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Study Skills for School Success

Terry Mills Tanneberg

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STUDY SKILLS FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

A Project
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Terry Mills Tanneberg
May, 1989

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"Study Skills for School Success" is a project study focusing on the skills characterized by effective study. The specific nature of study skills and the influence of the home environment are also examined. A major product of this project study is a handbook entitled "Study Skills for School Success." Focusing on the parents of elementary children, the step-by-step handbook is designed to serve as a resource guide for the effective implementation of a home study skills program.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The push for excellence in education is forcing those in the field to shift gears. Realization is dawning and the light being shed shows that improvement is not fostered by longer school days, added curriculum, or a variety of innovative teaching styles. The educational focus must move from "what we know" to "how we learn." Study skills can be the vehicle for such a shifting of gears. Students can be equipped with a set of skills that can transfer to all learning situations. In an age where the knowledge base will have doubled four times by the year 2000, our system of education can not begin to provide enough knowledge, however, it is possible to offer the keys to unlock the knowledge. Study skills can be this set of keys.

Statement of the Problem

Study skills can not be treated as a set of innate behaviors bestowed upon the lucky. A well-defined set of study skills needs to become a part of the curriculum being taught daily with importance assigned to the three R's. Parents can play an important part in further instructing and

reinforcing the study skills program. Equipped with appropriate knowledge concerning study skills, parents can be valuable teachers for their children.

Importance of the Project

During the school day, students are being instructed concerning a variety of academic subjects. Many students have trouble absorbing the information for a variety of reasons. Problems cited most often by teachers and parents are the student's inability to be prepared for class, complete assignments, and study for tests. Erroneously, students are all too often expected to magically obtain these skills. Realizing the importance of study skills, many teachers are beginning to offer instruction in this forgotten curriculum. Parents can also be involved. The parents' role is an important one as they provide study environments, assist with test taking and note taking skills, and encourage organization. Parents can be the link between school and home by providing guided practice in the study skills taught at school. This project is meant to offer help for parents so that they can build a home environment conducive to successful learning.

Scope of the Project

The end product of this project will be a handbook equipping the parent of the elementary child with a program

designed to make study time more effective. The elements of successful study will be thoroughly examined and tips for implementation will be given.

Limitations of the Project

This project is designed to serve the needs of elementary children and parents. It is therefore limited to those children in grades one through five. The core of the project is further limited to the upper grades (3-6) because of the cognitive level of the skills involved.

Definition of Terms

Study is learning from reading.

Study skills are a wide range of activities including listening, following directions, organizing time, setting up a study environment, and developing test-taking skills.

Elementary child is a student in grades one through five.

CHAPTER 4
Project Study

This project is a handbook entitled "Study Skills for School Success." Designed as a self-help guide, it's contents describe a step by step process of improvement regarding study skills.

STUDY SKILLS FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

TERRY TANNEBERG

Please note: Clip art on pages 14-38 have been redacted due to copyright concerns.

INTRODUCTION

Study skills is a preparation program for school success. These skills attempt to make learning easier and can apply to any subject or student. A proper and regular use of these skills can foster improvement and offer a study skills system for a lifetime of learning.

As a parent, you can cultivate your child's study skills. This step by step handbook can serve as a manual and assist your child in acquiring study skills. With guidance in the elementary years, you are building independence for the years to come.

To begin, follow the steps for school success...

HOME ENVIRONMENT

Many parents wonder if they are providing a proper learning environment for their children. Dr. Benjamin Bloom, a professor of Education at the University of Chicago, developed the following self-analysis to help determine the level of learning encouraged in the home. How does your home measure up?

Score two points for each statement that is "almost always true" of your home; score one point if it's "sometimes true"; score zero if it's "rarely or never true."

Questions:	Points:
1. Everyone in my family has a household responsibility, at least one chore that must be done on time.	_____
2. We have regular times for members of the family to eat, sleep, play, work, and study.	_____
3. Schoolwork and reading come before play or T.V.	_____
4. I praise my child for good schoolwork, sometimes in front of other people.	_____
5. My child has a quiet place to study, a desk or table at which to work, and books, including a dictionary and other reference material.	_____

6. Members of my family talk about hobbies, games, news, the books we're reading, and movies and TV programs we've seen. _____

7. The family visits museums, libraries, zoos, historical sites, and other places of interest. _____

8. I encourage good speech habits, helping my child to use the correct words, and to learn new ones. _____

9. At dinner, or some other daily occasion, our family talks about the day's events, with a chance for everyone to speak and be listened to. _____

10. I know my child's current teacher, what my child is doing in school, and which learning materials are to be used. _____

11. I expect quality work and good grades. I know my child's strengths and weaknesses and give encouragement and special help when they're needed. _____

12. I talk to my child about the future, about planning for high school and college, and about aiming for a high level of education. _____

Add the total of points for each question. If you scored ten or more, your home ranks in the top one-fourth in terms of the support and encouragement you give your child for school learning. If you scored six or lower, your home is in the bottom one-fourth. If you scored somewhere in between, you're average in the support you give your child for school learning.

