

THE READING-STUDY SKILLS

AN ABSTRACT OF
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The Reading Study Skills is a presentation of certain skills that may be used to help pupils become more efficient readers.

As children advance beyond the primary grades they are required to do considerably more reading each year. They must read increasingly more difficult material and for a greater variety of reasons. Since much of this reading must be done independently a knowledge of and the ability to use various study skills in connection with their reading is indispensable to efficient and satisfactory work.

The first chapter of this study attempts to explain what the reading-study skills are, why they are needed and presents suggestions for teaching these skills. The four chapters that follow discuss four major skills; the skills of locating information, evaluating information, organizing information and retaining information respectively. Each individual chapter includes a list of skills that are essential to the particular subject being discussed as well as methods and materials that may be used to teach these skills. The final chapter is a summary of the study. In addition to a bibliography there is an appendix which lists sources of books and materials that may be of particular help in specific areas.

During the primary years of school children learn the skills essential to the fundamentals of reading. It is frequently assumed that teaching a child to be a competent reader in these years is sufficient preparation for study. Experience

has proven that this is not true. Primary grade children use and are familiar with basic readers and books of similar style. When they enter the intermediate grades they are suddenly introduced to a variety of textbooks. This presents a new and more difficult reading situation. Since basic readers are written in a narrative style, have a controlled vocabulary and express more or less familiar experiences and ideas they are comparatively easy to read and understand. This is not true of textbooks which are generally written in a factual and compact style. Many ideas may be expressed on a single page. The vocabulary and ideas presented usually represent a number of unfamiliar concepts and experiences. If pupils are to understand what they are reading and grasp the main ideas expressed much guidance will be needed. Guidance is not always available. Pupils must accomplish much of their reading-for-study-purposes independently. Those who learn to use the skills presented in this study and who practice them constantly will become more competent readers, develop better habits and be able to work independently with less difficulty.

In order to teach these reading-study skills effectively there are certain principles and methods that need to be considered. Definite lessons which explain the meaning of the skill being taught and which give initial practice in using that skill must be provided. Special exercises that give additional practice should be available. Examples of these lessons and exercises as well as materials that may be used in connection with them have been included in each major chapter

of this study.

The lessons used in teaching the reading-study skills must be well motivated. The need for a given item that is to be taught should be made clear through the use of highly focalized assignments in the teaching of social studies, science, and other content subjects. These subjects must be taught constantly in ways which will give the pupils many opportunities to make use of the skills already presented, for skills that are not used are lost. Unit activities in the content areas make an important contribution.

In addition to the above, means should be provided continuously to acquaint the pupils with their progress in learning to use the skills that have been taught. These appraisals will also help the teacher to discover the effectiveness of her teaching and to locate individual pupils who need additional help. Some of the materials needed to measure this progress may be found in various textbooks, basic reading manuals and workbooks. Much of the material, however, will need to be constructed by the teacher. Examples of home-made tests that may be used for this purpose are given in several chapters in this study.

It is hoped that The Reading-Study Skills will be useful to those who wish to help their pupils become more efficient readers.