

Developing Study habits: Key to success

¹ Shubha Vyas, ² Garima Choudhary

¹ Professor, School of Education, J.N.U., Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

² Assistant Professor, Delhi Teachers' Training College, Najafgarh, New Delhi, India

² Research Scholar, J.N.U., Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

Abstract

Human beings are known as the creature of habits which is one of the prominent attributes of character. The term study habit has been used to mean various methods, activities and practices adopted by the students in their schools and college studies. Effective study consists of much more than merely memorization of fact. It calls for knowing where and how to obtain facts and the ability to make intelligent use of time. Study habit is a learned behaviour pattern, which enables the student to acquire how to study. For this purpose student must be able to organize, classify and arrange facts accordance with the subject being studied, it includes, students' habit of concentration, notes taking, time budgeting and various study methods. This paper highlights certain assumptions and guidelines underlying study habits which enhance the performance of students when strategically utilized. Further need and importance of study habits are discussed.

Keywords: study habits, students, skills, methods, strategies

Introduction

Study habits refer to activities carried out by a learner during the learning process for the purpose of improving learning. This includes four component, concerning the what, when and why and how of study strategies. Therefore study habits and strategies are behaviors that the learners produce with required aids to learning (Mayer, 1987) ^[1]. It is a mental process that learners deliberately recruit to help themselves learn and understand as self-regulated or autonomous learning (Brandtt, 1989) ^[2].

The word 'study habits' comprises of two words i.e. study and habits. 'Study' means application of mind to the requirements of knowledge. 'Habit' refers to a sense of behavior that remains more or less fixed. Habits signify a way of acting or thinking frequently enough leading to unconscious behavior. Thus study habits refer to acquisition of knowledge and skills through more or less permanent modes of studying.

Good's dictionary of Education (1945) puts "*Study habit as the tendency of a pupil or student to study when the opportunities are given. It also speaks about the pupil's way of studying whether systematic or unsystematic, efficient or inefficient etc.*"

The dictionary of education (2007) ^[3] says that it is a *settled tendency of practice and thought to acquire knowledge and information from the book.*"

Crow & Crow (educational psychology, 2000) ^[4] defines, "*Study habit as a planned programme of subject matter mastery*". Where they provide three essential attributes for acquiring subject matter mastery it is essential:

- a) To acquire knowledge and habits which will be useful in meeting new situation, interpreting ideas, making judgments and creating new ideas and in general enrichment of life.
- b) To acquire perfect skills in a planned way.

c) To develop attitudes to learn something new.

Palsane (1963) ^[5] has given operational definition of study habits as, *budgeting time, physical conditions for study, health, reading ability, notes taking factor in learning motivation, memory and taking, preparing and, use of examination results.*

It has been usually observed that different students plan their study at home in their own way. They also devote time to the study different subjects according to their needs. Owing to the individual differences in learning, some learns study alone while some study listening radios, few studies at night, or in morning. Therefore, study habits of individual, play a major role in learning. Poor study habit is one of the major and most persistent problems among the school and college students.

Human beings are known as the creature of habits which is one of the prominent attributes of character. Education helps the learners in the development of their self-concept etc. with the attainment of knowledge by way of good habits. The task of learning is not dependent on teacher alone rather it is also the responsibility of the pupil. Efficient learning depends not only on good teaching alone, but on satisfactory learning procedures also. The term study habit has been used to mean various methods, activities and practices adopted by the students in their schools and college studies.

Effective study consists of much more than merely memorization of fact. It calls for knowing where and how to obtain facts and the ability to make intelligent use of time. For this purpose student must be able to organize, classify and arrange facts accordance with the subject being studied. In other words, learning involves the development of proper study habits and skills. Thus, Study habit is a learned behaviour pattern, which enables the student to acquire how to study. A good study habit actually develops a behaviour pattern, which enables

him/her to sit down and work on his assignment or project with a minimum hassle and maximum concentration.

