MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

TEACHING TIPS OF THE MONTH
FROM THE MC COMMUNITY

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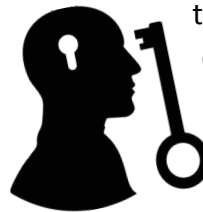
Theme: Unlocking Prior Knowledge

Tip 1: One-Word Round Robin

Description: Before introducing a new topic/theme/chapter/ concept, ask students what they already know about it. Go around the class and ask each student to give one word that comes to mind when they hear about the topic. Stress that they can only give one word! You write each word on the board, and consider writing in different colors to make the list more interesting and appealing. When all have given a word, step back and guide the students in looking at the list. You could comment on how this list shows that there is already knowledge in the room and how you are going to build upon it. This activity teaches students that knowledge is constructed (not independent and neutral), and true learning takes place by connecting new knowledge to the knowledge students already bring with them into the classroom.

For more information about this tip, contact Carolien Annink, carolien.annink@montgomerycollege.edu

Tip 2: See/Think/Wonder

Description: *See/Think/Wonder* is one of several routines developed by Harvard University's Project Zero initiative to encourage the habit of making thinking visible. The *See/Think/Wonder* routine is ideal for lessons that use a visual stimulus (photo, painting, artifact, etc.) to connect students with content. In the first step, students focus on objective details in the visual by telling what they "see." Next, students share what they "think" about what they see. Last, they share what this makes them "wonder" about the visual. During this process, students and/or the instructor document students' thinking using chart paper, white boards, the computer, note cards, sticky notes, etc. Documentation is important for extended learning tasks such as research projects, making justifications, writing papers, comparing/contrasting ideas, etc. The Smithsonian Learning Lab is a great resource for identifying visuals for this assignment as seen in this example used in a nutrition course.

Variation: These routines can be adapted for use with non-visual stimuli. For example, students can engage in a *Hear/Think/Wonder* in response to music or *Taste/Think/Wonder* in a culinary arts activity.

For more information about this tip, contact Sara Ducey, sara.ducey@montgomerycollege.edu