read a graph that represents information they have read about in a related article. Their collaborative cross-walk between the graph and article help them clarify their understanding of both.

In addition to visualizing and reading visual information, students benefit from producing their own visual representations, which will vary with the discipline, text, and purpose for reading. The process of visual note making gives readers in any discipline opportunities to access their own schema, to represent the text in a new form using what they know and what they are learning, and to integrate new knowledge (and sometimes confront misunderstandings) with their existing knowledge through the active construction of meaning. Visual note making can be a powerful way for readers to commit new ideas, information, and concepts to memory.

Although students’ visual notes primarily serve to help them make meaning as they read, they can also be used after reading to demonstrate understanding through spreadsheets, databases, graphics, illustrations, and other forms of textual support that are common in the discipline in which they are working.

As Dorothea Jordan explained in Classroom Close-Up 7.2, her grade 7 pre-algebra students cited visual note making—“drawing”—as the one thing that