STUDENTS PLAN STRATEGY USE

Sue Dailey, a seventh grade language arts teacher (Kalispell), did a powerful sequence of activities to assist students in internalizing theory and in applying strategies to other classes. Her students already knew how to do power notes, concept mapping, and two-column notes, but were not applying these strategies very effectively to other curriculum areas. Sue decided to address the problem directly by having students use strategies with their next reading assignment in science. (Sue works as part of a middle school team).

Throughout the lesson sequence, her students worked in cooperative teams. On the first day she asked the teams to decide how they were going to activate their prior knowledge and set purposes for reading the science selection. After making their decision and completing the strategy, she asked teams to write responses in their logs. Two team responses follow.

> ***Team 1:*** *We talked about what we each knew about protists. My science teachers taught me some information about protists and I wrote down what I remember.*
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> ***Team 2:*** *First, we put down what we already know and what we think we know. Also, we wrote down what we wanted to learn, which was the purpose for reading. Next, we read the objectives so we know what to look for while we're reading. Last, we find out what the teacher wants us to know.*

The next day the students read the assignment. Before reading, the teams decided what they were going to do to make sure that they were active readers. After actively reading, the teams wrote about their strategies:

> ***Team 1:*** *Most of us did the conceptual map. I think it worked out pretty well. I did a summary also. It kind of made me understand about protists by writing it out.*
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> ***Team 2:*** *Our group did a power outline. When we did this we thought of what the power 3's were and 4's and so on. We worked together so it all made sense.*

Then Sue asked the teams to decide how they were going to learn the information. Each team responded to the following question: How did you self-test (two-column notes, QARs)?

> ***Team 1:*** *We used two-column notes. I think after doing the conceptual map it made it easier to do the two-column notes. It was easier to write it out and understand it.*

After students had completed their self-testing practice, they took a quiz on the material. As predicted, most did extremely well on the test. Sue concluded the sequence by asking students to write their reactions to the unit. Two students' responses follow.

> ***Student 1:*** *I learned more about taking fast, efficient notes. I think I need to work on more detail. I will take more detailed notes. I'll probably take a few more 2 column notes also. Yes I understand metacognition better. I'm not positive about it though. I know what it is though and how to use it.*
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> ***Student 2:*** *Whenever I studied before, I had no idea what to do. I never got really good scores. I think I'm going to get much better scores from now on. I'm still going to practice though. I know this is a good way to study.*

These studies are excellent examples of ways to help students internalize and apply learning processes. Each case is rich in student reflection and transfers ownership of learning strategies to students.