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LEARNING AND STUDY STRATEGIES

Issues in Assessment, Instruction, and Evaluation

Edited by
CLAIRE E. WEINSTEIN
ERNEST T. GOETZ
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To those who have taught us a zest for living
and a zest for learning—our parents and our mentors

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PREFACE

Research into the cognitive strategies required for effective knowledge acquisition, storage, and use has exploded during the past few years. Work on study strategies, once an isolated and largely atheoretical area of prescriptive manuals and race-horse training studies, has suddenly blossomed into an interdisciplinary topic of considerable theoretical and practical concern. Drawing upon advances in fields such as cognitive, developmental, educational, and social psychology, current research on learning and study strategies reflects concerns about cognitive, metacognitive, and affective aspects of the learner and the instructional task and interactions between learners and tasks.

Learning and Study Strategies reflects the theoretical diversity and interdisciplinary nature of current research on the cognitive strategies of autonomous learning. Topics such as metacognition, attribution theory, self-efficacy, direct instruction, attention, and problem solving are discussed by leading researchers of learning and study strategies. Further, the contributors to this volume acknowledge and address the concerns of educators at the primary, secondary, and postsecondary school levels. This blend of theory and practice is an important feature of this volume.

Learning and Study Strategies is organized around three critical issues: assessment of an individual's strategic behaviors, delivery of strategy instruction, and evaluation of strategy instruction and research. The discussion begins with two stage-setting chapters. McKeachie examines the need for strategy training in terms of current conditions in our schools and colleges. Mayer examines the conceptual bases of learning strategies, drawing particularly on cognitive psychology.

In the section on assessment, Weinstein, Zimmermann, and Palmer review assessment instruments and describe the development and evaluation of the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI). Palmer and Goetz argue that in order to understand studiers' selection and use of strategies we

must examine their beliefs about self and strategies. Garner cautions about the use of self-reports of strategy selection and implementation. Reynolds and Shirey report studies that circumvent Garner's concerns by the use of on-line measures to examine the role of attention in studying.

The section on instruction represents a variety of approaches. Dansereau outlines his research on cooperative learning, in which the students teach each other (and themselves). Winograd and Hare review work on direct instruction of strategies, in which the teacher delivers explicit information about strategy use to the students. McCombs calls for strategy instruction that combines cognitive, metacognitive, and affective components. Schmeck discusses the consideration of individuals' strategies in the context of his model of learning styles in order to reconcile strategy instruction with individuals' differing styles and personalities. Schallert, Alexander, and Goetz examine implicit strategy instruction provided by instructors and texts in college courses. O'Malley, Russo, Chamot, and Stewner-Manzanares examine the role of strategies in the learning of English as a second language. Jones describes efforts to develop curriculum for the Chicago Public Schools that translates advances in "laboratory" research into gains in the classroom.

Evaluation of strategy instruction and research is considered from methodological, theoretical, and applied perspectives. Willson critically examines experimental designs and statistical techniques employed in the area and suggests alternative procedures that address some of the problems and gaps. Rothkopf ponders what effective strategies are "really like" and what is required to get students to use them. Wittrock views the work on learning and study strategies as reflective of current theoretical views in cognitive psychology, notably his generative process model. Paris considers the theoretical models and metaphors that have guided strategy research and the ways in which they have constrained this research. The chapters by Wilson and Miles express the need to provide information and instructional techniques for learning and study strategies to the educational practitioners in primary, secondary, and postsecondary schools. Wilson and Miles also discuss the pitfalls that threaten such translation and implementation.

The intended audience for this volume is primarily educators and researchers in higher education. More specifically, this book should be of interest to individuals whose areas of interest include comprehension, instruction, learning, and memory. Instructors of study skills and developmental reading courses should also profit from reading this volume, as should teacher trainers and public school resource personnel.

The chapters included in this volume were originally presented at a conference funded by the Basic Research Program of the Army Research Institute, jointly sponsored by the University of Texas and Texas A&M University, and held at the Texas A&M University campus during October 1984.

The editors and authors would like to express their deep appreciation to the members of these institutions who worked so hard to help make the conference and the book a success and, we hope, an important contribution to the field. In particular, we would like to thank Robert Sasmor and Judith Orasanu from the Army Research Institute, Mollie Banks and Michael Thomas from the University of Texas, and Michael Ash and William Peters from Texas A&M University.

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CONTENTS

Contributors xiii
Preface xv

PART I. INTRODUCTION: TWO PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNING AND STUDY STRATEGIES

1. The Need for Study Strategy Training 3
W. J. McKeachie

2. Learning Strategies: An Overview 11
Richard E. Mayer

I. Three Views of Learning 12
II. Four Components of Learning 14
III. Can Students Learn to Manipulate Their Cognitive Processes? 18
IV. An Example 20
V. Research Issues 21
VI. General Conclusion 21
References 22

PART II. ISSUES IN THE ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING AND STUDY STRATEGIES

3. Assessing Learning Strategies: The Design and Development of the LASSI 25
Claire E. Weinstein, Stephen A. Zimmerman, and David R. Palmer