Study habit includes students' habit of concentration, notes taking, time budgeting and various study methods (Smith, 1961) [6]. Taking notes is essential for learning, remembering or retaining things properly and also because every time it is not possible to go through the books we have read. Lack of good study habits among the students may be a possible and pertinent reason for failure in exams. Smith (1961) further describes that what a student learns depends upon his/her ways of learning, methods, the goal he/she sets, the time spent, the degree to which he/she becomes actively involved in his/her work, the breath of the framework within which he/she tries to learn and the extent to which he applies what he/she has already learnt. This is why ambitious and intelligent students are more likely to develop effective study method.

Assumptions Underlying the Study Habits

Evaluating one's own study habits analytically and logically provide an opportunity to discover one's weakness and provide an insight to, improve study proficiency. This is why, for the enhancement of learning, certain assumptions underlying study habits suggest that:

- Study involves more reading if printed materials are utilized.
- Study efficiency can be increased with the help of a proper plan.
- Words, phrases and sentences become thought provoking if it is contextual and develops study habits. Some study material can be learnt best by the whole method.
- Cramming reduces learning outcomes as most of the content crammed does not provide thoughtfulness.
- Good health, adequate sleep and recreation are necessary attributes for development to the achievement of good study habits.

Development of Study Habits

Study habits and strategies are intended to elicit and guide one's cognitive process during learning. Researches (Mayer, 1992) [7] suggest that understanding the use of study strategy and its modification according to need is a part of Meta cognitive skill. Study strategies help the learner in retention as well as enhancing goal oriented performance (Pressley, 1990) [8]. There are several strategies and approaches that help in developing good study habits among students. Some of these strategies are deliberated below, which enhances the performance of students when strategically utilized.

- **Thinking skills** –Effective thinking skills can be built up over a period of time. Those students, who are not a good thinker, can develop habits to ask question themselves, as they read. Talking to other students, who thinks of themselves as good thinkers, also help in developing thinking skills. Deliberating critically and creatively provides valuable insights to become better thinkers.

- **The SQ3R method-** (SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review) It has been a proven way to sharpen study skills. It is one of the effective study strategies that develop thinking skills among students.
- **Survey**– Survey develops thinking as students correlate different aspects to understand. It provides a road map to explore and understand imbedded elements upon, which survey is conducted. As for example if any student don't know the territory, surveying a map is the best way to develop study habit.
- **Question**– Questions usually emphasizes on what, why, how, when, who and where of the study content. Answering them these attributes of questions, help in remembering the material more easily. Even writing answers to their questions help in understanding and retention of the content in better manner.
- **Read**– Reading text attentively to acquire information including tables, graphs and illustrations makes the content meaningful. Many times, tables, graphs and illustration can convey an idea more powerfully than written text. Hence, reading the same assignment more than once helps in better retention of the content.
- **Recite** – When the students recite, they should stop reading periodically to recall what they have read. Lovell (1993) [9] stated that instead of re-reading a material to be learnt, it is better to recite to oneself or to a friend, or write it out, making use of prompts whenever necessary. Recalling main headings, important ideas of concepts presented in bold or italicized type, graphs, charts or illustrations indicate that the content has been understood in better manner.
- **Review** – A review is a survey of what the students have covered. During review, it's a time to go over the notes that have taken to clarify points. The best time to review is just after finishing the study and one should not wait till examination for the review process. However, before examination, one must do a final review.

Apart from these strategies Kulshrestha (1992) [10] suggests the following guidelines for the development of effective study habit:

- Having a definite purpose and place of study.
- Seeking physical conditions that are favorable to mental activity.
- Planning and follow a definite time schedule for study.
- Looking for the topics, sentences and paragraphs to study in free time.
- During the study employing the methods of studying the whole content whenever possible.
- Making an effort to read rapidly, carefully by taking in brief well organized notes.
- Trying to evaluate the difficulty level of the material to be learned.
- Raising significant questions and attempt to find answer to those questions.
- Studying carefully charts graphs and other illustrative material.

- Studying with intent to recall and develop the habit of summarizing and reviewing.
- Making efforts to complete the study significantly.
- Reflecting on statements made by others and challenging them when in a doubt.
- Investigating the points of view of several authorities.
- Learning to use the dictionary properly.
- Analyzing study habits and attempting to correct weakness.

