(Info)Graphically inclined: A framework of infographic learning

**Teaser Text:** Exploration, investigation, creation, and integration of infographics can be powerful ways to increase student comprehension of graphics in informational text and provide opportunities for use in their own writing.

**Pause and Ponder**

1) What types of visual representations are you seeing in the children’s literature, magazines, digital resources, and websites your students are exposed to?

2) Do your students know how to interpret these visual representations in order to fully understand what the author/creator was trying to share or teach?

3) What kinds of instructional strategies can you use to help your students understand these more complex visuals?

4) When your students share information, what are some ways to teach them how to use these visual techniques to represent what they want to say?

Infographics, or information graphics, are everywhere. These complex visual representations of information or data are a part of the reading landscape for adults, and increasingly, for children. In our work with recent award-winning nonfiction texts for children (Smith & Robertson, 2019), we noticed an increased use of graphics with information (such as infographics) and one book written almost entirely in infographics (Jenkins, 2016). These findings led us to focus on this infographic trend in our work with teachers and with students.
In this article, we share a working definition of infographics, scholarship on multimodality and using multimodal texts like infographics in the classroom, and a four-part framework for infographic learning. Curriculum standards in English language arts and in other content areas often include standards for interpreting a variety of visual information, such as graphics, as well as writing using illustrations and graphical representations. Our 21st century students need to learn ways to read and represent information in a variety of formats (Beschorner & Hall, 2018; Dalton, 2012; Kang, 2018), not only to meet curriculum standards, but also to creatively communicate in their visual world. Figure 1 (created using canva.com) provides an example of an infographic representing an overview of why infographics should be studied in classrooms with instruction in both reading and writing, as learning in one supports learning in the other (International Reading Association & National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2011; Graham & Hebert, 2010).
Figure 1. Why Study Infographics?

**Reason 1: Standards**
Standards at all grades include reading and writing with visual images and with a variety of graphical representations of data. Studying infographics fits the standards, especially when focusing on digital environments and the use of technology.

**Reason 2: Real World Use**
Infographics are used everywhere in real world texts including newspapers, magazines, websites, and children’s books. Studying infographics helps students understand the texts that are an increasing part of their visual world.

**Reason 3: Thinking Level**
Exploring, investigating, creating, and integrating infographics requires the use of higher-order thinking skills like understanding, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, and creating. This level of thinking should always be a goal in every classroom.

**Reason 4: Fun/Engaging**
What student doesn’t want to find colorful and visual ways to represent their knowledge and understanding of concepts? Learning how to understand and create infographics for student-chosen projects is the ultimate in student engagement.
What are infographics?

The term infographic comes from information graphic. Infographics are visual representations of information, data, or ideas (Fowler, 2015; Gebre, 2018; National Geographic Kids, 2015; Yearta, Kelly, Kissel, & Schonhar, 2018). They are often used to communicate multiple ideas and go beyond the traditional graphics of charts, timelines, tables, or graphs (Krauss, 2012). The graphics and design elements allow the reader to see a visual of the numbers and data, which supports understanding. Krauss noted that since infographics use both words and visuals, they “strike the sweet spot where linguistic and nonlinguistic systems converge” (p. 11). In this article, we use the term graphic to represent a broad range of visuals including pictures, illustrations, photographs, icons, images, and traditional graphics.

Infographics are designed to compare data, explain information, show connections, and list facts or numbers (Martineau, 2016). They may include charts, graphs, maps, word clouds, diagrams, timelines, or visual articles (Jenkins, 2016; Martineau, 2016; National Geographic Kids, 2017). Yet, the graphics are specifically designed for the information presented. For example, in Animals by the Numbers: A Book of Animal Infographics, Jenkins (2016) included illustrations of a horn or antler within an otherwise standard bar graph to provide information on not only the size of animals’ headgear, but a visual of each (pp. 24-25). The conservation-themed book What a Waste: Trash, Recycling, and Protecting Our Planet (French, 2019) used an image of a plastic bottle divided into sections based on what happens to plastic bottles after use (pp. 30-31) and a pipe that begins at a toilet and ends with clean water to illustrate what happens to sewage (pp. 54-55). Infographics draw readers in with captivating visual designs and provide another way to process, understand, and remember information.

