

BENEFITS OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER LEVEL THOUGHT

- Graphic organizers almost always incorporate higher-level thinking.
- Users must evaluate input and select only the most essential information since there is generally not enough room to copy directly from a source.
- Metacognitive development occurs as students explain their own thought processes and are exposed to the strategies and thinking of others.
- The format often encourages students to expand beyond the source(s): to access prior knowledge, to predict and question, to investigate further.
- Because people are thinking at a higher level, they can more readily identify: ambiguities, the need for clarification, and information that is missing.

APPLICABILITY FOR A WIDE RANGE OF LEARNERS

- Students with very diverse levels can often collaborate meaningfully on a graphic organizer.
- More advanced learners are often challenged by graphic organizers because the format gives them an opportunity to incorporate prior knowledge and real-world applications.
- Students who did not initially know the information at the comprehension level still have the opportunity to demonstrate their intelligence when higher-level thinking is required in completion of the organizer.
- Students with low literacy skills, limited fluency in the language of instruction, and those with diverse learning styles can often process information presented in this format more readily than they can traditional text material.
- Organizers are often easily modified for special needs students.

INCREASED LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Higher-level thinking prompts more use of language.
- Students have more exposure to the language of thought.
- New content vocabulary is clearly presented on the organizer.
- Students must incorporate their own words when summarizing the information presented on an organizer.

GREATER RETENTION FOR ALL LEARNERS

- People retain:
 - 10% of what they read
 - 20% of what they hear
 - 30% of what they see
 - 50% of what they see and hear
 - 70% of what they say
 - 90% of what they **say** as they **do** or **teach** something. (E.Dale)

When students collaborate on a graphic organizer, they are saying, doing, and teaching each other.

They are also changing written or oral input to visual input that is meaningful to them.

- People retain information more readily when they are processing it at higher levels of thought. (Examples: Students are categorizing words rather than memorizing them. Students are reading and listening at the analytical level rather than at the comprehension level.)
- The visual presentation of any organizer reflects the relationship of the concepts contained which promotes retention for most learners.
- It is more beneficial, and more fun, to study from notes on organizers than from traditional notes.

MORE EQUITABLE ASSESSMENT MEASURES

- After using an organizer for instructional purposes, they are often very effective for assessment purposes.
- Many students who have trouble accurately reflecting their learning on traditional forced-choice tests, can perform well on alternative assessment measures that include graphic organizers.
- The conceptual and strategic essence of a lesson is more evident to students who study from graphic organizers.
- It is easier to make modifications for special needs students with graphic organizers used for assessment purposes than it is to modify a traditional exam.

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