

Make sense of the muddle

Helping students organize language



Bonnie Singer, P.hD.

Some students are just all over the place.

When it comes to expressing themselves, they don't know how to start. They don't know how to finish. Whether talking or writing, their stories and explanations don't make sense.

They don't know how to organize their language or their thinking. And they're struggling in school.

It seems like they're just in a **muddle**.



Language and thinking go hand in hand; when one is disorganized, so is the other.

Because language and thinking are neurologically intertwined, each influences the development of the other. Thoughts are held hostage by our ability to organize and verbalize them, and language is held hostage by the organization and clarity of our thoughts.

Students who struggle within one of these realms often struggle with organization overall. Their disorganization can bleed into just about everything they do in school: listen in class, grasp what they read, share their ideas, write clearly, solve complex problems, and tackle projects and assignments efficiently.

Too often, their teachers don't have the instructional tools they need to help them.



Thoughts and ideas are invisible. They live in your head.

They are brought to life through words, images, and movement. In school, teachers and students predominantly rely on language for gathering and sharing ideas.

Thoughts and ideas move from one person to another by way of listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

When language is organized, thinking flows smoothly, and learning does too.

When language is disorganized, though, learning and school performance take a nosedive.

Thanks to research, we understand why.



Language has patterns.

Language and thinking are rooted in patterns, the brain's best tool for making meaning. We choose particular words and put them together in particular ways to get things done.

For example:

We tell stories.

Stories begin with someone being somewhere and something happening, then follow with a series of events that are ordered chronologically.

We explain.

Explanations begin by identifying the phenomenon that's being explained then follow with how or why that phenomenon occurs.

Once you know the pattern of a story, they're fun to listen to and tell because you know how the ideas are supposed to unfold. If you start to tell a story and suddenly switch to a different pattern, others get confused. They can't help but wonder, "what happened?"

Even very young children can detect these patterns and a whole host of others, too.

We can help ALL students learn to organize language.



Seeing and hearing go hand in hand when it comes to learning.

Eyes help ears and vice versa.

Research shows that visual roadmaps help students organize new knowledge.

They do better when teachers pair what they say with images, and they do even BETTER when those images reveal the underlying structure of the information they are learning.

Vivido has spent decades developing practical teaching methods that any educator can use to make the patterns of language more obvious.

One method is Brain Frames[®].



Brain Frames make the invisible **visible!**

Brain Frames are a set of visual tools that organize language according to six patterns.

All day, every day, everyone uses language in a handful of basic ways – to tell about ideas, sequence them in order, sort them into categories, explain causes and effects, make comparisons and distinctions, and show connections between concepts. With Brain Frames, each of these basic language patterns comes to life graphically.

Just look how typical classroom tasks align with a Brain Frame pattern:

Language Task	Pattern
Identify the key differences between two forms of government.	Contrasting
Explain why the water in Flint, Michigan is unsafe to drink.	Showing Causes & Effects
Show how to multiply uneven fractions.	Sequencing
Describe the characteristics of different kinds of rocks.	Categorizing
Analyze the major goals of the Washington, Jefferson, and Adams presidencies.	Showing Connections
Portray what life was like on the Oregon Trail.	Telling



You have to see the dots in order to connect them.

Unlike traditional graphic organizers (i.e., pre-made worksheets that get filled in), students learn to draw their own Brain Frames from scratch.

This puts them in full control of meaning making as they capture and organize their thoughts in real time.

One by one, they can see not only their ideas but also the connections between them.

With all their thoughts in view, they can see how to share what they know with others.



Brain Frames are universal tools for sharing ideas.

They can be used in any grade, any subject, and any language. The principles are timeless and universal across cultures.

Used by everyone in a classroom, Brain Frames become universal tools for sharing ideas in a learning community. Teachers and students alike use them to forge new connections and gain clarity. This is the essence of critical thinking – the holy grail of learning.

Whether students are writing a paper or figuring out what to say in class, when they can see their ideas visually, they can organize them, reflect on them, improve them, and express them.

Learning flourishes when teachers and students can share their ideas.



Teachers can transform students' learning with visual tools that organize language.

Vivido has been training educators to use Brain Frames for over 20 years. We keep doing it because students make noticeable gains in:

- **Understanding** the gist of what they hear and read.
- **Organizing** ideas in logical ways.
- **Writing** stories, paragraphs, and essays that make sense.
- **Getting** things done efficiently.
- **Sharing** thoughts and ideas with confidence.

We believe:

If students are thinking, they can show it.

And if they can see their ideas, they can organize and refine them.

And if they can organize their ideas, they can figure out how to express what they know and understand about themselves and the world.



Vivido can give teachers the instructional tools they need to **make sense of the muddle.**

At Vivido, we are dedicated to teaching K-12 educators to make language and learning visible. We equip speech-language pathologists, teachers, and schools with the most powerful methods for teaching language and literacy so they can prepare students who struggle in school to lead successful lives.

Vivido offers online courses for SLPs and educators, custom trainings for schools and school districts, and conference presentations for education professionals world-wide.

If your students need to strengthen their language organization skills, **let's talk.**



"This is my 21st year in this district, and meeting the needs of students and putting them first is just how we roll. What you all provided to our teachers was simply refreshing. It was current, engaging, interactive, and so creative. It was the right thing at the time for our educators who were dealt a really hard hand this year with Covid." - **K. Weathers**, Assistant Director of Special Services, Clover School District

vividolearning.com
hello@vividolearning.com

