

# Overview: Graphic Organizers

## Module Outline

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1. Introduction: What are Graphic Organizers?  
In this session we will explore how to use graphic organizers as tools to organize students' ideas and thought processes. Graphic organizers are visual representations of information. There are various types of graphic organizers
2. Discuss various types of graphic organizer formats (use resources from the Web site section). Samples include: brainstorming, concept-mapping, Venn diagrams, matrices.
3. Identify general software that can be used to create graphic organizers (Microsoft Word, AppleWorks, PowerPoint, KidPix). Introduce concept-mapping specific software – Inspiration – as a tool for facilitating this process as the program automatically creates boxes and arrows.
4. Skill Acquisition: Review techniques for using Inspiration
  - Creating a blank page
  - Formatting page properties
  - Rapid Fire Brainstorming
  - Basic Concept Mapping
  - Inserting images
5. Discuss classroom activities that use Graphic Organizers to promote reading and writing. (See Sample Projects for some ideas).
6. Brainstorming: Have pairs brainstorm ideas for using graphic organizers in their classroom. Write down these lesson ideas.
7. Share ideas with the entire group (Facilitator should use Inspiration to capture main ideas).

## Sample Projects

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**Title: Timelines**

**Grade Levels: K-2**

**Area: Comprehension**

**Skill: Sequencing**

Use Graphic Organizers to construct a timeline of events. For example, you may create a timeline of story events from a book the students are reading or you may create a timeline of things students did on a class

fieldtrip. Have the class use the timeline to write their own summaries of what took place,

**Title: Brainstorming**

**Grade Levels: 1-8**

**Area: Writing**

**Skill: Pre-writing strategies**

Use Rapid Fire in Inspiration to brainstorm ideas for the area under study (e.g. type a word and brainstorm different adjective; type an idea and brainstorm different events or areas for character and plot development). Use these ideas to help guide the writing process.

**Title: Venn Diagrams**

**Grade Levels: 2-8**

**Area: Literature**

**Skill: Compare and Contrast**

Use Graphic Organizers in Kid Pix to create Venn Diagrams to be able to compare and contrast stories (e.g. comparing different versions of Cinderella stories, comparing themes from The Giver and present day life)

## **Reflection and Brainstorming**

- Where might graphic organizers be useful in your curriculum?
- Have the activities described above given you some ideas for how you might use graphic organizers in your classroom with your students to promote reading and writing?
- Jot some of your ideas below:

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## **Special Education Notes and Adaptations**

1. Have students use Inspiration to visually map out their ideas
  - a. Who, what, when, where, why, and how of a topic

- b. Map out cause and effect: what is the idea about, what happened, so what?
  - c. Use as a comprehension tool to map out their understanding of a text selection, main ideas, etc.
2. Use Inspiration to create graphic organizers for students. Give students blank organizers and/or partially fill them in for other students. They can be used to take notes during a lecture or reading assignment or to organize important information to review for a test.
3. Turn the inspiration map into an outline, and use this outline as a writing guide.
4. Use inspiration to aid in the pre-writing skills: have students create ideas in no particular order and then move them around to categorize or organize ideas.
5. Add pictures to graphic organizers, and/or show students how to add pictures.
6. Consider using Kidspiration software as an alternative. Remember, some students with mild disabilities have difficulty with abstract reasoning skills. Simplifying the cognitive demands of the software program may assist even older students.
7. Remember that many students with disabilities have problems with reading fluency, text comprehension skills, vocabulary learning, and abstract reasoning from text presentations. Developing and using graphic organizers to assist these students has been a traditional recommendation to assist the students to focus on the important ideas of the text. Inspiration is a great way to develop these graphic organizers. Consider a variety of uses: i.e. setting out text structure, important vocabulary, cause and effect, etc. Teach the students how to use Inspiration or Kidspiration and let them analyze their text as an aid to learning.
8. Combine Inspiration with a text or screen reader program, so that the student with poor reading fluency skills may have auditory input.

## **Sample NETS Connections**

- Grades K–3: Awesome Authors p.36. Brrr, It's Alive, p.40
- Grades 3–5: Les Voyageurs: The Explorers, p.82
- Grades 6–8: Birthstone Project with a Multimedia Twist, p.52

## **Explore these Web sites**

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Here are some sample sites, but be sure to check out Project Impact Resource site for more links: <http://web.utk.edu/~impact/resources.html>

- George Mason's PT3 project has archived Web videos on using Inspiration at: <http://www.techmentor.org/webcasts.html>
- Graphic Organizer Printables <http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-6293.html>
- The Graphic Organizer <http://www.graphic.org/>
- S.C.O.R.E. Language Arts: Graphic Organizers <http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/actbank/torganiz.htm>
- Student examples: <http://home.earthlink.net/~tsdobbs/go/go.html>
- Write Design Online: Graphic Organizers <http://www.writedesignonline.com/organizers/>
- NCREL Graphic Organizers: <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/students/learning/lr1grorg.htm>
- Graphic Organizers: <http://www.smcps.k12.md.us/mbms/writing/graphorg.html>
- Graphic Organizer Guidelines: <http://www.wm.edu/TTAC/articles/learning/graphic.htm>
- Excerpts from *A Field Guide to Using Visual Tools* <http://www.ascd.org/readingroom/books/hyerle00book.html#intro>