Mobilize Learning Through Strategic Visual Communication

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Time Frame 75 minutes

Essential Question(s)

- What is the purpose of communication?

Summary

This interactive session will provide participants with the tools and resources they need to successfully create visual communication that informs stakeholders, strengthens partnerships, communicates goals and data, and inspires collaborative action. Participants will walk away with tools and resources they can use to implement visual communication strategies in their programs.

Learning Goals

- Explore how the purpose of visual representations can serve as a tool for strategic communication.
- Identify the tools and features available for creating a strategic visual representation.
- Determine ways to apply this approach with your learners or stakeholders.

Attachments

- Agenda and QR Codes—Mobilize Learning Through Strategic Visual Communication.docx
- Agenda and QR Codes—Mobilize Learning Through Strategic Visual Communication.pdf
- Session Slides—Mobilize Learning Through Strategic Visual Communication.pptx
- Strategic Communication Chart Pieces—Mobilize Learning Through Strategic Visual Communication.pdf
- Strategic Visual Communication Planning Document—Mobilize Learning Through Strategic Visual Communication.docx
- Strategic Visual Communication Planning Document—Mobilize Learning Through Strategic Visual Communication.pdf

Materials

- Session slides (attached)
- Agenda and QR codes handout (attached)
- Infographic Planning Document (attached)
- Sticky notes
- Pens/pencils
- Pieces of paper cut into different sizes for the infographic activity (for audience of 40: 20 (1/2), 12 (1/4), 42 (1/8), 27 (1/3), 9 (1/6), 12 (1/9) = 122 pages)

5 minutes

Engage

Use the attached **Session Slides** to follow along with this professional development session. Begin by displaying **slide 3**. Ask participants to answer the following question: *What's the purpose of communication?*

Tell participants that they can answer the question by either using the QR code on the slide or heading to Menti.com and entering the code provided. Give participants a couple of minutes to answer the question.

Tech Note

Mentimeter Link: ######

Copy this presentation to your own account, and update the link for your participants prior to facilitating the activity. To do this, after entering the link above into your browser, select "Copy to your Account." Once in your account, choose "Share" to get a new link for your participants. Paste this new link into slide 3.

As the audience answers the question, make sure to display their responses as a flowing grid. Once all the responses have been submitted, convert those responses to a Word Cloud. Make sure to draw attention to the words that stand out in the Word Cloud.

Proceed to **slide 4**. Introduce participants to the research-based categories of strategic communication: raising awareness, changing attitudes, and motivating action. You can mention how some words in the Word Cloud resonate with these three purposes.

Display **slide 5**. Take a moment to review the session objectives with participants.

15 minutes

Explore

Proceed to display each of the infographic examples included in the slides to show different uses of strategic visual communication.

Begin by sharing the school profile report on **slide 6**. An infographic like this one was created for each school in our program to show how they have used our services so far this year as well as to celebrate their accomplishments. This brings both awareness and recognition, as participants may not realize how much their school has accomplished during the year. Additionally, it can motivate action if they see what still needs to be done to reach goals for the rest of the year.

Next, describe the infographic on **slide 7** that focuses on career exploration. You may point out that the primary goal of this infographic is to develop an awareness of career options for students. However, it also serves a secondary function of addressing attitudes about what kinds of people can serve in different careers by representing diverse identities across the career clusters; note, for example, that a female welder is depicted. Every career cluster links out to activities that students can do independently to learn more about that career cluster. This can be considered an action.

Display **slide 8**, and when discussing the program overview infographic, explain that it was created by our teams to share historical data and impact. Mention also that this infographic was created with both informational and motivational goals: showing our Oklahoma congressman K20 Center's positive impact on schools and encouraging him to support our programs in the future. The data-created change could also be a call to action. To reveal this, we adapted the infographic to inform new partners about past successes, new grants, and future services.

Finally, show the two examples on **slide 9**. Explain that the first example from the lesson "Si Se Puede" contains more text, along with images that break up the reading. The intentions behind this example are primarily to inform by providing students awareness of farmworker conditions during the Delano Grape Strike and the present day. Arguably, this infographic—within the context of an entire lesson—may eventually change students' attitudes about the topic, at least in terms of the essential question *How can political participation affect change?*

Let participants know that the second educational example uses math equations and embedded videos. The intention here was to help build a positive math mindset as well as to teach students how to simplify square roots, changing attitudes and motivating action.

