I Wonder: Using a Semester-Long Inquiry Tool with Pre-service Teachers

Course Redesign of READ 3310: Principles and Practices of Early Literacy Instruction
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Goal:
Use prior knowledge to make links to new learning and demonstrate a graphic organizer/inquiry tool that pre-service teachers can use in their future classrooms.

How we’re meeting this goal:
1. We begin the class RAN chart on the third day of class. This way, students have an opportunity to build some background knowledge about early literacy, so that they have more to contribute when we begin with What We Think We Know.
2. Then, on about every other class day, I encourage students to add to the chart in some way. They might move a sticky note from the What We Think We Know to Misconceptions or Confirmed. As their questions are answered, they move sticky notes from the Wonderings column to New Learning.
3. I put sticky notes on the tables every class session and encourage them to add new ones and move previous ones around. This constantly sends the message that this is their chart.

Comments about RAN
I love that we are getting to practice using the RAN strategy in class and are updating that periodically because it will make me more confident in the classroom knowing that I’ve at least practiced it before. Rather than, reading about it and going into the classroom blind-sided and using it for the first time with my students.

Being exposed to it now makes me comfortable and confident enough to teach it to my own students someday since I’ve seen first-hand how it works.

I know the RAN chart will be beneficial to my students, and I am excited to use it. I also love how we have our own RAN chart set up in the classroom and we are able to write on it whenever we want.

Conclusion
The goal of using this graphic organizer/inquiry tool is three-fold.
1. Charts such as these make our thinking visible and create a record of how our knowing changes throughout the semester.
2. We use RAN as an inquiry guide. Near the end of the semester, we will spend time creating more “wonderings,” and students will use these as a launch pad for their end-of-semester early literacy projects.
3. This is a teaching strategy that I present as part of the course when we discuss comprehension. By using it as part of the course, I am providing them with firsthand experience with it. They will be more likely to use it with their students in their future classrooms.