2007

Show Me What You Mean: Visual Literacy and the Academic Library

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Nora Hillyer and Audrey DeFrank

The Visually Literate Student

- Is able to show you what they mean by using graphics, data, images, multimedia, etc. to communicate their ideas
- Is more resistant to the manipulative use of images in advertisements and other contexts
- Has a foundation for understanding and evaluating aesthetic intention and artistic skills

Visual Literacy Defined

- ... refers to a group of vision competencies a human being can develop by seeing and integrating other sensory experiences. Through the creative use of these competencies, he is able to communicate with others (John Debes, 1969).
- Ability to see, to comprehend, and to think, recreate and communicate graphically (McPhearson, 2004).
- Ability to construct meaning from visual images (Giorgis, Johnson, Bonomo, Colbert, & al, 1999:146).
- Ability to both accurately send and receive messages that are transmitted by a variety of signals perceived through the sense of sight (Rezabek, 2005).
- Interpreting images of the present and past and producing images that communicate the message to an audience (Bamford, 2003).

Visual vs. Information Literacy

**Information Literacy**
- Linear, technical skills required to find and evaluate information
- Complements lifelong learning

**Visual Literacy**
- Added dimension to IL
- Adds context to the interpretation of an image
- Making the cognitive link from your knowledge base to the image that is being presented

Sources


Libraries

- **Criss Library**
  - State of the art learning labs
  - SCOLA
  - Instruction
  - Using visuals to create interest and integrate visual, audio, and traditional learning
  - Library branding
  - Logos

Collaboration

**Partnership for Visual Literacy**
(API, School of Communication, and the Library)
- Presentations to campus community
- Roundtable and workshops

**Collaboration with Campus ITS**
- Joint purchase of Adobe Suite and Web Bundle for Library computers
- Tech support provided in library by ITS
- Library workshops for campus community