Multimodality
Interest in how to teach elementary students to comprehend informational texts that include features such as basic graphs, charts, and diagrams has been around for decades (Weintraub, 1967). However, the increasing use of visual features that go beyond basic graphical representations of information to include the use of images, space, and design requires a more complex theory of learning, even for our youngest learners.

Multimodality acknowledges that contemporary society is “sharpening the focus on how the visual and other modes are configured and put to work for the purposes of society - and how (as well as why) this might be redesigned,” often using technological advances (Jewitt, 2009, p. 4). Multimodality usually encompasses text, images, speech, gestures, gaze, posture, etc. (Jewitt, 2009). In today’s world, even the aesthetics of everyday communications has changed from merely “functional and monomodal” to incorporate design elements as a way to communicate (van Leeuwen, 2017, p. 22). Multimodality is integrated into the world we live in.

Infographics are examples of multimodal texts, sometimes known as multimodal ensembles (Serafini, 2014), as they use more than one mode to represent meaning. In print-based multimodal ensembles, such as infographics, these modes fall within the categories of written language, visual images, and design elements (Serafini, 2014). Each mode performs functions that complement the other modes, yet they each have their own affordances and constraints (Kress, 2003). Together, the modes work to create meaning. According to Serafini, “[v]isual literacy is the process of generating meanings in transaction with multimodal ensembles, including written text, visual images, and design elements, from a variety of perspectives to meet the requirements of particular social contexts” (p. 23). Thus, Serafini suggested teachers develop lessons that focus on visual literacy and multimodal ensembles to help students understand these complex representations.
Comprehension of Graphical Representations

The proliferation of more complex visual graphics, such as infographics, in nonfiction texts has continued to increase in recent years (Smith & Robertson, 2019). Infographics designed for younger audiences are appearing in children’s magazines, informational texts, and nonfiction picture books. Research has shown that as much as 60% of the information contained in graphics within science and social studies textbooks and other books available to children is not in the written text (Fingeret, 2012). Moreover, reading comprehension for third-grade readers shows that 12.81% of comprehension is strongly related to comprehension of graphical devices (Roberts, Norman, & Cocco, 2015). Not only do students need to be able to critically read graphical representations to become educated consumers (Lamb, Polman, Newman, & Smith, 2019), they also need to understand the purpose of specific graphical devices and how to interpret them (Roberts et al., 2015).

Students are being exposed to complex graphics in print and digital spaces, and “the canon of devices that they are expected to interpret is a fast-moving target” (Roberts et al., 2013, p. 21). In addition to traditional features such as captioned images, maps, flowcharts, and diagrams (Roberts, Brugar, & Norman, 2014), complex graphical representations such as infographics need to be considered as an increasingly prevalent component in nonfiction texts for K-12 students, especially in more recent texts and in digital environments.

Infographic Instruction

Infographic instruction has been implemented in recent years, often in science courses at the middle school, high school, or university level (Davidson, 2014; Fowler, 2015; Gebre, 2018; Lamb et al., 2014; Saunders, Horrell, & Murray, 2018). Additional scholarship includes infographic comprehension and composition within a high school social studies class studying
migration (Staurseth & Haland, 2018) and middle school language arts students making connections between *To Kill a Mockingbird* and contemporary social justice issues (Yearta et al., 2018). There is less scholarship, however, on infographic instruction at the elementary level (e.g. Thacker, Stoddard, & van Hover, 2019).

