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Introduction to the Program

What is *Skills for School Success*?

Skills for School Success is a four-level, teacher-directed program designed to teach critical organisation skills and study skills systematically to students in the primary and middle years. In the program, students are taught skills required for success in the classroom: appropriate school behaviours, organisation skills, specific learning strategies, textbook reference skills, graphics skills, and use of classroom reference materials.

Skills for School Success uses a spiral curriculum: Skills that are introduced at one level are reviewed at each subsequent level with more difficult applications. Additional skills are also introduced in each subsequent level.

A comprehensive Scope and Sequence for all levels is located on the back cover of the Teacher Guide and the back cover of the Student Book. The Scope and Sequence outlines the skills introduced, extended and reviewed in all four levels.

For whom is *Skills for School Success, Book 3*, designed?

Skills for School Success, Book 3, is designed for use with year three students and students in intermediate or middle years settings who have not mastered organisation and study skills. While this program is primarily designed for use in the regular classroom, it may also be used in special education classrooms, remedial settings, special study skills programs, and summer programs. The graphics used in the program are age neutral, so that the program can be used across year levels.

What are the components of *Skills for School Success, Book 3*?

- **Teacher Guide.** The Teacher Guide is divided into the following six sections:
 1. Introduction – This section provides information about the program and how the program can be implemented.

2. Lessons – These comprehensive teacher-directed lessons provide information for the teacher to ensure successful implementation of the program in the classroom. Each lesson includes an objective, a list of necessary student materials, an outline of the general teaching procedure, a teacher-scripted procedure, and the answer key for accompanying Student Book pages. Teacher preparation information and a note to the teacher describing the skill are often included in the lessons. Application lessons, skill support, skill checklists, and skill maintenance activities follow some lessons to provide necessary skill reinforcement. The application lessons are teacher-directed and essential to the sequential development of **Skills for School Success**, but do not have accompanying Student Book pages.
 3. Reproducibles – These materials support the program and provide letters for parents, reference pages for students, and awards for students.
 4. Review Games – These activities extend the program through reinforcement and review of skills taught in the program.
 5. Class Posters – These charts support skill instruction and remind students of important steps in the skill strategies they have learned.
 6. Teacher Checklist of Critical School Behaviours – This checklist analyses teaching practices that promote successful classroom behaviours.
- **Student Book.** The Student Book contains the lesson pages required for the students to complete lessons 1–60 described in the Teacher Guide.

What additional materials are required for *Skills for School Success, Book 3*?

To support the program, students are required to have a standard three-ring notebook (binder) with 4 to 5 centimetre metal rings, dividers for each subject plus at least one

additional divider, a plastic pencil case for the notebook and notebook paper.

If students cannot obtain notebooks, these materials often may be obtained from local industries or businesses, or through volunteer groups.

What skills are taught in *Skills for School Success, Book 3*?

The lessons in the **Skills for School Success** program are organised around five strands: 1) School Behaviours and Organisation Skills, 2) Learning Strategies, 3) Textbook Reference Skills, 4) Graphics, and 5) Dictionary Skills. The authors recommend teaching the skills in the order they appear in the program. However, you may plan a different order of instruction provided you teach the lessons in each strand consecutively and teach all skills to a high level of mastery.

In **School Behaviours and Organisation Skills**, students are introduced to critical school behaviours that need to occur before, during and after school. Students are also taught skills in organising and maintaining a notebook, organising a classroom desk, recording assignments on an assignment calendar, and organising assignment papers.

In **Learning Strategies**, students are taught specific strategies to assist them in completing assignments. They are introduced to procedures for completing assignments, answering chapter questions, and proofreading their work.

In **Textbook Reference Skills and Graphics**, textbook skills are stressed. First, students are taught how to utilise textbook reference sources: the table of contents, glossary and index. Next, they learn how to read and interpret graphics presented in textbooks. In Book 3, pictographs, bar graphs and pie graphs are introduced. Both strands end with a multiple-choice test providing students with practice in test-taking skills.

In **Dictionary Skills**, students are taught a series of skills leading to locating entries in a dictionary. They are then taught to read dictionary

entries and to use the dictionary entries to understand written material. A multiple-choice test about dictionary skills completes this strand.

How are the lessons and skill activities in the Teacher Guide designed?

Skills for School Success, Book 3, is a teacher-directed program, not an independent practice program.

Each lesson and application lesson begins by stating the instructional objective(s) and identifying the student materials needed for the lesson.

Also, some lessons provide teacher preparation information as well as a note to the teacher that describes the skill and the rationale behind the skill instruction.

An outline of the general teaching procedure follows. This outline gives the teacher an overall picture of instruction, assistance in preparation for instruction, and guidance during the actual instruction.

A scripted, more detailed, teaching procedure follows the general teaching procedure. This script provides exact wording for the teacher to use during instruction. **Boldfaced words** identify words from the Student Book page, underlined words are to be spoken with emphasis, and *italicised words* identify student responses. A dash (—) indicates a student's oral or written response or work time provided for the student to complete a teacher direction.

The general teaching procedure and the scripted teaching procedure may be used in several ways. In all cases, you should read the general teaching procedure and the scripted teaching procedure before teaching the lesson. The authors recommend using the wording found in the scripted teaching procedure, especially for the more complex lessons. You may prefer to read the scripted teaching procedure for appropriate wording and examples before instruction, then use the general teaching procedure as an outline during instruction.

At the end of each lesson there is a review box containing suggestions for maintaining skills that have been introduced. These suggestions encourage students to apply the study skills that have been taught. The suggestions in the review box should be utilised on the day the lesson is taught.

How much time do the lessons take?

A twenty-minute instructional period should be scheduled for each lesson and application lesson. If a lesson or activity is not completed in one class period, it can be completed on the following day.

How should the instruction be scheduled?

The **Skills for School Success** program introduces organisation and study skills that will help students throughout the school year; therefore, the program should be introduced on the first day of school and be taught regularly during the initial months of the school year. The program is designed so that one lesson can be taught each day. (Two lessons are taught on Day 1.)

Implementation of the program may be scheduled in two ways. A number of lessons may be taught each day during the initial weeks of school, focusing on how to be a successful student. Teaching three or four of the lessons each week is another way to schedule instruction. Either of these plans is acceptable, provided the lessons in each strand are taught in order and all skills are taught to a high level of mastery.

How should the lessons be taught?

Before presenting the lesson, study the general teaching procedure or the scripted teaching procedure. When presenting the lesson, you may use either the general teaching procedure or the scripted teaching procedure. When the wording or examples are complex, the authors suggest that you use the scripted teaching procedure.

Whether you use the general teaching procedure or the scripted teaching procedure, be careful to actively involve students in the lesson by having them say, write and do things throughout the lesson. Whenever a dash (—) occurs in the script, ask students to respond. Most often the students will be asked to make a verbal response. If the answer is short, you may have the students answer together. Otherwise, students may respond to a partner, or individual students may respond to the whole class. In each case, “best practice” should be used. Following is an outline of best practices for eliciting student responses.

Best Practices for Eliciting Responses

Type of Response:

Group says answer: (A group response can be used when the wording is short and the same for all students.)

Best Practice:

If students are looking at the teacher

T: Asks question.

T: Raises his/her hand to signal thinking time.

S: Think of answer.

T: Says “Everyone” and lowers hand.

S: Say answer.

If students are looking at their student book

T: Asks question or gives directive.

T: Gives thinking time.

S: Think of answer.

T: Signals auditorily (e.g., tap or voice signal).

S: Respond.

Type of Response:

Partners say answers:

Best Practice:

The teacher assigns students response partners and the number one or two.

T: Asks question or gives directive.

T: Tells one partner to respond. (Ones, tell your partner ...)

S: Tell answer to partner.

T: Monitors.

