

THE POWER OF SIMPLE VISUAL IMAGINING

Teachers Guide

Relevant National Content Standards for Entrepreneurship

Business Functions The business activities performed by entrepreneurs in managing the business.	
L	Marketing Management Understands the concepts, processes, and systems needed to determine and satisfy customer needs/wants/expectations, meet business goals/objectives, and create new product/service ideas
Product/Service Creation	
L.01	Explain methods to generate a product/service idea
L.02	Generate product/service ideas
L.04	Determine product/service to fill customer need

Problem Solving and Selling Using Visual Thinking and Learning

Educators have become well versed in the fact that there are three basic learning styles (visual, kinesthetic, and auditory). By tapping into all three learning styles, it has been well documented that understanding and active engagement in the learning process increases.

In *“The Back of the Napkin, Solving Problems and Selling Ideas with Pictures,”* author Dan Roam provides a background of why simple drawing techniques can so effective in problem-solving and selling in general. For the entrepreneur, being able to reach the customer or client quickly, effectively, and efficiently is paramount for success. The quicker the sale, the faster the cash flow.

Visual Learning

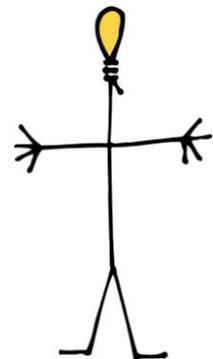


Visual learning is a teaching and learning style in which ideas, concepts, data and other information are associated with images and techniques. Graphs, icons, idea maps, illustrations and many other graphic organizers enhance both thinking and learning. Visual images allow the audience to focus on meaning, reorganize and group ideas more easily, and adjust and adapt ideas and concepts “on the fly.” Visual images and brainstorming go hand in hand.

Visual learning techniques

Graphic organizers like diagrams, webs and concept maps allow the use of symbols to represent ideas and information. (Entrepreneurs can use graphic images as they work with their partners, boards of directors, employees, venture capitalists, and clients/customers. Simple and quickly drawn icons (drawn images) allow symbols to represent ideas. Words can then further clarify meaning.

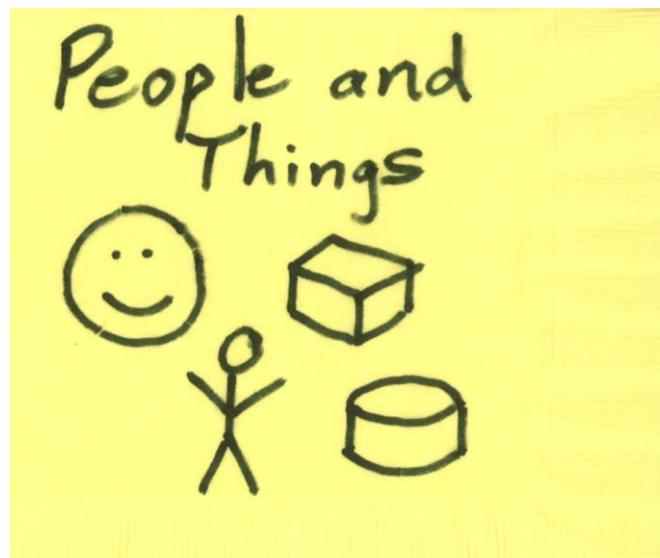
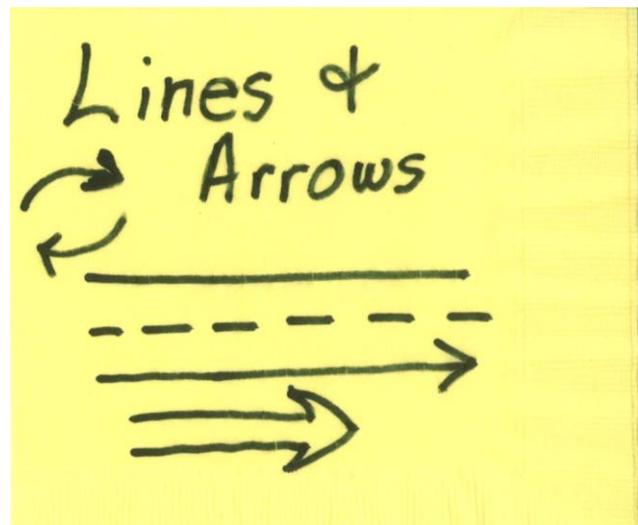
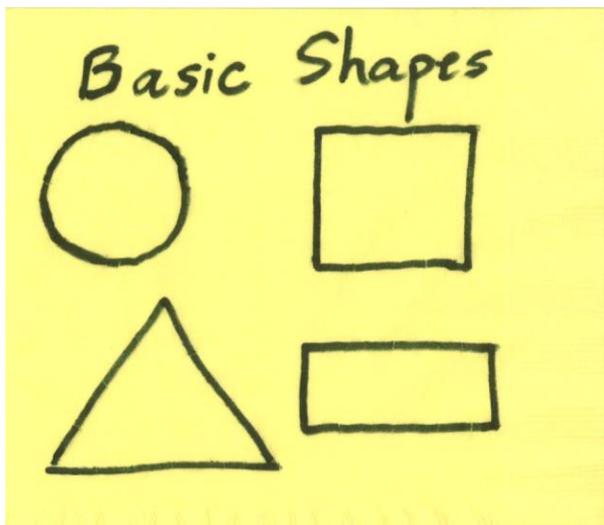
By representing information spatially and with images, you can focus on meaning, reorganize and group similar ideas easily, and make better use of visual memory.



