

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT - HELPING STUDENTS LEARN

Hartlep, Karen L. & Forsyth, G. Alfred. (2000). The Effect of Self-Reference on Learning and Retention. *Teaching of Psychology*, 27, 4, 269-271.

*Teaching of Psychology* has newly published a study comparing study methods supporting the prediction that students taught a self-referencing technique would recall material better than students asked to use their best learning strategy.

The study included the following 3 groups of Child Developmental Psychology students.

- 1. Students instructed to use the SQ4R (survey, question, read, reflect, recite, review) during a moderated study session
- 2. Students instructed to use a read and reflect strategy (read and reflect portion of SQ4R) during a moderated study session
- 3. Students instructed to "Do your best" during a moderated study session

A 25 item multiple choice exam was administered at the end of the 90 minute study session. An unannounced alternate version of the same exam was administered two weeks later to all students.

The results suggest that read and reflect strategies enhance student performance. Although there were no significant differences between groups on the original test, the students in groups 1 and 2 performed significantly better ( $p < .01$ ) than the students in group 3 on the unannounced retention test. There were no statistically significant differences between groups 1 and 2. Only the scores from group 3 declined significantly from the first to the second test.

**The authors suggest that the reflection component (self-referencing) is an important strategy in the deeper processing of material that can usefully be encouraged in all disciplines.**

Silver, V. L. & Kreiner, D. S. (1997). The Effects of Pre-existing Inappropriate Highlighting on reading Comprehension. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 36, 3, 217-223.

Abstract: Highlighting relevant passages from textbooks has often been considered an effective encoding process tool. However, if a student rents a previously used textbook that contains inappropriate highlighting throughout the text, the inappropriate highlighting may interfere with reading comprehension... **Experiment 1 showed that pre-existing inappropriate highlighting interfered with performance...**

Experiment 2 showed that an advance warning on the negative effects of pre-existing inappropriate highlighting did not eliminate the effect of the inappropriate highlighting.

Interestingly, in the Hartlep & Forsyth study, the preferred study technique reported by students in the control group (group 3) was "reading and highlighting important concepts, then reviewing whatever they had highlighted. (270)"

A useful, relatively easy strategy for faculty to include in their classrooms would be instructions for students to reflect on the material from the assigned readings.

Marianne Hunnicutt  
Coordinator  
Innovation Incubator  
IC 3067c  
College of DuPage  
425 Fawell Blvd.  
Glen Ellyn, IL 605137  
(630) 942-4306  
hunnicut@cdnet.cod.edu