Making Thinking Visible (MTV)

Making Thinking Visible is a strategy that allows students to do just that – make their thinking visible – in the form of annotated drawings. It can be used at multiple points during instruction to give learners a creative and unique way to visually represent their understanding. Use of the strategy may also bring misconceptions or incomplete understanding to light. Students are presented with a prompt and must design a drawing that includes notes and labels that describes their thinking. Learning is supported in at least two ways: 1) when students plan and create the actual picture, and 2) when students describe and explain their representations to others in order to give and receive feedback.

How to implement the strategy (Summarizing):

1. Design a prompt that will allow students to demonstrate their conceptual understanding of the concept or topic of study.
2. Provide drawing materials: paper (either regular or poster-sized), markers, colored pencils, etc. Students may also use their science or math notebook.
3. Tell students they should draw a picture in response to the prompt. *They should label parts of the picture and use notes where appropriate.*
4. When students have completed their drawings, including labels and notes, they should describe what their picture means and how it represents their thinking about the question. This may be done in a number of ways:
    a. Form small groups randomly and have students take turns presenting their pictures to each other.
    b. Form small groups based on similarities or differences in the pictures and have students take turns presenting their pictures to each other.
    c. If students created the pictures in collaborative small groups, each group may present their thinking to the whole class.
5. Circulate as students work and present their pictures to provide feedback, ask probing questions, and note any misconceptions.

Adapted from:

- Keeley, P. (2008). *Science Formative Assessment: 75 Practical Strategies for Linking Assessment, Instruction, and Learning, Thousand Oaks CA. Corwin Press.*