

Viewing and Representing

Supporting English Language Arts 10, 20, 30

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Purpose

The purpose of this material is to provide additional information related to the viewing and representing strands of the renewed English language arts curricula.

Viewing

Print text does not stand alone but interacts with images, sound, graphics, animations, and design features to create “textual” meaning. Text is now used to refer broadly to a range of cultural artifacts — lists, songs, buildings, posters, rituals, paintings, even the routine and practices of the classroom itself — that can be “read” (interpreted) (Seixas, 2001). Even print texts have changed, no longer relying solely on the printed words. “Dedication to print decoding practice will not develop the skills and strategies needed to “read” images, graphics, and hyperlinks” (Doherty, 2002).

“Reading”/viewing requires students to construct meaning by interpreting the parts (images, symbols, conventions, context) that are related to the visual message and to understand not only “what” the text is saying but “how” the text works. Effective viewers must ask themselves:

- What is the visual text representing?
- How was this visual text constructed?
- What assumptions, interests, beliefs, biases, and values are portrayed by the visual text?
- What assumptions, interests, beliefs, biases, values can be inferred about the author from this visual text?
- What is the purpose of the text?
- To whom is the text directed? Who does the text exclude?
- What is my reaction to this visual text? What causes this reaction?
- What personal connections and associations can I make with this text?
- What use is made of language, image, and/or symbol? Is it effective? Why?



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Viewing helps students develop the knowledge and skills to analyze and evaluate visual texts and multimedia texts that use visuals. Viewing helps students acquire information and appreciate ideas and experiences visually conveyed by others. Students need to view widely and critically a range of visual forms including video, film, television, three-dimensional models, dance, graphics, drama, photographs, gestures, and movements. As demonstrated by these examples, some visual forms may also include oral, print, and/or other media texts.

Teacher-guided	Student-directed	Specific Strategies
<p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activating what students already know • Providing important background information • Explaining conventions, techniques, and concepts • Setting purposes for viewing <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelling the strategies effective viewers use • Guiding with questions and activities • Using think-alouds • Noting effect of visuals <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing overall use of visuals within particular text • Evaluating contribution of visuals within particular text 	<p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I think about what I am going to see? • Who created this visual text? • Whose point of view will be presented? • Who are the intended audiences? • What do I already know about this? What do I need to learn from this? • What is my purpose? • What strategies do I need to use to make sense of this visual? <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I understand what I am viewing? Does it make sense? • Am I attentive, alert, and focused in my viewing? • Do I identify the key ideas and underlying messages or assumptions portrayed by the visual text? • Do I consider the relevance, reliability, and validity of the information portrayed by the visual text? • Do I make notes and pose questions? • Do I note techniques and special visual effects? • Do I consider the ethic of what is being presented visually? <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do I reflect, review, and evaluate what I have seen? • Do I consider the overall effectiveness of the visual presentation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modelling • Mini-lessons • Guided viewing • Viewing guides • Asking questions • Setting purpose • Exploring the conventions, and discussing techniques and special effects • Think-alouds • Pausing and reviewing • View, Pause, Predict, and Think-aloud • Directed Viewing-Thinking Activity • Response forms • Viewing journals • Paired response • Gallery walks • Illustrator studies

Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to support students in understanding a range of visual texts.

1. Understanding the viewing process is as important as understanding the listening and reading process. Students should understand that effective, strategic viewers engage in the following procedure:
 - a. Pre-viewing: Students prepare to view by activating prior knowledge, anticipating a message, asking questions, setting a purpose for viewing, and other pre-viewing activities.
 - b. During Viewing: Students view the visual text to understand the message by attending, seeking and checking understanding by making connections, making and confirming predictions and inferences, interpreting and summarizing, pausing and reviewing, and analyzing and evaluating. Students should monitor their understanding by connecting to prior knowledge and experiences, questioning, and reflecting.
 - c. After Viewing or Responding: Students should be given opportunities to respond personally, critically, and creatively to visual texts. Students respond by reflecting, analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, creating, and other responding activities.

A visual text can invite different responses. Some questions to promote personal, critical, and creative responses are provided below.

Personal Response

- What is my initial reaction to this text?
- Why did I respond this way?
- What feelings, connections, and associations did this text evoke?
- What stands out after viewing this text?
- Do I agree or disagree with what I have seen? Why?
- What have I learned from this text?

Critical Response

- Who is communicating what message for what purpose?
- For whom is this message intended?
- Who owns or supports this mode of transmission and what impact does such ownership have on its content?
- What is the surface text (subject and what is being shown about that subject) and subtext (underlying assumptions, messages, and values)?
- From whose perspective is the message presented?
- What communities or viewpoints are presented in the text and what communities or viewpoints are absent?
- What elements are used to get and hold the viewer's attention?
- What were the outstanding parts of this visual text? What were the weak parts?
- How was this visual text constructed?
- What are the noteworthy technical aspects of this visual text (e.g., camera shots or angles, layout, setting, lighting, special effects, size, shape, spacing, etc.)?
- What use is made of colour, shadow, and images such as symbols, photographs, and three-dimensional objects? Is it effective?

Creative Response

- How could I build on and extend this text?
- How could I create a similar text?

- How could I create a new text about this subject?
 - What techniques, language, and artistry could I use to create the effect or impact of my text?
2. As in listening, reading, and responding to aural, oral, and print texts, students should analyze the message, purposes behind, impact, and production of visual texts. Some examples follow.

- a. All texts contain ideological and values messages:
- Who is communicating and why? (Who produced this visual text? What were their intentions? What ideology/view of the world do the creators/producers assume and present?)
 - Why else do you think the visual text was created?
 - When was it created?
 - Who is the intended audience?
 - What is the message of this visual text?
 - What genre is it (e.g., soap opera, science fiction, documentary)? What form or type is it (e.g., video, painting, radio, drama, film, dance)?
 - How was it produced? What production techniques were used to create the visual text (e.g., codes and conventions, structures, special techniques, etc.)?
- b. Each text uses certain techniques, conventions, and aesthetic elements (e.g., light, angle, colour, focus, composition, shape) and psychological appeals. Students might analyze the elements of design in an ad for a popular product. They could consider both the elements and principles of design using a matrix such as the following:

	Line	Shape	Texture	Space	Size	Colour
Images						
Lettering						
Background						
Foreground						

Students could also consider dominance (focal point), movement, balance, unity, variety, repetition, and the impact.

