Intercultural Visual Literacy: From Theories to Pedagogy

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Intercultural Visual Literacy: From Theories to Pedagogy. With more and more emphasis being placed on visual literacy because of the digital age, it seems reasonable that educators should incorporate visual literacy theories not only into their curriculum but also into their teaching practices. Further, these theories need to encompass a multicultural perspective in order to be ethical, relevant, and responsible modes of instruction. These teaching practices also need to reflect the fact that visual images play a vital role in how humans understand the world around them. This understanding is made possible through how the human brain perceives and deals with images. Because the brain must connect visual images with language and textual learning, it is important to develop instruction practices that encourage multiple literacies. Multiple literacies allow all learners to access information. As librarians, staff, students, and educators we are asked to help people gain access through instruction and presentations. In order to perform these teaching duties, we must learn how to communicate our ideas effectively. Effective communication takes place when the audience can move between texts and images to interpret and understand their meanings. This paper will examine visual literacy theories, cognitive theories, and intercultural literacy theories, and explain how these theories are being used to effectively communicate ideas by placing them into pedagogical contexts. These examples will provide an access point for understanding how these theories can be combined to not only provide increased user access to information but also be used to provide practical and ethically responsible library instruction.