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Introduction to the Program

What is *Advanced Skills for School Success*?

Advanced Skills for School Success is a study-skills program consisting of six separate modules:

- Module 1** School Behaviors and Organization Skills
- Module 2** Completing Daily Assignments
- Module 3** Effective Reading of Textbooks
- Module 4** Learning from Verbal Presentations and Participating in Discussions
- Module 5** Writing Reports
- Module 6** Preparing for and Taking Tests

For whom is *Advanced Skills for School Success* designed?

Advanced Skills for School Success is designed primarily for students in junior and middle secondary school who have not completed **Skills for School Success** at primary school. The program can also be used with students of any age who have already participated in the program but have not yet mastered organization and study skills. Although **Advanced Skills for School Success** has generally been taught as part of the regular instructional program, it has also been successfully used in remedial, special education, and tutorial settings with secondary students experiencing difficulty in academic areas.

What is the content of *Effective Reading of Textbooks*?

Whether studying government, biology, or sociology in a school setting; learning about a new computer or software program in the workplace; determining which candidate to vote for; or discovering how to build a new deck on a house, one is likely to read factual material. This module introduces students to five strategies that will assist them in reading and comprehending factual or expository writing, such as that found in content-area textbooks, factual articles, reference books, and trade books. These strategies are designed to increase students' active involvement when reading text material; to enhance students' thinking, information processing, and self-monitoring while reading; and to maximize student comprehension and learning from text materials.

Firstly, students are taught to preview a chapter or section of a chapter before reading. Using the **Warm-up** strategy, students preview salient features at the beginning of the chapter (title and introduction), in the middle of the chapter (headings and subheadings), and at the end of the chapter (summary and questions). Through previewing, students determine the emphasis of the chapter, what should be learned by reading the chapter, and the organization of the chapter. Previewing the chapter enhances comprehension.

Once the **Warm-up** strategy has been taught, students can preview the chapter with the teacher, with a partner, or independently.

In order to learn from expository materials, students must engage in "mindful" rather than "mindless" reading. This is generally accomplished when students engage in verbal or written rehearsal of the critical information as they read. Students are taught a verbal rehearsal strategy and two written rehearsal strategies to facilitate expository reading. The verbal rehearsal strategy, **Active Reading**, is taught first. **Active Reading** is an extension of Read, Cover, Recite, Check (**RCRC**), a learning strategy introduced in Module 2. Using **Active Reading**, students read a paragraph, cover the paragraph, recite the topic and important details from the paragraph, and then check their recall by lifting their hand to look at the paragraph and determining the accuracy of their recitation. Verbal rehearsal not only increases students' active involvement and thinking while reading but also increases both short- and long-term recall of the critical information.

Next, students are taught two written rehearsal strategies, indentation notes and mapping. When taking indentation notes, students read a paragraph, record a topic for the paragraph, indent and record important details. The relationship of ideas is shown through indentation rather than through traditional outline-style form (e.g. I. A. 1. 2. 3. B.). As a result, students focus their attention on the content of the information rather than on the notetaking form. After students become proficient at notetaking, they learn how to generate and record study questions in the left margin, to study the questions and notes, and to use their notes to retell the text content.

The second type of notetaking, mapping, is one in which students make a visual display or "picture" of the chapter content using a series of circles and lines that they draw on the page. Like indentation notes, mapping assists students in understanding the relationships between ideas. It also helps them to study and recall information. Students can also use mapping to organize their ideas when preparing to write a summary, a report, or other written products.

Finally, students are taught to write a paragraph summary of a content-area chapter or a section of a chapter using a writing strategy called **POWER** (prepare, organize, write, edit, rewrite). Students are taught to carefully select information for the summary, to "map" the content before writing the summary, to combine ideas into sentences, and to write and edit their summaries. Like the verbal and written rehearsal strategies, this strategy is designed to increase students' processing and recall of information in a content-area selection.