Visual Literacy Strategy

**SEE—THINK—WONDER**

- **Use at the beginning of a unit of study to allow questions to be raised that might guide future inquiry.**
  - **Looking at an image or object (painting, photo, artifact, video clip, excerpt of text, political cartoon, chart, found object)** to harness the power of looking closer hones observations skills.

  i. **See**—What do you see or notice
     - Not looking for interpretations at this point only for what you observe.
  
  ii. **Think**—What do you think is going on?
      - Or... Based on what we are seeing and noticing, what does it make us think?
      - Or..... What kinds of interpretations can we form based on our observations?
        - Encourage layers of meaning and alternatives. What else is going on here?
        - What makes you say that?
  
  iii. **Wonder**—What does it make you wonder?
        - Wondering is about asking your own broader questions to consider issues/ideas raised by the image/object.

**Making Thinking Visible: How to Promote Engagement, Understanding, and Independence for All Learners,** Ron Ritchhart, Mark Church, Karin Morrison

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**ZOOM IN**

- **Learners act as detectives and know that they are only dealing with limited information so their initial interpretations will be tentative. This enables learners to see that it is ok to change your mind about something and that you must be open-minded enough to deal with conflicting information.** Could be used to learn history from primary source documents

- **Process shows how readily assumptions can be made based on limited information.**

  i. Look closely at the portion of a larger image that is revealed.
     - What do you see or notice?
     - What is your hypothesis or interpretation of what this might be based on what you are seeing?
  
  ii. Reveal more of the image
     - What new things do you see?
     - What feelings are you getting so far?
     - How does this change your hypothesis or interpretation?
       - Has the new information answered any of your wonders or changed your previous ideas?
       - What new things are you wondering about?
         - Or ... Do you have a prediction about the next part of the image that will be revealed?
  
  iii. Repeat the reveal and questioning until the whole image is revealed.
     - What lingering questions remain for you about this image?
       - ➞ Encourage students to make connections with other situations.

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Visual Literacy Strategy

CSI—COLOUR, SYMBOL, IMAGE

- Think of the big ideas and important themes in what you have just read, seen or heard.
  Identify and distill the essence of ideas in nonverbal ways.
- Select a brief but rich piece of content that has a variety of interpretations and meanings.
  i. Select a **colour** you feel represents the core ideas of the content.
     - Use a crayon or marker to indicate the colour on paper.
     - Students could explain choices.
  ii. Select a **symbol** you feel represents the core ideas.
     - A symbol is a thing that stands for something else.
     - Create a simple sketch of the symbol you have chosen. Students could explain choices.
  iii. Select an **image** you feel represents the core ideas.
     - Create a simple sketch of your image. Do NOT worry about your drawing ability/experience.
     - You just need to capture the idea. If necessary, select an image/photo from a digital or paper image file.
     - Students could explain choices.

Not necessary to do the steps in this order.

Visual Literacy Strategy

VISUAL THINK ALOUDS

- **Visualization technique**
  i. Type an excerpt of text on the left side of a sheet of paper and have students draw responses on the right side next to text.
     OR... provide students with a sheet of paper and ask them to sketch their visualizations at particular points in the story.
  ii. Have students sketch anything they **see, think, or feel**, as they go through a think-aloud of a text.
     - Students could be asked to identify visual cues and key words that help them visualize the particular scene or image they sketched. This way the relationship between verbal stimuli and visual response can be seen.
**FLOORSTORMING**

- Frontloading to build background before and during reading. Images stimulate and support student thinking and provide scaffolding.
  
  i. Collect various images or visual displays related to the text or concept that is going to be studied (i.e., montage, picture map, tableau, timeline, family tree, object, artifact, photographs, artwork, chart, etc.)
     - Do NOT tell students what the topic is in advance.
  
  ii. Place images on the floor or large table so that groups have easy access. Each group should be prompted to respond the visual floor display in specific ways.
     - Encourage brainstorming.
  
  iii. Students describe what they see and what they already know about what is represented bringing in prior knowledge.
  
  iv. Next, ask them to look for relationships between the individual parts of the display and how the whole display tells a story.
     - Infer what the relationships are, what do the individual elements have in common? What topic or idea could be represented by this display? What makes you say that?
  
  v. Students should be encouraged to consider what is missing from this display. Add or draw in missing components that they believe should be included. Ask students to justify these additions.

