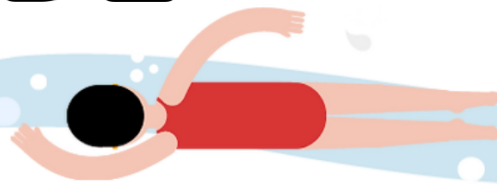


Dive Into UDL



Chapter 9 Pause and Reflect: Deep Inquiry and Understanding - Build Foundational Skills and Strategies

Wade In

How would you make Figure 9.3 a graphic organizer?

One way is to create an essential question, such as How do [animal name]’s body parts help them survive? Then, let students choose an animal. Instead of “facts,” they’d list body parts and find evidence as to what the body part does and helps the animal survive.

What digital tool would you use to remove barriers from the paper version? How would the tool help you create a more flexible activity that focuses on visual thinking?

Research Graphic Organizer

Topic	Resources/Links
Vocabulary	
Important Facts	Why Important
Additional Facts	Picture

How is the “real work” of your classroom done?

Visual thinking and learning is messy work as students wrestle with complex ideas and concepts. Regardless of where you are in your use of visual thinking and learning, take a moment to:

- Visually scan your classroom (physical/virtual). What evidence do you have that you value visual thinking and learning?
- When learning “counts,” that is a mark/grade is needed or a goal/objective is important, how often do you rely on solely text-based assignments?

- Consider if and how you teach the process of visual thinking. Do students have regular opportunities to grapple with complex ideas using visual diagrams, graphic organizers, and concept maps?
- Do you provide digital tools such as Inspiration, MindNode, or Coggle? What value do they have over print-based visual thinking? Are there any barriers to student use?

Share the above list with other educators. Together, discuss the various viewpoints, and then determine how you can bring some of this messy work into your classroom.

Before you go, take a moment to create a mind map, concept map, or sketchnote about what you learned in this chapter. For inspiration, watch more of Dan Roam's videos, watch MindNode's video "[Visual Thinking with MindNode](#)," or check out examples from Creately (an online visual workspace) via their blog post, "[The Ultimate List of Graphic Organizers for Teachers and Students](#)." (Careful: Some may need altering to avoid becoming worksheets!)

Shallow Swim

Even in the early grades, literacy (reading/writing) takes precedence over other forms of communication. Recently, Kendra responded to a social media post that listed activities to support mental health in young elementary students. One activity suggested students write self-reflections focused on their feelings. Kendra commented on the need to separate the goal from the means to remove the barrier of print (by offering options) from the deeper process of metacognition and self-reflection. One second-grade teacher responded that the average second grader should know how to write. It was an end-of-year expectation. Beyond the "myth of average," the teacher was fixated on the value of writing and viewed it as the only option. Kendra argued that the activity's goal was to develop self-reflection. Written language creates barriers. In this activity, someone who struggled to write or had fine motor issues would be limited to words they knew and could write. Imagine giving learners options (draw, record, act out, create a video) so that every learner could focus on their feelings rather than the mechanics. Not providing options (and expecting every learner to meet the average writing expectation) reduces the complexity of students' thinking and adds stress, both of which are counterproductive to maintaining positive mental health.

As an educator interested in UDL, you may agree with our stance. But often those you work with and for, as well as the curriculum you must deliver, disagree. In order to bridge the gap, here are some questions to discuss with other educators in school or online:

- How often should we separate the goal from the means? (See the "Instructional Goals" section in Chapter 8 for ideas.)
- When the curriculum emphasizes written language skills (and deemphasizes the arts), should we limit choice in favor of these important skills?
- When and how do we offer choice?
- How do we change the perception that written language is difficult, important, and essential but that the arts are easy, fun, and nice to have?

To further the conversation, scan the QR code to watch Sir Ken Robinson's famous TedTalk, "[Do Schools Kill Creativity?](#)" What takeaways still resonate (and have yet to be addressed) even as we rapidly approach the twentieth anniversary of this talk?

Deep Dive

Using the indicators in Figure 9.11 and with a colleague, plot a recent project or unit on the continuum. With your colleagues and your students, plan how you can continue to move the needle to the right towards student ownership. What changes do you need to make in your teaching? What skills do students need to develop? Use the UDL Planning Guide for suggestions.

