

# TIP Sheet

## Teaching Soft Skills

By Claire Lambert and Robyn R. Jackson

Consider setting aside a few minutes to talk with students about how to tackle the upcoming task. Getting students thinking and talking about how they study makes them active participants in their own learning. Here are a few ideas to get you started!

- ✦ "Think Aloud" with students about how you would approach a task. Have them practice talking through an upcoming assignment with a partner or small group.
- ✦ Start by providing a checklist or set of guidelines for preparing for an upcoming assignment. Then, in month or two, give a shorter or more general strategy sheet and ask students to fill in their own ideas. By spring, ask students to write out their own strategy.
- ✦ Teach students to break down a complex assignment and write interim due dates on a calendar. Next time, provide only a couple of checkpoints and have students decide and record how they will manage their time.
- ✦ Divide students into study teams. Have them generate ideas for how to study or how to approach a difficult assignment. After the assignment is complete and they have their results, let them meet again to reflect on which strategies were most effective.
- ✦ Help students connect effort to success. Ask students to share their most effective strategies with the class and encourage them to try out new ideas from their classmates. You can even help students keep a running list of study strategies and other students can "like" or otherwise rate these strategies throughout the year.
- ✦ Before a big test, ask students to commit to a study strategy. Discuss the pro's and cons of using these study strategies as a class. Then, have students write down which strategy they used on the test. When you pass back the graded tests, ask students to take a few moments and reflect on the strategy they used. Have them write in their journals whether the strategy worked or not and whether they would use the strategy again. Ask students to also consider how they might tweak their strategies for better results next time. Doing so helps students connect the strategies they choose to the results they get and develops a growth-oriented mindset.
- ✦ Rather than just showing students models of completed assignments, show them annotated models of the assignments in the various draft stages so that they can see the process needed to complete the assignment successfully.
- ✦ Provide students with graphic organizers to help them take notes on texts and during class discussions and lectures. Eventually, have students create their own graphic organizers and use them to take notes on their own.

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