

# Reaching the Ultimate Educational Goal with Applied Scholastics Study Technology

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## Introduction

Teachers have many goals for their pupils. These educational aims and objectives include, but are not limited to: helping learners develop a passion for different subjects; building a literacy level that permits students to function in their present culture; and acquiring sufficient information so that the students can perform well on various measures of assessment. But what is the ultimate goal of any educational system?

Our world changes daily. It has been suggested that by the time a child is thirty years old the amount of information in the world will be fifty to one hundred times greater than the day that the child was born. Research shows that people change jobs an average of seven times before they retire, and many of these career changes require new skills and new knowledge (Weinstein, 1994). Therefore, it can be asserted that the ultimate goal of education is to liberate students from a reliance upon teachers, so the students can sustain independent learning throughout their lives.

A student who possesses this ability to continue to learn independently throughout his life is called a *self-regulated learner*. Self-regulated learners demonstrate a combination of academic learning abilities and self-discipline that facilitate studying. They maintain both the "skill and the will" to learn (McCombs & Marzano, 1990; Murphy & Alexander, 2000). The Study Technology that is employed in Applied Scholastics programs effectively aids students and teachers in achieving this ulti-

mate educational goal of developing self-regulated learners.

## Study Technology and Knowledge about Learning

Self-regulated learners are actually expert students who are knowledgeable about the learning process. Expert students are aware of what to do to prevent themselves from becoming distracted. They know how to deal with the more difficult parts of a subject they are studying. They can apply the appropriate learning strategy when called for. "Self-regulated learners know how to cope when they feel anxious, drowsy or lazy" (Corno, 1992 1995; Snow, Corno, & Jackson, 1996). The Study Technology of Applied Scholastics is designed to prepare students to be exactly this type of savvy learner.

Applied Scholastics materials first equip students with knowledge of the barriers to learning and the specific physical and mental reactions each barrier can cause. The student is then provided with simple strategies for efficiently and effectively handling each barrier. Armed with this critical information, even primary school children have the ability to determine precisely which barrier they have met and which tools need to be applied to handle their study problem.

As an example, a student in an Applied Scholastics program might be reading a historical text. Having been trained in Study Technology, he is an expert learner who is cognizant of the fact that drowsy or anxious feelings are the result of non-comprehension and occur when one hits the barrier of one or more misunderstood words and/or symbols. This awareness signals the student when to stop reading and apply the study strategy of how to backtrack to locate the misunderstood word or symbol. Next, the student implements the study method of clearing up the meaning of that word so that he has a full conceptual understanding of the word and can once again make sense of what he is studying. Finally, he tries to apply the information being studied and demonstrate it in either two or three dimensions. While demonstrating a concept, the student instructs himself silently as he goes through the task. Self-instruction techniques have proven very useful in helping students generalize concepts that are studied (Harris, Graham, & Pressley, in press; Meichenbaum, 1977). Any failure to be able to demonstrate or explain the concept would indicate to the learner that further employment of study strategies was required.

Numerous educational and psychological studies all converge on one key point, that responsibility for learning lies within the individual and no person can learn something for another (Manning & Payne, 1996; Winne, 1995; Zimmerman, 1990; Zimmerman & Schunk, 1989). Students trained in Applied Scholastics methods are not unknowing and passive recipients of information. Instead, they are aware and engaged in constructing meaning for themselves. Students versed in Study Technology constantly assess where they are having difficulties. They apply appropriate strategies to solve the problems they encounter while studying. Research studies indicate that students who are actively involved in their own learning, like those in Applied Scholastics programs, have increased achievement and show better personal adjustment to school (Skinner, Wellborn, & Connell, 1990). Students trained in Study Technology readily develop into the type of self-governed, high-achieving, expert learners that educational systems worldwide are striving to create.

## **Study Technology, Autonomy and Motivation**

Self-regulated learners have the skills to learn and learning comes easier, hence, they are more motivated. Their actions are self-determined. This permits them to take initiative in their studies. It should also be noted that the classrooms rated highly by students are those in which students have opportunities to monitor themselves and their performance (Anderson, Stevens, Prawatt, & Nickerson, 1988). Students in Applied Scholastics programs study under their own volition. They also know how to monitor their own work. However, even when they are not intrinsically motivated to study a particular subject, the students who use Study Technology at least know what it means “to study” and why they are doing it. In this way their actions are more autonomous.

## **Study Technology as a Tool to Help Students with Learning Disabilities and Attention Problems**

Current educational texts point out that students who are labeled as “learning disabled” or ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) typically lack effective ways to approach learning tasks and tend to be passive learn-

ers due, in part, to the fact that they do not know how to learn. The most promising approaches for assisting learning disabled and ADHD children have been programs that equip learners with study skills and specific learning strategies, which, in turn, impart the desire to learn (Paris, 1988). Programs that put the student “in control” and encourage persistence have also shown positive results with ADHD children (Reid & Borkowski, 1987). There is still no evidence that the drugs typically used to increase ADHD students’ attention spans lead to any academic improvement. Students with learning problems still require assistance in learning and instruction in how to learn (Breggin, 1998).

Applied Scholastics meets the challenge of empowering learning disabled and ADHD students with simple but effective study tools. Applied Scholastics carries the additional advantage over other study skills programs in that it is a comprehensive package, suitable for all subject areas and grade levels. This universal applicability assists the learning disabled student because he only needs to become familiar with a single set of tools which can then be applied to any subject throughout the years of schooling and subsequent job training.

Furthermore, in Applied Scholastics programs, students learn that many of the so-called symptoms of learning disabilities such as word omissions and alterations, or transposing and reversing letters and words (Meece, 1997), are considered to be phenomena linked to the barriers to learning. This is supported by the fact that using the appropriate study tool can easily rectify these “symptoms”. Likewise, many of the characteristics used to identify a learner as ADHD can also be directly attributed to the barriers to learning and can be readily overcome with study strategies. For example, fidgeting due to boredom is remedied with the study tool of demo kits or clay demos. Other ADHD traits such as day-dreaming, careless mistakes, and an inability to sustain attention are similarly solved with various word-clearing methods and coaching strategies. In fact, many of the recommended strategies for helping learning disabled and ADHD students, such as the “skill and will” training described by Paris (1988), mirror Applied Scholastics methods.

In Applied Scholastics programs, there is no danger of students developing *learned helplessness*, a condition that is frequently described in learning disabled students (Seligman, 1975). Students with learned helplessness have the expectation, based on prior experiences with a lack of control, that all of their efforts will only lead to

failure. Thus, they quit trying. Students in Applied Scholastics programs are not victims. They grow into capable learners who know they can control their own studying and thereby make a difference in their own learning.

## Conclusion

In this increasingly technological and ever-changing society, it is paramount that all students learn how to learn. Applied Scholastics programs accomplish this. Furthermore, the most salient feature of Applied Scholastics materials is that they promote self-regulated learning by allowing students to successfully overcome barriers to learning with little or no assistance from another person.

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