3. Help students use visual texts for both learning and enjoyment by modelling both efferent and aesthetic stances.
- a. Model and give students strategies for viewing to learn by considering the ideas that are being presented (i.e., take an efferent stance).
- Viewing to learn by gathering information requires students to develop and use key skills to acquire knowledge. Key skills and strategies include:
- asking questions (What is this going to be about?)
 - using prior knowledge to make inferences and predictions about what students are about to hear (What do I already know about the topic? What does the visual text want me to know or do?)
 - recognizing what is not known (What is the significance of what I am watching? What have I learned? What else do I want/need to know about this topic?)
 - being able to synthesize information or create summaries (What do I need to remember from this presentation?)
 - knowing when to adapt the viewing approach to the situation (Do I need to take notes, pause, review, conduct research, check facts or claims, use a dictionary, compare with other texts?)
 - taking a critical stance by considering the deeper meanings, implications, limitations, or biases of the visual text.

- b. Model and give students strategies for viewing to use their imaginations or to take an aesthetic stance.
- Proficient viewers usually assume an aesthetic stance when they view for pleasure. They:
 - enter in – building a mental picture and figuring out what the presentation is about
 - move through – considering the visual text and their own experiences as they construct meaning
 - examine what is known – using developing ideas to rethink what they have learned from the visual text
 - take a critical stance – moving away from personal involvement to consider deeper meanings and connections between the visual text, and social and cultural issues (Langer, 1998, pp. 16-23).

As students view a visual text or a multimedia text that includes visuals, students should ask questions such as the following:

- How does what I am seeing make me feel?
- Where and when does this take place? How do things look?
- How might things sound, taste, feel, and smell? How is this similar to what I know or have experienced?
- Do I identify with any of the characters or the situation or the point of view? What would I do if I were in there and experiencing these events or this experience?
- Does what I am seeing involve a conflict? If so, what is it? How might it be resolved?
- Does what I am seeing involve humour? If so, what makes it humorous?
- What are the main images, ideas, symbols, or themes found in this visual presentation?
- If the presentation is multimedia, what can be learned from this visual presentation?
- What types of listening and/or reading strategies will enhance my understanding of this multimedia text?

- c. Extend students' viewing responses by using dialogue and split-page journals, conferences, discussion, and other activities.

4. Use strategies such as View, Pause, Predict, and Think-aloud (VPPT) to model and verbalize thoughts and strategies for viewing and considering the text and subtext. Use the pause function in a video, for example, in order to model making predictions and reflecting upon, talking about, comparing, and critically evaluating key points in the visual texts. Periodically stop an information video, for example, to question a statement, an opinion, or a perspective. Encourage students to make notes during pauses and to consider not only the information being presented but also the technique being used.

Use a Directed Viewing-Thinking Activity (DVTA) when guiding students through a visual work or presentation. The focus in a DVTA is on making observations and predictions, formulating questions, and confirming or rejecting ideas before, during, and after viewing. Steps for the DVTA are listed below.

Step 1: Activate the background knowledge by looking at the title and any visual cues available in a survey of the work.

Step 2: Make predictions about the content of the work and support predictions with reasons. Set a purpose for viewing.

Step 3: Have students view the work, keeping their predictions and purpose in mind.

Step 4: Have students confirm or reject predictions by finding proof or supporting information in the work.

Step 5: Have students continue to view the work with different purposes or foci for viewing, and finding evidence in the visual text for their ideas and conclusions.

5. Discuss the techniques, elements, and conventions that are used to construct texts that include visuals. Some conventions of visual texts are listed below.

Print Texts with Visuals

Newspapers, magazines, newsletters, leaflets, brochures, pamphlets, etc.

Techniques and Elements

Captions, layout, graphics, charts, tables, diagrams, pictures, flowcharts, logos, headline fonts (style, size, and placement), white space, spacing, proportion, pictures (foreground/background), colour, shape, borders/ wraps, etc.

Two and three-dimensional Texts with Visuals

Photographs, pictures, posters, billboards, comics, cartoons, drawings, brochures, maps, collages, dioramas, sculptures, tableaux, movement or dance sequences, leaflets, print advertising, etc.

Techniques and Elements

Subject, medium, composition, arrangement, foreground/background, colours, shape, line, light, shadow, camera angle, focus/focal point, movement, frame/panel, balance, text/copy, etc.

Multimedia Texts with Visuals

Films and television (dramas, children's shows, movies, science fiction, westerns, documentaries, nature shows, news, advertising, special interest shows), videos, stage plays, music videos, dance performances, computers (desktop publishing, Internet web sites, home pages, e-mail, browsers, search engines, CD-ROMs, simulations), emerging technologies, etc.

Techniques and Elements

Scenes, story elements (setting, plot/sequence, character, dialogue), production elements (camera shots, movement, sound/music and sound effects, colour and lighting, transitions, special effects, makeup, costumes, sets, props, blocking), graphics, pictures, video, animation, hypertexts, hyperlinks, anchors, typefaces, spacing, proportion, continuity, models, clips, slides, graphics, displays, etc.

6. Use viewing guides. Students should view a variety of different texts for a variety of purposes (e.g., to explore, to understand, to evaluate, to empathize, for pleasure). Viewing guides can be created to help students "watch for" specific issues and techniques including the implicit and explicit purpose, point of view, message, and values as well as the techniques, elements, and structural features of the visual text. Viewing guides, such as the following, could be prepared for different purposes and mediums including television, film, comics, cartoons, posters, advertisements, and graphics.

The following Collaborative Viewing Guide (Wood, 1994) on page 8 could be used by students as they view a presentation in which their purpose is to connect prior learning with new learning and to develop ideas for future learning. It is a variation of the KWL technique (Ogle, 1986). A sample viewing guide for a photograph is found on page 9 and a viewing guide for a video presentation is found on page 9-10.

