

## Visual Note Taking

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 visual-organization (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;
  - 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!

