



# 1. Digital Literacy

The term 'Digital Literacy' is broad and multi-faceted, open to interpretation and constantly evolving. The number of definitive definitions of Digital Literacy or fluency are varied and many, from [Wikipedia](#), to [Microsoft.com](#) to schools and [universities, such as CSU](#), around the world. In addition, the term is often used interchangeably with others, such as Media Literacy, Digital Media Literacy, Transliteracy and Information Literacy/Fluency.

The [NMC Horizon Report \(2012\)](#) lists the continued rise in importance of digital media literacy as the third most important challenge to education institutions.

Then there is the perception that students or 'digital natives' ([Prensky, 2001](#)), who have grown up in and experience daily, the digital world, are naturally digitally literate; a view that subsequent research ([Palfrey & Glasser, 2008](#); [Brumberger, 2011](#)) is proving false -that in fact, students are immersed in and experiencing the digital world, rather than **creating, critiquing, analysing** and **challenging** it.

[Boyd](#) (2014, p.176) concurs that, while the Net Generation is accustomed to living online and engaging with technology, their knowledge, understanding, experience and ability to interpret, analyse, evaluate and critically engage with visual and digital texts is not automatic, and needs to be taught. This was not necessary in previous generations, prior to the internet, when publishers and curators provided such evaluations, hence the increasing need for these skills today.

It is apparent, then, that any organisation undertaking the up skilling of students, teachers and employees in digital literacy, will require a definitive decision on what digital literacy looks like, is comprised of and how evidence of such literacy will be measured, in their institution.

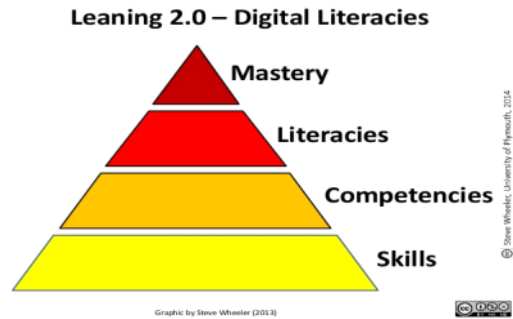


[Figure. 2](#)

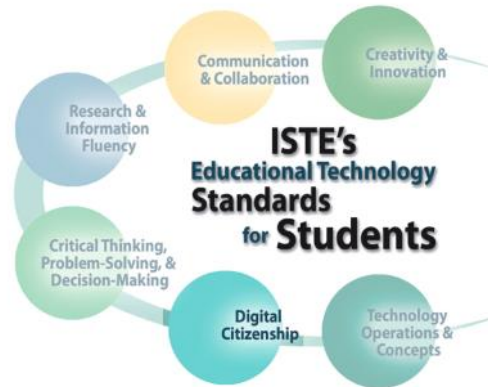
## 2. THE COMPONENTS OF DIGITAL LITERACY

The choices are many -

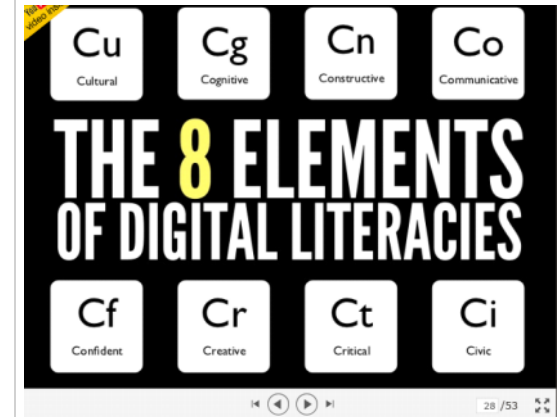
[Steve Wheeler \(2014\)](#) - 'new literacies' of social networking, privacy maintenance, identity management, content creation, curation and organisation, repurposing, self presentation and transliteracy.



