

Visual Literacy

Curriculum Ties

- As one of the major strands of literacy, visual literacy can be used throughout the curriculum at all levels.
- Visual literacy can be tied into other literacies or multi-modal literacies through related texts. By examining and contrasting different forms of literacy, a greater understanding of many forms of literacy can be achieved.
 - For example: Film and novel comparisons, picture books, graphic novels.

Critical Thinking and Media Awareness

- Today's students are exposed to a wider variety of media than in any other point in time.
- It is important to teach students the ability to create meaning and question messages in all media
- As teachers it is important to use visual media relevant to students' interests so that they understand to be critical of visual media that is specifically directed at them

Assessing Visual Literacy – The Three Dimensions of Visual Literacy

- **Affective:** the viewer's personal reaction to a text. Focus on did the student enjoy the text or not and how the text made the student feel. Affective assessment can be used to gauge student interest in a text and thus how effectively the student is likely to be engaged in further interaction with the text.
- **Compositional:** the mechanical elements of a text and how they convey meaning. Compositional assessment relies on having students develop and use metalanguage to explain how the creator of a visual text conveys meaning. Students should be made to consider techniques such as framing, angle, expression, colouring and the like to build an understanding of textual elements.
- **Critical:** The understanding and questioning of the sociocultural implications and context of the text. Critical assessment involves question why a text was created and how it affects or comments upon culture and society.

Sample Learning Activities for Visual Literacy

- **Division 1: Symbols in a Box** - You use items/objects/images to represent things. each time you pull out or a student pulls one out you have opened up space for discussion on what it is representing. By having this discussion you are teaching them how to critically view things in a non literal light. The point of viewing is to understand how representative items are chosen and created. The activity is a bunch of examples used to guide conversation and exploration of the topic of viewing representations.
- **Division 2: Ballet** – Students are exposed to a primarily visual form of story telling. By examining how plot, characterization and emotion are conveyed through physical representation
- **Division 3: Concept art character sketches.** Students are provided pictures of characters in a text that they will be studying. They are asked to describe the character. The students are then presented with the 'official' character sketch and asked to compare how their impressions of the characters were similar and/or different from the author's character sketch. Students are encouraged to consider what visual cues caused them to interpret the character the way they did.
- **Division 4: Commercial Analysis** – Students are presented with television/internet commercials and asked to discuss visual and multi-modal elements in the commercial that are used to express cultural stereotypes, ideologies and opinions. Students are asked to consider how a commercial

attempts to sway the viewer into agreement

Exit Slips – The Things You Wanted to Know

- Assessment: The bulk of the assessment information was taken from an article titled Show Me: Principles for Assessing Students' Visual Literacy, written by Jon Callow of the University of Sydney. The full article contains excellent resources for assessment, practical applications and the cure for cancer (Disclaimer: Does not actually contain the cure for cancer). The abstract of the article and a link to the full text can be found at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1598/RT.61.8.3/abstract>
- The videos used in the media awareness activity are:
 - Conservative Party ad <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1I1IHxgJzss>
 - Liberal Party ad <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-QSgRfjBDs>
 - Yoplait ad <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQe1-WpxkG0>
 -
- Alternate texts for Concept Art Character sketch
 - Any concept art book would work and there are many some examples are:
 - [**The Art of Monsters, Inc.**](#) by John Lasseter
 - [**Walt Disney's Little Mermaid: The Sketchbooks Series**](#) by Applewood Books
 - [**The Art of Beowulf**](#) by Steve Starkey
 - Try searching for concept art books for any visual text you are planning to study
- Types of Viewing
 - A detailed explanation of visual literacy and its uses can be found here <http://k-8visual.info/>