THE STUDY PLACE

Having a specific place to study, equipped with all the necessary supplies, is a key element to successful study.

The Setting

1. Any quiet room free of distractions.
2. A desk with a clutter-free top, partnered with a straight back chair.
3. Proper lighting: 60-100 watt bulb placed on the opposite side of the writing hand.

The Supplies

1. A variety of paper (lined, typing, construction)
2. Pens
3. Pencils
4. Ruler
5. Scissors
6. Glue
7. Erasers
8. Clock
9. Phone number of a student in the same class
10. Calculator
11. Dictionary, Thesaurus
12. Pencil Sharpener

THE
NOTEBOOK

All students need a specific place to store their papers. A variety of notebooks are on the market ranging from the more complicated Trapperkeepers to the simplistic PeeChee. For the youngster in first grade, the PeeChee serves as a great "first notebook." The size lends itself to smaller arms, and the two-sided pouch offers quick

Ask the following questions if your child gets stuck on his homework?

1. Have you read and followed directions carefully?
2. Are you taking short cuts that are confusing you?
3. Read the directions aloud...now do they make sense?
4. Have you tried making a picture, table, graph, or diagram to represent the known facts and relationships?
5. Have you tried to solve a similar but less difficult problem?
6. Have you checked the glossaries, table of contents, or the indexes for help?
7. Did you copy the words or numbers correctly?
8. Are you trying to do too much of the work in your head?
9. Have you checked for careless mistakes?
10. Have you called anyone else in your classroom for help?

Suggest that your child starts on the toughest subject first while the energy level is high.

Help your child set study goals. For example, learning five of the spelling words each night rather than all twenty on Thursday.

Remember to help explain how to do the homework even when doing it yourself would be easier.

Teach your child how to talk positively. Statements like "Yes, you are almost finished," can foster enough energy to forge ahead.

Suggest a break should you see frustration mounting.

Show your child how to divide big projects into more manageable chunks.

Help your child with homework when you are both relaxed. Right after school or right before the bus comes may not be the best times.

Keep the sessions as pleasant in tone as possible. Try to be patient with your child.



PROOFREADING

Teach your child to proofread his completed homework. Go through the following steps together remembering any corrections should be the child's job.

- * Does the paper have a complete heading which includes name, date, and subject?
- * Does the paper look neat?
- * Are all mistakes erased rather than scratched out?
- * Is the spelling correct?
- * Are questions answered in complete sentences?
- * Is the grammar correct?
- * Is the child proud of his paper?

The importance of reading with your child can not be stressed enough. This time spent together fosters a love of books and provides a special bond between you and your child. Reading aloud to your child improves reading and language skills. When planning your child's learning environment,

include this read aloud time. The following suggested read-aloud list may provide you with some special books for that precious time together.

Grades K-1

Asch, Frank. Happy Birthday Moon.

When a bear discovers that the moon shares his birthday, he buys the moon a beautiful hat as a present.

Carle, Eric. The Very Busy Spider.

The farm animals try to divert a busy little spider from spinning her web, but she persists and produces a thing of beauty and usefulness.

Fox, Mem. Hattie and the Fox.

Hattie, a big black hen, discovers a fox in the bushes which creates varying reactions in the other barnyard animals.

Howe, James. The Day the Teacher Went Bananas.

A class's new teacher, who leads the class in a number of very popular activities, turns out to be a gorilla.

Martin, Bill Jr. Barn Dance.

Unable to sleep on the night of a full moon, a young boy follows the sound of music across the fields and finds an unusual barn dance in progress.

Numeroff, Laura. If You Give a Mouse a Cookie.

Relating the cycle of requests a mouse is likely to make after you give him a cookie, takes the reader through a young boy's day.

Noble, Trinka Hakes. The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash.

