Seeing is Believing: Visual Literacy in the 21st Century
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• NC A+ Fellow

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• Executive Director
Write down 3 images you saw.

Give a reason you think that image was chosen.
Visual Literacy

What is it and why is it important?
VISUAL LITERACY
the ability to read, write, and respond to and interpret visual images
Bette Fetter, Author
• Knowledge Visualization

graphic representations that help you make decisions
American College and Research Library

**ACLR standards**

- Determine the nature and extent of the visual materials needed
- Find and access needed images and visual media effectively and efficiently
- Interpret and analyze the meanings of images and visual media
- Evaluate images and their sources
- Use images and visual media effectively
- Design and create meaningful images and visual media
- Understand many of the ethical, legal, social, and economic issues surrounding the creation and use of images and visual media, and access and use visual materials ethically
American College and Research Library
7 standards of Visual Literacy

1 – defines
2 – accesses
3 – interprets
4 – evaluates
5 – uses
6 – designs
7 – ethics
“The importance of images and visual media in contemporary culture is changing what it means to be literate in the 21st century. Today's society is highly visual, and visual imagery is no longer supplemental to other forms of information. New digital technologies have made it possible for almost anyone to create and share visual media. Yet the pervasiveness of images and visual media does not necessarily mean that individuals are able to critically view, use, and produce visual content. Individuals must develop these essential skills in order to engage capably in a visually-oriented society. Visual literacy empowers individuals to participate fully in a visual culture.”

From the ACRL Board of Directors, 2011
The importance of images and visual media in contemporary culture is changing what it means to be literate in the 21st century.
Today's society is highly visual, and visual imagery is no longer supplemental to other forms of information.
New digital technologies have made it possible for almost anyone to create and share visual media.
Yet the pervasiveness of images and visual media does not necessarily mean that individuals are able to critically view, use, and produce visual content.
Individuals must develop these essential skills in order to engage capably in a visually-oriented society.
Visual literacy empowers individuals to participate fully in a visual culture.
On their own -- without explicit, intentional and systematic instruction -- students will not develop VL skills because the language for talking about images is so foreign.

Ever heard kids debate the object salience and shot angles of a Ryan Gosling meme?
Hey girl,

I think I'd make a great stay-at-home dad.
And just some of the sources of visual imagery

- Advertisements
- Cartoons
- Charts
- Collages
- Comic books
- Diagrams
- Dioramas
- Websites
- DVDs

- Graphic Novels
- Graphs
- Icons
- Magazines
- Maps
- Memes
- Multimodal Texts
- Photos
- Pictograms

- Political cartoons
- Signs
- Slide shows
- Storyboards
- Symbols
- Tables
- Timelines
- Videos
- AND???????
Seeing is believing
Right.....
Which of these are students fully engaged in in our schools?

Where must we, as educators, focus more explicit instruction?

1 – defines
2 – accesses
3 – interprets
4 – evaluates
5 – uses
6 – designs
7 – ethics

American College and Research Library
7 standards of Visual Literacy
• Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
  • CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7: "Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos or maps) with other information in print and digital texts."
  • CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7: "Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words."
  • CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6: "Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text."
  • CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1: "Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively."

• National Council of Teachers of English Standards (NCTE)
  • Standard 1: Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts.

• The Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning Corporation (McRel)
  • Standard 9: Uses viewing skills and strategies to interpret visual media.
How can we do this when we already have so much content to cover?
Integration!!!
A Few Lesson Examples:
Poster Analysis
7th grade students studied WW I and II, and the use of propaganda to influence public opinion and actions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Topics: (select at least 1)</th>
<th>Propaganda Tools: (select at least 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Military Recruitment</td>
<td>Catchy Slogans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War Bonds</td>
<td>Humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonizing other Countries</td>
<td>Nationalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recruiting African-American Soldiers</td>
<td>Euphemisms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conserving Resources</td>
<td>National Symbols</td>
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<td>Stopping Gossip</td>
<td>Lies</td>
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<td>Women Entering the Workforce</td>
<td>Exaggeration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income Taxes</td>
<td>Scare Tactics</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Military Honor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Famous People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stereotypes (discuss with teacher to make sure you are using this tool in a school-appropriate way)</td>
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</table>
1. What are the main colors used in the poster?

2. What symbols (if any) are used in the poster?

3. If a symbol is used, is it
   a. clear (easy to interpret)?
   b. memorable?
   c. dramatic?

4. Are the messages in the poster primarily visual, verbal, or both?

5. Who do you think is the intended audience for the poster?

6. What does the Government hope the audience will do?

7. What Government purpose(s) is served by the poster?

8. The most effective posters use symbols that are unusual, simple, and direct. Is this an effective poster?
Longing won't bring him back sooner... 

GET A WAR JOB!

SEE YOUR U. S. EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

WAR MANPOWER COMMISSION
When you ride ALONE you ride with Hitler!

Join a Car-Sharing Club TODAY!
We Can Do It!
<table>
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**Designed and developed by the**
Cartoon Analysis
Think alouds – adapting a reading strategy to a visual strategy

• What do I know about this topic?
• What do I think I will learn about this topic?
• Do I understand what I just saw?
• Do I have a clear picture in my head about this information?
• What more can I do to understand this?
• What were the most important points in this cartoon?
• What new information did I learn?
• How does it fit in with what I already know?
The Veteran Recalls the Battle of 1943

There we were . . . Japs to the left of us! Germans to the right! Closing in . . . in . . . !

Did I run? I did not! Unyielding, I sat in this chair and groused about the annoying shortage of fuel oil!
Our Big Bertha
"And on this platform, the most amazing marvel of the age! He lives; he talks . . . yet the guy has no guts!"
Test:

1. When did the Pilgrims land at Plymouth Rock?

1620.

As you can see, I've memorized this utterly useless fact long enough to pass a test question. I now intend to forget it forever. You've taught me nothing except how to cynically manipulate the system. Congratulations.

They say the satisfaction of teaching makes up for the lousy pay.
What do I know about this topic?
What do I think I will learn about this topic?
Do I understand what I just saw?
Do I have a clear picture in my head about this information?
What more can I do to understand this?
What were the most important points in this cartoon?
What new information did I learn?
How does it fit in with what I already know?
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<td>What do I see?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[What do you observe? What else?]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does it remind me of?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Another image? A personal experience?]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s the artist’s purpose?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So What?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Why does it matter? What is the significance?]</td>
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These were pictures from 1942 of Japanese Americans being moved to Internment Camps (Manzanar in California) for the duration of the WWII.

How does context change/influence VL of a photograph/visual element?
How do we teach use and design?

Use images and visual media effectively
Design and create meaningful images and visual media

Visual Arts Instruction
Elements and Principals of Design
Feedback
On-going Instruction- Graphic Design
Accountability- students must articulate meaning
Technology Instruction

Find and access needed images and visual media effectively and efficiently
CHILDREN SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY

PREVENT ACCIDENTS. READ THE LABEL.
How do we teach ethics?
Seeing is believing?
Some online resources
Resources

• The Literacy Toolbox - created by the College of Arts and Humanities, University of Maryland College Park
  http://www.humanities.umd.edu/vislit/activities.php

• Blog by Todd Finley in Edutopia -
  http://www.edutopia.org/blog/ccia-10-visual-literacy-strategies-todd-finley
Resources

• The National Archives Teaching with Documents - http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/

• Library of Congress - http://www.loc.gov/
How do we weave intentionality of Visual Literacy skills into classroom instruction?
Thank you

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lori.cozzi@artspacecharter.org