The Top 5 Most Useful Metacognitive Strategies

(as reported by our students)

(PS> You'll notice there is a lot of overlap between strategies…that's purposeful!)

#1 – Active Reading – Building an Anticipatory Set

Key idea: Knowing what to read FOR increases the comprehension of material read!

1. Preview the material (headings, diagrams, questions, bold words, etc.)
2. Develop questions based on your preview (what sort of questions do you think the text will answer? ACTUALLY WRITE THESE DOWN!)
3. Read only ONE paragraph, then STOP! Paraphrase the information, see if you've answered any of your questions. Then read the next paragraph…AND STOP AGAIN! Continue like this to make sure you are truly understanding the material and answering the questions presented.

#2 – Summarizing and Paraphrasing

Key idea: Putting information into your own words increases retention of the information!

1. Take the time to write out a concept or idea in your own words as you truly understand it.
2. Find someone to teach the information to (a classmate, a family member, the family pet, some stuffed animals…whatever).
3. Teach the information you just learned to that someone/something else and you will see quickly just how much you recall and understand!
4. Pair-Shares work great for this (students share their ideas and understanding with other students).

#3 – Studying in Groups and Teaching Each Other

Key idea: Working with other people to review information means that you are getting more than one way of seeing that information!

1. Find a study partner or form a study group (make sure everyone is there to actually STUDY!).
2. Compare notes and understanding of the material with those in your group.
3. Quiz each other with questions you think might be asked by the instructor.
4. Fill in your notes with the new ideas and understandings you gained so you can review!

#4 – Self-Testing Strategies

Key idea: Remembering information is just half the battle…you also have to be able to actively RECALL that information!

1. Print out your lecture slides, if possible, with three or four slides per page.
2. Review the slides before lecture, coming up with questions that you think might be answered by the instructor during lecture (improves active listening).
3. During lecture, while taking notes on the slides, also be thinking about what questions the instructor could ask about this slide.
4. Now you have not just notes, but an active learning study tool!

#5 – Bloom's Taxonomy and Scaffolding

Key idea: If we are clear with students about what we expect from them, they might just surprise us with how easily they are able to meet those demands!

1. Students often believe they "aren't good at" a subject or "just can't do" some type of learning or work.
2. Actually introduce your student to Bloom's Taxonomy and explain the levels of learning and where you expect their learning to be.
3. Also explain how you are going to get them to that level of learning! (i.e. homework and quizzes will be formative assessments about remembering and recalling…where as written assignments and exams will move up to the understanding, applying, and analyzing levels.)
4. Be candid from that point forward – specifically tell the students that this assignment is meant to move them from just understanding the material to actually applying the material.

Honorable Mentions

1. Making Connections – students purposefully try to connect a concept or idea they are learning to something they already know. Coming up with examples of a certain idea or theory in real life is often used.
2. Scheduling and Time Management – remind students that they need to be studying and looking over material EVERYDAY…even if it is just for 5 minutes between classes. The sooner they can review after a lecture, the better. Having a schedule and STICKING TO IT is key for learning.
3. Diagramming – students should take the time to create visual flow charts and diagrams of ideas that are particularly hard to grasp and remember. This helps students to organize complex information into categories…which your brain has an easier time of remembering! Plus, it might be easier to then visualize the diagram when remembering the information.