

DESIGNING VISUAL AIDS

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Annotation: *Currently, the demand for education is rising, requiring teachers to have more knowledge, skills, and training. It should be noted that English is considered to be the most demanded and organized subject among subjects. Everyone is aware that handouts work best for drawing students' attention to the lesson. Because of this, educators are conducting extensive research on the subject and creating visual and aural training guides. In this context, visual aids hold a unique position. The reader will receive much-needed information on how to construct such visual aids as well as information on their overall significance in the essay that follows.*

Key Words: *Decorative Visuals, Representational Visuals, Mnemonic Visuals, Organizational Visuals, Relational Visuals.*

INTRODUCTION

Visual cues are cues that draw attention to information or deconstruct a task into manageable pieces that humans can see. Visual aids include things like flashcards, films, sticky notes, and anything else you can see. Young children, children learning to read, and children who might have trouble focusing on a lot of writing or lengthy instructions can all benefit greatly from the use of visual aids. Some people learn best visually. For visual learners, who may struggle, for example, to assimilate information by listening, visual aides are excellent. They can better process and comprehend the information with the aid of images. Many teachers strive to employ a range of visual aids in their lessons, in addition to manipulatives (something kids can handle), written prompts, and spoken prompts. All learners can experience inclusion and engagement when there is a balance of seeing, hearing, and doing. Long texts can be processed more easily with the use of visual aids. This can be helpful for kids who might have trouble reading or for kids who are just learning to read. When learning and attempting to retain certain information, using images and visual clues can be incredibly helpful.

MAIN PART

Effective graphics aid in comprehension and memory of your presentation's main ideas by your audience. If used properly, overhead projectors, slides, blackboards, handouts, and software like PowerPoint can all significantly improve the impact of your message. The following advice will assist you in creating powerful visual aids.

Each visual needs to be clear and understandable on its own. To help you accomplish this, consider using the following tips:

- limit each slide to only one topic, and give it a relevant title
- state sources where appropriate – for statistics, figures, pictures, etc.
- number headings to clearly illustrate where you are in your presentation
- know your audience: avoid abbreviations and jargon unfamiliar to them
- use meaningful graphics when they reinforce your written message
- highlight key information on charts, tables, and graphs to help focus your audience's attention (i.e., use colour, circle the information, or use a pointer)
- make points concise yet meaningful – avoid being cryptic

Visuals are only effective if your audience can physically see them. Here are some tips:

- use 24 - 28 point font for main text and 32 - 40 point font for headings
- if writing by hand on overhead slides, make your letters at least 1/2" (1.0 cm) high
- avoid distracting, unnecessary graphics and excessively complex backgrounds
- use clear, standard fonts such as Times New Roman, Arial, or Helvetica consider using boldface lettering to make text thicker
- avoid putting much text in italics or all upper-case letters – this slows down reading
- ensure diagrams are not too intricate to be visible from the back of the room
- limit each point to one line whenever possible to limit reading time¹

Visual elements, such as images, charts, and diagrams, enhance in understanding and memory retention of information presented orally. Visual aids can pique an audience's interest, motivate them to support a cause or purchase a product, aid in the retention of specific information, make the presentation's structure clear, remind the speaker of the points they want to make, and boost its persuasiveness. Objects, pictures, diagrams, data graphs, pie charts, and moving pictures like films are all examples of visual aids. Projectors, presentation software, and whiteboards are often utilized technology to convey visual aids.

Why is the potential of visuals to improve learning so under-realized? We believe that a root cause is our educational emphasis on words. We have all spent years learning verbal language skills. From the early grades through graduate school, we spend much of our instructional time learning the production and analysis of language. In contrast to language arts, the visual arts are generally considered an elective or a relief activity to offer an occasional break from the

¹ *Designing Visual Aids. Centre for Teaching Excellence, University of Waterloo.*

serious skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. It's not surprising then that most of us find it much easier to express our ideas with words, even though we may respond more readily to pictures²

Decorative Visuals

Decorative visuals are usually added to educational materials for aesthetic appeal and for humorous and motivational purposes. These visuals usually serve as eye candy to make the content more exciting. However, decorative visuals can interfere with learning processes and it is therefore recommended to limit the use of decorative visuals in your educational materials³

Representational Visuals

Representational visuals show an object in a realistic way. These images have a high degree of correspondence to the real items that they represent. In some cases, extraneous detail is omitted from representational visuals, even though the visual still depicts the object realistically. Examples of representational visuals are a line drawing of a car engine, a photograph of a guitar, or a screenshot of your computer.

Mnemonic Visuals

Mnemonic visuals help people recall details, facts, or concepts that are taught in a lesson. These visuals provide cues so the learner can retrieve factual information more easily. Mnemonics sometimes relate to specific cultural or linguistic practices. In some cases, this can make mnemonic visuals difficult to understand for a more culturally diverse audience (Clark & Lyons, 2011). It is therefore important to always think about your target learners before creating and embedding any visual into your lesson materials.

Organizational Visuals

Organizational visuals show relationships among content of your lesson. These visuals are usually shown as charts, concept maps, or (tree) diagrams. An example of an organizational visual is a representation of a lesson structure that depicts the topics and the relationships of the topics to one another

Relational Visuals

Relational Visuals are used to show relationships among multiple variables. These relationships are usually visually shown in charts and diagrams. Examples are line graphs, pie charts, and bar charts

Transformational Visuals

Transformational visuals show changes in time and space. Visuals that show motion are usually used for these purposes, such as animations, video, or line drawings with arrows or other signs indicating motion. Transformational visuals are often used to show procedures or steps in a process.

Interpretive Visuals

² Ruth Colvin Clark and Chopeta Lyons

³ (Clark & Lyons, 2011).

Interpretive visuals illustrate a principle, theory, or cause-effect relationship (Clark & Lyons, 2011). They help your learner understand processes or events that are usually invisible and/or abstract. An example of an interpretive visual would be an image showing how blood circulates through our heart and body or an animation depicting cell division.

Using a visual medium to communicate, such as an object, picture, sign, or photograph, is referred to as a visual support. Visual aids facilitate and improve communication.

They offer an alternate form of communication for kids and people with speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN).

Visuals can aid in establishing routine and organization, enhancing comprehension, reducing frustration, and creating chances for social interaction.

Each visual should be relevant to your message, convey an important point, be clearly understandable, and be visible by your entire audience. Visuals should be used to make concepts easier to understand and to reinforce your message. They should illustrate important points that are otherwise hard to understand.⁴

Use visuals in presentations that cover procedures, goods, or how-to demos. For instance, in a speech about computer security, show a graphic showing how email is sent. Use images to illustrate concepts that are hidden or abstract and that are difficult to perceive, such as a model of your internal organs in a speech about gastric bypass surgery. Use them when you need to pique the interest or emotions of your audience.

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