Teacher Reflections

Introducing Thinking Maps
My students were introduced to Thinking Maps® in September of 2012 when the district first became involved with them. We learned each map one week at a time and gradually began to incorporate them into different content areas. My students have only been working with the maps for about 4-5 months, and it’s wonderful to know that they’ve reached a comfort level with the maps that they’ve started using them automatically and independently. They are beginning to see the value of the maps and find them helpful and useful during an exam.

Thinking Maps®: Developing Independent & Interdependent Thinking & Learning
Several of my 4th grade students had the opportunity to talk about how they were able to utilize Thinking Maps® during their most recent ELA Benchmark exam. The children used several of the maps including the Flow Map, Multi-Flow Map and the Bubble Map when responding to questions. They did so on their own without any input or coaching from me. I was very pleased with how they spoke about the maps, their reasoning for using them, their ability to name the maps and the skill that was being addressed and the language they used while speaking about the maps. Knowing that my students actually decided to use some of the maps to assist them with their writing responses on the benchmark assessment made me feel very satisfied and quite pleased with the direction that they’re moving in.

Applying, Consistency, Modeling
As I reflect over the use of the maps in my own classroom, I think the key to getting the students to this point is patience and consistency. I believe consistently using the maps wherever they apply and modeling their use is very important.

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Student Reflections on Mapping and Test Prep

Did you use the Thinking Maps® for your thinking?

Deanna: The maps affected me because before I started doing the maps I had a little more trouble knowing what to write but with the maps I got my ideas down quicker, and I realized the ideas that I had, and so when I wrote the essay it was the stuff on my map but it came out even better than I thought.

Caitlin: It helped me because if I just thought of it in my mind it would be harder to just plan it out on paper. But if you use the map you would already got some of the ideas down and be able easier to write the full essay answer.

Henry: I used a Multi-Flow map. I had to write cause and effects about the story. I did the Multi-Flow Map first because you get to write the cause and effects first.

Areseo: A Tree Map because they told us to write bullets and I could have made each bullet a paragraph and I could have wrote what each paragraph was about in a tree map.

Nathalia: I used a Bubble Map because it said how did he feel and that is why I used the Bubble Map. You only have choose as adjectives how he feels, what does... like colors, size, shape and texture.

Caitlin: I used the Flow Map for the last question and it helped me out because I was able to plan out what I was going to write first and the Flow Map helped me do that because I could do the sequence from the beginning to the ending of how he felt and his actions throughout the story. And it helped me do my writing.

Alea: I can have more ideas down to write. When I want to write it was hard before Thinking Maps. Now when I actually have it I can see what to write and put it into paragraphs and it can actually sound better than before I made the map.

Contact Designs for Thinking for information regarding the video containing the above excerpts of Roosevelt UFSD students and educators.
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