

The Uniqueness of A.C.E. Self-Instruction

While a textbook must be taught, a **PACE is self-instructional**. Ideally, a PACE presents the best teaching techniques. It is entertaining, thought provoking, and informative, but all in text and visuals **for the child** to read and see. It inspires a student to want to learn.

Learning, not teaching, is the goal of self-instruction. Self-instruction supposes a student can learn on his own with minimal help and supervisor instruction, but with maximum motivation and encouragement. The focus of academic instruction is on the individual. The audience is one child rather than a class because self-instructional material, i.e. a PACE, is student driven, not teacher driven. A textbook is a resource for the teacher; a PACE is designed for the student. It stands on its own, not requiring exposition and amplification by a supervisor. (The exception would be materials for children who are not yet ready to be independent learners.) This sounds like a lofty goal, but A.C.E. makes it possible.

A PACE is not just a listing of facts and information. **The PACE is the teacher**. A good teacher would logically preface a lesson with a review of previous concepts and lessons; so does a PACE. Information presents itself in small, concise, well-defined units. New information relates to known information or observable phenomena. Review and illustration are more extensive than in a textbook. **The PACE moves from "the known to the unknown."** The concept is to build "precept upon precept."

What questions might students in a classroom raise? What aspects might be confusing? How does a child learn? The PACE anticipates and addresses all these concerns. The text never neglects to address the questions, "How would the student know this? Has enough background information preceded this?" PACE structure does not assume that students have been taught the presupposing information or that they remember all information and exercises. Variety and creativity are essential, but review, explanation, and restatement are cyclic and in an ever widening spiral.

Features that Support Self-Instruction

Goals are specific and provide an overview of the PACE. They are required reading, and from them, the student, as well as the supervisor, gets a preview of new and upcoming material and concepts. The goals outline the PACE as well as summarize the Test. When stated in question form, they become a tool for student review.

Self-instructional aspects of goals:

- Provide student with an overview of material and concepts.
- Translate into a tool for the student's review.

Vocabulary control creates a self-instructional learning tool. The student's reading vocabulary is kept on grade level. Vocabulary level is based on nationally accepted reading lists. New and conceptual vocabulary is introduced with definition, illustration, and repetitive use within the text. Spelling those words follows at the next level.

Self-instructional aspects of vocabulary control:

- Keeps true to student's grade level.
- Reinforces reading by having spelling on different level.
- Builds and enhances the student's reading and spelling vocabulary.

Teaching strips, balloons, and boxes draw attention to specific, bite-sized elements of the general outline of a PACE. Rather than burying a concept within text, as would often be the case in many textbooks, these teaching elements pinpoint concepts for the student's reference and guidance. Information is logical, well organized, less overwhelming, and less confusing.

Self-instructional aspects of illustrations:

- Delineate the main concepts.
- Make for more accurate review.

Examples follow the introduction of a concept or the review of a difficult concept. The student should not have to ask the supervisor, "Is this right?" The examples should presuppose the challenges of the

student by providing adequate and comprehensive illustrations, working from the simple to the complex.

Self-instructional aspects of examples:

- Anticipate questions and misunderstandings.
- Give the student more independence for self-learning.

Score strips are strategically located to provide a "safety net" preventing the student from proceeding without understanding or mastery. They provide control to learning and mastery. They also give the student immediate feedback, which encourages him and lets him know how well he is doing. A score strip follows the introduction and initial practice of a new concept and always precedes each Checkup so that the student's erroneous thinking is corrected before reinforcement and quizzing.

Self-instructional aspects of score strips:

- Provide immediate feedback as well as a safety net.
- Allow student to move on independently.

Supervisor initial and note boxes provide information for subjective scoring and activities the supervisor must oversee. Specific purpose and direction are given for the supervisor's quick reference. These boxes (in smaller type and indicated in yellow) give opportunity for the supervisor to personally check student understanding of the concept.

Self-instructional aspects of supervisor initial and note boxes:

- Aid the supervisor in scoring and checking abstract concepts.
- Allow supervisor to give immediate feedback to student.

Checkups monitor the assimilation of information and focus on learning. While activity questions cover a broader spectrum, Checkups filter down and delineate the important concepts of a section of material. They are unit quizzes. A Checkup may combine elements of a concept and often uses a

different, but familiar, format for questions from those in the activity section.

Self-instructional aspects of Checkups:

- Keep the student from proceeding without mastery.
- Place focus on the most important concepts.

The **Self Test** serves the purpose of measuring the student's knowledge and indicates to the supervisor whether the student is ready for the Test. The Self Test is made up of questions covering the most important and focal concepts of the PACE. It may use a different format or different examples in testing than previously presented, but no concept appears on the Self Test that has not already been quizzed on a Checkup.

Self-instructional aspects of the Self Test:

- Build student confidence by giving him opportunity to know if he is ready for the Test.
- Give supervisor indication of whether or not the student understands PACE content and is ready to test.

The **Test** should truly evaluate mastery but should not hold surprises. When the student has mastered the material for the Self Test, the Test allows him to demonstrate that mastery. The repetition and reinforcement of concepts is the basis for self-instruction. This does not mean just filling in the same blanks or answering the same questions in the same format, but the true testing of a concept. Requiring a score of 80% or above ensures this mastery—the goal of a PACE. The Test simply evaluates mastery. However, the very fact that few students consistently and repeatedly make 100% on Tests is another reason why review and repetition are imperative in the learning process.

Self-instructional aspect of the Test:

- Verifies level of mastery. *ACE*

Minimum supervisor instruction
Maximum motivation
Uniquely self-instructional 