

Inspiration® scores with Montana science students

Students achieve higher test results after learning to organize and take notes with Inspiration

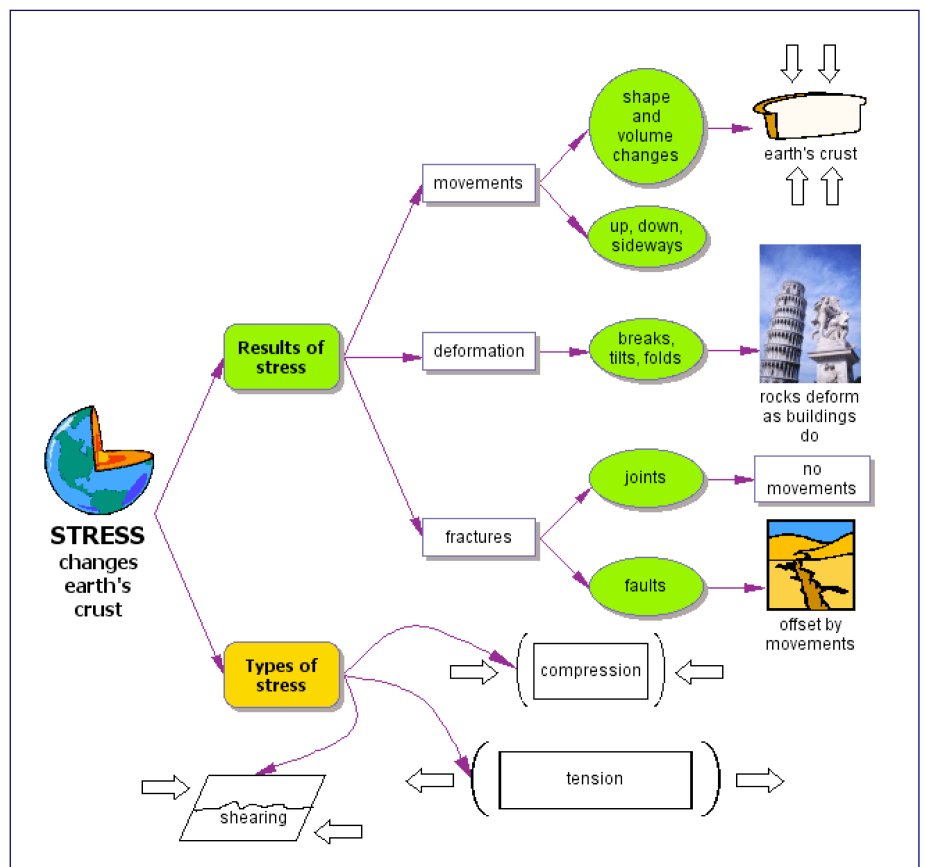
Things haven't always been this rosy at Skyview High School. Students in Tom Stahley's science class used to feel overwhelmed by their schoolwork. They took notes and studied for tests, but struggled with the difficult process of organizing and prioritizing information. Many students couldn't determine what information was important, so they took notes on everything. Later, when they reviewed their notes, all the insignificant facts they had written made studying time consuming and often ineffective.

Research project tests visual learning methods

Tom Stahley, a science teacher at Skyview, was concerned about his students' problems. He wanted to find a way to help them improve their skills in note taking and organization. An adventurous user of Inspiration, he thought the students would benefit from using the techniques of visual learning when studying and organizing for tests. Together with teachers from two other city high schools, Stahley organized a state-funded research project with ninth- and tenth-grade students. His goal was to determine if using graphic

organizers as study tools, such as those created in Inspiration, could be the key to helping students organize their notes in a logical, effective way.

For the first part of the research project, the students studied a challenging passage of text. Stahley evaluated their notes and found that only 18 percent of the students were able to organize their work effectively. The students then took a quiz on the material from the text. The students' test scores reflected their weak study skills and lack of organization.



Graphic organizers created in Inspiration help Tom Stahley's students study more effectively and get better grades on their science tests.

It was time to bring in the remedy—graphic organizing with Inspiration!

Students were taught how to use Inspiration to record important information and prepare for tests. They used the computer to practice constructing concept maps and mind maps, illustrating their key points in Inspiration with colors and symbols.

The students also learned important steps to keep in mind when collecting and organizing information. By following some basic guidelines when working in Inspiration, the students could determine what information was essential and what was not as significant. "Many students enjoyed the visual organization strategies," commented Stahley. "They took time to seek out pertinent information and paid more attention to how they were organizing content."

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The results are in ... testing proved that visual learning improves study skills!

After spending several weeks learning about Inspiration and graphic organizers, the students were ready to be tested on the skills they were practicing. They read a second science passage and used the new organization techniques they had learned to take notes in Inspiration. Then they took a test over the material. Stahley found that an astounding 81 percent of the students organized information effectively after learning to use Inspiration to create graphic organizers, and 36 percent of the students showed improvement on their test scores!

Following the study, many of the students were so excited about Inspiration, they began using it in their other classes to help them organize class notes. Some of the students shared with their other teachers how much Inspiration had helped them. Because of the students' and teachers' enthusiasm, Inspiration training is now available throughout the district. According to the teachers involved in the study, "We want to get the word out about the powerful effect Inspiration has on students' motivation and learning!"

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