

# Developing Better Study Habits

By Dr. Morton Tener

Let's give some thought to an important problem—how to study. Most students do not give enough thought to knowing how to study. Just like there are rules in athletics, there are rules to studying. Study habits can be developed. They are not born to us no matter how bright a person is.

To be successful in school, one must develop and apply good study habits. There are many books written on the subject; maybe you can find some in your school library that will help you. You also may get some clues from your teacher, parents or peers. Every person studies differently, but there are general hints that apply to almost everybody.

First, learn how to concentrate. This means putting your mind on the subject you are studying and not letting other ideas interfere. One way is to arrange a time and place to study that suits you. Most people can concentrate best when it is quiet—with all sound and visual appliances turned off. Also, study alone with nobody in the location to distract you.

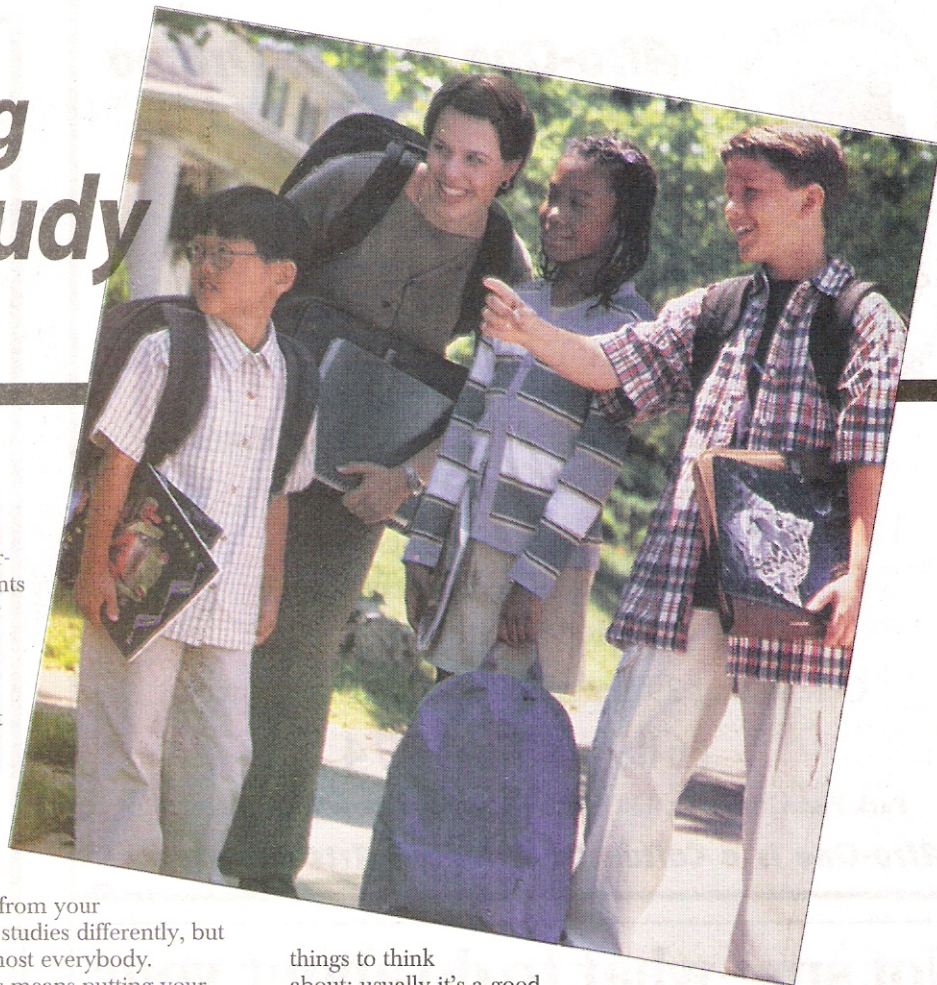
Most people study better when they sit up straight (don't get too relaxed), when the light is bright enough and correctly placed, and when they have a desk or table on which to spread out their books and papers.

There is another way to train yourself to concentrate. When you sit down to study and find other ideas popping into your head (somebody you forgot to telephone, getting your clothing ready to wear), don't jump up and do it. Write a note to yourself so that you will remember to take care of it after you've finished studying. By doing this, you will be promoting concentration and getting rid of distractions.

If you're a person who has trouble settling down to study, here's another tip. Begin your most interesting assignment first. It's easier to concentrate when the subject interests you. After you are in the swing of studying, then go to your less interesting subject.

Then there's the problem of how long to study at a time. Some students are slow "warming up", unless they have an hour or two at a time. Others learn better if they divide their studying into shorter periods—maybe a half hour at a time—and spread their studying throughout the day. Here again you should try out different methods and try to find which fits you best. Once you decide, work out a schedule and stick to it.

Since all subjects require reading components, here are a few



things to think about: usually it's a good idea to read the whole lesson to get the general idea, to see what the lesson covers, to hit the high points and write an outline on which to harbor ideas.

The best way to be active in your studying is to go further than thinking over the material to yourself. Talk over what you have learned with other people. The more you think about a thing and talk about it, the more it sinks in. So don't read an assignment, close the book, and think that's the end. You'll never learn much that way. There are benefits in taking notes, making outlines, reviewing and discussing.

Other thoughts to make one successful in absorbing content:

- Have your work in on time.
- Try to find out what the subject is all about and why you are taking it.
- Find out what teachers expect.
- Follow everything in class, so there will be less to do outside of class.
- Keep up with daily work .

*Dr. Morton Tener is in his 34th year at Glassboro State-Rowan University and his 45th year in New Jersey education. Prior to coming to Glassboro-Rowan University he was a teacher, basketball coach, guidance counselor, vice-principal and camp director in different school districts in South Jersey. Out of all the educational experiences, his greatest love is working with student teachers.*