

SOAR® Study Skills - Susan Kruger  
**Potential Interview Questions & News Angles**

## **Interview Questions**

- **How did you end up doing so much work with study skills?**
  - My interest in study skills began right as I entered college. After years of struggling to earn mediocre grades all through grade school and high school, I was determined to figure out how to make college easier for myself. So, I began reading a few books about how to study and succeed in college and eventually got a job as a peer tutor on campus where I received over 150 hours of study skills training. Soon afterwards, I was able to 'make my way through college' as a study skills tutor to local high school and college students. Within six months of graduating from college, I created the SOAR® program so I could meet the tutoring demand and work with more students.
  
- **Why did you decide to write a book about study skills?**
  - To reach more people. After an article about my program was published in a local paper three years ago, I received over 200 phone calls; many of which asked questions like, "Do you have anything for my grand-son in Texas?" Now, I can say "Yes, I do!"
  
- **How long have you been teaching students about study skills?**
  - I began tutoring study skills in 1996. I have been teaching the SOAR® program since 1998.
  
- **Why do you think study skills are not taught in school? Why is it that students typically do not learn *how* to learn?**
  - The state mandated curriculum is too demanding...there is no time to teach study skills.
  - *Educators* themselves do not know how to study.
  
- **Describe some of the situations you have encountered with students and families and how you were able to help them.**

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- See [Case studies](#).
- One straight-A student with Turrets was so demanding on himself that he needed to learn how to calm down and deal with pressure and stress without feeling like the world was caving in on him. I taught him some coping strategies to help him stay calm and study skills to help him get his homework done more quickly.
- Another student with ADHD needed help, but parents did not know what to do or where to go. After working with him for a few weeks, I was able to teach him and his parents strategies for getting (and staying) organized, help them communicate more effectively with each other, and skills for studying.
- **Why did you decide to make your programs “virtual”?**
  - Students can get more value from this format than they can from an on-site workshop; more interaction, more feedback, they can access recordings of every session, and have a resource for on-going support.
  - The format is more convenient for everyone!
  - The virtual nature of the program enhances the peer interaction without peer pressure because there is a certain amount of anonymity in cyber-space.
- **What are some typical situations you encounter?**
  - Parents feeling like they are going mad...homework creates craziness in the house.
  - Parents frustrated because their child will not listen to them when it comes to getting organized or studying a certain way.
  - Students who are frustrated because they spend a lot of time studying, but their grades do not reflect their effort.
  - Students who are unorganized and overwhelmed with school, often getting poor grades.
  - Students with ADHD.

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- **How do students respond to you?**
  - I begin the first session of every group by asking “How many of you are on this call because your parents are making you do this?” Most of the students admit that they don’t really want to be doing this group, but they become a lot more receptive once I’ve acknowledged that the class is not their first choice of entertainment for the evening. Before long, they realize that they really enjoy it!
  
- **How do parents respond to you?**
  - Parents are often grateful that someone understands their plight with homework battles and that they are not alone.
  - Most parents are eager to learn how they can support their child(ren).
  - Some parents have trepidations that certain things might not work, but I am always open to discuss the parent’s concerns so we can work out a solution that works for each specific circumstance.
  
- **Are you doing any work with schools?**
  - Yes, in the Fall of 2006, a local high school will be using the SOAR® curriculum in a required course for freshmen. I will be working closely with the teachers of this school to create more detailed lesson plans and assessments for teachers. By the '07-'08 school year, I hope to have a Teachers Edition created and expand the use of SOAR® in classrooms.
  
- **What age groups would benefit from your book or program?**
  - Students in upper elementary, middle school, high school, and college.
  - Adults have said the program has taught them valuable skills for the workplace.
  
- **Can you explain how students can get better grades in less time? Is that really possible or it just a cliché?**

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- It is completely possible...they just need to learn how to study more efficiently and maximize the way that their brain is programmed.
  
- **What do students learn from your program?**
  - They learn how to: set meaningful and motivating goals, organize their work, work with teachers and parents, take notes, read text-books, study for tests, study for math tests, and write papers painlessly.
  
- **What outcomes can they expect?**

Students will:

  - Turn papers in on time.
  - Keep better track of assignments and tests.
  - Earn better grades on tests.
  - Earn better grades on writing assignments.
  - Feel more confident.
  - Have more free time!
  
- **Do you have any advice for students?**
  - Learn one "study skill" and see how that makes a difference, then learn another strategy and another, etc...
  
- **Do you have any advice for parents?**
  - Be consistent!!
  - Value your child as a human being and genuinely listen to his/her ideas, wishes, opinions, etc... They will respond more favorably to you when it comes to homework issues because they will feel valued.