Using Metacognitive Reading Logs

One of the routines that faculty on campus have raved about is the metacognitive reading log (also known as two-column log, double entry log, T-chart). These logs can be used with any text (such as the sample below).

But with opportunity comes responsibility. Companies today aren’t managing their employees’ careers; knowledge workers must, effectively, be their own chief executive officers. It’s up to you to carve out your place, to know when to change course, and to keep yourself engaged and productive during a work life that may span some 50 years.

To do those things well you’ll need to cultivate a deep understanding of yourself—not only what your strengths and weaknesses are but also how you learn, how you work with others, what your values are, and where you can make the greatest contribution. Because only when you operate from strengths can you achieve true excellence.

(Excerpt from Managing Oneself by Peter Drucker)

What students think and how they connect ideas to what they understand (their schema) matters. This engages learners.

students are directed back into their texts to look for meaning and evidence. They cite pages.

Two Column Reading Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I read in the text</th>
<th>My thoughts, feelings, questions, and connections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Companies today aren’t managing their employees’ careers; knowledge workers must, effectively, be their own chief executive officers (2)</td>
<td>Ten years ago my company planned my career ladder. What brought about this change? I think the word effectively is also a key. Maybe people do not know how to do this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>need to cultivate a deep understanding of yourself(2)</td>
<td>This is like planting a garden; it takes the right conditions and time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>only when you operate from strengths can you achieve true excellence(2)</td>
<td>Wow! I need to change how I am thinking about my life and what I can do with it. With my strengths, I already have a head start on my effort.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In fact, this week Sheila Dahlgren, a RTC nursing instructor, shared that she is using evidence logs and that the students were gaining a lot more insight into their texts. She was able to gauge this from their submitted logs.

This chart has many purposes and benefits. For Reading Apprenticeship® classroom, we like to use this log as a way to get students to look for and pull evidence from the text. In addition, the log also allows faculty to see how the text engages the students and promotes inquiry around the text.
The goal of using these two column logs is to help students think and write about their reading process with their textbook chapters and academic work. When students become aware of their thinking as readers, they are empowered to take control of how well they learn. The students work on the logs independently, then come together to share in pairs and/or in table groups and ultimately to report their findings to the class.

Faculty should model this activity and they should definitely scaffold the routine as the students may not know what to do. Some of the templates that we have for sharing including the metacognitive prompts to help the students get started in their thinking about their texts.

Some examples of these starters are:

- While I was reading...
- I felt confused when....
- I was distracted by....
- I started to think about....
- I got stuck when ...
- The time went by quickly because ...
- A word/some words I did not know...
- I stopped because...
- I lost track of everything except...
- I figured out that...
- I first thought that...but then realized that...
- I finally understood...
- I remembered that earlier in the book...
- This contributes to what I know by...

We want to develop strong readers and thinkers in our disciplinary fields. Using metacognitive reading logs is another way to help students do the thinking and processing work with their texts. Furthermore as a routine in a flipped classroom, the students are then able to spend their time collaborating and applying their knowledge when they enter your classroom.

For more information about on this topic including some ready-to-use templates, go to the RA/RATs LibGuide at http://libguides.rtc.edu/rats, click on the RA Routines & Topics tab and select Reading Logs from the drop-down menu.

Resources for Learning More about RA

- The RTC Library’s RA/RATs LibGuide will remain available indefinitely at http://libguides.rtc.edu/rats.
- The RATs website http://www.rtc-rats.org and its online files will available at least until 09/01/2013.
- Info about WestEd’s online RA course is available at http://www.wested.org/cs/ra/view/serv/158
- Feel free to email Michele Lesmeister (mlesmeister@rtc.edu) with questions about RA.