**How to Make it Work: A Framework of Infographic Learning**

Teachers can scaffold students’ infographic experiences to support their understanding of how text and graphics work together to provide information in a complex and visual manner. Several scholars and educators have proposed models for multimodal and/or infographic instruction. Serafini (2014) suggested students not only be exposed to and explore many multimodal ensembles, but also engage in producing their own. Lamb et al. (2014) cited a series of infographic activities used with high school science students that included visual read-aloud/think alouds of infographics, re-visualizing the infographic data, and scaffolding students’ infographic creations. Thacker et al. (2019) discussed how elementary social studies teachers might engage their students in studying and creating infographics. Others have proposed infographic or graphical representation lessons in middle and high school as a way to present research or writing (Staurseth & Haland, 2018; Yearta et al., 2018). We build upon the existing scholarship to offer infographic instruction, mentor texts, and examples that could be used by elementary and middle grade teachers.

Below, we provide a framework for infographic exploration, investigation, creation, and integration. See Table 1 for the phases of this framework, purpose of each phase, instructional steps, and guiding questions to use with students.
## Table 1

**Infographic Instruction Framework and Guiding Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework Phases</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Instructional Steps</th>
<th>Guiding Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Exploration**  | To build broad background knowledge about different types of infographics | Teachers introduce students to different types of infographics and model their reading process for each. Students explore and discuss a wide variety of infographics, as a class and in small groups, using the guiding questions. | How do you read the infographics? *  
What do you look at first, next, last - the graphics or the words? Does it matter? *  
What do you notice about these infographics that are similar or different than others? |
| **Investigation** | To show understanding of how specific infographics represent information in both print and graphic form | Teachers model analyzing an infographic by determining what information is conveyed through words, graphics, and design elements. Students use the guiding questions to analyze specific infographics, and to consider author/creator decisions. | How do the words, graphics, and design work together to create meaning?  
Is the information included in the infographic also written in the main text? *  
Why do you think the author chose this type of infographic to represent the information? |
| **Creation**     | To create infographics to represent information | Teachers model infographic creation using the guiding questions, explaining design choices, and acknowledging other ways the information might be presented as an infographic. Teachers provide instruction on the use of digital tools or platforms, if needed. | What do you want to communicate?  
What kind of infographic makes sense given your data or information?  
What design elements can you incorporate? |
Students work individually, or in small groups, to create an infographic. Other infographics may serve as mentor texts.

### Integration

To integrate an infographic into a larger piece of writing

Teachers and students revisit infographics previously explored and analyzed.

- Teachers provide students with examples of how infographics can be integrated into a larger text, such as a picture book, magazine article, or writing piece.
- Students use the guiding questions as they integrate an infographic into a larger text.

What do you need to explain in the main text?

- How can the infographic contribute to the reader’s understanding of your writing piece?
- Does the main text and the infographic work together by each providing unique, but connected, information?

### Note

Questions with an asterisk have been adapted and reprinted from


### Exploration

Providing students with opportunities to explore a wide variety of infographics is important in order to build broad background knowledge about different types of infographics.

For example, infographics may be used to compare two or more things, serve as a timeline to tell a story in chronological order, represent numbers or an amount using graphics, include visual information on a traditional map, explain a process, or break down a big idea into smaller pieces.
to make it easier to understand. Teachers should discuss these different types of infographics with students, show examples of each, and model how to read them.

During the Exploration phase, teachers can provide students with many different types of infographics and use the Exploration questions in Table 1 as a guide to model how they approach infographics. For example, in the nonfiction middle-grade book *Trash Revolution: Breaking the Waste Cycle* (Fyvie, 2018), infographics are included to explain the processes for turning waste into usable items. National Geographic Kids *By the Numbers 3.14* (2017) contains timeline infographics illustrating famous songs (pp. 42-43), toy fads (pp. 50-51), and video game heroes (pp. 62-63) over the years. Infographics may use graphics to represent numbers or an amount, such as animals’ heartbeats per minute in *Animals by the Numbers: A Book of Animal Infographics* (Jenkins, 2017, p. 23) and the percentage of food that is wasted in *What a Waste: Trash, Recycling, and Protecting our Planet* (French, 2019, pp. 48-49). Map infographics are in *The 50 States* by Gabrielle Balkan and illustrated by Sol Linero. Teachers could display one or more of these infographics under a document camera, model their reading process of the infographics by discussing what they look at first, next, last, whether reading order is important, and share their observations regarding what they notice about the different types of infographics. These think alouds might consider the title, written text, color, type of graphics, and whether there are indicators to let the reader know what parts fit together more closely.

