For a graphic organizer to be a successful tool, teachers must teach students the step-by-step process of how to use the GO. Students need to be shown how concepts are related and how to recognize differences in ideas. This will allow students to create a clear picture of the information.

First choose one of the many available graphic organizers. The main idea or topic is placed at the top or in the middle of the page. Concepts are placed in ovals or rectangles surrounding the main topic, these are connected to the topic with lines. Additional concepts and details are placed in another set of ovals or rectangles, and connected to the initial concept with lines. Each additional concept or detail connects to another level with lines.

This method shows students the way to guide from a main idea to the concepts and details. Students can organize thoughts and concepts using a visual strategy.

Graphic Organizers can be especially helpful for organizing papers and essays.

Who do they work for?

Graphic Organizers, GOs, work for all students. Those with LD can find this tool to be especially helpful.

What are Graphic Organizers?

GOs are visual and spatial displays of information.

They help make relationships between facts and concepts visible to students.

GOs help students connect new information with prior information.

GOs can help students retain new information easier and can help with abstract concepts.
Graphic Organizers can decrease the stress a student feels with studying and writing papers.

This educational strategy works by taking students step by step through the thought process. Initially a lot of work needs to be modeled by the teacher, students need less help as they become more comfortable with the strategy.

Studies have shown graphic organizers help students in elementary and secondary education.

Graphic organizers can help across all subject areas.

Keeping organizers in notebooks can help students make connections with class notes at the end of the lesson.

Teachers should practice using the graphic organizer they plan to use in class. This will help when answering students questions, and aid in the modeling aspect of the tool. Modeling how ideas flow and help organize papers can make students more receptive to the use of GOs and remove fears of using a new strategy.

