Visual Literacy for Improved Presentations
Fonts, Colors and Graphics

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Definition

"The ability to recognize and understand ideas conveyed through visual actions or images"

- Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Research and Impact

Visual literacy is the ability to interpret, use, appreciate, and create images and video using both conventional and 21st century media in ways that advance thinking, decision-making, communication, and learning.

Professor Albert Mehrabian did a lot of research into how we take in information during a presentation. He concluded that 55% of the information we take in is visual and only 7% is text

A study by Decker Communications showed that by using visuals in your presentation you could expect roughly to double the chance of achieving your objectives

Brain-based research conducted by the 3M Corporation in "The Power of Color in Presentations:" We process images 60,000 times faster than text. Students score 35% better with illustrated texts. Color visuals increased willingness to read, motivation, and participation by up to 80%. Color enhanced learning and improved retention by more than 75%. Color accounts for 60% of the acceptance or rejection of an object.

Design Principles

The fundamental principles of design are:

Alignment	Proportion
Balance	Proximity
Color	Repetition
Contrast	Rhythm
Emphasis	Texture
Movement	Unity
Pattern	White space

Fonts

Typography gives visual form to language. A doctor's business card with a fun font like Comic Sans would make potential patients uneasy. Fonts should compliment the presentation but never bring undue attention to itself or be difficult to read

Font Minimums

Titles and Headlines:
 44 point
 54 point

Body Text:
 24 point
 32 point

Serif or San-Serif?

Document	Headings and Larger Text	Body Text
Web or Projected	Serif	Sans Serif
Printed	Sans Serif	Serif

The Verdana, Tahoma, and Bookman fonts are designed specifically for online viewing.

Typefaces spaced tightly for printed materials such as Times are not a wise choice for projected materials. They create lots of noise in the closeness of space.

Check font by standing 10 feet from computer screen to make sure it is visible. Sometimes we try to fit too much on a slide and lose perspective.

How many?

- No more than 2 from same family
- No more than 2 in 3 different sizes on any one slide
- Because each font has its own personality, consistency is important.
- If you are changing fonts frequently, you might not be presenting a consistent message to your audience.

Caps vs. Lower Case

- Moods
- Detailed Information
- Keep it simple when using charts/ graphs
- Readability is the guiding factor when using all caps. Most ornate fonts are unattractive and hard to read in all caps.
- Use all caps in moderation.

Stick primarily with plain sans serif or basic serif typefaces or specially designed small caps and all caps titling fonts for text in all capitals. Choosing fonts is both an art and a science. The designer must understand how to choose fonts that set the tone for a design, provide the best readability, and convey the right image.

Use bold, italics, and different sizes of those fonts for captions, subheadings, decks, and other design elements. Depending on the design you might use a third font for initial caps, pull quotes, or other selected items. You might add a fourth font for page numbers or as a secondary body font for sidebars, but usually two or three are sufficient. Select a font for body copy and another for headlines. Use bold and italic effects sparingly. Overuse diminishes their effectiveness.

Color

Color Language

1. 80% of a person's impression on a product is based upon its color
2. Color call to mind specific emotional responses
3. Solemn events are depicted in black and white
4. Adding a highlight color increases comprehension and recall
5. Light blue, yellow, yellow-green, and orange seem to help the learning environment
6. Warm colors are active and exciting
7. Cool colors are passive and calming

Color Meanings

Red	Danger, Heat
Yellow	Warmth
Green	Life, youth
Blue	Cool
Brown	Age, Earth, Soil
Paler Colors	Distance

Color has Different Meanings in Other Cultures

White	Purity in West and European cultures
	Death and Mourning in Eastern cultures
Red	Danger in West and European cultures
	Joy and Festivities in Eastern cultures
Yellow	Cowardice in Western culture
	Once Reserved for emperor in China

Key Presentations Elements

Make sure to use contrasting colors. Light colors should appear on darker colors and vice versa. Monochromatic colors schemes are difficult to read on projection screen.

Never use blues and reds together. These colors blur when projected and cause eyestrain.

One of the best color schemes is dark blue background with white text. Use yellow for the highlight color. This is very pleasing to the eye and projects wonderfully

Graphics

Graphics are a great way to spark ideas and communication within your presentation. This is the visual bridge to understanding the subject matter presented. Abstract graphics such as line arts and clip art are a good start. For deeper connection and understanding use photos or pictures. Humor is also a great way to help the audience remember your presentation and connect it to their lives.

Graphics should not distract the viewer from the intended message. The graphic should complement and help the viewer make a desired connection to text or subject. Too much movement in transitions and animations become tiring to the eye and distracting

Great Sites for Graphics

Web Museum:	http://metalab.unc.edu/wm/paint/
Pics 4 Learning:	http://www.pic4learning.com
NASA:	http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/
Google:	Click on the image tab and search for desired graphic. **WARNING**: Not all pictures are school appropriate. There are no filters.

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Dr. Joseph Sommerville. Peak Communication Performance,
http://desktoppub.about.com/od/microsoft/bb/powerpointrules.htm

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Additional Resources

Desktop Publishing: http://www.desktoppubli shi ng.com/

PowerPoint for Teachers: http://powerpointforteachers.com/i ndex.html

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