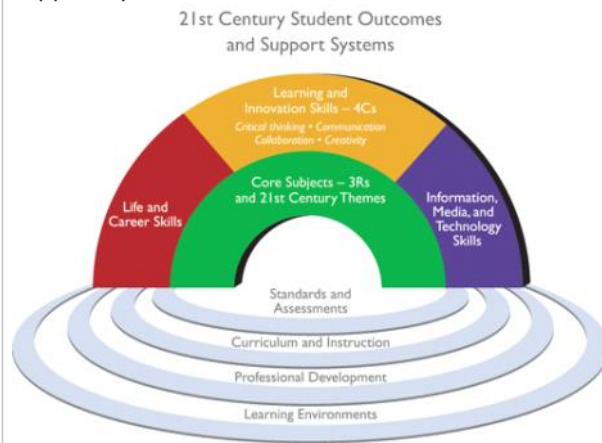
The [ISTE Standards](#) for students and teachers, includes VL in all of the elements.



[Doug Belshaw \(2011\)](#) - the 8 elements of Digital Literacy.



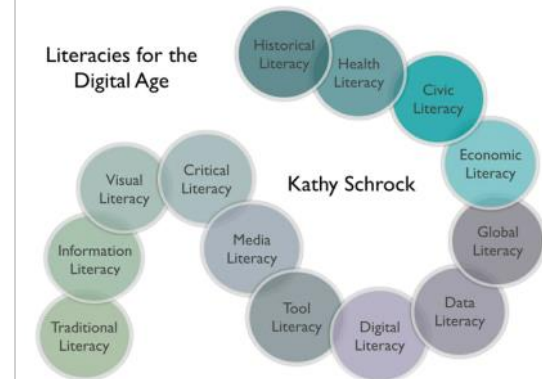
The Partnership for 21st Century Learning incorporates the skills and literacies, within a graphic that also represents student outcomes and support systems.



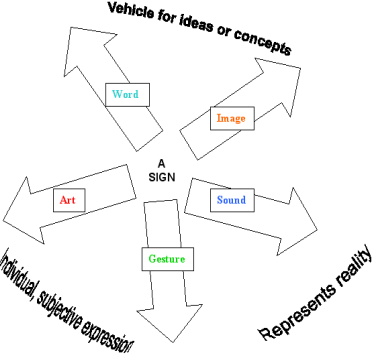

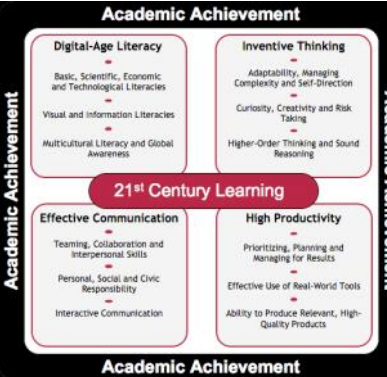
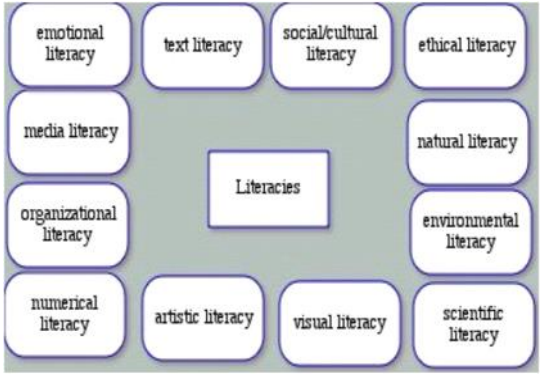
[Futurelab](#)- Digital Literacy across the Curriculum model.



[Kathy Schrock](#) has listed a more extensive list of literacies in her model.



