignments under study. The writer had the students list at least three to five skills of individual choice for use when learning new concepts.

Month 3: Week 4

The writer reviewed all of the strategies learned during weeks 1-12. The writer had the students complete study skills posttests (see Appendices A-E). The writer evaluated test grades to determine if students had gained the study skills needed to acquire the concepts of social studies and discussed progress with students independently.

The writer met with 15 faculty members who taught social studies detailing the final positive and/or negative results of this practicum. The writer discussed the goals of the practicum and the outcome results related to the goals. The writer continued to encourage teachers to implement study skills within other content areas.

Chapter V: Results

Results

The problem was that sixth-grade students did not have the study skills needed to acquire the concepts of social studies. Students experienced difficulty using an index, biographical dictionary, reading graphs, reading maps and map keys, using headings to help research the answers to questions, and how to write an outline. The 1995-1996 map-and-globe and chapter tests tracked had mean score averages that ranged from 50% to 71% (see Table 2). The problem continued with 1996-1997 mean score averages that ranged from 61% to 74% on the pre-implementation chapter tests. A student survey revealed that test scores were low due to a refusal to study, lack of study skills needed to complete test reviews, and a belief that the chapter concepts were hard to understand.

The writer's goal was that students would gain a knowledge of study skills and be able to use these skills to acquire the concepts of social studies. This was accomplished by teaching students how to effectively use an index, biographical dictionary, read graphs and maps, convert headings into questions, and to complete several outlines for use as study guides.

The following six outcomes were projected for this practicum:

1. At the end of the practicum implementation, at least 100 of 125 students will demonstrate the correct use of an index by receiving a passing score of 70% on a Index Skill Test.

As shown in Table 3, the pretest revealed that 1 of 125 students received a passing score of 70% on a Index Skill Test. The posttest revealed that 125 of 125 students received a passing score of 70% demonstrating the correct use of an index. This outcome was met.

The writer observed students flipping through chapter pages randomly searching for answers to review questions before the index skill was taught. After learning how to use an index effectively, students confidently used the index daily to locate page numbers which, in turn, helped to find answers quickly.

2. At the end of the practicum implementation, at least 100 of 125 students will demonstrate how to use a biographical dictionary by receiving a passing score of 70% on a Biographical Dictionary Test.

As shown in Table 3, the pretest revealed that 0 of 125 students knew how to correctly use a biographical dictionary. The posttest revealed that 119 of 125 were able to correctly use a biographical dictionary by achieving a passing score of 70%. This outcome was met.

The students did not use the biographical dictionary before the skill was taught. There was no awareness by 118 students that the textbook contained such a dictionary. The writer observed students using the biographical dictionary many times to read information about a person of historical importance. At the end of the given biographical information there are page numbers for additional information on the person. Since learning study skills, students seem to be using the textbook more to read about people of individual interest when completing reports or studying for tests.

3. At the end of the practicum implementation, at least 100 of 125 students will demonstrate the correct reading of graphs and maps by receiving a score of 70% on a Graph and Map Skills Test.

As shown in Table 3, the pretest revealed that 0 of 125 students knew how to read and use a graph, a map, or a map key. The posttest revealed that 103 of 125 students were able to read a graph, a map, or a map key correctly by receiving a passing score of 70%. This outcome was met.

Table 3

Comparison of Pre/Post Study Skills Test Scores

Study Skills Tests	No. Passing Students	
	Pre	Post
Index	1	125
Biographical Dictionary	0	119
Reading Graphs and Maps	0	103
Headings Test	0	117
Chapter Outlining	8	120

Note: Passing score was 70%.

Students stated that before these skills were learned graphs and maps appeared confusing and hard to understand. These particular skills required a lot of patience and time to teach, but slowly after many practice sessions students were able to locate a place using longitude and latitude, read a graph, and use a map key to answer the chapter lesson review questions. Students have been observed helping each other locate places, read graphs, read maps, and map keys with confidence.

4. At the end of the practicum implementation, at least 100 of 125 students will demonstrate the skill of correctly converting headings into questions by receiving a passing score of 70% on the Headings Skill Test.

As shown in Table 3, the pretest revealed that 0 of 125 students knew how to convert headings into questions. The posttest revealed that 117 of 125 students knew how to correctly convert headings into questions by receiving a passing score of 70%. This outcome was met.

Students did not pay attention to headings or use headings when searching for information. The skill of learning how to convert headings into questions turned into a game that the students enjoyed. Many students had begun to compete in order to see who could convert headings into questions the fastest and the most accurately. The writer became the judge and sometimes the mediator among arguing opponents.