You will probably want to spend a couple of minutes on the first three slides and about four minutes on slide 9.

20 minutes

Explain

Display **slide 10**. Ask participants the following question: *After seeing the four examples and their corresponding goals, for which of the three goals do you most see yourself using an infographic?*

Once again, tell participants they can answer the question by either using the QR code on the slide or heading to Menti.com and entering the code provided. Give participants a couple of minutes to answer the question.

Tech Note

Mentimeter Link: ########

As with the previous Menti activity, copy this presentation to your own account and update the link for your participants prior to facilitating the activity. To do this, after entering the link above into your browser, select “Copy to your Account.” Once in your account, choose “Share” to get a new link for your participants. Paste this new link into slide 10.

20 minutes

Extend

Explain to participants that they will be using different-sized pieces of paper to create their own infographic. They should use a variety of visual representation types. Their infographic should also incorporate one of the three goals for strategic communication. Make sure to inform participants that they can work alone, with an elbow partner, or with others from their school or organization.

Display **slide 11**, and pass out one copy of the **Infographic Planning Document** to each participant. Take at least a few minutes to walk your audience through the different components of the handout and explain how they should fill out each section.

Facilitator's Note: Arranging the Infographic Activity

As you explain the activity to participants, make sure to point out that at the center of each table is a container holding cards of varying shapes and sizes. For an audience of 40, you should print the following number of each size of paper: 20 (½ page), 12 (¼ page), 42 (? page), 27 (? page), 9 (? page), 12 (1/9 page). You will need 122 pages of paper to do so. Feel free to adjust the number of cards according to the size of your group and make sure that you've divided these cards evenly among the tables before the start of the session. You will also want to make sure to include some sticky notes in the center of each table for the POMS activity during the Evaluate.

Display **slide 12**. Tell participants they will use the cards in the center of their table to create the infographic. Let them know that they can include any of the following types of graphic: bar chart, timeline, illustration, org chart, photo, pie chart, line graph, animation, etc. On each card, they should write why they chose to include each graphic and how that graphic supports their communication goal. Give participants about 10 minutes to create their infographics.

You may wish to scaffold them in their creations a little through prompting questions. Ask if there is someone from the audience who has an idea they are working on that they'd like to share. Model the thinking process behind developing that idea with the following questions:

- Where are you thinking you might go with your infographic in terms of what kinds of information to show and how to show it?
- Have you decided if you will focus your strategy on awareness, attitude, or action?
- Which piece of information is the most compelling to share? How does it relate to your goal?
- Has anyone in this room had a similar project and something they did that worked for them?
- Even if no one has encountered this before, is there anyone who has another idea about where they would start with this kind of project?

It's okay to keep this conversation fluid and not work through this list of questions rigidly. Just use the ones that feel natural in the moment to help participants think together about how to approach sharing information in a strategic, goal-focused way.

15 minutes

Evaluate

Call on a few volunteers to share their infographics with the rest of the group. After some participants have shared, display **slide 13**. Using the POMS: Point of Most Significance strategy, ask participants to answer the following question: *How can you apply what you learned about visual communication to your own work?*

Ask participants to write down their answers on sticky notes, which they will post on the door before leaving the session.

Conclude the session by displaying **slide 14**. Take a minute to explain the features included with the free and paid versions of Infogram. Also provide participants with information about alternative platforms that could be used for designing infographics, including Piktochart, Venngage, Visme, and Canva.

Research Rationale

Information gains show a significant effect on behavior. Moreover, attitudes—whether positive or negative—have mediating effect on actions. Recognition of constraints (cost, time, scope, etc.) is the biggest obstacle to involvement in a cause. However, factors related to a cause, such as emotional connections, social ties, and expectations, can help predict how information affects decisions to act (McKeever, 2013). This knowledge can help us craft visual communication messages that share information, raise awareness, and mobilize action.

Resources

- K20 Center. (2020, October 20). Canva. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/612
- K20 Center. (2020, September 25). Mentimeter. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/645
- K20 Center. (2020, September 16). POMS: Point of most significance. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/101
- McKeever, B. W. (2013). From awareness to advocacy: Understanding nonprofit communication, participation, and support. Journal of Public Relations Research, 25(4), 307–328. https://doi.org/10.1080/1062726x.2013.806868