7. Students should have the opportunity to compare different visual texts. Comparisons can include the presentation of similar content by two or more media (e.g., compare news reports of the same event by different media), the form and techniques (e.g., two forms of advertisement of the same product), and the representations of gender, race, and culture (e.g., in a sitcom or a gallery display of photographs). Ask students to make generalizations about the ways in which content has been adapted to different purposes and audiences in the visual texts and to evaluate the various adaptations. Which form is most effective in fulfilling its purpose?
8. Help students consider the ethics of what they see. "Visual messages are a powerful form of communication because they stimulate both intellectual and emotional responses — they make us think as well as feel.

Consequently, images can be used to persuade and to perpetuate ideas that words alone cannot. When controlled by economic interests and corporate considerations, [visual texts] can be powerful tools to persuade people to buy a particular product or think a specific way. Any viewer or producer of visual messages must be aware of the ways that [images] are used to convince others of a certain view. A creator of images has an ethical and moral responsibility to ensure, for example, that a picture is a fair, accurate, and complete representation of someone from another culture.” (Lester, 1995, p. 73). Students could consider the visual persuasion and ethics in advertising (e.g., a clothing advertising campaign or a current television commercial).

9. The Internet is a valuable medium for communication. Using it wisely and safely, however, requires critical thinking skills. On the Saskatchewan curriculum website, teachers will find a number of resources useful for developing students’ critical thinking and viewing abilities.
10. Incorporate visuals throughout each unit of study and encourage students to share visuals associated with the unit theme or issue students find effective in communicating an explicit or implicit message.

Assessing and Evaluating Viewing

Pages 11–13 contain sample forms to be used in the assessment (i.e., gathering of information) and considered in the evaluation (i.e., making a judgement based on the gathered information) of student learning. See also Comprehend and Respond (Viewing, Listening, and Reading) Rubrics in renewed English Language Arts 10, English Language Arts 20, and English Language Arts 30 curricula.

Sample Collaborative Viewing Guide for a Multimedia Presentation

Name: _____

Date: _____

Group Members: _____

Topic: _____

Presenter: _____

1. We know that:

2. Possible questions for the presenter:

3. My notes:

4. The group's notes:

5. We learned that:

6. We need to find out more about:

Sample Viewing Guide for a Photograph

Name: _____

Date: _____

Class: _____

Photograph and Source: _____

First Impressions: As you look at this photograph, try to describe your impressions of it. What do you notice, and what thoughts or memories or emotions does it evoke in you?

Second Impressions: What has the photographer chosen to show you? What has the photographer focused on? What has the photographer included in the frame or the picture and what has been left out?

What is the setting (the place, the time of year, the time of day, and the period of history)? If there are human subjects, who are the people involved and what are they doing? How are they interacting? What is happening in the photograph? What likely happened before the photograph was taken?

How would you describe the photograph technically? Is it black and white or colour? Is it a portrait or a landscape? Does it focus on a detail or on a concept? From what angle was it taken? Are there strong contrasts between light and dark? Colours? Shapes? Foreground and background? What is the mood of the photograph? What feeling does it evoke in you? Why?

What seems to be the purpose of the photograph? Is the photographer documenting a fact? Expressing an idea? What is the message? What does this photograph say to an audience? What is its ultimate value as a work of communication?

Sample Viewing Guide for a Video Presentation

(Note: Pausing techniques can be used for predicting or analyzing.)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Class: _____

Video Title and Source: _____

Pre-viewing

Before you watch the video, consider the following questions: What do you expect to see in this video? Consider specific places and sights, who the main characters will be, and what the opening scene might be.

As You View the Video

As you view the video, note the following: The main actors, where and when the story takes place, the major scenes and conflicts, and any interesting visual or sound techniques.

After Viewing the Video

First Impressions:

- What seems important to you about the video?
- What message was presented? Who was the target audience?
- When you think about this video, what images, sounds, characters, or situations come to mind?
- Did you identify with any character or situation in the video?
- What effect did the presentation have on you?

Second Thoughts:

- Is there any significance to the title?
- Was the setting important and if so, how?
- Who are the people in the video? Are they realistic? Are they stereotypes?
- What qualities did the major characters possess? Did they behave in predictable ways? How effective was the acting?
- Did the plot maintain your interest and why or why not? What were the major conflicts?
- What does the story suggest is important?
- Were there any interesting production techniques and how would you describe them?
- Who created this video?
- Does the video contain any bias or stereotyping of different people or issues?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the video? Would you recommend it to a particular audience and why or why not?
- How did this video affect your understanding of life or an issue? On what topic would you create a video (and why)?

Sample Viewing Assessment and Evaluation Form

	Comments
<p>Before: What does the student do before viewing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinks about why he/she is viewing • Thinks about what he/she already knows and needs to know about the topic • Considers additional background knowledge • Asks questions • Anticipates message • Sets purposes • Considers a viewing strategy <p>Other:</p>	
<p>During: What does the student do during viewing to construct meaning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses • Makes connections to presentation, experiences, and other texts • Makes and confirms predictions • Makes and confirms inferences • Makes and confirms interpretations • Notes key ideas (main messages/themes) and what supports them • Determines purposes of visuals • Identifies underlying messages or assumptions • Draws conclusions and makes judgements • Makes notes • Detects stereotypes and biases • Identifies unfamiliar images used <p>Other:</p>	
<p>After: What does the student do after viewing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds in a variety of ways • Considers preferred response from intended audience (e.g., buy, laugh, reflect) • Discusses ideas generated by visual texts with others • Recalls, retells, and reviews • Summarizes and paraphrases • Evaluates • Asks questions • Considers elements, techniques, and overall effect • Views again (if possible) to deepen understanding or pleasure • Builds on and extends what was seen (e.g., posing new questions, writing, drawing, dramatizing, researching) <p>Other:</p>	

Sample Analytic Rubric for Viewing

Criteria	Level 6	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Criterion 1: Viewing Skills and Strategies	Demonstrates a strong understanding of and the effective use of a broad repertoire of appropriate strategies required to construct meaning before, during, and after the viewing process.	Demonstrates a good understanding of a repertoire of strategies and consistently uses most of the strategies needed to construct meaning before, during, and after the viewing process.	Demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of and uses with relative ease the important strategies needed to construct meaning before, during, and after the viewing process.	Demonstrates a general knowledge of and uses to varying degrees (some well and others less well) the strategies needed to construct meaning before, during, and after the viewing process.	Demonstrates limited knowledge of and uses in a limited way only a few of the strategies needed to construct meaning before, during, and after the viewing process.	Demonstrates little or no knowledge of and makes little or no use of the strategies needed to construct meaning before, during, and after the viewing process.
Criterion 2: Comprehension	Identifies the overall message, key ideas and their supporting details, and can explain the relationship between the explicit and implicit messages in visual, multimedia, oral, and printed texts.	Identifies the overall message, key ideas and their supporting details, and can explain the explicit and implicit messages in visual, multimedia, oral, and printed texts.	Identifies most of the key ideas and their supporting details, and can identify explicit and some of the implicit messages in visual, multimedia, oral, and printed texts.	Identifies some of the key explicit ideas and some of the key supporting details but has difficulty identifying the implicit messages in visual, multimedia, oral, and printed texts.	Identifies a few of the explicit main ideas and a few supporting details but cannot identify the implicit messages in visual, multimedia, oral, and printed texts.	Identifies neither the explicit nor implicit messages in visual, multimedia, oral, and printed texts.

Criteria	Level 6	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Criterion 3: Response	Explains in a thorough and insightful way how ideas are organized and how key conventions and elements/ techniques achieve a particular effect in visual, multimedia, oral, and print texts.	Explains in a clear and thoughtful way how ideas are organized and how key conventions and elements/ techniques achieve a particular effect in visual, multimedia, oral, and print texts.	Explains in a straightforward and logical way how ideas are organized and how key conventions and elements/ techniques achieve effects in visual, multimedia, oral, and print texts.	Explains in a simple and general way how ideas are organized and identifies how only some of the conventions and elements/ techniques are used for effect in visual, multimedia, oral, and print texts.	Explains in a vague and limited way how ideas are organized and has limited understanding of how conventions and elements/ techniques are used for effect in visual, multimedia, oral, and print texts.	Explains with difficulty how ideas are organized and does not recognize how conventions and elements/ techniques are used for effect in visual, multimedia, oral, and print.
Criterion 4: Response	Provides an insightful and critical interpretation and response to visual texts and provides an insightful analysis and strong evidence in supporting response. Makes insightful connections with other texts and experiences. Identifies and explains overt and covert bias; insightfully challenges bias in visual texts.	Provides a thoughtful and critical interpretation and response to visual texts and provides thoughtful analysis and reasonable evidence in supporting response. Makes thoughtful connections with other texts and experiences. Identifies and explains overt and covert bias; thoughtfully challenges bias in visual texts.	Provides an adequate interpretation and response in a generalized way to visual texts, and provides some analysis and relatively apparent evidence in supporting response. Makes satisfactory connections with other texts and experiences. Identifies and explains overt and covert bias; sufficiently challenges bias in visual texts.	Provides a general interpretation and response to visual texts and provides surface analysis and limited or obvious evidence in supporting response. Makes commonplace connections with other texts and experiences. Identifies and explains overt bias; tentatively challenges overt bias in visual texts.	Provides a simplistic and limited interpretation and response to visual, texts and provides limited analysis and little evidence in supporting response. Makes limited connections with other texts and experiences. Identifies with some prompting overt bias in visual texts.	Provides an inadequate interpretation and response to visual texts and provides minimal or irrelevant analysis and lacks evidence or chooses inappropriate evidence in supporting response. Makes connections with other texts and experiences only with considerable prompting overt bias.

Sample Lesson Planning Guide for Viewing

Outcomes: (What will students know, understand, and be able to do as a result of this activity?)

Assessment and Evaluation: (What do students already know and do as viewers? What do they not know or do as viewers? What criteria and guidelines will help students know what is expected in this lesson? What mini-lesson(s) might be needed for students to succeed?)

Task: (What is the task? What demands will the visual text make on students? What viewing skills and strategies do students need to comprehend the text?)

Preparing to View: (What pre-viewing activities will help the students prepare to view? How will they access their background knowledge on the topic and think about what they already know? Is there key information or vocabulary regarding visual elements or the topic that students need to know? Are there things that students should know about the medium in which the ideas, images, and sounds are presented? How will students be supported in setting a purpose for viewing?)

During Viewing: (What strategies can students use to understand what they are viewing? What supports can I provide? How will students make personal connections, identify parts that confuse, monitor understanding, and note and recall important ideas? How will students make and confirm predictions, make inferences, evaluate, and reflect further upon the visual?)

After Viewing: (What activities or guidelines will help students follow up on the viewing, review what they have seen, clarify their ideas, and reflect upon the visual text? What activities will help students analyze and synthesize what they have seen? What activities will help students evaluate the content and design of the visual text and draw conclusions? Will students have an opportunity to re-view the text?)

Sample Teacher Checklist to Support Viewing

1. Do I model effective viewing skills to extend and complement students' listening and reading skills and strategies?

view and discuss different visual texts with students

provide varied visual experiences and activities for students to discuss and analyze

Comments:

2. Do I use mini-lessons to instruct students in making sense of visual images to enhance students' listening and reading comprehension?

analyze what individuals and groups of students need to know, and build on what they already know

provide direct instruction and practice of critical viewing strategies

Comments:

3. Do I provide opportunities for students to respond to, interpret, and critically evaluate a variety of visual texts including dance, drama, or multimedia presentations?

support students' unique responses to visual texts

teach and model a variety of comprehension strategies that viewers use before, during, and after interacting with visual texts

employ and model a variety of strategies to help students respond to visual texts

help students extend their initial understanding and interpretations of visual texts

help students examine the form, techniques, and symbols employed in visual texts

help students understand that each visual text reflects a particular viewpoint and set of values that are shaped by its social, cultural, and historical context

Comments:

4. Do I provide students with, and help them to use, a variety of tools to assist with viewing?

___ provide activities and experiences that develop students' knowledge of visual elements and their effects

___ provide viewing guides and other strategies/supports for viewing

___ include peer learning activities

Comments:

5. Do I involve students in assessing their viewing skills and strategies?

___ identify students' strengths and needs in their critical viewing abilities

___ support students in assessing their own strengths and needs related to viewing

___ assist students in using criteria to review visual texts created by peers and others

___ consider peer, teacher, and self-assessments

___ use checklists, rubrics, anecdotal notes, and other assessment techniques

___ involve students in determining criteria for assessing viewing skills and strategies

Comments:

Representing

Every time a story is told, an event described, or an image created in words or pictures, it is “re-presented”. Representing encourages students to expand and extend their repertoire of skills and strategies for communication, not at the expense of verbal language but as an important complement to it (Messaris, 1997, page 3). Representing enables students to communicate their ideas using a variety of media and formats, including diagrams, sounds, charts, movement or gestures, illustrations, photographs, images or symbols, posters, three-dimensional objects or models, video presentations, music, and dramatizations. In many cases, representing allows students to make sense of their learning and to demonstrate their understanding.

The following pages provide ideas for:

- teaching learning strategies related to representing
- supporting students in representing their understanding
- assessing and evaluating student representational processes and products.

Teaching-Learning Strategies

Teacher-guided	Student-directed	Specific Techniques
<p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussing and modelling the pre-designing and planning phase • Considering the variables of purpose, audience, and form • Considering the medium/ media and techniques associated with it/ them • Planning, flowcharting, scripting, layout, imagining, thinking, etc. <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drafting and designing • Using various representing strategies • Problem solving and critically reflecting <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing and reshaping strategies • Seeking responses to clarify and rework • Reworking and refining ideas • Discussing • Field testing • Reflecting • Displaying • Marketing 	<p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What understanding/message do I want to communicate? Who are my audiences? What is my purpose? • What medium/media would best help me present this? • How am I going to organize and present my understanding/ message? • What materials, technology, and equipment will I need? • How can I ensure clarity and effectiveness? • How can I rehearse and try out my representation? • What arrangements do I have to make to display or present my representation? <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will I introduce my representation? • How will I create a clear, smooth, well-coordinated presentation? • How will I conclude my representation? <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will I invite feedback? • How can I improve my representation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving specific prompts • Modelling the process • Using think-alouds • Planning mini-lessons on a range of ways to represent including drama, mapping, music, visual images, graphic aids, sounds, effective presentations, three-dimensional objects, and computer-enhanced presentations • Engaging students in a variety of activities and processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveying, charting, and labeling • Storyboarding and scripting • Considering layout and design • Reviewing and examining models • Conferencing • Incorporating technical techniques • Illustrating • Dramatizations, role plays, and tableaux • Creating effective images and symbols • Using sounds, music, movement, and gestures • Creating three-dimensional objects, models, sculptures, and props • Developing multimedia sessions • Displaying and presenting

Guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to support students in developing a range of representations to develop and express their understandings.

1. Provide clear prompts that help students identify their purpose, audiences, and ideas as well as their medium (or media) when they are developing their representations. Students should consider the following in the representing process:

- What is my purpose? Who are my audiences?
- What is my idea or message?
- What medium will help me to express my understanding (or message) (e.g., oral, print, other)?
- How could this representation be enhanced or made clearer (e.g., with images, sounds, movement, objects, music, other)?

Effective prompts that identify the variables are important. Teachers could use, for example, the RAFTS (Santa, 1988) process to prompt a representing assignment:

- R - the role the students will assume
- A - the intended audience is whom students are addressing
- F - the form the representation will take
- T - the topic or subject of the representation
- S - the strong verbs (or key words) that give the students their purpose and tone for their representation.

A sample prompt might read:

You are a senior citizen in your community. Prepare a sound piece with dramatic movements and props or a PowerPoint presentation that involves graphics, video, and sound. Develop your representation to sell the advantages of living in rural Saskatchewan to seniors who live in urban Saskatchewan.

2. Model and discuss the representing process. Process is as important to representing as it is for the other language arts strands. Typically, the steps include:
 - a. **Planning and Focusing.** Students must identify their purpose, audiences, and ideas as well as their medium.

In an oral representation, students might consider:

- Are there ideas or information that cannot be communicated in words, but can be communicated through movement, sounds, or images?
- Are there ideas or information that need to be represented both orally and visually for emphasis?
- Which kind of visual would be most effective or have the most appeal for the audience (e.g., graphics on overheads, gestures, slides, tableaux, charts, mime, costumes, symbols, or props)?
- Does this representation clearly reflect my understanding?
- Is this representation interesting or thought-provoking?

In a print representation, students might consider:

- Is the message as clear, concise, and complete as possible? Is it organized in a logical manner?
- How can the reader best be drawn in and the reader's attention held? What aural, visual, or oral elements can add to the interest level and effectiveness of the representation?
- What information needs to be presented both in written and other forms for emphasis? What part of the representation could be supported by an image, a photograph, a picture, a graph, a chart, a table, a diagram, an illustration, a map or other form? Where are these forms best placed?

- What headings and typeface would be best?
- What would make the representation balanced and attractive? Do the important elements stand out? Are the elements arranged to direct the eye to a focal point? Does the relative size of the elements correspond to their importance? Is there consistency among the elements and print?

In a multimedia representation, students might consider the following:

- Which media are the appropriate media to reflect my understanding?
 - Which media will help most to clearly present the ideas in a lively and appealing way to the intended audiences? How will each serve the purpose of the representation?
 - How will each medium hold the audience's interest, enhance learning, and increase understanding or enjoyment of the representation?
 - How can each medium help create a smooth and well-coordinated representation?
 - What materials, technology, or equipment are needed for the representation?
 - How can bombarding the audience with gimmicks and an unnecessary string of multimedia forms or effects be avoided?
- b. **Designing and Producing.** Students must organize and sequence their ideas and create a dynamic introduction, logical sequence, and strong conclusion. Designing a sequence using a flow chart or some other organizer helps students consider what will be seen and/or heard.
- c. **Reworking and Presenting.** Students must then review and revise their work. They will need to review, assess, and evaluate their representations for appeal to the intended audiences and consider how well-coordinated and effective their representations are. Students may need to confer and field test and make other arrangements for finalizing their representations. Ultimately, students will need to rehearse and present to determine if the representation has the desired effect on their audiences.
3. Make students aware of the purpose and value of organizers for learning and communicating. The more students use both linguistic and visual organizers in the classroom, the more opportunity students have to learn effectively (Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, 2001). Organizational tools can help students construct knowledge, sort information, remember ideas, and communicate their learning to others (Heryle, 1996). Students can use a variety of tools to explore what they know about a particular topic. Students can use concept maps, frames, grids, and text structure maps to identify key concepts. Some examples of organizers follow:
- Concept web or mind map
 - Concept map
 - Graphic organizer (e.g., fishbone, Venn diagram)
 - Structured overview
 - Decision-making framework
 - Outline
 - Paragraph frame
 - Word map
 - Story map
 - Strategy map
 - Character map
 - Comparison/Contrast grid
 - Criteria matrix.

Storyboards are particularly useful for planning a slide-tape, drama, dance, video, or film representation. The traditional storyboard is drawn in panels that include a frame for a rough sketch of the shot accompanied by notes on the type of shot (e.g., L.S. [long shot], M.S.[medium shot], C.U.[close-up]) and the angle. Suggestions are also made for the sound track to accompany the shot and the length of the shot.

A variation of the traditional storyboard is planning each shot on a large index card using the following format (Thomas, 1988, p. 5):

- Video, drama, or dance: Sketch the shot.
- Audio: Write any narration or dialogue and identify the background music or sound effects.
- Special Instructions: Note any directions for the video (e.g., dissolve) or for the audio (e.g., fade).

The use of index cards allows students to experiment with the sequence of their shots and to easily add, delete, or revise their plans for a particular shot.

4. Plan mini-lessons that introduce students to a range of **visual and graphic aids** that can be used in their representations. Students should consider using a visual or graphic aid when it is too difficult to describe something in words. Research suggests that many people are significantly better at processing visual information than verbal information and that they take in 75-80 percent of information presented to them through sight. These people learn better and more quickly if the information includes visual cues beyond traditional typography (Markel, 1998, p. 48). According to some research, visual and graphic aids can improve retention by up to 38 percent (Goldsborough, 1998). A visual aid might be a symbol, a graph, a chart, a table, a painting, a photograph, a cartoon, a three-dimensional model, or other representation.

Informational graphics (infographics) convey important information in a clear, precise, and efficient manner. They visually convey key data. Diagrams, pictures, charts, graphs, and maps are intended to communicate vital information. Some common visual and graphic aids are shown in the following chart.

Common Visual and Graphic Aids

Type	Purpose
Diagram (e.g., Venn, tree, labelled, scale, cutaway, cross-section)	To show the parts or workings of something
Other illustrations (e.g., painting, collage, drawing, poster, photograph)	To illustrate an idea
Chart (e.g., flow chart, table, matrix, timeline)	To present a set of facts or ideas in an organized way
Graph (e.g., bar, line, circle or pie, pictograph)	To show how certain facts are related
Map (e.g., bird's eye-view, scale map or plan, typographic, road or street)	To show spatial relationships, location, distance, routes, and pathways
Three-dimensional (e.g., diorama, tableau, dance, mime, role play)	To portray an idea

Students should consider the elements that will represent students' understanding most effectively, capture the attention of their audiences, increase the understanding and acceptance of the messages, and ensure that the messages are remembered. Effective visual and graphic aids:

- focus and hold the audience's attention
- emphasize key points or summarize main thoughts
- clarify something complicated or help the audience grasp facts quickly.

To be effective, visual and graphic aids should be:

- visible
- neat
- accurate
- instantly understandable.

Students might begin exploring the basic principles behind effective representations that use visual and graphic aids. Students should consider the following questions:

- What sequence or layout will help the audience understand the representation?
- What points need special emphasis?
- What gestures, photographs, and other visual cues will guide the audience?
- What graphic aids would best complement these visuals?

Communication through visual and graphic aids is enhanced when students understand the elements and principles of visual design. Students should consider employing the principles of design including attending to focal point, colour, size, perspective, balance, and movement to make the message easy to grasp. Posters, book jackets, and print advertisements could be used to explore further the principles of design and layout.

5. Help students understand the advantages and disadvantages of using **technology** to represent their understanding and communicate their messages. Students might make a computer-enhanced representation using software such as Microsoft PowerPoint, Corel Draw, or Astound [www.spcoco]. Students can also communicate on-line. On-line communication requires well organized thoughts, key or concise messages, clear and compelling images, and convenient ways to retrieve and link information. Students must work with words, symbols, sounds, colours, and sequence or placement to communicate clearly and concisely on-line.

In addition to their purpose and audiences, students need to consider:

- forming their ideas using oral, print, and other media text
 - providing easy access for the reader/viewer (organizing information so that it is easy to “find and click”)
 - developing the design using colours, typefaces, images, spacing, proportion, and continuity
 - inserting pictures, graphics, symbols, and other images
 - adding links and anchors
 - including video and sound
- avoiding technical glitches.

Students also might experiment with animation to highlight key points or to illustrate change, or with a video or audio clip to show how a product or process works. Students should be cautioned, however, about overusing computer or multimedia effects. Too much sound, animation, or video can distract from the main message.

6. Students could begin exploring representing their ideas by using **two media** (e.g., an essay accompanied by a collage, a poem accompanied by a sound piece, or a tableau accompanied by audio clips of interviews) to explore or share ideas. In addition to attending to the content and language of the representation, students should consider their layout (including titles, bullets, borders, and backgrounds), typefaces

(including type size, position, and the “personalities” of typefaces), sound (including environmental, voice, found objects, and music), and visual (including illustrations, three-dimensional objects, dance, and drama). Students should strive to make their representations clear and appealing to ensure maximum impact.

7. A **multimedia representation** coordinates various media (e.g., print text, oral text, visual text, and aural text such as sound and music), to convey the message or idea.

Using a combination of media allows students to appeal to more than one of the audience’s senses. Students should be encouraged to choose the media carefully and to consider which media will clearly represent the ideas in a lively and appealing way for intended audiences. Students should consider the appeal that different media make to the senses and how each medium will serve the purpose. Some examples related to the five senses follow.

- Sight: graphics, paintings, tableaux, mime, movement or dance, overhead projections, maps, charts, graphs, models, computer animation, film clips, symbols, slides, and other visual images
- Sound: music, sound effects, taped speeches, book readings, and other audio
- Touch: scale models, displays, sculptures, interactive computer programs, and other tactile forms
- Smell: chemicals, perfumes, food, flowers, and other olfactory products or experiences
- Taste: spices, food, drinks, and other gustatory experiences.

Multimedia representations allow students to incorporate movement, graphics, video, animation, objects, sound effects, music, and other forms into their representations.

8. **Adapting one medium** to another allows students to understand the conventions and techniques used in different media. Students might try their hand at adapting narratives to dance, music, film, drama, or video. Students could consider what decisions the director must make about casting a character, handling characters’ thoughts, developing set, and creating dramatic effect.

Conclusion

The strand of representing not only gives teachers an opportunity to develop their students’ literacies but also provides teachers an opportunity to honour the learning styles of all students and to support students in broadening their learning styles. Open-ended assignments that engage students in inquiry provide them with different learning styles opportunities to synthesize what they have learned and present their understandings in a variety of ways. For example, students in an English Language Arts B10 course could consider the following projects for the culmination of *The World Around and Within Us: The Natural and Constructed Worlds* unit. See the following page.

Eight Ways of Learning

(ELA B10: The World Around and Within Us)

Type of intelligence	How someone with this type thinks	Culminating project suggestions
Linguistic	In words	Develop a portfolio of stories or poems that contain ideas and themes from the unit texts (visual, oral, print, and multimedia) and class discussions or develop and deliver a speech
Logical-mathematical	By reasoning	Perform a series of experiments in which you document the results or design a web page that highlights some of the issues related to the natural and constructed worlds
Spatial	In images and pictures	Create a photo/art exhibit, video/ documentary, or scrapbook that documents how a particular piece of technology provides both benefits and risks to the local community
Bodily-kinesthetic	Through somatic sensations	Create a dance sequence, tableau, mime sequence, or drama in context that portrays one of the passages from the unit texts
Musical	Via rhythms and melodies	Create a sound piece, rhythmic sequence, or song that highlights the relationship between a particular piece of technology (the constructed world) and the local environment (the natural world)
Interpersonal	By bouncing ideas off other people	Do a survey of at least 100 of your peers regarding their views about how a particular technological development relates to, or is affecting, the local environment and document the results
Intrapersonal	In relation to their needs, feelings, and goals	Spend an hour outdoors or at a museum during the week and design a journal (may be digital) based on the ideas gained through your experiences, the texts in this unit, and your personal reflections
Naturalist	Through nature and natural forms	Explore a local park, and create a guide for the park using passages from the unit readings for inspiration

(based on Armstrong, 1994 and Ruggieri, 2002)

Assessing and Evaluating Representing

The following pages contain sample forms to be used in the assessment (i.e., gathering of information) and considered in the evaluation (i.e., making a judgement based on the gathered information). See also Compose and Create (Representing, Speaking, and Writing) Rubrics in renewed English Language Arts 10 , English Language Arts 20, and English Language Arts 30 curricula.

Before	Observations
<p>What does the student do before representing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finds a topic or idea of personal interest or one appropriate for purpose and audiences • Generates ideas for representation by using strategies such as brainstorming, questioning, graphic organizers, storyboarding, conferencing, clustering, webbing, discussing, drawing, journalizing, and other reflective activities • Accesses and gathers additional ideas and information from external sources • Selects and focuses topic or idea • Develops a plan or approach • Chooses various media and form(s) • Organizes thoughts • Considers how multiple mediums could enhance representation • Other: 	
During	
<p>What does the student do during the process of developing the representation to demonstrate understanding and communicate meaning?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explores ways to start • Drafts, shapes, and connects • Experiments, problem solves, and creates • Modifies, changes, and reworks • Reflects, clarifies, and refines • Other: 	
After	
<p>What does the student do after developing the representation?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews and reworks content • Reviews and refines form and organization • Checks language, images, sounds, objects, and movement for clarity, precision, and appropriateness • Attends to conventions and cues • Confers, discusses, and reflects • Shows concern for overall appearance • Shares • Other: 	

Sample Holistic Rubric for Representing Ideas

Name of Student	Date	Level	Comments

Level 6: Confidently and insightfully communicates ideas and provides engaging, rich, vivid, and powerful support for ideas.

Level 5: Clearly and thoughtfully communicates ideas and provides relevant and appropriate support for ideas.

Level 4: Logically communicates ideas and provides appropriate support for ideas.

Level 3: Correctly communicates some ideas and provides adequate support.

Level 2: Communicates information in a limited, overgeneralized manner and support is vague, inappropriate, or incorrect.

Level 1: Communicates information in an unfocused, unclear manner with little to no meaningful or correct support of ideas.

N/S: Not scorable.

Sample Analytic Rubric for Representing Ideas

Criteria	Level 6	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
<p>Criterion 1: Message Content and Ideas</p>	<p>The visual or multimedia representation is original and insightful.</p> <p>It has a well-defined central focus in keeping with audience and purpose. It demonstrates a deep understanding of the subject matter and supporting details are engaging, relevant, and appropriate for the intended message.</p>	<p>The visual or multimedia representation is clear and thoughtful.</p> <p>It has a clear focus, shows a clear awareness of audience, and demonstrates a logical understanding of subject matter. Supporting details are relevant and appropriate for the intended message.</p>	<p>The visual or multimedia representation is logical and straightforward.</p> <p>It has a recognizable focus and an awareness of audience. It demonstrates a clear understanding of the subject matter. Most ideas are correct and supporting details are appropriate for the intended message.</p>	<p>The visual or multimedia representation is satisfactory but unrefined.</p> <p>It has a limited focus and some awareness of audience. It demonstrates a basic or uneven understanding of the subject matter. Some of the ideas are correct and supporting details are adequate for the intended message.</p>	<p>The visual or multimedia representation is limited and over-generalized.</p> <p>It has an unclear focus and shows little awareness of audience. Ideas are poorly developed; they are often rambling and superficial. Supporting details are vague, inappropriate, or incorrect in relation to the intended message.</p>	<p>The visual or multimedia representation is unfocused and unclear.</p> <p>It lacks focus and shows no awareness of audience. Ideas may be elementary or unclear. Few supporting details are included. Details provided may be incorrect.</p>
<p>Criterion 2: Organization and Coherence</p>	<p>Planning is evident and the representation comes together as a secure whole.</p> <p>The representation shows thoughtful and coherent organization and development.</p>	<p>Planning is evident and the representation seems complete.</p> <p>The representation shows sufficient and logical organization and development</p>	<p>Planning identifies main ideas.</p> <p>The representation shows predictable and straightforward organization and development.</p>	<p>Planning shows an awareness of purpose.</p> <p>The representation shows acceptable but unrefined organization and development.</p>	<p>Less than adequate planning results in inconsistent development.</p> <p>The representation shows limited and fragmented organization and development.</p>	<p>Evidence of planning is absent.</p> <p>The representation shows poor, unclear, and unfocused organization and development.</p>

Criteria	Level 6	Level 5	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Criterion 3: Language Cues and Conventions (see EL:A curriculum documents)	The representation demonstrates confident control of the language cues and conventions of composition and presentation. A definite point of view is evident.	The representation effectively controls the language cues and conventions and techniques. A clear point of view is employed.	The representation demonstrates control over the language cues and conventions and techniques. A generally recognizable point of view is maintained.	The representation shows a basic control over the language cues and conventions and techniques. Point of view is evident but not consistently maintained.	The representation shows some control over the language cues and conventions and techniques but attempts at variety result in awkwardness and/or obscured meaning. Point of view may shift in confusing ways.	The representation shows an uncertain grasp of the basic language cues and conventions and techniques relative to the purpose. Point of view is not evident.
Criterion 4: Sharing or Presentation	Choice and use of media are intentional, informed, and effectively communicate message. Representation is polished and original and is appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context.	Choice and use of media are effective and appropriately communicate message. Representation is effective and is appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context.	Choice and use of media are predictable and appropriately communicate message. Representation is straightforward and is appropriate to the audience, purpose, and context.	Choice and use of media are acceptable and adequately communicate the message. Representation demonstrates a basic understanding of audience, purpose, and context.	Choice and use of media are limited and inadequately communicate the message. Representation demonstrates a limited or uneven understanding of audience, purpose, and context.	Choice and use of media are inappropriate and inadequately communicate the message. Representation demonstrates an unclear understanding of audience, purpose, and context.

Sample Lesson Planning Guide for Representing

Outcomes: (What will students know, understand, and be able to do as a result of this activity? What prior knowledge will students require to engage in this activity? What scaffolding or supports will students need to achieve these outcomes?)

Assessment and Evaluation: (What do students already know and do as representers? What do they not know or do? What criteria and guidelines will help students know what is expected in the representation? What mini-lesson(s) might be needed for students to succeed?)

Prompt: (What is the task? What is the purpose? What is the prompt? Is it clearly stated? From the prompt, will students know their role, their audience, the format, the topic, and the strong verb?)

Focusing and Planning: (What activities will help students generate ideas for their representations? What activities will help students focus on the task and formulate a plan? What key ideas, words, images, movements, objects, or sounds will be used? What consideration should students give to their purpose, audiences, and form? What media will work best?)

Creating: (What strategies can students use to develop their representations? What specific activities or guidelines will help students in their creative problem solving? How can students reshape their work to achieve their purpose? What special effects or techniques such as colour, light, camera techniques, music, or sound effects will be used?)

Response and Self-assessment: (What specific activities or guidelines will help students to consider their impact on the audiences? How will students consider feedback and assess themselves? What and how can students improve?)

Sample Teacher Checklist to Support Representing

1. Do I model additional effective representing skills to extend and complement students' speaking and writing skills and strategies?

___ support students in communicating and responding through a variety of media?

___ share examples of various forms of representation (e.g., mime, sound pieces, movement phrases or sequences, mobiles, diagrams, journal writings, reader's theatres) and discuss potential impact?

___ model and discuss using different media (e.g., oral, print, aural, and visual including drama and dance, and multimedia)?

Comments:

2. Do I use mini-lessons to instruct students in using appropriate aural, graphic, visual, and non-verbal aids and images to enhance their written and spoken communication?

___ analyze what individuals and groups of students need to know, and build on what they already know?

___ provide direct instruction and model a range of representing strategies?

___ provide instruction and scaffolds to help students use new forms of representation?

___ provide models of various ways of representing?

Comments:

3. Do I provide opportunities for students to use representing in a variety of situations and for a variety of purposes?

___ encourage students to use oral text (e.g., voice sounds or sound effects, speeches, songs)?

___ encourage students to include graphics (e.g., charts, graphs, tables)?

___ encourage students to include visuals (e.g., diagrams, photos, paintings)?

___ encourage students to use drama (e.g., tableaux, improvisations, role playing)?

___ encourage students to use sound and movement (e.g., music, gestures, dance)?

___ encourage students to use technology (e.g., CD-ROMs, videos, computer-generated graphics)?

___ encourage students to create three-dimensional models (e.g., sculptures, dioramas, mobiles)?

___ encourage and accept a variety of representations?

Comments:

4. Do I provide students with, and help them to use, a variety of materials and tools to assist with creating representations?

___ encourage students to experiment with new media (e.g., oral, print, aural, visual) and forms (e.g., collage, diorama, diary, dance piece, sound effects, drama, video and audio tapes)?

___ design activities for students to use new and varied media and forms?

___ provide a variety of materials and tools for students to access?

Comments:

5. Do I involve students in assessing their representing skills and strategies?

___ support students in identifying their strengths and needs in their representations?

___ support students in assessing their peers by using particular criteria?

___ consider peer and self-assessments along with conferences?

___ use checklists, rubrics, anecdotal notes, and other assessment techniques?

___ involve students in determining criteria for assessing representations?

Comments:

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