Visual Literacy Defined

Visual Literacy Defined & Other Related Quotes

"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-orientated society. Visual literacy empowers individuals to participate fully in a visual culture." (Source: Introduction, [ACRL Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education](#))

"Visual literacy is a set of abilities that enables an individual to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use, and create images and visual media. Images and visual media may include photographs, illustrations, drawings, maps, diagrams, advertisements, and other visual messages and representations, both still and moving." ([Source](#): The **Association of College and Research Libraries** Image Resources Interest Group)

"As students develop their visual literacy, they begin to understand that every visual choice the artist has made, every detail regarding subject and color and composition, conveys information that informs the reader." (from "The Power of Pictures: Creating Pathways To Literacy Through Art")

"Visual literacy stems from the notion of images and symbols that can be read. Meaning is communicated through image more readily than print, which makesvisual literacy a powerful teaching tool." Source: Reconceptualizing Literacy,Edwards, Patricia A, Reading Today 27.6 (June-July 2010): p22

"There is this illusion that photography is 'true,' " Dominique Issermann, a French fashion photographer said. But a camera can easily distort reality through the use of a different lens without any

retouching. "As soon as you frame something you exclude something else," she said, adding that photographs are "a piece of reality, but the reality of the world is different." In family photos, for instance, "Someone always says, 'That doesn't look like you at all.' " (Source: NYT)

"We do not get to witness most of the events in the world that are important to us; we have to see them through other people's eyes…."(Source: Peter Howe's reference to photojournalists from the foreword to the book "Moments in Time")

"Each of us reacts to the picture on the basis of our own sensitivity, culture, intelligence, mood and passion. What is more, the interpretation of one and the same photograph will be different at different times. A photograph produced today will offer a different impact tomorrow. Even the place where the photograph is seen can dictate our reactions. A photograph published in a gossip weekly cannot have, a priori, the same impact as a photograph on display in a museum or of another printed in a sophisticated book. The environment where the photograph appears may determine our reading of it." (Source:
Grazia Neri from "Ethics and Photography")

"Visual literacy includes such areas as facial expressions, body language, drawing, painting, sculpture, hand signs, street signs, international symbols, layout of the pictures and words in a textbook, the clarity of type fonts, computer images, pupils producing still pictures, sequences, movies or video, user-friendly equipment design and critical analysis of television advertisements."
(Jan 2009- Source)

Visual images, like all representations, "are never innocent or neutral reflections of reality…they represent for us: that is, they offer not a mirror of the world but an interpretation of it." (Midalia 1999 p.131) In this way, students must be made critically literate: they require knowledge and understanding of how visual texts are produced and composed and how viewers will "relate to and interrogate" (Stephens 1997, p. 164) such representations of the world around them. (Source: An introduction to the grammar of visual design)

"….the three R's are no longer enough. Our world is changing fast — faster than we can keep up with our historical modes of thinking and communicating. Visual literacy — the ability to both read *and write* visual information; the ability to learn visually; to think and solve problems in the visual domain — will, as the information revolution evolves, become a requirement for success in business and in life." (May 22, 2008 [Source]( ))

"One becomes visually literate by studying the techniques used to create images, learning the vocabulary of shapes and colors, identifying the characteristics of an image that gives it meaning, and developing the cognitive skills necessary to interpret or create the ideas that inform an image, be it a television show, photograph, painting, chart, graph, advertisement, Power Point slide, animated GIF, or monster movie" (p. *v*).

Tad Simons, in the introduction to *Visual Literacy: Learn to See, See to Learn* (2002)
"Texts are only representations but people process images as reality."
(Media Education Lab website)

"the ability to construct meaning from visual images."
(Source: [The Visual Literacy White Paper](https://))

" the photograph is not valid as a document until it is placed in a relationship to the beholder's experience." Beaumont Newhall, "Documentary Approach to Photography," Parnassus, March 1938

"students need visualization skills to be able to decipher, interpret, detect patterns, and communicate using imagery—especially given the ease with which digitized visuals can be manipulated." NCREL quoted [here](https://)

"Visual culture is not limited to the study of images or media, but extends to everyday practices of seeing and showing, especially those that we take to be immediate and unmediated" (Mitchell, 2002, Showing seeing: A critique of visual culture. Journal of Visual Culture, p. 170).

"The skills and abilities needed to decode and interpret visual images

are probably as demanding as those required for print." Vandergrift and Hannigan, School Library Journal, 1993, 20

Visual literacy is:

1) the incorporation of visual images as part of conscious and preconscious thought

2) a process of developing visual images for instructional purposes

3) the use of visuals to express ideas and convey meanings to others

Jean Trumbo, 1999 quoted in Communication Research Trends

"Visual literacy is an emerging area of study which deals with what can be seen and how we interpret what is seen. It is approached from a range of disciplines that:

1) study the physical processes involved in visual perception;

2) use of technology to represent visual imagery, and;

3) develop intellectual strategies used to interpret and understand what is seen." **Martin Lester** quoted [here](#)

 "A democratic civilization will save itself only if it makes the language of the image into a stimulus for critical reflection -not an invitation for hypnosis."

Umberto Eco

"Visual literacy is the ability to find meaning in imagery. It involves a set of skills ranging from simple identification—naming what one sees—to complex interpretation of contextual, metaphoric and philosophical levels. Many aspects of cognition are called upon, such as personal association, questioning, speculating, analyzing, fact-finding, and categorizing."

    P. Yenawine (1997) Thoughts on visual literacy, in J Flood, SB Heath, and D Lapp (Eds) *Handbook of research on teaching literacy through the communicative and visual arts*

"If students 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?"

Film maker **George Lucas**, quoted in Edutopia

Based on the idea that visual images are a language, visual literacy can be defined as the ability to understand and produce visual messages. ([Source](#))

"Without an understanding of media grammars, we cannot hope to achieve a contemporary awareness of the world in which we live." **Marshall McLuhan**

"Evidence is evidence whether words, numbers, images, diagrams, still or moving. The information doesn't care what it is. The content doesn't care what it is. It is all information … For readers and viewers, it is the intellectual tasks that remain constant regardless of the particular mode of evidence … to understand and to reason about the materials at hand and to appraise their quality, relevance, and integrity." **Edward Lufte,** father of data visualization

"Visual Literacy refers to a group of vision-competencies a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences. The development of these competencies is fundamental to normal human learning. When developed, they enable a visually literate person to discriminate and interpret the visible actions, objects, symbols, natural or man-made, that he encounters in his environment. Through the creative use of these competencies, he is able to communicate with others. Through the appreciative use of these competencies, he is able to comprehend and enjoy the masterworks of visual communication." (Source: IVLA)