**Reading for Meaning**

**Directions:** The purpose of this page is to hone your ability to gather textual evidence to support or refute a statement. For each statement below, circle whether the text agrees or disagrees with it, and, in the space provided, share quoted, textual evidence to support your agreement or disagreement.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Agree?** | **Statements** | **Your Evidence** |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **yes** |
| **no** |

 | 1.To succeed academically, students should only focus on the subjects before them. |  |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **yes** |
| **no** |

 | 2. Teachers and parents can help their students practice metacognitive skills. |  |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **yes** |
| **no** |

 | 3. Students will low knowledge of learning strategies actually perform the same as those with more knowledge of learning strategies. |  |
|

|  |
| --- |
| **yes** |
| **no** |

 | 4. United States students could actually perform higher than their international peers by practicing learning strategies.  |  |

**Psychology 101**

**AAR**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Glossary**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **deficits** an amount that is too small | **proficiency level** The ranking of an ability or experience |

# [Smart Strategies That Help Students Learn How to Learn](http://blogs.kqed.org/mindshift/2013/10/smart-strategies-that-help-students-learn-how-to-learn/)

## By [Annie Murphy Paul](http://blogs.kqed.org/mindshift/author/anniempaul/)| October 7, 2013 via *Mind Shift*

What’s the key to effective learning? One intriguing body of research suggests a rather riddle-like answer: It’s not just what you know. It’s what you know about what you know.

To put it in more straightforward terms, anytime a student learns, he or she has to bring in two kinds of prior knowledge: knowledge about *the subject at hand* (say, mathematics or history) and knowledge about how learning works. Parents and educators are pretty good at imparting the first kind of knowledge. We’re comfortable talking about concrete information: names, dates, numbers, facts. But the guidance we offer on the act of learning itself—the “**metacognitive**” aspects of learning—is more hit-or-miss, and it shows.

In our schools, “the emphasis is on what students need to learn, whereas little emphasis—if any—is placed on training students how they should go about learning the content and what skills will promote efficient studying to support robust learning,” writes John Dunlosky, professor of psychology at Kent State University in Ohio, in an [article](http://anniemurphypaul.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=bc04df008d4705e4e77c2eb35&id=b71b3aa780&e=c73b114bbb) just published in American Educator.However, he continues, “teaching students how to learn is as important as teaching them content, because acquiring both the right learning strategies and background knowledge is important—if not essential—for promoting lifelong learning.”

“Teaching students how to learn is as important as teaching them content.”

Research has found that students vary widely in what they know about how to learn, according to a team of educational researchers from Australia [writing](http://anniemurphypaul.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=bc04df008d4705e4e77c2eb35&id=5610944124&e=c73b114bbb) last year in the journal *Instructional Science*. Most striking, low-achieving students show “substantial **deficits**” in their awareness of the **cognitive** and metacognitive strategies that lead to effective learning—suggesting that these students’ struggles may be due in part to a gap in their knowledge about how learning works.

Teaching students good learning strategies would ensure that they know how to acquire new knowledge, which leads to improved learning outcomes, writes lead author Helen Askell-Williams of Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia. And studies bear this out. Askell-Williams cites as one example a recent finding by [PISA](http://anniemurphypaul.us2.list-manage.com/track/click?u=bc04df008d4705e4e77c2eb35&id=a6a3184fb6&e=c73b114bbb), the Programme for International Student Assessment, which administers academic proficiency tests to students around the globe, and place American students in the mediocre middle. “Students who use appropriate strategies to understand and remember what they read, such as underlining important parts of the texts or discussing what they read with other people, perform at least 73 points higher in the PISA assessment—that is, one full **proficiency** level or nearly two full school years—than students who use these strategies the least,” the PISA report reads.

In their own study, Askell-Williams and her coauthors took as their subjects 1,388 Australian high school students. They first administered an assessment to find out how much the students knew about cognitive and metacognitive learning strategies—and found that their familiarity with these tactics was “less than optimal.”

Students can assess their own awareness by asking themselves which of the following learning strategies they regularly use (the response to each item is ideally “yes”):

• I draw pictures or diagrams to help me understand this subject.

• I make up questions that I try to answer about this subject.

• When I am learning something new in this subject, I think back to what I already know about it.

• I discuss what I am doing in this subject with others.

• I practice things over and over until I know them well in this subject.

• I think about my thinking, to check if I understand the ideas in this subject.

• When I don’t understand something in this subject I go back over it again.

• I make a note of things that I don’t understand very well in this subject, so that I can follow them up.

• When I have finished an activity in this subject I look back to see how well I did.

• I organize my time to manage my learning in this subject.

• I make plans for how to do the activities in this subject.

Askell-Williams and her colleagues found that those students who used fewer of these strategies reported more difficulty coping with their schoolwork. For the second part of their study, they designed a series of proactive questions for teachers to drop into the lesson on a “just-in-time” basis—at the moments when students could use the prompting most. These questions, too, can be adopted by any parent or educator to make sure that children know not just what is to be learned, but how.

• What is the topic for today’s lesson?

• What will be important ideas in today’s lesson?

• What do you already know about this topic?

• What can you relate this to?

• What will you do to remember the key ideas?

• Is there anything about this topic you don’t understand, or are not clear about?