5. At the end of the practicum implementation, at least 100 of 125 students will correctly outline a chapter.

As shown in Table 3, the pretest revealed that 8 of 125 students knew how to correctly outline a chapter. The posttest revealed that 120 of 125 students knew how to correctly outline a chapter. This outcome was met.

Students experienced the most difficulty learning to outline a chapter. The most commonly heard remark concerned the importance of a heading and the number of details to be included. This skill required a lot of practice also before a clear understanding was achieved. Students were allowed to work individually or in groups composed of varying student abilities which helped create an atmosphere of peer teachers whereby all students learned from each other. The writer observed and sometimes mediated many debates about which headings were important and which details should have been included.

6. At the end of the practicum implementation, at least 100 of 125 students will increase the mean average of chapter test scores by 20 percentage points.

As shown in Table 4, the pre-implementation chapter mean test score averages ranged from 61% to 74%. During the implementation of the study skills unit, the mean chapter test score averages ranged from 80% to 88%.

Table 4

A Comparison of World History Mean Test Score Averages

No. Students = 125

Pre-Implementation		Implementation	
Test	<u>M</u>	Test	<u>M</u>
1	74%	5	83%
2	69%	6	80%
3	66%	7	84%
4	61%	8	88%

Although the specific objective was not met, a comparison of the pre-implementation mean chapter test score averages with those during implementation revealed a significant increase in the range of chapter mean test score averages.

The students were impressed with the test score increases and became encouraged to study more and do even better on future tests. The writer was impressed at the amount of work students were willing to put into studying and gave more class time to this endeavor as each test date approached. The writer served as a facilitator during these study periods by walking around contributing help to any students in need.

Discussion

The preceding facts revealed that five practicum outcomes were met. Although the sixth practicum outcome was not met, there was a significant increase in the mean chapter test score averages after the implementation of the study skills unit. The writer has become convinced that learning study skills is important and must be taught. It cannot be assumed that students already know these skills from elementary school. Students became excited and encouraged about learning as individual test scores rose. The excitement created students wanting to be in charge of individual learning. These types of students Bandura (1991) has called "self-regulated learners" (p. 250). Butler and Winne (1995) described the academic journey of such self-regulated students as one of self-vigilance and diversity.

As students gained confidence in individual abilities to information detect and study effectively for tests, the individual reasoning abilities expanded to solve other academic problems. Study skills must be taught in a way that allows students to work easily as academic needs arise. The practicum gave 125 students some of the tools necessary to begin the journey of life-long independent learning. Teachers need to help students as facilitators in order for the journey to continue.

Recommendations

The writer recommends the following in order for study skills to help students:

1. Students need to learn study skills and good study habits that apply to all study areas.
2. Study skills should be taught as a course, but with the thoughtful, careful, integrated planning by teachers of all other academic areas.
3. When planning or teaching a variety of study skills one must always remember the main objective is to create independent, self-regulated learners capable of completing research to solve problems in a variety of areas.
4. Students must understand that strategic learning is a life-long process. Learning how to learn is not just a way to do well in school for the moment, it is a way to be successful at a future job in real life.

Finally, teachers of study skills must be flexible enough to accommodate special projects/papers and teach individual skills on an as needed basis. The recommendations are given because students need to actively participate in personal learning; however, in order to intelligently participate, students must be taught the necessary skills that will be helpful along a variety of career paths. A teacher can no longer be a fount of knowledge or a sage on the stage. Today's teacher must be a facilitator enabling students to master and use the concepts within all curricula.

Dissemination

The writer has shared the entire practicum, including the final results, with current 1996-97 faculty members and administration. The writer also plans to share this report with all faculty members at the opening of the 1997-1998 school year. In addition, the writer will contact the county district social studies office to request a presentation of the practicum and its results at a conference or a workshop locally and nationally. The writer has been asked to teach study skills to all sixth-grade students on an elective wheel for the upcoming 1997-1998 school year. The writer will teach study skills to some seventh- and eighth-grade classes as well. The school's administration has requested that the writer continue to promote study skills at parent and school improvement meetings for the new school year.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
INDEX SKILL TEST

INDEX SKILL TEST

Name: _____

Directions: On the blank line, write at least one page number where the following information can be found using the Houghton Mifflin social studies textbook.

This is a timed 10 minute test.

