

Strategy: Pre-reading strategies/Using infographics

Initiating pre-reading discussion can generate student interest in a topic before students begin reading about it. This can build engagement and increase the likelihood that they will read the material.

Related to this strategy and involving the use of Wordle is the potential benefit of using infographics (visual interpretations of data and information) to engage students in course content.

Origin

Bandeem, H. & Sawin, J. (2012). Encourage students to read through the use of data visualization. *College Teaching*, 60:1, 38-39.

Daily Tekk. (February 27, 2012). Over 100 Incredible Infographic Tools and Resources (Categorized). <http://dailytekk.com/2012/02/27/over-100-incredible-infographic-tools-and-resources/>.

Schulten, K. (August 23, 2010). Teaching with infographics: Places to start. The Learning Network: Teaching & Learning with *The New York Times*. <http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/08/23/teaching-with-infographics-places-to-start/>.

Application

Wordle (<http://www.wordle.net/>)

Using technology, such as Wordle, can create word clouds of the reading (or a portion of it) for students to analyze. Word clouds can engage students in pre-reading conversations to:

- Understand major themes: What words do you notice? Why are they most frequent?
- Identify and define unfamiliar terms
- Connect with previous readings: Compare multiple word clouds to highlight connections
- Point out unexpected words: Identify terms that are surprising or unexpected
- Look for missing words
- Theorize connections among words: How are concepts associated?

As the authors suggest, using visual representations of the concepts in the reading can prompt student interest and encourage reading. Here are more sites where instructors can locate visuals, otherwise known as infographics, that can engage student interest in topics. Instructors can also consider having students create an infographic of their own as a demonstration of their understanding of a concept.

Visual.ly (<http://visual.ly/>)

Browse the showcase of infographics and/or create your own. Consider using these to “frame up” readings for students.

Information aesthetics (infosthetics.com)

This site collects projects that represent data or information in original or intriguing ways.

Visualizing.org (<http://www.visualizing.org/>)

This site is a community of people “making sense of complex issues through data and design.”

Cool Infographics (<http://www.coolinfographics.com/>)

This blog not only features new infographics, but it also analyzes the information and data presented and provides feedback for designers.

Good Infographics (www.good.is/infographics)

This site features infographics related to the organization's mission of "pushing the world forward."

Daily Infographic (<http://dailyinfographic.com/>)

This site provides a new infographic every day.

Certain organizations also feature issue-specific infographics that can provide information and data for students to review. Among these are the following:

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

(<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/infographics/Pages/infographics.aspx>)

The Heritage Foundation (<http://www.heritage.org/multimedia/infographic>)

Reflection

- What other uses can you identify for infographics?
- What other strategies can you identify for pre-reading?