

# PLC/Book Study Guide for *Visual Learning and Teaching*

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This study guide is designed as a professional development resource that can be used to facilitate a book study, to guide teacher workshops, or to support a professional learning community (PLC). Facilitator notes are provided for additional support and explanation in planning and facilitating your school or group's study sessions or workshops. We recommend that the training facilitator read the entire guide and the book before beginning the study.

For each session, participants will be asked to read chapters of the book. They may also be asked to bring materials or create or implement something prior to attending a session. Each chapter description includes guiding questions and suggested tasks that can be used as group activities during the group session.

Please note that the preparation work is noted at the beginning for each session. Before you dismiss participants from each session, look ahead to the next chapter to review and clarify what must be done before the next meeting. Reach agreements if suggests tasks are going to be adjusted or modified.



## INTRODUCTION

# Why Visual Teaching and Learning? Why Now?

### To be completed before first session:

- Read the book’s foreword and introduction.
- Consider the benefits and challenges of integrating visual learning and teaching in your classroom.

1. What are three important benefits—for you and your students—that may occur from integrating visual learning and teaching in your classroom?

2. As a group:

- List problems or obstacles that may need to be addressed before you can proceed with visual learning and teaching in your classroom.
- List some questions you hope to have answered by the end of this book study.

**Facilitator Note:** *Keep both lists handy as you conduct this book study. Keep referring participants back to their concerns and questions as a way to guide group conversations and also to encourage individual professional growth.*

3. In reviewing the descriptions of each chapter, which chapters are the most appealing to you? Which ones do you think may address a challenge you face in your classroom?

4. Review Figure 1 “Differences Between Learners with Auditory-Sequential Strengths or Visual-Spatial Strengths” on page 4 of the book and identify the visual and verbal strengths you have at this time.

- Discuss how these strengths contribute to effective teaching in your classroom.
- Discuss how you might apply this list to better understand the learning strengths and preferences of your students.

# CHAPTER 1

## Being a Visual Teacher

### To be completed before the chapter 1 book study session:

- Read chapter 1.
- Complete the “Visual Teacher Checklist” on page 219.
- Complete the visual learning notebook activity on page 18 and bring your notebook to the book study meeting.

**Facilitator Note:** *There will likely be a wide range of visual abilities and instructional approaches used by teachers within your book study group. It is important to discuss these abilities and approaches early on to help teachers recognize that there is not one right way to do this work but rather many possibilities for how visual learning and teaching may fit into classrooms. The book presents strategies for building upon visual learning and teaching approaches for all teachers.*

1. Consider the teacher profiles and comments included in this chapter.
  - Do you identify with a particular teacher—Kipp, Carol, Jenna, Martin, Toni, or Jennie? If so, why?
  - Do any of the specific comments made by the teachers help your understanding of visual learning and teaching? Do any of them particularly inspire you?
2. How do the visual triad model on page 15 and the “Visual Triad Model Breakdown” on page 16 help you think about visual learning and teaching applications for your classroom?
3. As a group, discuss your responses to the “Visual Teacher Checklist.” What did you discover about your visual abilities? Does the checklist create any questions for you at this time?

**Facilitator Note:** *Keep this list handy as you conduct the book study. Keep referring participants back to their questions and concerns to guide group conversation and to encourage individual professional growth.*

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4. Think-Pair-Share: With partners or in small groups, share the first entries from visual learning notebooks.

- Discuss the use of the notebook and how it might help you participate in the activities in the book and document your developing skills and strategies for later use.
- Discuss what you liked about starting the visual learning notebook.
- Discuss what you might want to do differently as you visually document your learning while reading upcoming chapters.

**Facilitator Note:** *Let book study group members know that there are several activities to complete in chapter 2. These are meant to be fun and also provide visual strategies to use in the classroom. Book study members should complete these activities in their visual learning notebooks and bring them to the next meeting.*

# CHAPTER 2

## The Visual Toolbox— Doodle, Design, and Depict

**To be completed before the chapter 2 book study session:**

- Read chapter 2.
- Complete activities described in chapter 2 in your visual learning notebook.
- Bring your visual learning notebook to the study group meeting.