T: Gives feedback to group.

Type of Response:

Individual says answers:

Best Practice:

T: Asks question.

T: Raises his/her hand to signal thinking time. Gives eye contact to all students to encourage formulation of answer.

S: Think of answer.

T: Calls on one student.

S: Gives answer.

Type of Response:

Students write answers:

Best Practice:

T: Gives directive or asks question.

T: Tells students to put their pencil down and to look up when they are done.

S: Write response.

T: Monitors.

T: Gives feedback to students.

Type of Response:

Students touch stimuli:

Best Practice:

T: Gives directive. (e.g., Put your pencil on the directions.)

S: Touch stimuli.

T: Monitors.

How are the skills maintained over time?

The skills and strategies taught in **Skills for School Success** are not difficult to teach. However, it can be difficult to get students to consistently use the skills and strategies. As a result, much of your effort should be focused on the maintenance and generalisation of the skills and strategies to the classroom and home.

After each of the skills or strategies has been introduced, Skill Maintenance activities and procedures are provided for maintaining the skills. As many of these activities as possible should be incorporated into your daily planning. The following instructional practices are reflected in the Skill Maintenance Activities.

1. **Tell students that you expect them to use the skill or strategy.** While this is a very simple procedure, clearly stating your expectations will increase the probability of students using the skill.

2. **Display visual reminders of the skills.** Written prompts can be used to encourage strategy use. Posters with strategy steps can be posted in the classroom as a reminder to the student and to you. Copies of the strategies can also be kept in student notebooks, in study areas at home, or in some cases on the student's desk at school.
3. **Review the strategy periodically.** As with academic strategies, school behaviours, organisation skills and learning strategies should be reviewed periodically. During these lessons, the steps in the strategy can be reviewed, the steps can be verbally rehearsed, and the importance of the strategy re-emphasised.
4. **Provide opportunities to use and practise the skill or strategy.** When students have learned a skill or strategy, it should be incorporated into the routines and lessons within the classroom. For example, the notebook and calendar can be used on a daily basis to organise homework assignments. When studying for a quiz or learning a poem, the students can be guided in using **Read, Cover, Recite, Check**. If the skills and strategies are not used, they will quickly leave the student's repertoire.
5. **Provide feedback on performance and use of the strategy.** Students will profit from feedback on how well they are using the strategy or skills. This feedback can be given by you to the student or can involve self-monitoring. For example, you can check students' notebooks using the feedback form provided in the program.

The five review games found in the back of this Teacher Guide provide additional reinforcement. Each game reviews skills taught in one strand and can be played after the strand has been taught or any time during the remainder of the school year. Suggested times for playing the games are noted in the Teacher Guide.

Can cooperative learning be utilised with this program?

After teaching the teacher-directed lesson, you may have students complete the work independently or in cooperative groups of two or three students. Together the students can read the items, locate or determine the answers, discuss the answers until consensus is reached, and record the answers.

How do I get started?

The use of a notebook (binder) to organise classroom materials is central to this program. In order to use the notebooks, some advance preparation is necessary.

1. If possible, send a letter to parents *before* the beginning of the school year requesting that their child bring specific materials to school on the first day. This letter could be sent out at the end of the previous year, several weeks before the beginning of the school year, or on the first day of school. Reproducible B, found on page 131 in the Teacher Guide, is an example letter that you may use.
2. You are likely to have some students who are unable to purchase the required materials. Have a number of notebooks with dividers and pencil cases available for these students.
3. Organise a sample notebook to use when you introduce notebook organisation to your students. (*See Application Lesson 2A: Organising Student Notebooks* on page 15 in the Teacher Guide.)
4. To support the use of the notebooks in your classroom, obtain supplies such as a hole punch, notebook paper and paper for duplicating the reproducibles.

Additional preparation before the beginning of the year will also assist you.

1. Display a **Class Assignment Calendar** in your room.
2. Display the poster entitled **Before-Class Behaviours and During-Class Behaviours**.

