Technology & Assessment: Infographics

On the surface, Infographics appear to be a bit of a fad these days. Cute, colorful, visual representations of information and statistics intended to amuse, intrigue, and capture the attention of their 21st century audience. However, there is more to infographics than meets the eye, and this presents some interesting possibilities from an assessment point of view.
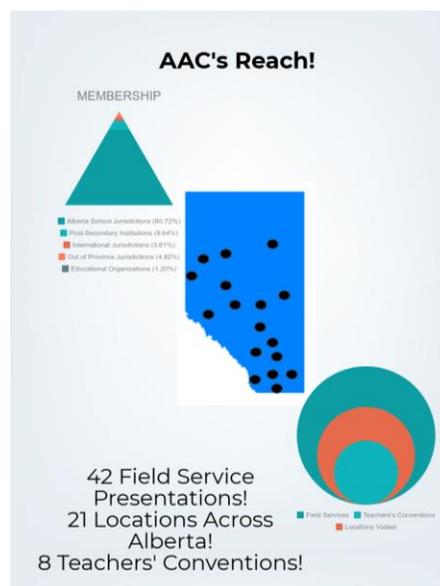
Infographics as Visual Language

Italian designer, Fancesco Franchi, sees infographics as a narrative language - as "representation plus interpretation to develop an idea". The designer interprets content and adds his/her interpretation in order to make the content meaningful for the audience. Using this medium, the story does not need to be linear or one-dimensional (like a conventional slide presentation), but can provide multiple entry points for the audience to engage with the content and make their own meaning. This requires something much deeper and more complex than just adding clever graphics to some information!

Making Student Thinking Visible

As a classroom teacher, I can appreciate that this type of "new language" requires time, practice and feedback to master, but I can also see the tremendous potential it contains for seeing the complex thinking processes of my students. And while I may struggle to fully comprehend how or why a student represented something in an infographic in a particular way, it certainly opens the door for conversations about the thinking that took place. As such, infographics can be a rich tool for making student thinking visible and engaging in metacognitive conversations.

Infographics can be used as summative assessment tools, but the conversations that arise from their use are value added formative assessment opportunities!

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A Collaborative Project with AAC and 2Learn.ca
Developed as a result of a grant from Alberta Education

Information, Tools, and Other Resources for Creating Infographics

Eight Types of Infographics Teachers Should Know About - Interesting and comprehensive article by Educational Technology & Mobile Learning

Teaching With Infographics: Places to Start - NY Times, August 23, 2010

Easel.ly - Read a review of this product on the Lethbridge College Learning Connections website

Piktochart - Read a review of this product by Common Sense Media's website: Graphite

Visme (formerly EWC Presenter) - Read a review of this product on the Teacher's First website

Infogr.am - Read a review of this product on the Lifehacker website

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