1. The Crusades were about what? _____.
2. What is the British East India Company? _____.
3. What is Hinduism? _____.
4. What is meant by "The Silk Road" _____.
5. What is Yom Kippur? _____.
6. Why was the Voting Rights Act of 1965? _____.
7. What is meant by the Pacific Rim? _____.
8. Why was the Great Wall of China built? _____.
9. What is a delta? _____.
10. What does "Indentured Servant" mean? _____.

APPENDIX B
BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY SKILL TEST

BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY SKILL TEST

Name: _____

Directions: Answer the following questions using the biographical dictionary using the Houghton Mifflin social studies textbook.

1. Who was Vasco da Gama? _____

2. Who is Lech Walesa? _____

3. Who was Ivan IV (the Terrible)? _____

4. Who was Ramesses II? _____

5. Who was Horace Mann? _____

6. Who was Pericles? _____

7. Who was Catherine the Great? _____

8. Who was Menachem Begin? _____

9. Who was Imhotep? _____

10. Who was Eva Duarte de Peron? _____

APPENDIX C
GRAPH AND MAP SKILLS TEST

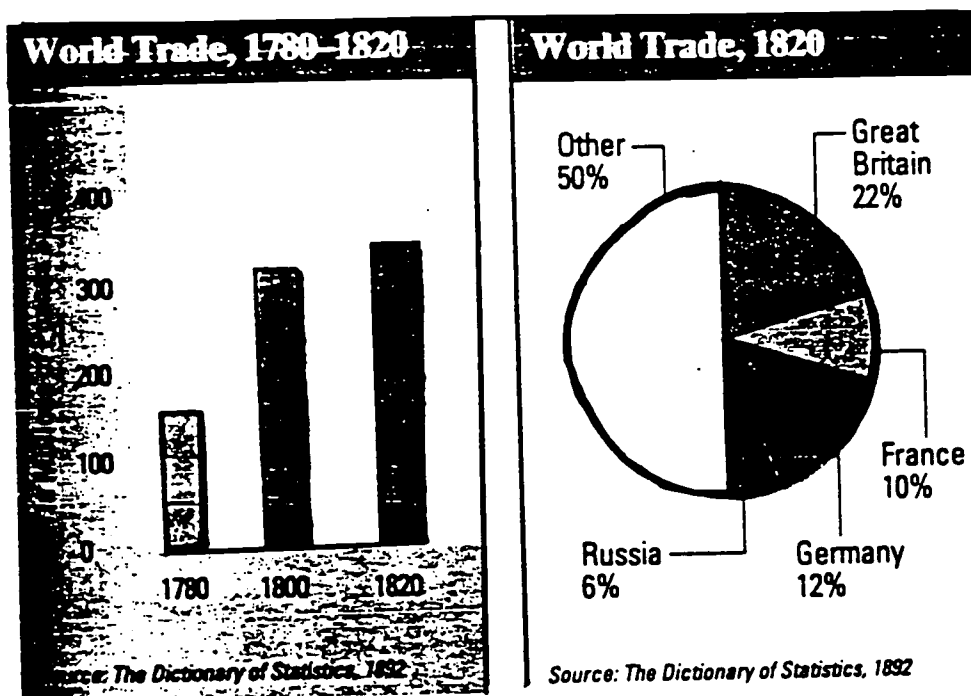
GRAPH SKILL TEST

Name: _____

Directions: Answer the following questions using the two graphs on the attached sheet.

1. Compare world trade between France and Germany. Which country had more world trade in 1820? _____
2. Which country had less world trade Great Britain or Russia? _____
3. Compare millions of pounds sterling by determining which year had more world trade? _____
4. Which year had the least amount of pounds sterling?

5. What word represents 50 percent of the world trade in 1820? _____
6. Did France have more world trade than Great Britain?
Yes or no (circle one)
7. Did the year 1800 have more world trade than 1820?
yes or no (circle one)
8. What year listed had the least amount of world trade? _____
9. Name the countries in order from low to high that had world trade in 1820? _____
10. Determine and write from high to low using the information provided the years in which world trade occurred? _____



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MAP SKILL TEST

Name: _____

Directions: Answer the following questions using the map on the attached sheet.

