Cultivating Creative Communication through Graphic Summary

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The graphic summary is a combination of text and graphics that models a concept or process and presents evidence to support an argument. I use this format to train students to dig into the primary literature, find and evaluate sources beyond the textbook, and communicate effectively and creatively – all essential steps in training students in writing scientifically. The concise guidelines introduce students to disciplinary conventions for writing, but solicit creative responses at both the introductory and advanced levels. It requires students to exercise the same level of analytical skill as a traditional written summary, but is faster and more interesting to grade. In classes of 30 – 60 students, more than 90% of students choose a unique graphic approach to summarize experimental methods and results. To demonstrate this pedagogical approach, workshop attendees will construct paper-based graphic summaries derived from experimental data given the same preset guidelines and grading criteria that students receive. Completed summaries will be randomly redistributed among workshop attendees for rubric-based peer review to mimic the student peer review process that is paired with instructor-based review. Instructors that are seeking creative new approaches to assess student communication skills without requiring extensive writing assignments will benefit from this presentation.

**Keywords:** graphic summary, science writing

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