

Graphic Organisers

"A picture is worth a thousand words."

When students are juggling new concepts, a concrete model or graphic organiser can be an excellent teaching and learning aid.

What is a concrete model/graphic organiser?

A concrete model/graphic organiser is usually a one page form with blank areas for the student to fill in ideas and information. Some organisers are very specific while others can be used with many topics. The graphic organiser gives students another way to see information.

Why do they work?

Random facts are quickly lost. However, the brain's ability to store pictures is unlimited. Since the brain likes to "chunk" information, the graphic organiser complements the way the brain naturally works.

When do they work?

Graphic organisers will be beneficial to students whenever they are given new information. They can be used to brainstorm, sequence and organise. During reading and listening, students should be encouraged to graphically organise new information.

Advantages of Concrete Models

1. They help students compress a lot of information into a structured, simple to read graphic display
2. They are good for teachers as they facilitate small group work, so students are actively participating in the lesson
3. They are excellent for allowing co-operative learning to take place in the classroom
4. They are good for revision and exam preparation for students
5. The brain remembers more when personal creativity has been invested in a project. Graphic organisers complement the way the brain works
6. Graphic organisers are beneficial for use in mixed ability classes as their use enables all students to feel empowered, to contribute and to work at their own level
7. Some graphic organisers are an excellent way of differentiating higher and ordinary level materials, e.g. fishbone