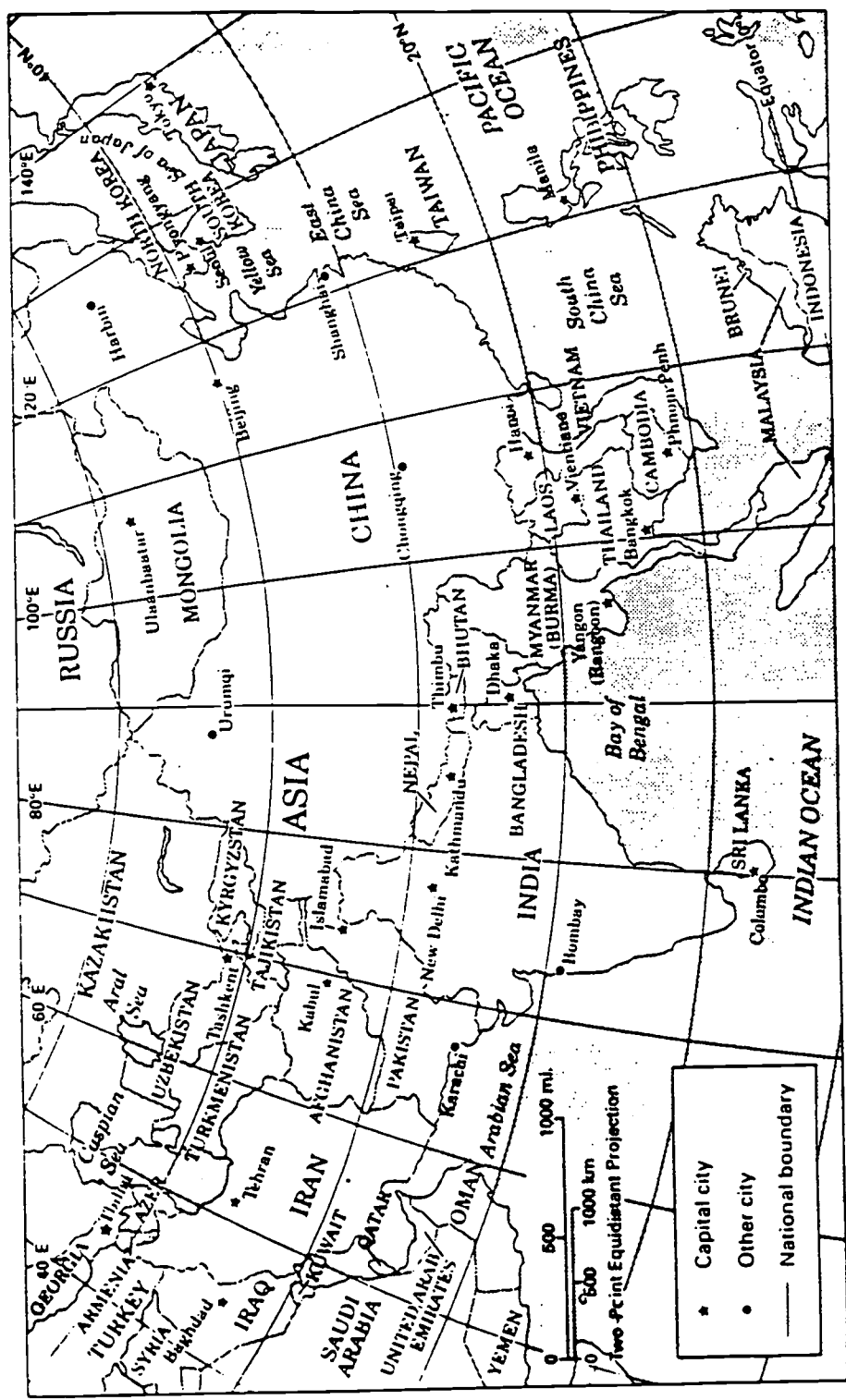
Give longitude and latitude markings for the following:

11. Locate Beijing? _____.
12. Locate Manila? _____.
13. Locate Bangkok? _____.

Use Map key to answer the following:

14. What is the capital city of Mongolia? _____.
15. What is the capital city of Iran? _____.
16. Name other cities in China? _____.
17. How many miles is Chongqing from Shanghai?

-
18. How many kilometers is Bombay, India from Baghdad, Iraq? _____.
 19. What divides China from Mongolia? _____.
 20. Plan a trip from Baghdad, Iraq to Phnom Penh, Cambodia:
 - A. List the countries and cities visited along the way.
 - B. Calculate the number of miles traveled.



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APPENDIX D
HEADINGS SKILL TEST - CHAPTER 1

HEADINGS SKILL TEST - CHAPTER 1

Name: _____

Directions: Use the Houghton Mifflin social studies textbook to rewrite the following headings to be questions. Then use the Index to help answer the new questions.