I. Issues in the Assessment of Learning Strategies 26
II. LASSI—Early Developmental Stages 28

III. Preliminary Pilot Test 30
IV. Revision of the LASSI Item Pool 32
V. Second Pilot Test 32
VI. Construction of the LASSI Scales 33
VII. Test–Retest Reliability 34
VIII. Validity and Norms 34
IX. Concluding Comment 36
X. Appendix: Brief Descriptions of LASSI Scales and Sample Items 36
References 39

4. Selection and Use of Study Strategies: The Role of the Studier's Beliefs about Self and Strategies 41
Douglas J. Palmer and Ernest T. Goetz

I. Conceptual Frameworks 43
II. Attribution Theory 46
III. Self-Efficacy Theory 49
IV. Learner Variables and Strategy Use 51
V. An Empirical Look at the Model 53
VI. Implications 55
References 57

5. Verbal-Report Data on Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies 63
Ruth Garner

I. Strategies: What Are They? 64
II. Verbal-Report Methods 65
III. Criticisms of Verbal Reports as Data 67
IV. Other Methods for Assessing Strategies 71
References 74

6. The Role of Attention in Studying and Learning 77
Ralph E. Reynolds and Larry L. Shirey

I. Introduction 77
II. What is Effective Studying? 78
III. The Process of Studying 80
IV. Theoretical Considerations 94
References 98

PART III. APPROACHES TO INSTRUCTION IN LEARNING AND STUDY STRATEGIES

7. Cooperative Learning Strategies 103
Donald F. Dansereau

Development of a Dyadic Cooperative Learning Strategy 104
References 118

8. Direct Instruction of Reading Comprehension Strategies: The Nature of Teacher Explanation 121
Peter Winograd and Victoria Chou Hare

I. The Nature of Teacher Explanation 121
II. Teacher Explanations in Successful Instructional Studies 124
III. The Value of Complete Explanations in Strategy Instruction 133
IV. Summary 136
References 137

9. Motivational Skills Training: Combining Metacognitive, Cognitive, and Affective Learning Strategies 141
Barbara L. McCombs

I. Role of Motivation in Strategic Behavior 141
II. An Integrative Model of Processes underlying Intrinsic Motivation to Learn 154
III. Conclusion and Future Research Recommendations 163
References 165

10. Individual Differences and Learning Strategies 171
Ronald R. Schmeck

I. Learning Style as a Dimension of Individual Difference 172
II. Inventory of Learning Processes 176
III. Should We Accommodate Personal Characteristics or Try to Change Them? 179
IV. Other Individual Differences Worthy of Study 181
V. Summary 187
References 188

11. Implicit Instruction of Strategies for Learning from Text 193
Diane Lemonnier Schallert, Patricia A. Alexander, and Ernest T. Goetz

I. Student Diaries 196
II. Student Interviews 202
III. Instructor Interviews 207
IV. General Discussion 208
References 213

12. Applications of Learning Strategies by Students Learning English as a Second Language 215
J. Michael O'Malley, Rocco P. Russo, Anna Uhl Chamot, and Gloria Stewner-Manzanares

I. Review of Literature 215
II. Descriptive Study 218
III. Training Study 225
References 230

13. Text Learning Strategy Instruction: Guidelines from Theory and Practice 223
Beau Fly Jones

I. Educational Contexts 223
II. Major Theoretical and Practical Issues 235
III. Concepts and Principles from Practice 245
IV. Concluding Comments 256
References 257

PART IV. EVALUATION OF RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN LEARNING AND STUDY STRATEGIES

14. Evaluation of Learning Strategies Research Methods and Techniques 263
Victor L. Willson

I. Purposes for Learning Strategy Research 264
II. Techniques and Methods Used in Learning Strategies Research 265
III. Conclusion 273
References 273

15. Perspectives on Study Skills Training in a Realistic Instructional Economy 275
Ernst Z. Rothkopf

I. School Perspectives 275
II. The Research Picture 277
III. Learning Strategies and Educational Styles 278
IV. Elicitation and Maintenance of Learning Activities 281
V. Conclusions 284
References 285

16. A Constructive Review of Research on Learning Strategies 287
M. C. Wittrock

I. Introduction 287
II. The Teaching of Learning Strategies 287
III. A Model of Learners' Thought Processes 289
IV. The Teaching of Reading Comprehension 292
V. A Research Strategy 295

VI. Summary 296
References 297

17. Models and Metaphors of Learning Strategies 299
Scott G. Paris

I. Describing the Unknown 301
II. The Value of Metaphors 309
III. Conclusions 317
References 318

18. Implications of Learning Strategy Research and Training: What It Has to Say to the Practitioner 323
John E. Wilson

I. A High School Learning Strategies/Study Skills Program 323
II. Learning Strategies, Practitioners, and Parents 327
III. Research and Practical Applications 328
IV. Training and Educating Teachers 329
V. Conclusion 330
Reference 331

19. Cognitive Learning Strategies: Implications for College Practice 333
Curtis Miles

I. The Students 334
II. The Faculty 335
III. The Process of Innovation 336
IV. Marketing Cognitive Learning Strategies 338
V. The Role of Research 339
VI. Increasing the Relevance 341
VII. Summary 346
References 346

Index 349

1

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