**Visual Notetaking**

Visual note taking can be a great way to synthesize and understand your notes. Some students like to take notes during lecture or when reading using techniques for visualorganization (e.g., charts) or graphic-representation (e.g., pictures). The types of notes you take depend upon the content you are capturing and your purpose for taking notes. Visual note taking is also a strategy that students can incorporate into exam preparation by reorganizing information into new study notes or by adding pictures and colour to existing notes.

# The Benefits of Graphic Organizers

* Visual notes can help you make connections and understand concepts:
  + Understanding improves by seeing connections within the big picture; o Making connections makes information easier to recall.
* Establishing meaningful connections between the information and your prior knowledge and experiences enhances learning:
  + You use higher order thinking skills by evaluating the information to create an image associated with it; therefore, you are thinking about what you are learning in a new way that will help you understand and recall information easily.
* Thinking in pictures helps you analyze and interpret information using your abilities to recall and understand:
  + Pictures and visuals expand your understanding and allow you to analyze and interpret information (Pauk, 2001, p. 323).
  + Thinking visually increases understanding and remembering of information because you use both sides of your brain (Pauk, 2001, p. 326).

# How to Start Taking Visual Notes

* Convert the sentences you’ve read or heard into a diagram or graph.
* Use concept maps to summarize key concepts or redraw the map to include new concepts and more information.
* Link new ideas in your map to ones you already know or redraw your map to gain a different view of the information.
* Don’t be afraid to use colours, symbols, shapes, different font sizes and types.
* Focus on main ideas and keep information concise.
* Be creative with your notes!

# Types of Visual Note Taking Techniques

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| --- | --- |
| *Concept Map or Mind Map*   * Used to show how concepts relate to a main idea. * Helps to cement important ideas, concepts and their relationships in your memory. | Image of concept map, mind map, timeline, T-chart, diagram labeling |
| *Venn Diagram*   Used for comparing and contrasting concepts. |  |
| *Timeline*   Used to understand a sequence of events. |  |
| *T-Chart*   Used for comparison between concepts. |  |
| *Diagram*   Used to understand how an object works or the different components of an object. |  |

References

Andrade, J. (2010). What does doodling do? *Applied Cognitive Psychology, 24*(1), 100-106.

Pauk, W. (2001). *How to study in college.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.