### 3. A PLACE FOR VISUAL LITERACY

 <p><a href="#">Noodletools Information Literacy</a> uses the term 'reading the medium'.</p>	 <p><a href="#">ACARA</a> incorporates VL in Critical and Creative Thinking and ICT Capability.</p>	 <p><a href="#">NCRL, enGauge Report</a> provides an indepth report on 21st Century Skills and being visually literate.</p>	 <p><a href="#">Jamie MacKenzie (2010)</a> highlights Visual Literacy as separate from Media Literacy.</p>
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On closer inspection, it is evident that each version of digital literacy contains many of the aspects of the others, while including variations and differing areas of emphasis, yet they all include Visual Literacy in some form. Clearly, Digital Literacy is comprised of a selection of lower order ICT skills, higher order critical, evaluation and analysis competencies and opportunities to collaborate and understand/demonstrate the responsibilities of having an online presence.

So why is the explicit teaching and assessment of Visual Literacy (VL), a consistent element of Digital Literacy, frequently overlooked within secondary classrooms, even when the task requires a multi-modal component?

## 4. VISUAL LITERACY (VL)

The [Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority](#) (ACARA, 2014) states that

*"Literacy involves students in listening to, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating oral, print, visual and digital texts, and using and modifying language for different purposes in a range of contexts."*

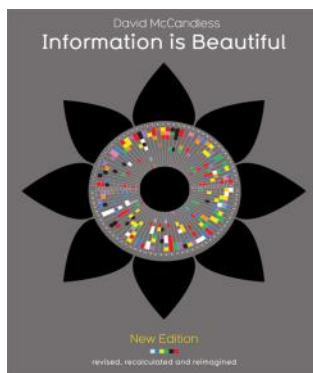
And ACARA is clear that teachers are responsible for teaching all literacies for each key learning area. Since visual and digital texts are specifically listed, the expectation of the Australian Curriculum authority is that every educator will be teaching VL within their field. Yet, the work of [Susan Metros \(2006\)](#) posits that visual literacy among the digital generation has evolved haphazardly and will continue to do so, until:

- educational institutions explicitly list visual literacy alongside the three Rs,
- include an explicit curriculum and
- educators clearly understand the vital role of visual literacy in society.

And the benefits of VL (Ausburn & Ausburn, 1978) continue to be cited today ([Frynt & Brozo, 2010](#)); ([Serafini, 2014](#))

[Gibson, Friesen and Martin \(2008, slide 4\)](#) define Digital Visual Literacy as a set of vital interdisciplinary skills that enable us to function in a digital, visual workplace, listing the skills of critically evaluating, using and creating still and moving visual images and data. And it is the multimodality of the modern world ([Serafini, 2014](#)) that is driving the need for VL.

But it is the work of [David McCandless \(2013\)](#) and [Hans Rosling](#) that perhaps best demonstrates the place of data visualisation and visual literacy through the use of data and graphics, enabling the language of the eye and the language of the mind to connect and collaborate, to make meaning, create and co-create stories. Information is just information without visual representation, yet visual representation is incomplete if we fail to ask the right questions around author, bias, data included and omitted, intended audience and motive ([Thoman & Jolis, 2003](#)). It is the skills of VL that enable us to see the 'complete story'.



[Figure.3](#)



[Figure. 4](#)



# 5.Components of VL

In 2010, the [Association of College and Research Libraries \(ACRL\)](#) produced a comprehensive breakdown of the elements of visual literacy and the competency standards, ranked 1-6, of a visually literate higher education student.

