

Using Infographics to Support Note Taking

Note taking is widely considered a critical element for learning. Yet countless students struggle with the skills necessary to effectively take notes, such as recognizing the most relevant content, reducing information, formatting information so it's usable at a later time, restating information in their own words, and recording the source of the information. Numerous approaches are available to teach note-taking skills, but relatively new free technology can provide teachers with a tool to help structure note-taking for their students.

An infographic is a way for teachers to organize content information and visually represent it. Since visualizing, categorizing, and representing relationships among concepts are vital to the learning process, infographics have become a popular and effective way for teachers and students to present knowledge. However, when designed with the intent to support note taking, infographics can be an excellent tool.

Figurative Language
Figurative language is of the use of phrases, or sentences with an intended meaning that is different from the usual meaning. Writers use language to express an idea in an interesting way that is beyond the usual meaning of the words. Three types of figurative language are hyperbole, idiom, and oxymoron.

Hyperbole
obvious and intended exaggeration
• "mountain of ice cream" = a lot of ice cream
• _____
• _____

Idiom
an expression that has a specific meaning to a particular group of people
• "walking up on the wrong side of the bed" = being grumpy
• _____
• _____

Oxymoron
two opposite ideas are joined to create an effect
• "jumbo shrimp" = shrimp, which means both a food and something very small, that are relatively large
• _____
• _____

Utilizing the visual elements of an infographic, such as shapes around text, pictures, diagrams, and drawings, teachers can create documents which provide a structure for students to add important definitions, complete cloze-style notes using content-appropriate vocabulary, use imagery and color to strengthen recall of information, as well as have structured spaces to explore concepts, discern patterns and represent them, and guide learning activities during a lesson. When students interact with the information displayed on an infographic in a variety of ways, they practice critical thinking skills and can transform new information into meaningful knowledge.

Currently, one site available to teachers to create infographics is Easel.ly. Easel.ly is user friendly, offers instructional blogs, and has numerous templates for registrants to use. Easel.ly can be used for free. For more options, an Easel.ly Pro account is only \$18/year for educators.

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