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CORWIN

Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Worksheets Don't Grow Dendrites*. Try out these three instructional strategies on leveraging visuals.

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HOW: INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES



WHO: Elementary/Middle/High
WHEN: During a lesson
CONTENT AREA(S): Cross-curricular

- Gain and keep students' visual attention by changing your location in the room. Begin your lesson in the front of the class and then shift to other areas. This tactic will not only keep students interested but also put you in close proximity to all students and communicate to them that you care about their well-being and are interested in what they are doing. *Remember to teach on your feet, not in your seat!*

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CONTENT AREA(S): Cross-curricular

- Prior to reading content-area texts, have students survey the chapter or unit of study and peruse any visuals such as maps, charts, graphs, pictures, chapter titles and subtitles, or bold headings. Have them make predictions as to what the chapter or unit will include. This survey technique, called *SQ3R* (Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review), should facilitate comprehension.

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- Place visuals on the classroom bulletin boards and walls that introduce or reinforce concepts being taught. For example, display a visual of the *periodic table* on the wall in a science class or the eight parts of speech in a language arts class. Even if those visuals are removed during testing, they can still be visualized by students.

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- When lecturing, PowerPoint can be a great visual tool, but it is over-used. I have watched students disengage when too many slides are shown. Remember the following 10–20–30 rule of good PowerPoint: (1) no more than 10 slides, (2) no more than 20 minutes, and (3) each line on the slide should be at least 30 font. Remember to intersperse activity within your lecture. Have a miniature copy of your slides for your students since they will not be listening to you if they are simultaneously having to do too much writing.

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- Facilitate lecture or discussion with visuals by writing key words and phrases or drawing pictures on a dry-erase or SMART board, or on a document camera. For example, write the word “noun” and the words “person,” “place,” “thing,” and “idea” as you explain its definition or draw and label a picture of the heart as you explain its function. Color leaves its imprint on the brain. Write with a blue marker, which works well for most students’ brains. Emphasize key words or phrases in red.

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- As you deliver a lecturette, or minilecture, provide students with a visual by filling in a semantic map or creating an appropriate graphic organizer emphasizing the lecturette’s main ideas and key points. Place the map or organizer on the board. Have students draw the visual along with you. Lecturettes typically last less than seven minutes. (See Strategy 5, “Graphic Organizers, Semantic Maps, and Word Webs,” for specific examples.)

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- Find and show students a visual or a real artifact to clarify a concept being taught. For example, bring in a live chrysanthemum as you teach the vocabulary word for this flower, show a picture of the Great Wall of China as you teach about its history, or bring in a pizza to teach the concept of fractional pieces.

WHO: Elementary/Middle/High
WHEN: During a lesson
CONTENT AREA(S): Mathematics

- When introducing a new math concept, work a minimum of three problems on the SMART or dry-erase board or document camera so that all students can see the steps involved. Most brains need at least three examples before they begin to understand the procedure. As you work each problem, talk aloud so that students can hear you modeling the thought processes aloud and become more metacognitive.

Adaptation: Have students come to the dry-erase or SMART board or document camera and work math problems that can serve as visuals for the remainder of the class. Have them explain the steps in solving the problem so that students have an auditory link to the visual problem.

WHO: Elementary/Middle/High
WHEN: After a lesson
CONTENT AREA(S): Cross-curricular