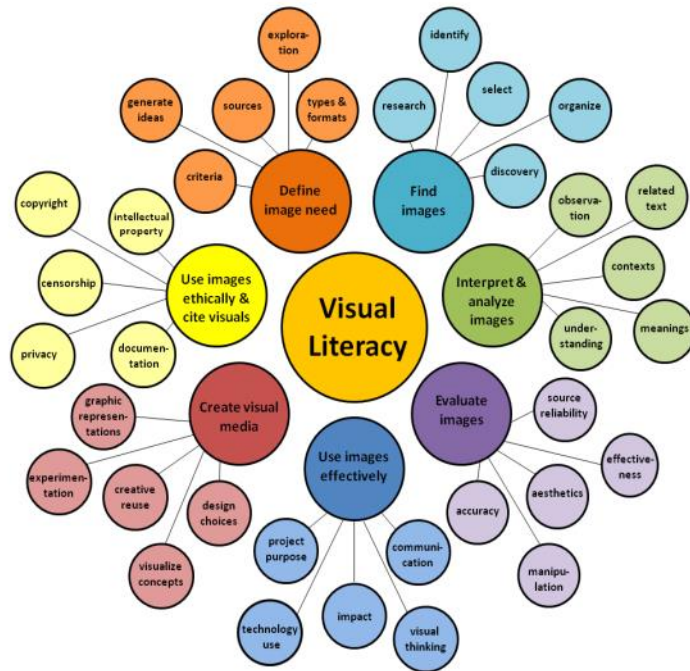


Figure. 5

The complexities and details of such graphics provides educators with a clearer idea of the extensive number of elements that are required to be visually literate, and the realisation that this level of complexity cannot be assumed, but needs to be explicitly taught.

## A PERIODIC TABLE OF VISUALIZATION METHODS

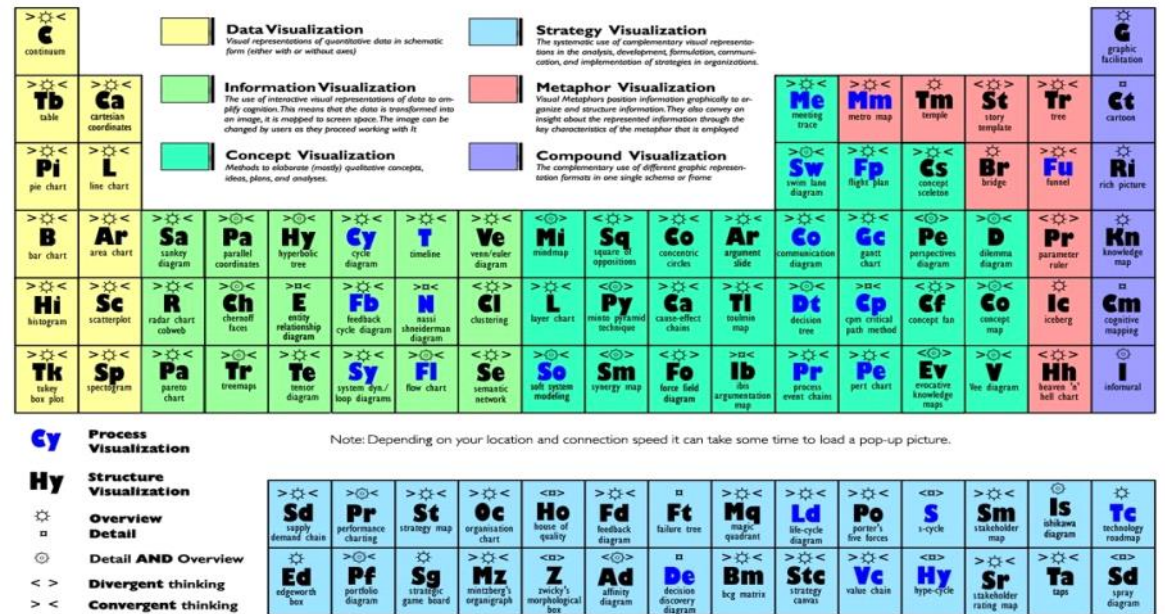


Figure. 6

## 6. TRIVIAL, TRANSITORY AND UNACADEMIC

*"Academics have a long history of claiming and defending the superiority of verbal over visual for representing knowledge. By dismissing imagery as mere decoration, they have upheld the sanctity of print for academic discourse."*

*Susan E. Metros & Kristina Woolsey*

**VS**

*"Young people learn more than half of what they know from visual information, but few schools have an explicit curriculum to show students how to think critically about visual data."*

*Mary Alice White, Columbia Teacher's College*

[Figure. 7](#)

So why then, is the Visual Literacy element of Digital Literacy not translating into tasks and assessment in schools, when extensive research, by Philip & Garcia (2013), [Boyd \(2013\)](#), and [Osterman, \(2012\)](#) has demonstrated the integral nature of visual literacy?