3. Display the poster entitled **HOW Should Your Papers Look?**
4. For each student, order an **Academic Calendar** OR duplicate Reproducibles K and L, Teacher Guide pages 144 and 145. The calendar should be run on heavy paper and three-hole punched so that the two pages of the calendar will face each other showing a month at a time. You may wish to duplicate two months. The monthly assignment calendars will be distributed during **Application Lesson 7A: Using the Assignment Calendar**, Teacher Guide page 23.
5. Duplicate the Parent Letters needed in the first weeks of the school year (Reproducible H, page 139; Reproducible M, page 146; Reproducible O, page 148; Reproducible P, page 149; and Reproducible R, page 151). These letters tell parents about skills being taught in the program and how they as parents can help to reinforce the skills at home.
6. Duplicate the **Before-Class Checklist** (Reproducible A, Teacher Guide page 130) and the **During-Class Checklist** (Reproducible C, Teacher Guide page 132). You may wish to make multiple copies of these reproducibles because they will be used often in the program. These checklists can be used to give your students feedback on the appropriateness of their behaviour. You may wish to use coloured paper so students will be able to locate the checklists quickly in their notebooks.
7. Duplicate the **Notebook and Calendar Checklist** (Reproducible N, Teacher Guide page 147). After the notebook and calendar have been introduced, provide feedback on their use. You may wish to use coloured paper to help students quickly find the checklists in their notebooks.
8. Duplicate copies of behaviour awards (Reproducibles F and G, Teacher Guide pages 135 to 138) and notebook awards (Reproducibles I and J, Teacher Guide pages 140 to 143). These awards will be

useful during the first weeks of school in acknowledging desired school and organisation behaviours.

Field Test Development

The field testing of these materials extended over a seven-year period. The development began with a survey in which 500 middle years teachers focused on the school behaviours, organisation skills and learning strategies desired in their classrooms. Based on these data, a program for middle years students was designed and successfully implemented with at-risk students.

Once middle years field testing was in progress, the focus switched to the primary years. The authors felt that study skills should be introduced in primary school in order to develop skill mastery before students enter secondary school. A four-level program was developed and implemented in all of the year three, year four, year five and year six classrooms in a large school district in Arizona, U.S. Throughout the year, feedback was collected from the teachers through written questionnaires and school visits. At the end of the year, a post-test on many of the program skills was administered. Based on the test data and teacher feedback, the program underwent extensive revisions.

The following year, the program was more extensively field tested. In this study, the program was implemented for a second year in the Arizona district and also in a large district in the state of Washington. Again, written and verbal feedback was collected from the cooperating teachers and administrators. Post-tests were administered in the two field-test districts and in a control district in Washington. The year four students in the two implementation districts scored significantly higher on the post-tests than the control district students.

After the field testing was completed, the materials were again revised to reflect the feedback from the teachers and to ensure ease of implementation in other school districts.

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Introduction to School Behaviours and Organisation Skills

School Behaviours

For you to effectively teach, students need to demonstrate certain school behaviours. They must do certain things **before class** (arrive on time, bring their materials, get ready for class), **during class** (follow classroom rules, listen, ask for help when needed), and **after class** (take home materials, complete homework, return homework). When students demonstrate these behaviours, you will have a better teaching environment and students will have a more successful learning environment.

During the first week of school, tell your students what your expectations are for before-class and during-class behaviours. At the beginning of the school year, teach students specific behaviours to assist them in completing homework. Once expectations are established, provide systematic feedback on school behaviours to help maintain a good learning and working environment. The presence or absence of these school behaviours depend largely on your actions as a teacher. Clearly communicating your expectations to your students will promote positive school behaviours. For example, encourage students to arrive on time by telling them specifically when to arrive, greeting them at the door and beginning class immediately.