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**SELF—TEXT—WORLD TRIPTYCH**

- Frontloading to build background before and during reading. Connecting a particular reading back to the self, the world and to other texts.
  
  i. Divide a posterboard or large paper into 3 equal panels. Label the sections: Text to Self, Text to World, and Text to Text.
  
  ii. **Connection to self** — students visualize a topic or issue related to the reading that comes from their own personal experience. Within the first section, ask them to create a drawing, collage, or other visual to illustrate the experience.
  
  iii. **Connection to world** — ask students to draw on their knowledge of history or current events to illustrate connections between the topic of the text and the world around them. Create a drawing, collage, or other visual in the second section.
     - This helps students to identify the larger context.
  
  iv. **Connection to other texts** — ask students to draw on their knowledge related to multiple forms of texts to illustrate connections between the topic of the text and other knowledge. Based on this, create a drawing, collage, or other visual in the third section.
Visual Literacy Strategy

- **Frontloading to build background before and during reading.**
- **Using provocative, complex, or ambiguous objects and photographs related to a text will trigger an inquiry approach to learning.**
  
  i. Set up a digital photo gallery related to the text or concept you are introducing.
  ii. Ask students to view the gallery and make inferences. When were these photos taken? Who are the people in the photos? What is the situation? What different groups of people are involved? What are the goals of each group? Etc.
  
  * Students practice inferring from visual cues while they build background knowledge.

Enriching Comprehension with Visualization Strategies, Jeffrey D. Wilhelm

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Visual Literacy Strategy

- **Frontloading to build background before and during reading.**
  
  i. Rather than using a film or documentary in its entirety, **select short clips** to create interest and build background knowledge.
  
  ii. Ask students what the clips have in common? What progression or relationship do you see?
  
  iii. Ask students to imagine themselves in the role of one of the characters in one of the clips. Students could provide an in-role commentary or reflection about the scene from that perspective.

Enriching Comprehension with Visualization Strategies, Jeffrey D. Wilhelm
Camera Crew

- Frontloading to build background before and during reading to show connections between lived experience and text.
  
  i. Send students out as digital camera crews on scavenger hunts as units of study are introduced. Students capture a photo that represents an idea, issue, question, structure, literary device, etc.
    * The concrete experience of taking photos helps students to see connections between their environment and the learning target.
  
  ii. Ask students to discuss the images and consider how purposeful compositions and select design elements like colour or focal point draw the attention to certain objects or ideas.
    * Connect this to how authors draw attention to certain images or ideas in multiple forms of text.

Reading Pictures

- Frontloading to build background before and during reading.
- A way to use art to provide analogous techniques for communicating meaning, such as mood or irony in other forms of text. Compare/contrast to skills needed in reading other forms of text.
  
  i. View a high quality reproduction of the photograph, drawing, or painting.
    * Match the content of the artwork to the text or concept you are exploring.
  
  ii. List everything you see. What are the primary and secondary details?

  iii. Identify what shapes & patterns are expressed in the image. How are the details you described earlier arranged in patterns?

  iv. Find the detail that is most salient or powerful to you. What did the artist do to make this detail stand out?

  v. Study this image and the relationship between the objects or people represented. What’s the story? What has already happened? What do you predict will happen? What is the relationship between the details you listed earlier? What is the feeling or emotional content of the relationship? What kinds of gaps did the artist leave for us to fill in?

