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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 may 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 *Learning from Verbal Presentations and Participating in Discussions*?

In the classroom and in the workplace, information is often communicated through verbal presentations: lectures, demonstrations, videotapes, or audiotapes. Unlike learning from written material, a learner often cannot refer back to verbal presentations to review information. Because of this, the ability to apply a notetaking strategy to verbal presentations is important. In Module 4, students learn to take notes on verbal presentations. Using the indentation-style notetaking strategy taught in Module 3, students record the title of the lesson and the important topics and details of the presentation. Students determine the important points by what the speaker emphasizes, writes on the board, or repeats.

In addition to notetaking, students are introduced to brainstorming and discussion strategies. The strategy for brainstorming, which they use with a partner or a team, includes the steps **Think, Explain, Record, and Share**. Students first *think* about the question, problem, or issue. Then they *explain* their ideas to their peers and *record* the ideas on a “map.” (First they enclose the topic in a circle, and then they write ideas that extend from the circle.) Finally, students *share* their ideas with the class. During these lessons, co-operative behaviors are taught, emphasized, and evaluated by team members. Students are

encouraged to use brainstorming as a tool when working independently or as part of a group. It can be used to generate ideas for a discussion, debate, or essay or possible solutions to maths, science, social science, practical, or personal problems. Students learn that brainstorming with others is an effective method of generating a broad range of creative ideas.

The discussion strategy is designed to eliminate problems common to everyday classroom discussions; many class discussions tend to be boring and lacking in vitality, poorly structured, lacking in direction and linkage between ideas, and lacking in student participation.

In the discussion strategy, students are first taught to prepare for the discussion by reviewing their notes or handouts, reading class material, and/or brainstorming. Next, they learn the guidelines for participating in the discussion. Firstly they *link* their comments to those of the previous speaker (e.g. “I agree with Jason.”) and *state* their opinion clearly. Then they *support* their opinion with facts and reasons. Students also learn to *stay* on the topic. As with the brainstorming strategy, emphasis is on the cooperative behaviors that allow all students to participate productively in discussions.

When should *Learning from Verbal Presentations and Participating in Discussions* be taught?

Ideally, this module should be taught during the beginning of the school year so that the strategies can be used throughout the year.

What are the components of *Learning from Verbal Presentations and Participating in Discussions*?

This module consists of a Teacher Guide and a Student Book. The Teacher Guide includes the following:

1. Introduction—The introduction answers questions about successful implementation of *Learning from Verbal Presentations and Participating in Discussions* and should be read by school staff before the module is taught.
2. Introductory Lessons and Post-test—There are twelve introductory lessons that are taught to all students in the first year of implementation and only to the lowest year level in the school in subsequent years. The optional post-test reviews the skills introduced in the twelve introductory lessons.
3. Immediate Application—After a skill has been introduced, an “Immediate Application” box provides suggestions that may be used to promote immediate generalization of the skills to all classes.
4. Maintenance Suggestions—These suggestions are provided after the lessons on a particular learning strategy. They should be implemented throughout the year to promote continuous use of strategies in all classes.

Lesson 1

Taking Notes in Class: Introduction

Lesson objective: Students will determine topics and important details presented class.

Teacher preparation: Review the notes at the end of this lesson.

Student materials:

- Student Book, pages 2 and 3
- Colored paper or cardboard

Note to the teacher: In school and vocational settings, information is often imparted orally through lectures, demonstrations, audiotapes, and videotapes. Students are expected to listen to the presentation, record critical information, and then study the information in their notes.

In Module 3, students learned to take indentation notes on written material. In the first five lessons of this module, students will apply this skill to a more difficult task — taking notes in class. In this lesson, students will listen for topics and details and review the structure of indentation notes.

General Teaching Procedure

NOTE:

At the beginning of the lesson, assign each student a partner. Assign each student in the partnership the number 1 or 2.

1. Introduce Module 4 to your students. Tell them that they will be learning how to take notes on oral presentations such as lectures, demonstrations, audiotapes, and videotapes. Have students suggest reasons for taking notes during oral presentations. Be sure they include the following:
(1) to help them recall and think about information, and (2) to create a summary that can be used to complete assignments or to study for tests.
2. Have students open their book to page 2 and locate part A. Review the hints for taking good notes. Tell students that these hints are used when taking notes on oral presentations as well as on written material. Ask students to locate part B. Have them read and discuss the two hints for careful listening.
3. Explain to students that they will be listening to a talk about rainbows. Stress the importance of looking at the teacher and thinking about what the teacher is saying.
4. Have students locate part C. Point out the heading (name, date, subject) on Sally's notes. Ask students why a heading would be important if they were taking notes. Tell students to examine Sally's indentation notes. Then have students cover the notes with colored paper or cardboard.
5. Give the introduction to the talk on rainbows, using the wording in step 6 in the scripted teaching procedure.
6. Have students uncover Sally's notes. Explain that because most lectures begin with an introduction, the word **introduction** can be used as the first topic. Point out that Sally wrote **introduction** as an abbreviation. Guide students in examining the details Sally wrote under **Intro**.
7. Have students cover Sally's notes again. Introduce the next topic (When rainbows can be seen). Ask students to state the topic. Talk about conditions under which rainbows can be seen, using the wording in steps 8 to 10 of the scripted teaching procedure. Ask students to tell their partner the important details.
8. Tell students to uncover Sally's notes and read the topic **When rainbows can be seen** and the related details.
9. Have students cover Sally's notes again. Introduce the third topic (How light is bent). Ask students to state the topic. Talk about refraction, using the wording in steps 13 and 14 of the scripted teaching procedure. Ask students to tell their partner the important details and to report those details to the class.
10. Tell students to uncover Sally's notes and read the topic **How light is bent** and the related details.
11. Have students cover Sally's notes again. Introduce the fourth topic (How a rainbow comes from raindrops). Ask students to state the topic. Talk about the formation of a rainbow, using the wording and diagram in steps 17 to 19 of the Scripted Teaching Procedure. Ask students to tell their partner the important details and to report those details to the class.
12. Tell students to uncover Sally's notes and read the topic **How a rainbow comes from raindrops** and the related details. Explain to students that they should add the teacher's drawings or diagrams to their notes to help them remember important information when they study.
13. Review the hints for careful listening. Ask students what two things are recorded during a lecture (topics and details). Ask students to suggest subjects in which they can take notes in class.