An important next step in the Exploration phase is to provide students with multiple types of infographics or books with infographics to practice within small groups. More and more nonfiction picture books and student magazines (e.g. *Scholastic News*) include infographics to add meaning and visual appeal to the content. Table 2 provides a list of books with many infographics throughout. These books can be resources to provide students with examples of
different types of infographics. Alternatively, teachers may also look for infographic examples online (see resources in More to Explore).

Table 2

Selected Books with Many Infographics

| *The 50 States* by Gabrielle Balkan |
| Awesome Space Tech: 40 Amazing Infographics for Kids by Jenn Dlugos and Charles Hatton |
| What a Waste: Trash, Recycling, and Protecting Our Planet by Jess French |
| Trash Revolution: Breaking the Waste Cycle by Erica Fyvie |
| *Bible Infographics for Kids: Giants, Ninja Skills, a Talking Donkey, and What’s the Deal with the Tabernacle?* by Harvest House Publishers |
| *US Government through Infographics* (Super Social Studies Infographics series) by Nadia Higgins |
| *Animals by the Numbers: A Book of Animal Infographics* by Steve Jenkins |
| *Economics through Infographics* (Super Social Studies Infographics series) by Karen Latchana Kenney |
| *Infographics for Kids* by Susan Martineau |
| *By the Numbers 3.14: 110.01 Cool Infographics Packed With Stats and Figures* by National Geographic Kids |

Note: Asterisks indicate that the author, publisher, or series listed has additional book(s) that contain infographics.
Investigation

Infographics are used to explain information in a visually appealing, easy to understand format. Yet, the multimodal components require readers to use the text and graphics to make meaning. The second phase of this framework, Investigation, is an extension of the Exploration phase and allows students to further analyze and understand how specific infographics represent information.

The Investigation phase focuses on the information that is conveyed through written text, graphics, and design elements in a particular infographic. Separating these modes is an important step in students understanding the significance of attending to both the printed word and the visual elements. Lamb et al. (2014) observed that “a strong infographic depicts multiple layers of related information and data, often densely, displaying deep interrelationships among variables and ideas” (p. 27). Teachers and students can examine how these multiple layers work together to make meaning and critically deconstruct model infographics (Lamb et al., 2014; Staurseth & Haland, 2018; Yearta et al., 2018). Table 1 includes guiding questions that may be used when analyzing infographics.

Teachers can think aloud as they model analyzing infographics and draw students’ attention to not only the information gained through the words and graphics, but also how elements such as color, size, scale, space, and typography influence the meaning. If the infographic is a supplemental part of a larger text (e.g. article, picture book, textbook), teachers might consider aloud how the infographic adds new meaning or a different perspective to the main text. Finally, teachers can use the analysis to help students understand why the author chose a particular type of infographic to represent the information. Table 3 is an example of how
teachers might record their observations and understanding using the infographic in “Skyscrapers of the Rain Forest” from *Infographics for Kids* (Martineau, 2016, pp. 38-39).