In a study entitled *Graphic Organizers: A Review of Scientifically Based Research*, The Institute for the Advancement of Research in Education at AEL evaluated 29 studies and concluded that visual learning improves student performance in critical thinking, retention, comprehension, and organization. And, doesn't an entrepreneur want that same enhancement as they problem solve and sell their products and services?

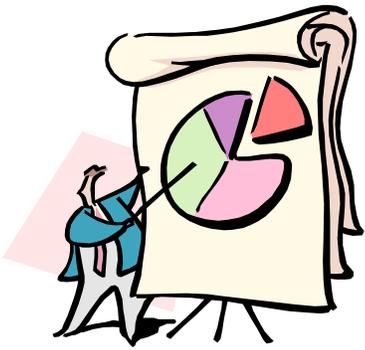
Visual Thinking

You don't need artistic talent to use visual images to enhance thinking and learning. Author Dan Roam broke the images into very simple categories: 1) the basic shapes of circles, boxes, triangles, and rectangles 2) lines and arrows, and 3) people and things like smiley faces, stick figures, etc.



Activity: Purchase a packet of plain white or light color napkins to distribute to your students. Give them markers and have them practice these basic shapes. Discuss how they might use visual thinking and drawing to sell a product or idea. An alternative to using napkins is to use flip chart paper or poster board. These provide larger and more visible surfaces for group presentations and the students will still be using visual thinking and drawing.

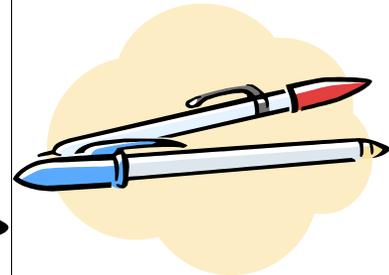
Supplies:



Flip Chart Paper



Napkins



Markers



Paper

Now, to prove how easy and effective it can be to use visual imaging techniques, assign them a simple idea to develop and propose to the class or a product/service concept to “sell” to the class.



Ideas for Visual Thinking Activity:

- Develop an idea to promote our town/city as an “entrepreneur-friendly” community.
- Tell (or sell) the idea that green energy can be the new entrepreneurial frontier.
- Compare/contrast 2 or 3 different ways to solve a problem facing your school:
 - Decreasing attendance at sporting event(s)
 - Not enough leaders stepping forward for the student organizations
 - Decreasing membership in your Career Student Organization
 - Ways to attract more customers to the school store or a concession stand operation
 - Advertising ideas/options to sell more tickets to the school play
 - Recruitment ideas to get more students to enroll in career education classes (or an entrepreneurship class/program)

Give the individual(s) or groups a single task, idea, or proposed problem to solve or let them choose from several options. Allow adequate time (one or two class periods) to sketch out their presentation on the “back of a napkin” or on flip chart paper. Then, have them present to another person or group and get their feedback. Have them sketch out new solutions or ideas on clean napkins or flip chart paper after the initial presentation. This will show the power of group visual thinking to create even more ideas and solutions.

Remember, the purpose of this is to let their creativity flow and to have them practice the power of visual thinking.

Now, turn ‘em loose and let ‘em have some fun!