***Facilitator Note:** This chapter is meant to represent the activities one would participate in at a Visual Learning and Teaching Workshop. At the workshop, participants are given time to “Show and Tell” their doodles. This helps teachers become comfortable expressing themselves visually and sharing their visual depictions with others, and also understand that visual representations are often similar but unique to each individual.*

1. Begin with a “Show and Tell” activity. In small groups of three to four people, have participants share their work from chapter 2 activities.
  - Have participants take out their visual learning notebooks.
  - Have participants share samples of the visual work they created while working through the activities from chapter 2.
  - Have participants discuss the process of creating these visuals. What is their comfort level at this time? How was this a useful activity? What was difficult?
2. Discuss the process of doodling.
  - What are the benefits of doodling?
  - How is doodling different from drawing?
  - What are your thoughts about “Everyone can doodle”?
  - Is it possible to represent complex concepts with doodles?
  - Is it possible to depict a variety of people, places, things, and actions with simple doodles? Give examples.

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3. Discuss the applications of the visual alphabet, six essential design elements, and doodles of faces and figures for learning activities in the classroom.
  4. Discuss the concept of recomposing (see page 35).
    - How does recomposing support learning?
    - How do you or might you use recomposing in your teaching?

# CHAPTER 3

## In the Hands of Our Students—Putting Visual Tools to Work in Our Classrooms

**To be completed before the chapter 3 book study session:**

- Read chapter 3.
- Keep visual and verbal notes in your visual learning notebook.
- Bring your visual learning notebook to the study group meeting.

1. In small groups, discuss the process of using visual note-taking while reading chapter 3 this past week.
  - Share an example.
  - How might visual note-taking help you build your experience of being a visual teacher?
2. Discuss the essential questions on page 40 from the “Learning with the Visual Alphabet and More” unit.
  - In what ways do doodling and drawing help with learning?
  - In what ways do visual and verbal communication work together?
3. Discuss the unit questions on page 40 from the “Learning with the Visual Alphabet and More” unit.
  - What is the visual alphabet?
  - What are the six essential design elements?
  - How can you use the visual alphabet to draw people and things?
  - How can you use the six essential design elements to add meaning to doodles, drawings, and more?
4. What are the uses and benefits of having students keep a visual learning notebook (including a doodle of the day) and develop a doodle dictionary?



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5. Briefly discuss how you might use each of the following visual note-taking strategies with students. Refer to book as needed.

- visual vocabulary flashcards
- visual note-taking form
- see-hear graphic organizer
- visual four-square graphic organizer

***Facilitator Note:*** *Have participants continue to use visual note-taking while completing their weekly readings, and remind participants to bring their visual learning notebooks to the group each week.*

# CHAPTER 4

## Visual Pages—Mind Maps and One Pagers

**To be completed before the chapter 4 book study session:**

- Read chapter 4.
- Keep visual and verbal notes in your visual learning notebook.
- Create a mind map about yourself similar to Jessica’s on page 59.
- Create a one pager about a unit you are teaching or will teach.
- Bring the visual learning notebook, mind map, and one pager to the study group meeting.

***Facilitator Note:** Sharing and discussing content from the participants’ visual learning notebooks is an essential part of the study group process for this book. Documenting the learning process in a visual way will support the teachers’ visual teaching skills as well. Each session will start with a time for participants to share.*

1. Show-and-tell your mind map within your small group.
  - What are the advantages of creating mind maps while learning?
  - How might you use mind maps in your classroom?
  - What prior skills and knowledge would your students need to apply mind maps to their learning across content areas?
2. Show-and-tell your one pager within your small group.
  - What are the advantages of creating one pagers while learning?
  - How might you use one pagers in your classroom?
  - What prior skills and knowledge would your students need to apply one pagers to their learning across content areas?
3. How might you adjust the use of mind maps or one pagers at your grade level or in a particular subject area?

# CHAPTER 5

## Visual Information and Informational Graphics—From Icons to Infographic Posters

### To be completed before the chapter 5 book study session:

- Read chapter 5.
- Keep visual and verbal notes in your visual learning notebook.
- Complete the chapter activities in your visual learning notebook.
- Make two lists of instructional strategies as follows:
  - Activities We Already Do
  - Strategies and Activities to Explore
- Bring visual learning notebooks to the study group meeting.

**Facilitator Note:** *Since this is a long and an information-packed chapter, feel free to choose from the following recommended discussion questions to adjust to your timeframe and the needs and interests of your study group.*

Optional Warm-Up: Share your visual and verbal notes with a partner.

