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Title

Grass roots visual literacy, an organic approach

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Grass Roots Visual Literacy: *An Organic Approach*

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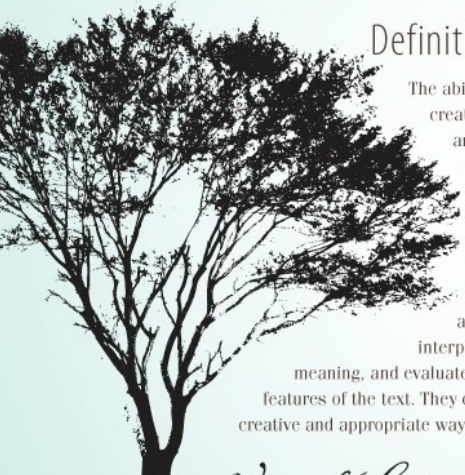
Definition

The ability to decode, interpret, create, question, challenge and evaluate texts that communicate with visual images as well as, or rather than, words. Visually literate people can read the intended meaning in a visual text such as an advertisement or a film shot, interpret the purpose and intended meaning, and evaluate the form, structure and features of the text. They can also use images in a creative and appropriate way to express meaning.

Visual Literacy:

-Design Literacy   -Media Literacy
-Internet Literacy   -Televisual Literacy

Implementing Institutional Visual Literacy, A Call to Action

In their article, Visual Literacy, an Institutional Imperative (2006), Susan Metros and Kristina Woolsey state:

Institutions can take three steps to accelerate the adoption of new visual literacies consistent with their goals:

1. Multimodal fluency: teach a basic visual design vocabulary.

2. Design context: Provide the places, people, and resources needed for those in the academic community to become visual producers.

3. Visual judgment: Develop constructive critics of visual information.

Survey

To answer this call to action, I conducted a survey designed to measure Visual Literacy knowledge amongst the UC Irvine Libraries' Reference Staff; resulting data informed my planning process for developing a training rubric for our librarians so that they will be equipped to teach and promote visual literacy on campus.

UC Irvine Librarians and Reference Staff rated the following as the most important image-based research skill…

- Web design/Photoshop Skills
- Knowing the basic functions of ARTstor
- Ability to Evaluate Visual Information
- Knowing Where to Look for Images
- Knowledge of Copyright & Fair Use Policy

25% of UC Irvine Reference Staff and Librarians surveyed strongly agreed that they were confident in their ability to create and manage digital images.

Methodology

1. Root Visual Literacy in Campus Curricula through the Embedded Subject Librarian

Immerse Reference Librarians and Staff in Visual Literacy Training

→ Find Teachable Moments in Reference Transactions

→ Embed Learning Objects in Bibliographic Instruction

→ Partner with developing curricula in Liasion Departments

2. Find Partners within the Library and on campus with a similar mission (i.e. committees, teams, initiatives, departments, people)

3. Branch Out with New Media
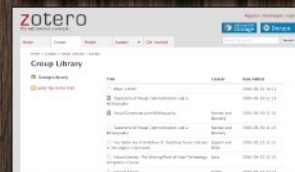
Visual Literacy Libguide Includes:

- **RSS feed** for new materials on Visual Literacy
- Links to **Visual Literacy learning objects in 2nd life**
- Annotated list of **online tools currently available for Visual Literacy Education**
- **Image Anatomy 101** provides an overview of image formats and components, the various ways they manifest in scholarship.
- Access to Collaborative **Visual Literacy Bibliography**
- **Video Tutorials** to come, fall 2010

The UCI Libraries created Anteater Island to highlight library services and to offer a platform for research and teaching to UCI faculty. The Second Life Team has been responsible for the successful management of Anteater Island since 2007. Our team has recruited additional library staff in order to build a modular, immersive and interactive Visual Literacy tutorial within this highly visual interactive space. "Module One: Pictures" will be released Fall, 2010.