

PARENT TEACHING TIPS

. . . on How Your children Should Read Textbooks

By Bill Welker, EdD

Many students approach their textbook assignments without any strategic “purpose” in mind.

Consider the following “relay track team” coaching analogy. It demonstrates how the coach prepares for an important meet, which is similar to how students should attack their textbooks.

The coach receives a letter from a national track association that his team has been selected to try out for a relay team race that would assure them a position on the U.S. Olympic Track and Field team.

Of course, the purpose is for the relay team to cross the finish line first. With that in mind, the coach develops a strategy to accomplish that goal. First, he has to identify the running times of his team members and compare those results to the running times of their opponents. Next, the coach develops a training plan that he believes will improve his members’ times. Finally, the coach determines who should start the race, run in the middle, and finish the race.

At the finish of the race, the coach evaluates the team’s performance, determining both its strengths and weaknesses and areas where it needs improvement.

In sum, the coach had to (1) set up a purpose; (2) form a strategy for practice sessions; (3) monitor the training; and (4) evaluate the final performance.

The same is entirely true when students attack their textbooks. Students must first plan (or set a purpose) for their textbook readings. Next, they need to develop

appropriate strategies and read the material section by section. Then students must monitor their understanding by asking questions and answering them while reading their textbook assignments. Finally, they must use self-testing methods to determine if learning took place.

Should a student use the above approach, he or she is actually incorporating facets of a reading technique referred to as “Meta-Comprehension.” Permit me to explain this in-depth reading understanding strategy.

META-COMPREHENSION

This is when the reader can (a) clarify a purpose; (b) identify the importance aspects of a message; (c) focus attention on the major content of reading material, not trivia; (d) monitor whether understanding is occurring; (e) engage in self-questioning to determine whether goals are being achieved; and (f) take corrective action when failures in understanding are detected.

The following has been a very successful study skills strategy over the years.

THE SQ3R STUDY METHOD

The acronym – SQ3R – stands for the textbook study steps below:

S: Survey – Previewing to set a “purpose” for reading.

Q: Question – Change titles and headings to questions.

R: Read – Read material to answer questions.

R: Recite – Think about what you read by taking notes in your own words.

R: Review – Review notes you wrote to summarize the textbook material read.

In reference to the “Survey” phase of this textbook study strategy, the student should:

- 1. Think about the title of the chapter, asking yourself – “What do I really know about the subject?”**
- 2. Check out any questions or summaries that may appear in textbook chapters prior to actually reading the chapters.**
- 3. Write down words you don’t know. Notice how they are used in context and look them up in the textbook glossary, dictionary or internet.**
- 4. Take a good look at all the pictures, graphs, diagrams, scales, etc. in each chapter. This way they will be easy to refer to when emphasized during your reading of the textbook.**
- 5. If there are ideas about certain topics of the chapter that you find very interesting, definitely attempt to keep these thoughts in mind while reading the textbook chapter.**
- 6. Consider how your teachers in each of the content areas develop their examination questions. Then study each textbook chapter with their assessment procedures in mind.**
- 7. Finally, if a teacher provides chapter “study guide” questions for you to utilize while reading your textbook, be sure you completely understand them before you begin to read.**

The SQ3R Study Method can be used for all academic content areas. So parents, encourage your children to take advantage of it. In doing so, they will understand

Their textbooks much better, as well as score higher grades on their homework assignments and tests.

Parent Proverb

“Many receive advice, but only the wise profit from it.”

- Syrus

Next Month’s Column: “Your children and Textbook Patterns of Learning”

(Editor’s Note: Dr. Bill Welker is a retired reading specialist who was a K-12 classroom teacher for 40 years. He was selected as a former “Teacher of the Year” by the Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce. His e-mail is mattalkwv@hotmail.com.)