1. Cultures Are Alike and Different

2. Cultures Include Customs

3. Cultures Include Institutions

4. Cultures Include Beliefs

5. Physical Environment and Culture

6. Physical Environments Change

7. Social Interaction

8. Technology and Culture

9. Advances in Transportation

10. Advances in Communication

11. Our Own Culture

12. Other Cultures

13. Culture and Social Sciences

14. The Value of Each Culture

APPENDIX E
CHAPTER OUTLINE SKILL TEST

CHAPTER OUTLINE SKILL TEST

Name: _____

Directions: Outline a chapter in the Houghton Mifflin social studies textbook using the title, all headings, and at least two details for each heading.

APPENDIX F
SELF-EVALUATION CHECKLIST OF FACTORS
INVOLVED IN READING, WRITING, AND STUDYING

SELF-EVALUATION CHECKLIST OF FACTORS
INVOLVED IN READING, WRITING, AND STUDYING

Name: _____

Directions: Please check areas of major and minor concern on the right. Check areas of strength on the left. The answers generated will be used for class discussion on study skills.

CHECKLIST

Area of strength	Factors in reading, writing, study	Need or concern	
		major	minor
	Comprehending written material		
	Responding critically and creatively		
	Retaining information		
	Taking notes from reading		
	Taking notes from listening		
	Time management		
	Vocabulary		
	Pronouncing unfamiliar words		
	Taking examinations		
	Writing papers		
	Rate of reading		
	Self-image as a reader		
	Self-image as a writer		
	Tension when reading		
	Preparation in previous school(s)		
	Present curriculum		
	Present instruction		
	Support/pressures from home		
	Coping with present environment		
	Attitude toward reading		
	Attitude toward writing		
	Concentration		
	Self-confidence		
	Willpower		
	Motivation		

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APPENDIX G
SELF-EVALUATION REGARDING TEST ANXIETY

Self-evaluation regarding test-anxiety*

There are many reasons that account for students not doing well on examinations: for example, being unprepared, feeling ill, missing an important lecture or assignment, distracting noise in or around the testing room, and so forth. Some students do not do well on examinations because they become overly tense and "test-anxious."

1. Do you block or freeze when studying for an exam?
2. Do you go blank during exams?
3. Do you frequently forget information that you previously learned?
4. Do you find the words meaningless as you read test questions?
5. Do you need to reread test questions in order to comprehend them?
6. Do you find yourself plotting ways to escape from a test (sneaking out, feigning illness)?
7. Do you—before, during, or after exams—have physical symptoms such as rapid heart rate, excessive perspiration, tense muscles, queasy stomach, nausea?
8. Do you have difficulty maintaining concentration while studying or taking exams?
9. Do you panic as time runs out during an exam?
10. Do you worry about how you are doing on an exam compared to others taking it?
11. Do you worry about failing an exam?
12. Do you find yourself wishing you were out of school, working—especially just before exams?
13. Do you panic on a test if you don't know the answer to a question?
14. Do you get distracted easily while taking an exam?
15. Do you find that you get so tired from worrying about exams that you almost don't care how well you do by the time the test comes?

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APPENDIX H

USE OF "PQ6R" - PREVIEW, QUESTION, READ,
RECITE, WRITE, REVIEW, REFLECT, REVIEW -
TO MASTER KEY CHAPTER CONCEPTS

To summarize, here is the rack of tools* with which to master a textbook chapter. To remember all the steps, use the formula "PQ6R"—Preview, Question, Read, Recite, Write, Review, Reflect, Review.