Jimmy's boa constrictor wreaks havoc on the class trip to a farm.

Van Allsburg, Chris. The Polar Express.

A magical train ride on Christmas Eve takes a boy to the North Pole to receive a special gift from Santa Claus.

Wilhelm, Hans. I'll Always Love You.

A child's sadness at the death of a beloved dog is tempered by the remembrance of saying every night, "I'll always love you."

Wood, Audrey. King Bidgood's in the Bathtub.

Despite pleas from his court, a fun-loving king refuses to get out of his bathtub to rule his kingdom.

Grade 2

Ballan, Lorna. Amelia's Nine Lives.

Nora is upset when her black cat disappears. She has lots of help trying to calm down before she finds Ameila.

Christelow, Eileen. Jerome the Babysitter.

Mrs. Gatorman's nine frisky little pranksters put Jerome, their babysitter, through his paces.

Cohen, Barbara. Molly's Pilgrim.

Told to make a doll like a Pilgrim for the Thanksgiving display at school, Molly's Jewish mother dresses the doll as she herself dressed before leaving Russia.

Flournoy, Valerie. The Patchword Quilt.

Using scraps from the family's old clothing, Tanya helps her grandmother make a beautiful quilt that tells the story of her family's life.

Jukes, Helme. Friends.

Farm adventures of Charlie Rooster, Johnny Mouse, and Fat Percy the Pig.

Jikes, Mavis. Like Jake and me.

Alex feels that he does not have much in common with his stepfather Jake until a fuzzy spider brings them together.

MacLachlan, Patricia. Sarah, Plain and Tall.

When their father invites a mail-order bride to come to live with them in their prairie home, Caleb and Anna are captivated by her and hope she will stay.

Martin, Bill Jr. The Ghost-Eye Tree.

Walking down a dary lonely road on an errand one night, a brother and sister argue over who is afraid of the dread Ghost-Eye tree.

Nordqvist, Sven. Pancake Pie.

Despite many difficulties, a farmer named Festus is determined to celebrate his cat's birthday by baking a pancake pie.

Nixon, Joan Lowery. If you Say So, Claude.

A knee slapping tale of the wild and wooly pioneer days.

Grade 3

Calhoun, Mary. The Night the Monster Came.

After finding giant footprints in the snow, Andy is sure that Bigfoot is stalking his house.

Cameron, Ann. Stories Julian Tells.
Relates episodes in seven-year-old Julian's life which include what he did to his fig tree, his strange meeting with the spice lady, and a late night trip with his father and younger brother.

Clifford, Eth. Harvey's Horrible Snake Disaster.
When 10 year-old Harvey is visited by his cousin Nora, trouble is bound to ensue, and this year's episode with snakes is no exception.

Dahl, Ronald. James and the Giant Peach.
James goes on a magical adventure in a peach that is filled with amazing creatures.

DePaola, Tomie. Favorite Nursery Tales.
This is a collection of favorite tales that a class or family will enjoy reading.

Gardiner, John. Stone Fox.
Rooted in Rocky Mountain legend, this is the story of a 10 year-old boy and legendary Indian, each determined to win a race and a prize.

Howe, James. Clery Stalks at Midnight.
Chester, the cat, is more than ever convinced that Bunnacula is a vampire bunny when there is a harvest of white vegetables on the morning after the night that Bunnacula was probably wandering the neighborhood.

Howe, James. Morgan's Zoo.
When the Chelsea Park Zoo is about to close, the animal keeper receives help from the animals themselves.

Taylor, Theodore. The Trouble with Tuck.
A young girl trains her blind dog to follow and trust a guide dog.

Grade 4

Banks, Lynne Reid. The Indian in the Cupboard.
A 9 year-old boy receives a plastic Indian, a cupboard, and a little key for his birthday. He finds himself involved in an adventure.

Banks, Lynne Reid. The Return of the Indian.
A year after he sends his Indian friend, Little Bear, back into the magic cupboard, Omri decides to bring him back, only to find that he is close to death and in need of help.

Gardiner, John Reynolds. Stone Fox.
Little Willy hopes to pay the back taxes on his grandfather's farm with the purse from a dog sled race he enters.

Gilson, Jamie. Do Bananas Chew Gum?
Sam will try anything to cover-up his learning disability.
His clown antics make for lots of surprises.

Gilson, Jamie. Hello, My Name is Scrambled Eggs.
When Harvey's parents host a family of Vietnamese refugees,
Harvey figures he'll show the new kid the ropes.

