Drawing for Understanding

Overview

Students illustrate an abstract concept or idea using drawings, graphs, diagrams, flowcharts, or mind maps.

According to generative learning theory, when a learner creates an image representing content learned previously, the learner identifies relevant information, organizes it into a drawing, and uses prior knowledge to clarify their understanding.

Drawing for Understanding is ideal for: understanding dynamic complex processes, and system level or big picture summary.

Drawing for Understanding meets the following WSU Learning Goals: critical and creative thinking, quantitative reasoning, scientific literacy, information literacy, communication, and depth, breadth, and integration of learning.

Group size: 1-3 | **Active Time**: 15 mins | **Prep. Time:** Low

Active time is an estimate and may vary depending on your class.

Implementation

Suggested Tech Tools: Blackboard Discussion Board, Blackboard Assignment, Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, VoiceThread, Google Drawings, Padlet

Instructor:
Give students a topic and context for what you want them to draw. It is helpful to give an example. Depending on the size of your class, provide students with drawing materials.

Students:
1. Draw the process (or structure) of the topic. Be sure to include all parts and show how they fit together.
2. Be prepared to submit your image and share with the class.

Variations & Tips:

➢ For more tactile engagement in **face-to-face** courses, use the whiteboard. Note that this option does not allow students to refer to their drawing for later reflection.

➢ In **online** courses, use VoiceThread or Blackboard Collaborate Ultra and encourage students to use the whiteboard feature for drawing.

➢ For **large enrollment** and **video conference (VC)** courses, have students share their drawings in class using an app like Padlet.

➢ Many students find it helpful to be given very specific directions on what to draw including a list of what elements must be included. Students still figure out how the pieces come together.

➢ Provide students with partially completed drawings that they complete. This may save time and help students focus on learning rather than drawing; it can also be utilized as an assessment.

You may also be interested in:

Concept Mapping
Defining Features Matrix
Twenty Questions

Resources:

The Generative Drawing Principle in Multimedia Learning

Let's explore the possibilities together!

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To find more activities, visit the LI website and select Teaching Tool Boxes.