It could be that:

- Reading words and images is assumed to have been dealt with in primary education and not applicable to secondary;
- VL can be interpreted in multiple ways, but most commonly for critiquing art and media, creating the perception that it is an Arts skill;
- There is insufficient knowledge and understanding of the role of VL in the curriculum, and perhaps there is merit in identifying the percentage of time allocated to teaching teachers learning theory and design, in their initial training and throughout their careers, to determine if this is a factor;
- the highly complex nature of teaching and assessing visual literacy, as can be seen by [ACRLs elements and standards of visual literacy](#) and the [Periodic Table of Visualisation Methods](#) is overwhelming. Visual literacy is a highly analytical and questioning skill, with multiple interpretations, making it more difficult to measure progress and competency; as opposed to more traditional skills where answers are right or wrong and can be 'fed' to students ([Daly, 2004](#)).
- integrating new disciplines takes time to allow new patterns of thinking to become habitual ([Cronin, 2010](#)).

The [QCS CCEs](#) identifies the different types of images that require interpretation, analysis and creative use, to demonstrate understanding across all subject areas. So, VL is multidisciplinary, as we analyse maps, data and graphs in geography and business; symbols and equations in mathematics and science; images in art, English and history ([Bamford, 2011](#)). Some KLAS, when using CCEs, call VL 'source evaluation', focusing on the elements relevant to their subject, yet there is generally little evidence of criteria being addressed across subjects and year levels.

Put simply, VL is an integral part of 21st century culture and can no longer be considered trivial, transitory or non-academic ([Bleed, 2005, p.8](#)).

# 8. VALUED AND SUPPORTED

Visual Literacy affords learners the opportunity to connect with the world and each other; understanding their role and the role of others in everything that they view, however there are many aspects of Visual Literacy that need to be learned by educators, in order to be effectively taught to students (Turner, 2013). The challenge faced by those striving to make Visual Literacy an embedded element of all learning, is not dissimilar to the challenge of embedding ICTs into every aspect of the curriculum; in fact it is one part of the embedding ICT/digital literacy challenge.

The need for VL highlights a growing awareness that educators will require considerable support and training in order to do this well. [Metros & Woolsey \(2006\)](#) challenge the leadership of institutions to commit to establishing strategic goals to:

- enculturate visual literacy into every aspect of the curriculum,
- facilitate a new way of thinking, problem-solving, collaborating and communicating, in order for it be seen as a valuable part of every curriculum. Her position indicates that change is required from the top down, within institutions, as well as through teacher training courses.

At the same time, educators and departments can develop an understanding of engaged, reconnected learning, and apply the four design principles of connected, co-created, integrated and personal ([Learning Frontiers, 2014](#)) into 21st century learning and make use of the plethora of models available, to build a spiral curriculum, and assess accordingly.

