



Making sense of text: representing it in your own way

Students read a piece of text and then represent it in the way that best helps them to remember it.

Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- locate the theme(s) and keywords within an article
- summarise the theme(s) of an article
- use these skills to make judgements about the value of an article based on browsing.

Time required

30 minutes

Outline of the activity

Any relevant piece of text can be used for this activity.

1 Give students the text and a blank sheet of A4 paper (or the briefing sheet). Tell them that the aim of the task is to develop their ability to summarise a piece of text in a way that they have not tried before. They could draw a picture, flow chart, or spider diagram for instance. This may help them to understand and learn the content more effectively than if they simply read through the text. Allocate 15 minutes or so to the activity, depending on the length of the text you have given the students.

2 Get the students into groups of four, and get them to swap their work so everybody is looking at someone else's. Ask students to identify what they like/don't like about the work and to point out anything they think is incorrect. Get the groups to identify what they think is good practice. Discuss this with the whole class.

3 Make sure you tour the groups during stage 2 - you can then see the range of work being produced, and you can identify students who can share their work with the class in a mini-plenary. If a scanner is available, the work of these students could be scanned in and projected on the board, or they could transfer an outline onto an OHT.

Tips and strategies



Many students are familiar with their preferred learning style. Bring this into your discussion before starting the activity. Stress the importance of a clear visual representation, even for students who are not visual learners; they need to be able to find the key information easily. Students should be discouraged from copying sections of text wholesale from the text - abbreviations and shorthand should be encouraged.

Point out that visual representations are useful as they can be easier to remember than a large number of details. Students should be encouraged to practise representing information visually, even if this is not as natural to them as other techniques.



Making sense of text: representing it in your own way: briefing sheet

- 1 Read the text you have been given. Read it through for a second time.
- 2 Use the space below to represent the text in a way that will help you to remember the key points and to understand how they link together.
- 3 Avoid copying sections of the text, but do try to capture all of the key points. Try to use abbreviations and shorthand where possible. You are trying to create something that will be easy for you to navigate through. Use a technique of note-making that you haven't tried before. It could be a flow chart, spider diagram or table for instance.

Your visual representation: