Creating Visual Schema for Complex Texts

Purpose: To apply effective systems of thinking from a previous text as a way to formalize analytical habits

Part 1: Individual reflections
1. What in-class activities—discussions, small group activities, writing prompts—helped you to organize your understanding of our previous texts?

2. How can you generalize these activities so that you can apply them to any text?

Part 2: Group activity
1. Discuss your answers with your small group and create a list of "best practices" for understanding a challenging text. Consider the following questions to begin organizing your ideas:

a) What general key terms/concepts need defining? (Your reader is unfamiliar but interested.)

b) What background information needs to be summarized to provide context?

c) What structural information (how the book is organized, sections, etc.) is necessary?

d) What kinds of evidence does the text draw on?

2. Create a visual schema for our text to help an unfamiliar reader understand it.

A schema is a unit of understanding/knowledge that can be hierarchically created or webbed into complex relationships. Some related terms: diagram, outline, model, conceptual framework.

As you create your visual schema, try to balance general and particular information. Be creative with your schema—you have complete freedom. After your group has finalized your schema, you can present it on the chalkboard, poster board, or via a free idea mapping tool like MindMup or LucidChart.

You will present your schema to the class.