Common Curriculum Elements Geography	
This assessment requires you to apply the following Common Curriculum Elements (CCEs) assessed in the QCS test. You can find the definitions for these in <a href="#">iDrive</a> .	
<b>Comprehend and Collect</b>	<b>Structure and Sequence</b>
1 Recognising letters, words, and other symbols	21 Structuring/organising extended written text
2 Finding material in an indexed collection	29 Comparing, contrasting
3 Recalling/remembering	36 Classifying
4 Interpreting the meaning of words or other symbols	31 Interrelating ideas/themes/issues
5 Interpreting the meaning of tables or diagrams or maps or graphs	38 Generalising from information
6 Interpreting the meaning of labels or diagrams or maps or graphs	49 Perceiving patterns
7 Transferring from one form to another	50 Visualising
12 Comparing lists/statistics	
13 Recording/entering data	
28 Interpreting	
51 Identifying shapes in two and three dimensions	
52 Researching and locating items/information	
53 Observing systematically	
57 Manipulating/operating/using equipment	
<b>Analyse, assess and conclude</b>	<b>Create and Present</b>
16 Calculating with or without calculators	9 Using correct spelling, punctuation
33 Reaching a conclusion which is consistent with a given set of assumptions (Inferring)	10 Using vocabulary appropriate to a context
35 Extrapolating	11 Summarising/condensing written text
41	14 Compiling results in a tabular form
42 Critiquing	15 Graphing
43 Analysing	20 Setting out/presenting/ranging/displaying
44 Synthesising	26 Explaining to others
45 Judging/evaluating	27 Encouraging a response
48 Justifying	46 Creating/composing/devising
	60 Structuring/organising

Figure. 8

Common Curriculum Elements (CCEs) Numbered CCEs colour-coded by basket	
1	Recognising letters, words and other symbols
2	Finding material in an indexed collection
3	Recalling/remembering
4	Interpreting the meaning of words or other symbols
5	Interpreting the meaning of tables or diagrams or maps or graphs
6	Interpreting the meaning of labels or diagrams or maps or graphs
7	Transferring from one form to another
12	Comparing lists/statistics
13	Recording/entering data
28	Interpreting
51	Identifying shapes in two and three dimensions
52	Researching and locating items/information
53	Observing systematically
57	Manipulating/operating/using equipment
16	Calculating with or without calculators
33	Reaching a conclusion which is consistent with a given set of assumptions
35	Extrapolating
41	
42	Critiquing
43	Analysing
44	Synthesising
45	Judging/evaluating
48	Justifying
60	Structuring/organising
9	Using correct spelling, punctuation
10	Using vocabulary appropriate to a context
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15	Graphing
20	Setting out/presenting/ranging/displaying
26	Explaining to others
27	Encouraging a response
46	Creating/composing/devising

Figure. 9



# 9. MODELS AND PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS

Since learning theories, design models and teaching/learning pedagogies all incorporate elements of visual literacy within higher order activities, providing educators with a selection of visual literacy models, criteria and resources, to enable a step by step progression for embedding VL into a higher order thinking secondary curriculum, is imperative.

Any one of the following would provide a starting point, as those who are visually literate have also addressed a portion of Digital Literacy, Information Literacy and Digital Citizenship.

## The Visual Literacy Toolbox



### Seeing is Deceiving: Visual Literacy in an Information Age

by Diane Cordell

[Seeing is Deceiving](#)

### MediaLit KIT Analysis and Critique

Key Word	Core Concept	Producer Question
Authorship	All media are constructed	What am I creating?
Format	Media uses a creative language with rules	Do I understand the language of my chosen format?
Audience	Different people experience media differently	Do I engage and compel my target audience?
Content	Media has embedded values and points of view	What values, lifestyles, and points of view are framed in my work?
Purpose	Most media are organized to gain profit or influence people	Have I communicated my purpose effectively?

Center for Media Literacy

[Media Centre for Literacy - MediaLit Kit](#)

### ASSESSMENT AS LEARNING - DEBRA GILCHRIST

1. LEARNING OUTCOME: "What do you want students to be able to do?"

2. CURRICULUM: "What does the student need to know in order to do this work?"

3. PEDAGOGY: "What activity will facilitate learning?"

4. ASSESSMENT: "How will the student demonstrate the learning?"

5. CRITERIA: "How will I know the student 'has done this work'?"

Gilchrist, Debra L. "A Twenty Year Path Learning about Assessment: Learning from Assessment" *Communication in Education* 3(2) (2012): 106-19.

[Visual literacy across the arts](#)

### Standards for Higher Education

Approved by the ACRL Board of Governors, October 2012

#### Introduction

The experience of design 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 literacy is no longer restricted to other forms of education. 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. Early skills were developed through essential skills to engage visually in a visually saturated society. Visual literacy responses individual to participants vary in a visual culture.

#### Visual Literacy Defined

Visual literacy is a set of abilities that enables an individual to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use, and create images and visual media. Visual literacy skills require a learner to understand and analyze the conceptual, cultural, aesthetic, technical, and rhetorical components involved in the production and use of visual material. A visually literate individual is both a critical consumer of visual media and a competent contributor to a body of shared knowledge and culture.

In an increasingly digital culture an individual, a visually literate individual is able to:

- Evaluate the nature and extent of the visual material needed.
- Find and locate needed images and visual media efficiently and effectively.
- Prepare and create the necessary images and visual media.
- Evaluate images and their sources.
- Use images and visual media effectively.
- Design and create meaningful images and visual media.
- Understand usage of the ethical, legal, social and economic issues surrounding the creative and use of images and visual media, and assess and use visual materials ethically.

ACRL Visual Literacy Competency Standards  
<http://www.slideshare.net/johmacasio/acrl-visual-literacy-competency-standards>

Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What issues are being shown in the image?</li> <li>How is the way the issue is shown in the image similar to or different from how you see this issue in the world?</li> <li>What might this image mean to someone who sees it?</li> <li>What is the message of the image?</li> </ul>
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where has the information in the image come from?</li> <li>What information has been included and what information has been left out?</li> <li>What proportion of the image could be inaccurate?</li> <li>What information presented is factual/manipulated/fair?</li> <li>What is the relationship between the image and any text?</li> <li>What impact does the size of images within the picture have?</li> </ul>
Who	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What people are depicted in the image (even if there are now actual people in the image, whose culture or experiences are being shown)?</li> <li>Who created the image and for what purpose?</li> <li>Who is the intended audience for the image?</li> <li>Whose point of view does the image take?</li> </ul>
Persuasion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why has a certain media been chosen?</li> <li>Why was a particular image chosen?</li> <li>Why was the image as targeted that way?</li> <li>Is the information contained in the image factual?</li> <li>What devices have been used to get the message across to the viewer?</li> <li>How has the message been affected by what has been left out or is not shown?</li> </ul>

[Visual Literacy White Paper](#)

### III: Preparing a Visually Literate Citizenry

1. Make it (Mobile)
2. Collect it
3. Access it
4. Share it (openly)
5. Author a Book
6. Replace the Book
7. Fulfill an Assignment
8. Be Prepared
9. Use it to Critique
10. Teach a Course
11. Create a Learning Environment
12. Establish an Institute
13. Embed it in General Education
14. Engrain it in the Institution's Strategic Vision
15. Take it to Heart

[The Educators Role](#) in preparing a visually literate citizenry

Level	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Proficiency
Understand and use digital resources	Describe how digital resources are used and how they are presented as an integral part of the learning process.	Describe how digital resources are used and how they are presented as an integral part of the learning process.	Describe how digital resources are used and how they are presented as an integral part of the learning process.	Describe how digital resources are used and how they are presented as an integral part of the learning process.
Apply digital resources to learning and research	Apply digital resources to learning and research.	Apply digital resources to learning and research.	Apply digital resources to learning and research.	Apply digital resources to learning and research.
Apply digital resources to learning and research	Apply digital resources to learning and research.	Apply digital resources to learning and research.	Apply digital resources to learning and research.	Apply digital resources to learning and research.
Apply digital resources to learning and research	Apply digital resources to learning and research.	Apply digital resources to learning and research.	Apply digital resources to learning and research.	Apply digital resources to learning and research.

[Digital and Information Literacy Framework](#)

### Common Curriculum Element Instance Matrix

[https://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/senior/qcs\\_ce\\_matrix.pdf](https://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/senior/qcs_ce_matrix.pdf)

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[direct=true&db=hlh&AN=59562695&site=ehost-live](http://ezproxy.csu.edu.au/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=59562695&site=ehost-live)

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