  vi. Compare the relationship in the image to a relationship in your reading or current learning. How do the artist and the author convey facts and feelings about the relationship? What do we learn from this and what must we attend to?

  vii. Look at another photo, drawing, painting, film, etc. from the same artist or treatments of the same theme by different artists. What is similar or different? What differing meanings are communicated through different treatments?
**PICTURE TALK: HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS**

- **Seeing and summarizing characters, events and situations.**
  - i. Utilize photographs of real people within the historical events you are learning about.
    - * You can do a variation on this by studying images of places.
  - ii. What are the people doing? How are they feeling? How do you know?
  - iii. Who are these people? What might their age be? If multiple people are in the photo, how might they be connected or related in some way?
  - iv. What do you think they have been through? What do you think their plans for the future are?

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**POSTCARDS**

- **Identifying, place holding, and interpreting key ideas to create knowledge.**
- “In true inquiry, students cannot plagiarize because the point is not to recapitulate information; the point is to go beyond what is currently known and to create a unique and usable ‘knowledge artifact’.
  - i. Students write a postcard exchange between characters or historical figures from what they have learned through multiple forms of text. The correspondence must review important information and demonstrate a relationship between the people involved.
  - ii. Postcards require students to imagine an event, setting, or scene and then to communicate their perspective, in role, about this scene to another character.
    - * The receiver must respond to the postcard received.
    - * Explore sample postcards with students to determine elements common to this form of communication.
  - iii. Create authentic postcards to scale and with a hand-drawn image, students photograph, or acquired image and source.
ILLUSTRATED CHARACTER JOURNALS

- **Enriching comprehension of fictional characters or historical figures**
  
i. Students create illustrated character diaries in-role using drawings, photographs, magazine cutouts, clip art, etc. Text and imagery work in combination to paint a complete picture.
  
ii. Include important information demonstrating an understanding of the character’s actions, environment, and worldview.
  
iii. Journals may be satiric in nature.

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TABLEAUX

- **Enriching comprehension of events or fictional characters or historical figures or abstract textual elements like main idea or motif.**
- **Best known as a dramatic process involving the creation of ‘frozen’ moments in time or snapshots where students use their bodies to pose as characters in a photo.**
  
i. Students work in small groups to create a series of tableaux showing a sequence of events. Choose a text or segment to depict visually. Consider the 5 w’s when selecting scenes to create.
  
ii. The tableaux should show the important details and be presented in a way that demonstrates understanding of effective visual composition.
  
iii. The teacher can ‘tap-in’ to the scene by tapping a student on the shoulder and asking some questions about the scene or the character that the student represents.
  
iv. Slide show variation: students photograph each tableau in the series and share in a slide show format using PowerPoint or other software.
Visual Literacy Strategy

MAPS AND THE MAP AS ART

- Seeing and summarizing through pictures (icons, symbols) characters, events, and situations.
  i. Students make maps of real or imagined physical locales as small as a room or as large as a country. Show the details of the terrain.
  ii. Include small illustrations alongside the map to indicate the importance of a particular place on the path. Add a legend.
  iii. Enrichment—maps of a character’s physical, psychological, or spiritual journeys; maps that include symbols that represent several key ideas; organize the map into a pattern other than chronological; based on the original text, depict the concept of change or a cause/effect relationship; add comments describing your thinking about the thinking depicted in the map; display the map and use it as reference for writing, tests, or discussions.
  iv. Students can also create a ‘mirror-map’ to visually depict their own life or journey through a particular text or area of study.

Visual Literacy Strategy

ROLL MOVIES

- Seeing and summarizing characters, events and situations.
  i. Illustrate the events of a story or historical time period on a long, narrow strip of paper. It can be rolled and unrolled to be read like a Japanese scroll or use a shoebox to create a viewer that reveals only a frame of the ‘film’ at one time.
  ii. Students viewing the ‘movie’ could be predicting what happens next.
  iii. Digital options – use iMovie or MovieMaker
**Visual Literacy Strategy**

**DETECTIVE SKETCHES**

- Seeing and summarizing characters, events and situations
- Importance of using background information to make inferences and then to revise ideas based on new information
- Can be used to create an understanding of how primary source texts contribute to our understanding through sketches, pictures, illustrations, etc.