Table 3

*Infographic Observations and Understandings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information gained from words</th>
<th>Information gained from graphics</th>
<th>Design elements that impacted my understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are four layers of a rainforest: forest floor, understory, canopy, and emergent layer.</td>
<td>Graphics of people are stacked on top of each other to represent the height of each layer of the rainforest.</td>
<td>Colored boxes contain information about the layers and are the same color as the horizontal lines showing the height of each layer of the rainforest (red for emergent layer, yellow for understory, etc.). The colors helped me organize information for each layer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The height of the rainforest levels can be measured by the number of six-foot people that can be stacked: forest floor (1 person), understory (10 people), canopy (20 people), emergent layer (33 people).</td>
<td>Raindrops fall from the sky and splatter when they hit the ground.</td>
<td>The graphics of stacked people helped me visualize the height of each layer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trees are very close together, so it may take rain 10 minutes to reach the ground.</td>
<td>The plants on the forest floor are dark in color. As the trees get taller, the leaves have a lighter color.</td>
<td>Some of the words are placed within the blue raindrops. This drew my attention to the words and helped me make a connection between the words and graphics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are specific creatures that live in the different layers of the rainforest.</td>
<td>The color of the plants helped me see patterns. I infer that the taller trees have lighter leaves because they get more sunlight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Placing the creatures within the levels helped me understand the habitat of various animals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some teachers may choose to end infographic instruction after these first two phases, as students have an increased understanding of why infographics are used and how to effectively read them. The following two phases move from reading infographics to creating them, as reading and writing are reciprocal, supportive, and complementary processes (Clay, 2005; Duffy, 2003; Rudell & Unrau, 2004); learning in one supports learning in the other.

**Creation**

The third phase of the framework scaffolds students’ infographic creation and guides students in creating infographics to represent information. National Geographic Kids (2017) states that “infographics are most interesting when they answer a question, tell a story, or share a surprise” (p. 238). Students are often answering questions, telling stories, and sharing surprising information through activities such as book reviews or reports, research projects, and personal writing. Projects such as these may use infographics as an innovative alternative to a traditional written piece. Additionally, infographics can be created as a supplementary piece to a written assignment.

Creating infographics involves higher-level thinking skills as students must analyze their information, synthesize multiple pieces of information, and make evaluations to determine what to include in the limited space of an infographic. Teachers and students can consider what they want to communicate, the kind of infographic that makes sense given the data or information, and any design elements that might be included. Gebre (2018) noted that “creating an infographic is a knowledge construction process” (p. 16). Thus, it is essential for a teacher to model the thought process that goes into creating an infographic, as there are many decisions that need to be made.
The guiding questions in Table 1 can help teachers and students as they make decisions while creating an infographic. For example, a teacher might survey the class to determine the number of students who own a pet and the types of pets these students own. Next, the teacher and students need to look at this data to determine the type of infographic that makes sense. Our example in Figure 2 was created in Microsoft PowerPoint. We began with a title to represent the infographic and designed it using Word Art. A solid line was inserted from the Shapes feature to divide the page in half for the two sets of data. We then considered how to display the data and add design elements. First, the pet categories were modeled after an infographic in *Animals by the Numbers: A Book of Animal Infographics* (Jenkins, 2016) which used the size of circles to represent animals’ biomass (pp. 13-15). Icons were available to insert, so we chose icons to match the pet categories and changed the colors for each. The height and width of each animal was changed within the Graphic Format tab. Boxes were added next to each pet category by inserting a text box to include the number and type of each pet, and the colors were changed to match the icons. A bright yellow box was added at the top to indicate that the sizes of the icons represent the number of pets. The second set of data, the number of students who own a pet, was included on the right side of the infographic. We chose icons to represent people, organized them in groups of five, and changed the color of the icons to illustrate the number/percentage of students who owned a pet. Finally, we added written text at the bottom to explain the icons. The final infographic is an example of a visual representation of data and incorporates written text, graphics, and design features.
Infographic creation can also be modeled as a way to summarize or share information from a narrative text. Figure 3 is an example of how an infographic can be used to summarize a text and the decisions that were made in the infographic creation. This infographic was created on canva.com and summarizes an article found on www.newsela.com about a boy who wrote a book based on his interest in the music from the Broadway musical “Hamilton.” Figures 2 and 3 illustrate one way an infographic could be created for each set of data or information, as there are many infographic templates and design options available. Teachers might create infographics to model for their students, explain their design process, and engage students in a discussion of other ways the information might be presented.
Figure 3. Spencer Park’s Journey Infographic and Description.