Korman, Gordon. I Want to Go Home.
Humorous antics of a boy who is trying to get sent home from
camp.

Lindbergh, Anne. Bailey's Window.
When their grumpy cousin, Baily Bond accidentally creates a
window to anywhere, Anna and Carl and their friend, Ingrid,
are in for a magical summer of visiting faraway places.

Moeri, Louise. Save Queen of Sheba.
After miraculously surviving a Sioux Indian raid on the trail
to Oregon, a brother and sister set out with few provisions
to find the rest of the settlers.

Oliver, Stephen Ryan. The Glitter, the Googer, and the
Ghost.
Ten-year-old best friends and ghost hunters, known to each
other as Glitter and Googer, think they have a chance to find
a real ghost when Glitter's family inherits an old house in
Maine.

Speare, Elizabeth George. Sign of the Beaver.
A young boy in Maine, when rescued by an Indian chief and his
grandson, must decide whether to spend the winter alone in
the woods waiting for his family to return or move on to a
new life with his new friends.

Fifth Grade

Adler, C.S. Footsteps on the Stairs.
Thirteen-year-old Dodie and his new stepsister, Anne,
gradually become friends as they investigate sounds of
footsteps that may be those of two sisters drowned in a
nearby marsh nearly forty years earlier.

Avi, S.O.R. Losers.
Each member of the South Orange River 7th grade soccer team
has qualities of excellence, but not on the soccer field.

Brittain, Bill. The Wish Giver.
Three tales of Coven Tree in which three young people are
each granted a wish, and each comes to regret it.

Corbett, Scott. Grave Doubts.

Two 16 year-old boys, suspicious of the sudden death of an eccentric millionaire, look for a clue to the mystery in the last crossword puzzle the old man worked on.

Garden, Nancy. Four Crossings.

After her mother's death a young girl moves to Four Crossings and finds herself at the center of a mystery including ciphers, folklore, a missing antique plate, a stray dog, a menacing hermit, a new friend named Jed, and a winter that seems to have no end.

Gree, Gery and Ruddick, Bob. Max and Me and the Time Machine.

Steve buys a time machine at a garage sale and takes his friend Max to the year 1250 in the middle of a jousting matching.

Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. Beetles.

Andy's project for the 5th grade essay contest is using insects to increase the food supply. He tries out three recipes on his friends and family.

Resh, Jane Thomas. Courage at Indian Deep.

Runaway, Cass, is caught in an autumn blizzard on the rugged northern shore of Lake Superior. When he realizes that the light off Indian Deep is a ship signaling for help, Cass must do all he can to help the survivors.

Winthrop, Elizabeth. The Cattle in the Attic.

A gift of a toy castle, complete with silver knight, introduces William to an adventure involving magic and a personal quest.

Wright, Betty Ren. The Dollhouse Murders.

A dollhouse filled with a ghostly light in the middle of the night and dolls that have moved from where she last left them, lead Amy and her retarded sister to unravel the mystery surrounding grisly murders that took place years ago.

To help prepare your child, go over the tips explaining the various test styles. Test taking is a skill that we can master through practice and knowledge.

THE ESSAY

The essay test requires the student to answer a variety of questions. Often answers require listing, comparing, and discussing the tested material.

1. Read the question carefully. On the back of the test, outline your answer.
2. Stick to the topic.
3. More isn't better. A brief clear answer is better than one that rambles.
4. Be sure to reread your answer.

MULTIPLE-CHOICE

The multiple-choice test is made up of several partially completed statements. At the end of each statement, the student needs to decide which answer correctly completes the statement. Usually four choices are given with one of the choices possible being, "all of the above."

1. Cover the answers and read the question carefully. Try to think of the answer without looking. Then see if your answer appears in the list. If it does, it is probably correct.
2. Look for the answer that says, "all of the above," or "none of the above." They are usually, but not always, correct.

3. If you don't know which answer is right, cross out all the ones which you know are wrong. Then, pick the best answer from the remaining ones.

4. Read all the answers given. Some questions give two answers that are right in some way. Choose the one you think is the best.

MATCHING QUESTIONS

In this type of test, the student is given two lists of information. The goal is to correctly match items on one list with items on the other.

1. Count to see if there is an equal number of items to match.

2. Match the items that you do know first.

3. Put a check beside the items after you have matched them.

4. At the end, make a good guess on the ones you are not sure of.

TRUE/FALSE

The true/false test lists statements concerning the information covered. The student has to decide if the statement is true or false. Often, the test requires the student to make the false statements true.