1. In small groups of three to four, discuss the range and variety of visual information from the chapter and what the applications are for your grade(s) and subject(s).
2. Discuss the process of:
  - presenting icons to your students
  - finding icons in the environment
  - having students design their own icons
3. Did you find that the process of decoding icons helped students decode other types of visual information as well? Discuss.
4. Discuss how to use diagrams and graphs most effectively at your grade level and in your subject areas.

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- 5.** What worked well and what was challenging when you had your students:
- create graphs from their own data
  - create maps of their own communities
  - create an itinerary using an illustrated timeline
- 6.** Infographic posters are similar to one pagers with an emphasis on the visual presentation of information. How do you or could you build upon students' experience with one pagers to help students begin designing informational posters in your curriculum and at your grade level?

# CHAPTER 6

## Visual Journals

**To be completed before the chapter 6 book study session:**

- Read chapter 6.
- Keep visual and verbal notes in your visual learning notebook.
- Complete the activities from chapter 6 in your visual learning notebook.
- Bring samples of your students' visual journals, if you have them.
- Bring your visual learning notebook to the study group meeting.

Optional Warm-Up: Share your visual and verbal notes with a partner.

1. What have been your and your students' experiences with keeping visual journals? Discuss your experiences with your colleagues. Share student samples if you have brought them with you.
2. What is the value of having students keep visual journals that incorporate text and images?
3. What has been your experience thus far in keeping your visual learning notebook? Has it helped as you participate in the study group meetings?
4. Does keeping your own notebook inform how you might work with visual journals with your students?
5. What are some of the academic benefits of visual journals for students? What are some of the creative benefits of visual journals for students?

# CHAPTER 7

## Image as Story

**To be completed before the chapter 7 book study session:**

- Read chapter 7.
- Keep visual and verbal notes in your visual learning notebook.
- Complete the activities from chapter 7 in your visual learning notebook.
- Bring samples of your students' visual journals, if you have them.
- Bring your visual learning notebook to the study group meeting.

Optional Warm-Up: Share your visual and verbal notes with a partner.

1. Discuss the process of—and responses from your students—about reading picture books.
2. Did your students prefer picture books with or without text?
3. Have you created picture books with your class? Or do you plan to do so? What are some challenges and benefits of making picture books?
4. What is your experience with using comics and graphic novels in the classroom? If you have not done so, does this interest you? What might you try?
5. How do critical and creative thinking skills apply to creating a picture book, comic, or graphic novel?

# CHAPTER 8

## Visual Learning Portfolios and Reflective Practice

**To be completed before the chapter 8 book study session:**

- Read chapter 8.
- Keep visual and verbal notes in your visual learning notebook.
- Complete the activities from chapter 8 in your visual learning notebook.
- Bring your visual learning notebook to the study group meeting.
- Bring a sample of one of your students' visual learning portfolios.

1. In your small groups, share and discuss sample student work. Discuss the strengths of the visual portfolios as well as ways to improve upon the use of visual portfolios.
2. In your opinion, what is the best kind of work sample to include in visual learning portfolios?
3. Discuss the ways in which your students reflect on the contents of their visual learning portfolios.
4. Do parents get to see their child's portfolio, perhaps during parent conferences? How else might the students show their work?
5. How might you share the visual learning portfolios with the child's next year teacher?

## CHAPTER 9

# Designing Visually Integrated Curriculum

## CHAPTER 10

# Visually Integrated Curriculum Grades K–3

## CHAPTER 11

# Visually Integrated Curriculum Grades 4–8

**Facilitator Note:** *This week’s session is differentiated. All study group members will read chapter 9 and then either chapter 10 or chapter 11 depending on the grade they teach.*

**To be completed before the book study session for chapters 9, 10, and 11:**

- Read chapter 9.
- Teachers of grades K–3 read chapter 10.
- Teachers of grades 4–8 read chapter 11.
- Keep visual and verbal notes in your visual learning notebook.
- Bring your visual learning notebook to the study group meeting.

### Teachers of Grades K–3

Optional Warm-Up: Share your visual and verbal notes with a partner.

1. Discuss chapter 9. Does this provide sufficient and appropriate information for designing visually integrated curriculum? How is the curriculum map helpful for you?



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2. Discuss chapter 10. Will you use the “Botany and Gardening in Own Backyard” unit materials? How can you adapt parts of the unit for your use?
  3. Will you use the “Who Am I? Heritage, Culture, Traditions of Me” unit materials? How can you adapt parts of the unit for your use?
  4. How will you apply the content of chapters 9 and 10 to developing or enhancing your curriculum in the future?