1) Read “Two boys take a shot at hooking kids on Alexander Hamilton” from newsela.com (published 6/24/2018)

2) Took notes on the main ideas in this article – determined 5 important points that summarize the article.

3) Looked on canva.com at infographics templates for one that had 5 spots to share ideas. Picked this one. The original template used blue and orange. Changed it to blue and green (personal choice).

4) Decided on a title for the infographic and wrote the overall idea below. Found a graphic that related to the word “journey.”

5) Determined the language for each main point that would fit in the allotted space for each of the 5 ideas and included a short description below a label. Some were longer than others so had to be concise in language so the idea would fit and look good. This meant considering the font size of the text for the label and the description across all sections. Decided to use blue color for text in these sections. The template used white.

6) Found a graphic on the website that fit the idea of each section. Section 1 was about listening. Section 2 was about reading. Section 3 was about attending a musical. Section 4 was about Spencer. Section 5 was about writing a book. Made sure all graphics were approximately the same size and lined up with each other.
The examples described above use digital tools to create infographics. Dalton (2014) cautions that in order to teach students multimodal composition, exploration of the possible tools and devices to be used will need to be part of the creation process. For instance, students might need instruction using Microsoft Word or PowerPoint to find the Word Art, icons, and how to change the size and colors of text and graphics. Online platforms (e.g. Canva, Easelly, and Piktochart) offer templates for infographic creation, but students will likely need instruction on using these platforms and inserting information and graphics into the templates. If the digital tools become a barrier to infographic creation, teachers and students can use paper and writing utensils.

As with traditional writing, using mentor texts can be extremely helpful as students begin their own infographic creations (Dorfman & Cappelli, 2009; Fletcher, 2011). Staurseth and Haland (2018) note that it is important to provide a range of visually dominant and print-dominant mentor texts, as these examples will likely influence how students construct and design their own products. Teachers might show students how to create an infographic like the example in Figure 2 that was modeled after Steve Jenkins’ infographics in *Animals by the Numbers: A Book of Animal Infographics* (2016). Process infographics, like those described above in *Trash Revolution: Breaking the Waste Cycle* (Fyvie, 2018), could be mentor texts for describing the stages of an event. Visual articles, such as those in *National Geographic Kids By the Numbers: 3.14* (2017), could serve as mentor texts for breaking down a big idea into smaller pieces by providing related facts using numbers, words, and graphics to explain information. Mentors texts can be from books, websites, previous student work, or a teacher-created piece. Creating infographics using mentor texts is as much about modeling the thinking process as it is about the actual infographic used as a model.
Integration

The final phase of the framework is to integrate an infographic into a piece of writing. While some infographics are self-standing, and some books include only infographics such as these, often an infographic is used as supplementary information within a larger text. Teachers can support students during this phase by revisiting the information from the Exploration and Investigation phases to review why specific infographics are used, how information is presented within the main text versus the infographic, and how the words, graphics, and design work together to create meaning.

Some books could serve as mentor texts for integration. For example, *Trash Revolution: Breaking the Waste Cycle*, written by Erica Fyvie and illustrated by Bill Slavin, includes information in paragraph form to provide readers with details about trash and recycling as well as infographics to illustrate relationships and processes related to the waste cycle. The infographics and the written paragraphs include information on the same topic, but the details are presented in either narrative form or in the visual infographic. Infographic integration examples can also be found in magazines, such as *Scholastic News*.

Teachers can encourage students to carefully consider how they might use infographics to add supplementary information to a writing piece or to provide further examples or explanation. Using the class pet example in Figure 2, teachers might model how this infographic fits into a shared writing piece about how students are similar and different. If students are working on personal narratives, teachers might encourage students to include a visual timeline to document a series of events. Infographic maps could be created as a supplement to a social studies or science paper. A compare/contrast infographic might be used to represent two characters within a book report. In most cases, the information included within infographics is not directly stated in the
main text and adds to the readers’ knowledge of the topic. Thus, students need to consider how their main text and infographic(s) work together by providing unique, yet connected, information.