Academic Performance and Study Habits

Research (Gordon, 1998) ^[11] suggests that academic performance and study habits are relative to each other. (Gordon, 1998) further suggests that academic difficulties have less to do with subject matter and more to do with the ability of the student to study and absorb information effectively. Actually learning requires discipline, concentration and time without which mastery of any content becomes difficult and uncertain. Thus, study habits imply a sort of more or less directed method or mode of studying. Individuals have their own way of studying. It has also been found (Raju, Asfaw & Abebech, 2009) ^[12] that those who have good study habits excel others of equal intelligence in academic achievement. They further explored in their study that study habits remain positively and significantly related to academic achievement. The same understanding were also suggested in other researches (Nandita & Tanima, 2004; Dhaliwal, 1989; Ghalsasi, 1988) ^[13, 14, 15] where no difference was found in study habit scores and academic scores leading the researcher believe that academic excellence is positively related to study habit. Actually, study habit not only correspond with academic excellence rather it also gives rise to high verbal ability, academic security feelings and success with satisfaction (Dhaliwal, 1989) which remains missing with poor study habits. This is because in one of the comparative study (Dey, 2008) ^[16] it was found that high achieving CBSE and ICSE girl students were having positive and constructive study habit as compared to boys.

This is why researcher believes that efficient learning depends upon the development of efficient study habits and skills. It has been often seen that teachers come across such students who appear to have average scholastic aptitudes, as well as poor performer in their courses of study. A large majority of these often have faulty study habits. The researcher strongly believe that proper guidance to such students would change their faulty study habits into desirable ones, and will lead to obtain for higher academic achievement. Thus study habits, is generic in terms of its importance. It has long lasting effects and penetrates the life of individuals deeply with its cumulative and interactive effects (Mukhopadhyay & Sansanwal, 1983) ^[17].

With regard to benefit pertaining to intelligence research (Mehra & Khera, 2002) ^[18] found that low intelligence group was benefitted more with respect to development of study habits as compared to their high intelligence counterparts. Similarly (Peluso, 1988) ^[19] found that those students, who have followed the programme, improved their study habits. Further the condition of education have also improved giving rise to a better study

situation (Kizlik, 2007; Ngalikiankim & Caroline, 1988) ^[20, 21].

Poor study habits are one of the vital causes of the educational backwardness, whereas good study habits are conducive to better attainment Sharma (2012) ^[22]. Considering study habit as a major component of academic achievement (Rhody, 1993) ^[23] found that only study instructions and related skills does not help in better academic performance, unless accompanied by other factors affecting achievement including good study habit. Similarly (Deb & Grewal, 1990) ^[24] found that there remain a significant relationship between study habits and academic achievement. He further suggested that the study habits of the individuals cover mainly the reading habits, learning techniques, memory, time schedule, physical conditions, preparation of examination, self-evaluation and so on. (Mullen, 1997) ^[25] revealed that a significant difference in study habits and study attitudes exist between students across their age groups. Even on the basis of caste in one of the study (Sheoran & Kalia, 2005) found significant difference among urban scheduled caste and non-scheduled caste adolescents on study habits.

Need and Importance of Study Habits

This is why the researcher believes that need for study creates study habits. Since Study involves exploration for the mastery of facts, ideas or procedures. Therefore, any application of energy directed towards the learning of new material, the solution of a problem, the detection of new relationship or similar purposeful activity requires proper energy and vitality. This is why studying becomes distasteful and unpleasant. Many learners need continued guidance for developing good study habits whereas; many develop the same for themselves and achieve desired outcomes.

Gradually the learner develops study habits to comprehend the concepts of the subject. The structure of the subject or content requires proper study habits on the part of students for present competitive world. Due to lack of appropriate study habit performance suffers as of students is not observed in the results of examination. Therefore, there is a need to develop proper study habits as it will help in acquiring academic excellence.

That is why in the academic arena study habits are of particularly theoretical and practical importance (Kohli, 1977) ^[26]. Healthy study habits benefit the individual to become successful achiever whereas contrary to it create obstacle in the way of achievements and do not let the student make the best of his potentialities leading to poor performance in the academia and make him under achiever. Hence, study habits are of immense importance in the acquisition of a satisfactory level of achievement.

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