  1. Students become the police artist and create a sketch of a real or fictional person based on available text details.

     Each student could be asked to depict a different character or, if the same character is depicted by multiple people, they could be compared for decisions the students made to depict the character in a certain way.

**Visual Literacy Strategy**

**ILLUSTRATING NON-ILLUSTRATED TEXT**

- Seeing and summarizing characters, events, and situations.
- An opportunity to practice visualization skills and understanding key details
  
  1. Students need to consider what is important to depict and what is best left for readers to imagine. Students create illustrations that act as cues for the reader.

  2. Another format is a Picture Book that students can share with younger learners. Students need to summarize and visually represent ideas from more complicated texts.

  3. Digital options – photography, computer graphics, Photoshop, Illustrator, etc.

  4. Discussions about choices students are making help them to attend to and critically appreciate illustrations that accompany text and think about them in a writerly way – as a method of communication.
VIEWING ART PROCESS

- Viewing is an interaction or conversation between the viewer and the art object. View original works whenever possible.
  
  1. FIRST IMPRESSION—your first spontaneous and immediate reactions to the artwork.
     * What mood or feeling do you get when you look at this work of art?
  
  2. DESCRIPTION—taking a factual inventory. List everything you see in the work.
  
  3. ANALYSIS—figure out what the artist has done to achieve certain effects. Refer to your first impressions and description to look for relationships.
     * What do you think the artist worked particularly hard at? What do you notice about the artist’s choice of materials? Do you know of any other artist or art style that this work resembles? Which of the Elements of Art (color, shape, line, texture, space, form, value) and the Principles of Design (balance, contrast, emphasis, movement/rhythm, unity, variety) are used in a significant way in this artwork?
  
  4. INTERPRETATION—what is the artwork about? What do you think the artist’s view of the world is?
     * Your own perspectives, associations and experiences meet with "the evidence" found in the work of art.
  
  5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION—check other sources to learn about the work and the artist. Consider information about the time period that the work was created and the historical events that may relate to its contents/subject matter.
     * Art works should provoke thought in the viewer. If you are given the ‘answer’ before you experience the artwork, your own creative thinking might be bypassed and your experience with the artwork will be lessened.
  
  6. INFORMED JUDGEMENT—come to some conclusions about the artwork based on the information from the previous stages.
     * What have you seen or learned from this work that you might apply to your own creative expressions or your own thinking?

Adapted from Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Secondary Visual Art curriculum

VISUAL THINKING STRATEGIES

- Based on work of cognitive psychologist Abigail Housen
- “can increase class participation and student engagement while deepening the thinking, language ability, writing skills, and visual literacy” page vii
- Use art as a hook to engage students. Select work that has “clearly readable information alongside ambiguity and diverse subjects and techniques” page 24
- Teacher maintains a neutral stance to support students in constructing their own knowledge and encourages accessing the thinking of peers.
  
  1. ASK “what is going on in this picture?”
     * Open-ended so that all responses are acceptable.
     * Teacher and students should point to the observed details throughout the process.
     * Teacher should paraphrase student comments and link student responses throughout the process.
  
  2. ASK “what do you see that makes you say that?”
     * Invite students to share their reasoning and provide evidence to support their varied interpretations.
  
  3. ASK “what more can we find?”
     * Ask this question often to deepen the meaning-making process. “Repeated use of this question also reinforces the notion that no matter how quickly we think we grasp something, further observing and reflecting often enlarges or changes first thoughts” page 26
  
  4. END with a ‘thank you’ and a comment about what you, as the teacher, learned from listening.