**Potential Challenges When Learning About or Creating Infographics**

The multimodal nature of infographics makes learning from and creating them complex. Below, we include potential challenges that students may encounter when working with infographics.

**Understanding the Basics**

Many infographics expand upon traditional graphical representations such as timelines, pie charts, and bar graphs (Krauss, 2012). If students do not understand how to read, interpret, or create these traditional graphical representations, infographics may be overly challenging. Teachers should consider teaching students how to read and create basic graphical representations before delving into more complex infographics.

**Thinking Visually**

Often print is privileged in schools, both in what students consume and create. It may seem natural for teachers to ask students to take their written text and transform it into an infographic. Yet, Dalton (2012) suggested that teachers “avoid relying on writing first” (pg. 337), as some students may begin with the graphics and then add text. Additionally, consider allowing students to work in pairs or small groups so they can talk about their understanding and think through design choices together.

**Creating with Design**

When creating infographics, the design choices may feel overwhelming and could present a unique challenge for students. They may wonder how to represent their information, how much
text to include, or how color may enhance their infographic. Teachers can provide support by having many examples of mentor texts available (see Table 2) and by thinking through their own infographic creations aloud (see Figure 3).

Online platforms are available and offer infographic design templates. While these templates can make creating infographics appear simpler due to the ease of dropping items into a predesigned template, they can also be confining if the available templates do not fit the information that students are trying to represent. Teachers might also consider modeling infographic creation using design tools in PowerPoint or Word documents, or drawing infographics using paper and writing utensils.

Conclusion

As infographics continue to appear in many different types of texts, it is important for students to understand their purpose and how to use them (Roberts et al., 2015). The Infographic Instruction Framework provides teachers and students with opportunities to widely explore infographics, analyze the ways in which the words, graphics, and design work together, and create infographics to represent information in a complex, visually appealing format. Presenting students with multiple connected opportunities to explore, discuss, and create their own infographics prepares them to be more visually literate in their increasingly multimodal world.

Take Action

1) Gather resources. Create a list of infographics in your curriculum books and digital materials and from other resources that you use in your classroom to use with the Infographic Instruction Framework. Be sure to collect a variety of types of infographics to work with.
2) Explore and investigate using those resources. If the infographic is a more complex version of a basic graphical representation (e.g. bar graph, pie chart, map), make sure students understand the basics first, before getting into the complexities of the infographic. Talk about how the author/creator used text, visuals, and design to share information.

3) Using classroom data, perhaps a class survey or information from a lesson you already teach, model creating an infographic using shared writing techniques. You can go through this process many times for different types of infographics.

4) Once students are familiar with several types of infographics, help them integrate one or more of these types of infographics into a piece of their own writing. Examples might be adding a visual timeline to a narrative, an infographic map to a social studies or history narrative, or a compare/contrast infographic to a book report or science narrative.

References


Children’s Books cited


More to Explore

- Website. KidsDiscover. This website has infographics on multiple topics that are designed for children [https://www.kidsdiscover.com/infographics/](https://www.kidsdiscover.com/infographics/)

- Lesson. *A Picture IS Worth a Thousand Words: Using Infographics to Illustrate How-to Writing*. This is a lesson from ReadWriteThink.org and is designed for grades 7-10, so it would have to be modified for younger students. [http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/picture-worth-thousand-words-a-31141.html?tab=3](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/picture-worth-thousand-words-a-31141.html?tab=3)

- Lesson. *Picture This: Combining Infographics and Argumentative Writing*. This lesson from ReadWriteThink.org is designed for grades 7-10 so would have to be modified for younger students. [http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/picture-this-combining-infographics-31135.html?tab=1#tabs](http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/picture-this-combining-infographics-31135.html?tab=1#tabs)


- Video. *7 Common Types of Infographics*. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6_7zC0mB9w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6_7zC0mB9w)