Vehicles of thought:
Visual Literacy in the 21st Century

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The power of images and symbols

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aThOZNFrCEM
What does it mean to be literate?

Becoming Visually Literate

The role of the visual

Affecting change

Questions?

Digital literacy

The journey
What does it mean to be literate?
Literacy…

Literacy encompasses a complex set of abilities to understand and use the dominant symbol systems of a culture for personal and community development, especially the ability to read and write.
21st Century Literacies

- Cultural
- Technological
- Digital
- Visual
- Information
- Ecological
- Economic
- Political
- Scientific
- Language
- Personal Security

- Economic
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- Cultural
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Visual Literacy

- Construct meaning from images
- Decode and interpret visuals
- Encode and compose meaningful visuals
- Make judgment of accuracy, validity and worth of visuals
Periodic table of the visual elements

This chart shows the 118 currently known and officially named elements that comprise the Periodic Table (EUPH). Each element is represented visually by an image produced by the Visual Elements project. The Periodic Table is an arrangement of all known elements in order of increasing atomic number. On this chart, all the elements, with their unique physical and chemical properties, are in a visual pattern. There are eighteen vertical columns in the table which divide the elements into groups. Elements within a group have similar physical properties. Additionally, the elements are ordered by their increasing atomic number and are called rows or periods. Properties of elements change in a systematic way through a period.
Questions?

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Why we need visual literacy?

It enhances intellectual capacity through critical thinking
Visuals are a universal language. They can enhance global understanding.
Visually help us make meaning

90% of all the information we take in from the world we take in visually; 30% of the brain context is given over to vision
Learning Styles

- Visual: 65%
- Kinesthetic: 5%
- Auditory: 30%

(Bradford, 2004)
We need to really look at images, look slowly, when we do we can describe what we see, then you can analyze it. Only then can you interpret or construct meaning from it.
visual literacy continuum

Stimulated

Literate

Fluent
- Lives in a visually saturated word in which technology is easily accessible
- Interacts with visuals everyday
- Amateur producer and manipulator
- Imitates rather than innovates
- Not enough knowledge to judge

Stimulated

visual literacy continuum
- Understands design vocabulary and concepts
- Informed viewer, decoder, and consumer
- Effective communicator, encoder and producer
- Informed critic of visual information

visual literacy continuum

Literate
- A knowledgeable and highly-skilled innovator, designer, composer, and producer
- Is digitally literate.

Managing Information – harvesting, searching, digging, leveraging collective intelligence, community plumbing, bookmarking, tagging, subscribing
Consuming information – visual, multimodal, interactive, using tools
Designing information – blogging, digital storytelling, copyright awareness, representing, authoring, mashing
Social Networking Literacy
We need to reintegrate our capacities between text and image because we’re now in the digital age.
From this
To this
To this
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New technologies and digital literacy

Emerging technologies create new possibilities, practices and demands. These challenge traditional conception of ‘a literate person’ while making outdated what is traditionally taught in schools. ‘Literacy’ as in the ‘new literacy’ is a metaphor for essential abilities required today to shape and communicate meanings, develop oneself, and participate in a society.
Digital literacy provides us with skills
“If people aren’t taught the language of sound and images, shouldn’t they be considered as illiterate as if they left college without being able to read or write?”

George Lucas, 2004
The role of the visual in the digital age
As Digital Elements, Visuals Let Us …

- Document
- Validate
- Communicate
- Inform
- Engage
- Expose
- Politicize
- Provoke
Four Models

1. Come to us
2. Woven into the curriculum
3. Systemic change
4. Component of something bigger!

Affecting change!

the journey
Visual literacy is a powerful teaching tool

- Visualization is thinking
- Recomposing helps understanding
- Visual texts are graphic organizers
- Diagrams are more accessible than words
- Meaning is communicated through image more readily than print
Students write by using a visual text

**Information report:** use a **table** or **tree diagram** to organize the order of the paragraphs ("Which comes first? What goes next?").

**Recount:** recall the key events along a **timeline** before starting to write.

**Explanation:** use a **flow chart** to sequence the steps in an explanation.
Students write by using a visual text

Procedure (instructions): organize the steps in the right order using a timeline or flow chart.

Argument (persuasion): use a flow chart to sequence in the best order all the reasons for a point of view.

Discussion: draw up a table of reasons "for" and "against" before making a decision about which side of a discussion you support
Traditional versus new literacy

Traditional literacy focuses on R-W-S-L (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening)

New literacy expands this to include Viewing and Representing through ‘multimodal text’
Multimodal: Pictures and Words

There's a ghost in my cupboard
Who always wears white
There's a ghost in my cupboard
That wants fright and fright.

There's a ghost in my cupboard
Who is really, really hairy
There's a ghost in my cupboard
That is absolutely hairy.

There's a ghost in my cupboard
That comes from the grave
There's a ghost in my cupboard
But I will be brave!
Multimodal: Pictures, Words and Digital Information
Intellectual property

Copyright in Digital Age

• Traditional copyright?
• Why is copyright important in the digital age?
• Creative Commons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Share Alike</th>
<th>Noncommercial</th>
<th>No Derivative Works</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You let others copy, distribute, display, and perform your copyrighted work — and derivative works based upon it — but only if they give credit the way you request.</td>
<td>You allow others to distribute derivative works only under a license identical to the license that governs your work.</td>
<td>You let others copy, distribute, display, and perform your work — and derivative works based upon it — but for noncommercial purposes only.</td>
<td>You let others copy, distribute, display, and perform only verbatim copies of your work, not derivative works based upon it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Principles of “Fair Use” of Copyrighted Materials

ONE: USING COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL IN LESSONS

Educators can use television news, advertising, movies, still images, newspaper and magazine articles, Web sites, video games, and other copyrighted material to build critical-thinking and communication skills.

TWO: EMPLOYING COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL IN PREPARING CURRICULUM MATERIALS

Teachers can use copyrighted materials in the creation of lesson plans, materials, tool kits, and curricula in order to apply the principles of media literacy education and use digital technologies effectively in an educational context.
THREE: SHARING CURRICULUM MATERIALS

Educators may informally share these materials occurs at educational conferences and through professional development programs, as well by electronic means. If teachers are making sound decisions on fair use when they create their materials, then their work should be able to be seen, used, and even purchased by anyone—since fair use applies to commercial materials as well as those produced outside the marketplace model.
FOUR: STUDENT USE OF COPYRIGHTED MATERIALS IN THEIR OWN ACADEMIC AND CREATIVE WORK

Students may include excerpts from copyrighted material in their own creative work for many purposes, including for comment and criticism, for illustration, to stimulate public discussion, or in incidental or accidental ways (for example, when they make a video capturing a scene from everyday life where copyrighted music is playing). Students should be encouraged to make their own careful assessments of fair use.
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**FIVE: DEVELOP AUDIENCES FOR STUDENT WORK**

Educators should work with learners to make a reasoned decision about distribution that reflects sound pedagogy and ethical values. In some cases, widespread distribution of students’ work (via the Internet, for example) is appropriate. If student work that incorporates, modifies, and re-presents existing media content meets the fair use standard, it can be distributed to wide audiences.
Education  = Media x Communication²
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