The Teacher Checklist of Critical School Behaviours on pages 182 and 183 in this Teacher Guide is a checklist of teaching practices that promote desired school behaviours. This checklist is based on extensive observations of classroom teachers and their students. Read each item, respond yes or no, and note new practices you might use during the school year. Also, note those practices you already use!

Organisation Skills

Managing time and materials is a critical part of the school setting. These organisation skills must be taught, directly modelled and practised. They should be introduced in the early year levels and systematically reinforced throughout students' school careers.

In the classroom, students have many materials to organise. Students need to bring paper, pencils or pens, and textbooks to class. Assignments and handouts need to be organised for easy retrieval and study. To do these things, students need a system for organising materials. They should maintain a notebook (binder) that contains dividers, paper and a pencil case. Students are also introduced to a general strategy for organising their desks.

A second organisation skill involves organising time. Students learn to use a calendar to record assignments, determine nightly study activities and remember special events.

The third organisation skill presented in this strand is the completion of neat, well-organised papers. Assignments should include the name of the student who completed the assignment, the date on which the assignment was completed, the class for which the assignment was completed, and the page number of the assignment.

Before-Class Guidelines

(NOTE: Lessons 1 and 2 should be taught on the first day of school.)

Lesson objective: Students will learn school behaviours that should be demonstrated **before class** begins. Students will explain why these school behaviours are important to their teacher, to their peers and to them.

Teacher preparation:

1. On the blackboard, list the materials the students need to bring to class.
2. Duplicate Reproducible A for each student’s notebook.
3. If you have not already made arrangements for each student to have a notebook, dividers, and a pencil case, send a letter home to parents. Duplicate Reproducible B, Parent Letter, for each student. Reproducible B is an example letter you can use.

Student materials:

- Student Book, page 5
- Reproducible A, page 130 (Teacher Guide)
- Reproducible B, Parent Letter, page 131 (Teacher Guide)

Note to the teacher: In order for you to teach and your students to learn, your students need to demonstrate certain behaviours before class begins. Explicitly teach these behaviours to your students on the first day of school. During the lesson, stress the importance of before-class behaviours. After introducing the **Before-Class Guidelines**, provide a great deal of feedback to your students on their performance. A suggested feedback procedure is found on pages 14 and 15.

General Teaching Procedure

(NOTE: On the blackboard, list the materials that will be needed in class.)

1. Students open to page 5 and read the question. Explain that these behaviours are important so that students can learn and the teacher can teach.
2. Students read the first guideline and copy the list of materials from the blackboard.
3. Ask students why the first school behaviour is important to the teacher, to other students and to them.
4. Repeat the procedure for the remaining guidelines.
5. Review the four guidelines. Individual students repeat a before-class guideline.
6. Distribute Reproducible A. Tell students that, beginning today, you will be giving them feedback on their use of the guidelines.
7. (optional) Tell students you will be giving points (stars, stickers, etc.) for following these guidelines.
8. Distribute Reproducible B.

Scripted Teaching Procedure

(NOTE: On the blackboard, list the materials that will be needed in class.)


1. Open your book to page 5.—Read the question with me: **What should I do before class begins?** There are certain things you need to do before you come to the classroom to help you learn and to help your teacher teach.
2. Read guideline 1 with me: **Bring the materials I need.** Teachers expect you to bring your materials to class every day. You can’t do your best without them. On the blackboard is a list of materials you will need in class. Read the list with me.—Write these materials under guideline 1.—If you didn’t bring your materials to class, how would that affect you, the student?—Other students?—Your teacher?
3. Read guideline 2 with me: **Arrive on time.** Why is it important not to be late to class?—How might being late affect other students in the class?—Your teacher?
4. Let’s read guideline 3: **Enter quietly and go to my place.** If

LESSON 1
Before-Class Guidelines

What should I do before class begins? I should:

1. **Bring the materials I need.**
List of materials written on blackboard

2. **Arrive on time.**
3. **Enter quietly and go to my place.**
If my teacher is not busy, say hello.
4. **Get ready for the first activity.**
Put away everything that I don’t need.



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