Guidelines and Resources for Preparing Students for Learning

It is essential to prepare students for learning when a new topic or concept is introduced. Activating students' prior knowledge on the subject of study helps then to make a stronger connections with new material.

Effective Practices for Preparing Students for Learning	Additional Guidelines & Strategies	Internet Resources & Digital Tools
Anticipation Guides stimulate students' thinking about themes or issues related to the content prior to engaging with it. They are meant to be used as an activity that precedes reading or engaging with a new subject of study.	● Typically, anticipation guides contain a list of statements dealing with themes or issues that students will encounter in a new subject of study. Students are to use their previous experience to decide whether they agree or disagree with these statements. ● Students do not necessarily need to share their answers with the class, but rather reflect on their current thinking about the topic. ● Likewise, the content of the anticipation guide should not be evaluated for a grade. It is simply a means to tap into prior knowledge, even if it is erroneous.	Anticipation Guide Samples How to Use Anticipation Guides Read, Write, Think Anticipation Guide
Know-Wonder-Learn (KWL) charts allow students to visually organize what they already know about a new subject of study, what they wonder about it, and, eventually, what they learned.	● KWL Charts are graphic organizers meant to encourage students to record the evolution of their thinking and learning about a new topic. ● In preparation for learning, they share what they already know and what they wonder about a "new" topic. ● This is an activity that is generally begun individually and then added to a class KWL chart. ● This is not the sort of activity in which the content should be evaluated for a grade. It is merely meant to ignite thinking and reflection in students.	KWL Chart Samples How to Use KWL Charts Online Interactive KWL Chart Creator

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Brainstorm with students about a new topic or question central to a new subject of study making certain to record all students' contributions on a "board" or some sort of visual space accessible to all participants.	- In preparing for learning, this is an activity that is generally conducted as a class. - Before brainstorming, make clear to the students that all answers are welcome and that students may contribute without the threat of criticism or ridicule. - Recording each student's contribution in a visual way helps students learn from each other's ideas, whether or not they are correct. - Note that this is the sort of activity that may encourage student buy-in as well as increase camaraderie and morale in the group by virtue of everyone participating and all ideas being accepted .	Brainstorming Graphic Organizer Brainstorming Web Sample Using Brainstorming Effectively Bubbl. us (Quick brainstorm mind maps) Padlet (Post a brainstorm note) Popplet (Brainstorming mind map)
Thinking Activities help students tap into what they already know through considering analogies and making predictions.	- Thinking activities are student-driven and generally conducted individually or in small groups and then shared with the larger class. - Students connect what they know to what they are learning using analogies: "How is an eye like a camera?" or "How is a song like a poem?"	Thinking Activities from Intel Answer Garden (Pose a question to connect learning)

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	● Students also make predictions using the same pattern: "Considering what you know about _____, what do you think will happen if _____?"	

Written Activities such as quick writes, journals, and learning logs encourage students to think about the new content in a meaningful way.	● **Quick writes** are conducted individually at the beginning of a lesson or unit of study and are meant to be short--maybe 5 minutes--yet focused on a specific topic central to the new material. They are not meant to be graded for content.
	● **Journals** are generally longer, although not necessarily timed, and allow students more time to explore a new topic in written form.
	  ○ Journal entries work well to introduce a topic or reflect on a topic during the course of study.
	  ○ Journaling meant to allow students space to think freely and creatively about a topic should not be edited.
	● Similar to journals, **learning logs** are meant to be a space for students to explore what they are learning. Specifically, they record what they have learned, what they think about it, and what questions they still have about the material.
	  ○ Learning logs can be used at the beginning of a lesson to help students record their ideas about the initial discussion or presentation of new material. Teachers often provide students with specific prompts or ideas for
		31 Fun Writing Prompts for Middle School
		
		180 Journal Writing Prompts
		
		High School Journal Topics
		
		Written Activities from Intel
		
		Learning Logs
		
		Learning Logs as Literacy Tools
		
		Weebly (students can create simple web pages as personal journals or learning logs)

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	content in their logs. ● Teachers generally respond in written form to what students record in their learning logs and can use learning logs as a form of assessment to determine what students do and do not understand about the material.	
Classroom Discussions are an important part of learning and serve as an effective means to introduce new ideas and connect them to previous knowledge.	● Use direct teacher-to-student and/or whole-class discussions to ignite thinking and excitement about a new topic. ● Be armed with **thoughtful and engaging questions** directly related to the new material and connected to students' prior knowledge. ● Establish clear **rules of civility**, kindness and respect with students prior to the discussion.	Classroom Discussions from Intel 13 Strategies to Improve Classroom Discussions Effective Classroom Discussions Rethinking Whole Classroom Discussion Making Class Discussions More Exciting
Clear Expectations are essential when introducing an assignment or activity.	● Share specific and explicit directions orally, and in written form, for the students' repeated and later reference. ● Model working backwards from the final product. ● Show samples of the final product. ● Create and share a rubric for the final product. Use the students' input in creating the rubric.	

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	● Identify and discuss the needed skills for the assignment. ● Consider creating smaller steps or tasks with accompanying deadlines to help students reach the end result successfully.	

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