Improving Study Skills with Visual Learning Techniques

Subject Areas: All subjects

Grade Level: 6 – 12 (ages 11-18)

Time: At least one 45-minute class period; time outside of class as necessary

Lesson Objective:
Students will use visual learning techniques to help them understand and remember important information.

Common Core State Standards¹:
College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading:
- **Standard 2.** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- **Standard 10.** Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing:
- **Standard 6.** Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Overview:
By applying visual learning techniques, students will be better able to understand complicated concepts and remember them more easily. Using the Study Guide template will help students get started: Webspiration Classroom™ Starter>Starter Docs>Thinking and Planning>Study Guide.
Preparation:
- This lesson requires Internet access and the Webspiration Classroom software application published by Inspiration® Software, Inc. It can be accessed by visiting <http://www.webspirationclassroom.com>.
- A short list of words as explained in steps one and two below.
- Access to information such as a textbook and class notes which students will organize.

Lesson:
1. Begin with a simple and fun demonstration of the power of visual learning. Show students a list of words in random order in **Outline View** and ask them to read and remember them. After 30 seconds, hide the program and ask students to write down all the words they remember.

2. Repeat the process with a different group of the same number of words in **Diagram View** where the words have symbols associated with them and they are organized into categories where possible. Again, hide the program after 30 seconds and ask students to write down everything they remember. Ask the students: Which list is longer? Why?

3. Explain that students will be using visual learning techniques such as applying symbols to words and visually organizing them to help them understand and remember what you are studying in class. Open the **Study Guide** template (Webspiration Classroom Starter>Starter Docs>Thinking & Planning>Study Guide) and explain the different parts of the diagram.

4. Open the example file (Webspiration Classroom Starter>Examples>Thinking & Planning>Examples>Study Guide) and talk the students through that, as well, so they see what is possible. Point out the use of symbols which add visual meaning and make information easier to remember, and the way the ideas are organized with links.

5. Demonstrate how the **Subtopic Quick Control** in the upper-right corner of symbols can be used to show or hide the subtopics. Explain that this is useful for students to test themselves and each other on what they remember about a topic.
6. Point out the Quiz Q & A which can also be a powerful learning tool; answers are typed into Notes and are only revealed to check one’s understanding of a topic.

7. Encourage students to add **Hyperlinks** to other sources of information, including any multimedia files available on the Internet.

8. Students can obtain feedback on their study guide from the teacher and their peers using the collaboration tools. Documents can be shared with others using the **Collaborate Tab**. The **Comment Tab** can be used to comment on the document, or the **Chat Tab** can be used, if it is turned on at your school, to discuss ideas in real time.

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**Adaptations / Extensions:**

- Students can go to **Outline View** to finish organizing their information. This may be especially useful for the chapter outline portion of the study guide.

- Written essays can be prepared about the subjects. Students can download their projects to Inspiration® or a word processor, or transfer it to a Google Doc.

- Students can make presentations to the class using their completed study guides. Having students share especially good examples will help the whole class learn the information.

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