

Teaching Strategies Using VariQuest[®] Visual Learning Tools with Inspiration[®] 9 Software

Classification

1. Customize the classification template for a specific topic (ex. Animal Kingdoms, Elements in the Periodic Table) and print a poster from the Poster Maker.
2. Pre-cut shapes or symbols for the related topic using the Cutout Maker.
3. Pass out shapes to all students and divide the class into two teams.
4. Call on students to add their shape to the appropriate branch of the classification chart.

Concept/Mind Maps

1. Create concept/mind map with Main Idea symbol and add several connections using Links to additional Subtopic branches with Symbols, leaving them blank.
2. Divide class into groups and print one poster of the Concept Map for each group.
3. Designate a subtopic and colored marker for each student and have students work together to fill in details and notes about the main idea. Ensure that all students are participating by the colors of the writing on the maps.
4. Encourage students to add additional branches, subtopics and details when necessary.
5. Each group can create a mind map for the same topic, or each can research different topics.
6. Have groups compare mind maps with other groups in the class and discuss any similarities or differences.
7. Have students give group presentations on their topic and display maps throughout the course of the unit.

Essay Prompt

1. Create a Concept Map, Timeline, Compare and Contrast chart or Cause and Effect based on a topic of study.
2. Fill in all main ideas or details that are key points students should know after studying the concept and print a poster.
3. Use the poster as an essay prompt for a timed essay. Students should use the main points that have been outlined in the graphic organizer to structure their essays and make sure to include additional details.

Prior Knowledge

1. Assess student's prior knowledge on a topic, such as Branches of Government, by printing a poster of a blank template.
2. Conduct a class brainstorm session to gather any information students already know about the topic and record (or have students record) on the template where appropriate.
3. Revisit the template at the conclusion of the unit and challenge students to complete the areas left blank prior to studying the key concepts.

Class Brainstorm

1. Project Inspiration 9 onto a screen for all students to see.
2. Work with students to fill in a template for a concept that you will refer to throughout the year, such as Evaluating an Experiment's Design or Evaluating Information from Web Sites.
3. Once completed, print a poster of the completed graphic organizer to display throughout the year for student reference.

Professional Development

1. Use Concept Mapping to plan for a grade level unit, theme or to plan curriculum district-wide across grade levels.
2. Customize a template with a main idea and defined branches based on your needs. Examples include:
 - Cross-curricular (subtopics would be the different subject areas)
 - Multiple Intelligences (subtopics would be the multiple intelligences)
 - Cross-Grade level by Subject Area (subtopics would be the grade levels)
3. Print a poster of the template and have teachers in the school/district work in appropriate groups to plan out a unit, theme or curriculum for the year.
4. Display posters and discuss as a large group if there are key concepts/standards missing.
5. Identify the gaps and construct a plan to address student learning in these areas.