1. Read each statement carefully. Sometimes the information in the statement can offer a clue to its answer.

2. Watch out for statements that use the words always, all, never, only, or none. They are usually false.

3. Look for statements that use the words generally, usually, often, sometimes, frequently. Those statements are usually true.

4. Very long and very short statements tend to be correct.

5. If any part of the statement is false, the entire statement will be false.

6. Only make changes if you are positive the answer is wrong - your first hunch is usually correct.

SHORT ANSWER

The short answer test asks the student to write in the correct answer as part of a statement. This type of question may also be referred to as "fill in the blank."

1. Read the statement carefully. Try to figure out what the question is asking.

2. If you don't know the exact answer but you do know something related to it, write it in the blank. Sometimes, teachers give partial credit.

REMEMBERING

Remembering what you've studied is an important step in improving study habits. You can help your child improve his remembering ability through practice and learning some "memorizing systems."

Four Common Sense Rules for Remembering:

1. Tell yourself to remember it. When you receive information, remind yourself that you are going to remember it.
2. You have to do something active to remember. It is work remembering.
3. You have to refresh your memory.
4. Make what you remember meaningful. Information has to be useful or there is little use in remembering.

When studying, try the following memory systems with your child:

Write down the information to be learned saying it out loud as you go. Repeat this step several times, then wait a few minutes. Can you say the information?

Organize the information to be learned. Arrangement can make difficult items relatively easy to remember. For example, if you have to learn a series of numbers such as 2, 31, 4, 12, 23, 10, 25, and 18. You could classify the list into even and odd numbers. Arrangement by size might also help.

Remembering by association is another successful strategy. Break down the information to be learned into smaller units. Try to associate each piece of information with well-established facts already secure in your mind. For example, you need to remember the name of the Confederate General, Robert E. Lee. Link his name to someone familiar such as your favorite Uncle Lee or neighbor Lee Brown.

Try acronyms. An acronym is a word that is made by taking the first letter of each word and combining the letters to make a new word. For example, if you need to remember the names of the Great Lakes, think of the acronym: HOME H(Huron) O(Ontario) M(Michigan) E(Erie) S(Superior).

Acrostics are sentences created to help you remember. If you wanted to remember the symbol for salt, which is NaCl, say this sentence. Norman Always Comes Late. The first letter of each word in the sentence spells out the answer.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Communication between the parent and teacher is important. As a parent, you can gain information concerning your child's strengths and weaknesses. This contact can

provide you with information useful in developing your child's home study environment. Later it can act as feedback for evaluating and possibly retuning the study skills system you've created.

Before the parent conference, plan your questions. Inquire about homework, tests, reading requirements, expectations, and class standards.

During the year, stay involved by attending school functions. If concerns arise, phone or write the teacher. Handle problems as they arise. View the teacher-parent relationship as a team working together to give your child the best education possible.

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CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary

Study skills are a set of skills designed to make learning easier. Encompassing a wide range of activities, study skills include listening, following directions, organizing time, setting up a study environment, and developing test taking skills. Many times, students are expected to acquire these skills naturally and formal instruction is absent from the classroom. In situations where formal instruction occurs, guided practice is the missing element. Parents can fill this gap by helping children acquire and maintain study skills. "Study Skills for School Success" is designed to serve as a guide and resource for the parent.

Through numerous studies, research indicates student improvement through the utilization of study skills. The nature of the skills, require specific instruction. Furthermore, the home is cited as a primary source of change and improvement when implementing a study skills program.

Conclusions

"Study Skills for School Success" can be an effective program in the acquisition and maintenance of study skills. To be successful, the handbook needs to be used

systematically by the parent. A maintenance program must also exist if the skills are to become habits. Providing support systems for the parent would help to insure continuous use.

Recommendations

1. "Study Skills for School Success" needs to be placed in the hands of all parents of elementary children.

2. A seminar should be provided for parents that offers assistance in setting up and maintaining the program. Support should also be fostered by follow-up sessions throughout the school year.

3. The elementary teacher needs to recognize the importance of study skills and implement a program in the classroom.

4. Eventually, the parent's role should change to one of partnership with the teacher, rather than primary instructor.

5. The next step should include the middle, junior high, and high school classrooms. Ideally, study skills would be a required subject for graduation.

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