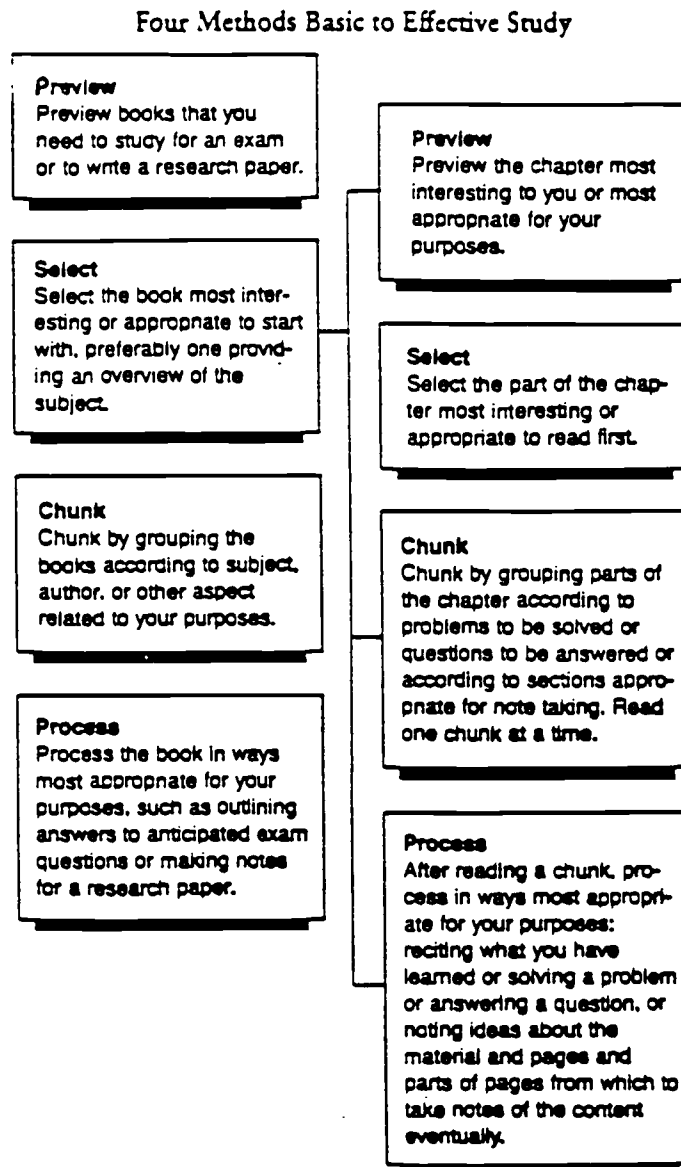
TOOLS	CHECK IF USED
Preview (survey) the whole chapter; recite from memory what you have learned from the preview.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question (set a purpose: formulate a question or read one of the problems listed).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>For each chapter section</i>	
Read one section (chunk) to answer the question or to solve the problem. Bracket main ideas in the margin.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recite your answer to the question or solve the problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write a line or two toward forming a one-page outline of the whole chapter.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>After finishing the chapter</i>	
Review the completed one-page outline. Recite it from memory.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reflect critically and creatively. Write brief notes about your reflections and questions on a page separate from the one-page outline.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review the one-page outline again within twenty-four hours.	<input type="checkbox"/>

* Most of these steps are derived from the procedure originally devised by Francis P. Robinson and described in his book *Effective Study*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1961).

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APPENDIX I
FOUR METHODS BASIC TO EFFECTIVE STUDY

Here is a graphic summary of the *Four Methods Basic to Effective Study*:



* Reprint permission is granted. Kahn, N. B. (1992). More learning in less time. Berkley, CA: Ten Speed Press, p. 76.

APPENDIX J

TWELVE BELIEFS OR PRINCIPLES THAT ALL SMART STUDENTS SHARE
ABOUT SCHOOL AND THE LEARNING PROCESS

TWELVE BELIEFS OR PRINCIPLES ABOUT SCHOOL
AND THE LEARNING PROCESS

1. Nobody can teach you as well as you can teach yourself.
2. Merely listening to your teachers and completing their assignments is never enough.
3. Not everything you are assigned to read or asked to do is equally important.
4. Grades are subjective opinions.
5. Making mistakes (and occasionally appearing foolish) is the price you pay for learning and improving.
6. The point of the question is to get you to think, not simply to answer it.
7. You are in school to learn to think for yourself, not to repeat what your textbooks and teachers tell you.
8. Subjects do not always seem interesting and relevant, but being actively engaged in learning them is better than being passively bored and not learning them.
9. Few things are as potentially difficult, frustrating, or frightening as genuine learning, yet nothing is so rewarding and empowering.
10. How well you do in school reflects your attitude and your method, not your ability.
11. If you are doing it for the grades or for the approval of others, you are missing the satisfaction of the process and putting your self-esteem at the mercy of things outside your control.
12. School is a game, but it is a very important game.

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APPENDIX K
TWELVE BASIC QUESTIONS SMART STUDENTS ASK
WHEN LEARNING A SUBJECT

TWELVE BASIC QUESTIONS SMART STUDENTS ASK
WHEN LEARNING A SUBJECT

1. What is the purpose for reading this?
2. What do I already know about this topic?
3. What is the big picture here?
4. What is the author going to say next?
5. What are the "expert questions"?
6. What questions does this information raise for me?
7. What information is important here?
8. How can I paraphrase and summarize this information?
9. How can I organize this information?
10. How can I picture this information?
11. What is my hook for remembering this information?
12. How does this information fit in with what I already know?

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