### **Teachers of Grades 4–8**

Optional Warm-Up: Share your visual and verbal notes with a partner.

1. Discuss chapter 9. Does this provide sufficient and appropriate information for designing visually integrated curriculum? Is the curriculum map helpful for you?
2. Discuss chapter 11. Will you use the “Novel Studies—Exploring Friendship Through Literature” unit materials? How can you adapt parts of the unit for your use?
3. Will you use the “Redesign Our Schoolyard—Applying Perimeter and Area” unit materials? How can you adapt parts of the unit for your use?
4. Will you use the “Plate Tectonics and Earth Science” unit materials? How can you adapt parts of the unit for your use?
5. How will you apply the content of chapters 9 and 11 to developing or enhancing your curriculum in the future?

# CONCLUSION

## Looking Forward

**To be completed before the final book study session:**

- Read the conclusion.
- In your visual learning notebook, write a “Vision Statement” regarding (1) what you value about supporting your students with visual learning and teaching practices, (2) how you will continue to integrate visual learning and teaching with your classes and in your curriculum, and (3) what would be the next steps to support visual learning and teaching in your school and the larger educational community.
- Bring your visual learning notebook to the study group meeting.

1. Ask volunteers to read their vision statements. List key concepts from these on the whiteboard.
2. Project the following chart on the whiteboard or re-create it on chart paper.
3. Fill out the chart with contributions from the study group members. When considering next steps, think about possible applications at the classroom, school, curriculum development, professional development, and district levels.

What We've Learned	What We Do Now	Next Steps

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**Facilitator Note:** *The conclusion of the book and the last meeting of the study group bring together the learning from the book study: “What We’ve Learned” and “What We Do Now” along with ideas for “Next Steps.” This will both sustain and strengthen the practice of visual learning and teaching at the teacher, class, building, and even district level.*

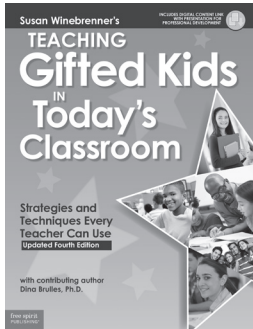
4. Discuss next steps and possibly meeting again for a *Visual Learning and Teaching* study group reunion to share strategies and experiences.
5. Close by making one last doodle about visual learning and teaching in your visual learning notebook that captures some aspect of the process that is important to you. Share with a colleague or two.



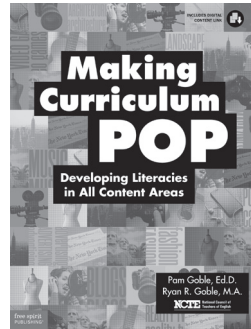
## About the Author

**Dr. Susan Daniels** is a professor, an author, an international consultant, and an educational director of a psychoeducational center that specializes in the needs of gifted, creative, and twice-exceptional children. She has been a professional development specialist for over twenty years, regularly providing workshops and training on creativity and visual learning and teaching. Susan is an avid doodler who enjoys working visually in her journals, and she is dedicated to supporting teachers' development of visual literacy and enhanced understanding of visual learning and teaching strategies. She lives in Berkeley, California.

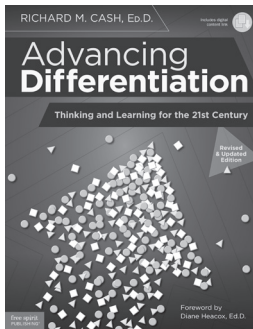
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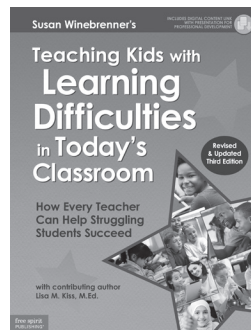
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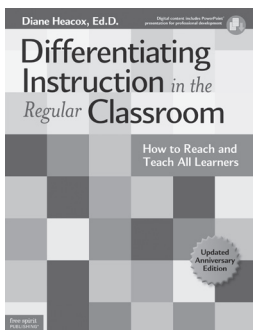
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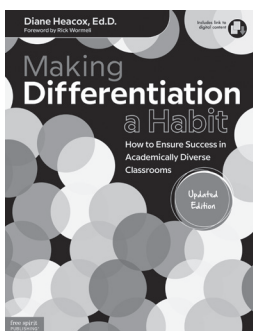
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