





The Case For Visual Thinking






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All of us have grown up in a world dominated by text. It is at the foundation of our communication system. When we think about literacy, we think about a person's ability to read and write and the importance of being literate, while an illiterate person is one who is deficient in one or both of these abilities and how this deficiency compromises one's ability to function in society.

Technology has upended our world in many ways, and one of the profound changes it has unleashed is the way in which information is communicated. In education, according to Tom Haymes in his article [Moving From Textual Thinking to Visual Thinking](#) , "The digital revolution has given us an unprecedented set of tools for acquiring, storing, and analyzing data but we consistently fail make effective use of them because of our ultimate reliance on a textual paradigm." It may be that as creatures of text, teachers have a difficult time integrating technology and digital tools into instruction because they rely on a different literacy – say, visual literacy – that teachers do not fully possess.

To some, we also have a bias against visual thinking that we need to overcome in the digital age. In her TED Talk [Doodlers, Unite!](#) , Sunni Brown explains how the act of doodling is seen as childish and insignificant in terms of learning and processing information. However, the simple act of doodling leads to higher retention of information when encountering verbal information. Giving greater weight to visual thinking would help to legitimize it more in education and perhaps lead to greater emphasis on strengthening visual literacy skills among teachers and students.

At the ISTE Conference in June, there were a number of sessions related to visual thinking, with some overlap with AR and VR (augmented and virtual reality). Here are some workshops to explore elements of visual thinking:

- [Meeting Students Where They Are With Visualized Thinking and Sketchnoting](#)  - Visual thinking is a learning process used to help students understand problems, make meaning and recall information through visualizations (brainstorming, sketchnoting, symbolism). We share our accessible approaches that are designed for all students. You'll learn to establish entry points to ease learners into this personalized way of thinking.
- [Visualizing Change Through Data](#)  - Data walls, reports, PLT meetings -- all have different data needs. Use data tools to create visualizations and design infographics and dashboards. This will be a session about finding ways to visualize, display and share data from your library, school, center and students.
- [Building Creative Confidence One Doodle at a Time](#)  - You don't have to be an artist to create a quick doodle. Sketchnoting is simply a combination of words and doodles that convey your thoughts. Discover fun and engaging activities to expand your visual vocabulary and increase sketchnoting confidence. Come explore, play and connect with a community of edu-sketchers.
- [Use Digital Video to Explain Abstract Concepts](#)  - The session involves students researching a topic and creating short animations to explain abstract scientific concepts. The students' visualizations are then peer assessed to provide formative feedback. Through an iterative process, students develop their animations further to reinforce learning and understanding of what can be complex scientific principles.
- [Creative Student Voice: Visual Design and Learning](#)  - Creative student voice activities are an essential part of classroom learning experiences. When students engage in exploring and creating visuals, the research shows that learning sticks. You'll explore visual design resources connected to creative student voice.

Article: [Moving From Textual Thinking to Visual Thinking](#)  from eSchoolNews

TED Talk: [Doodlers, Unite!](#)  by Sunni Brown

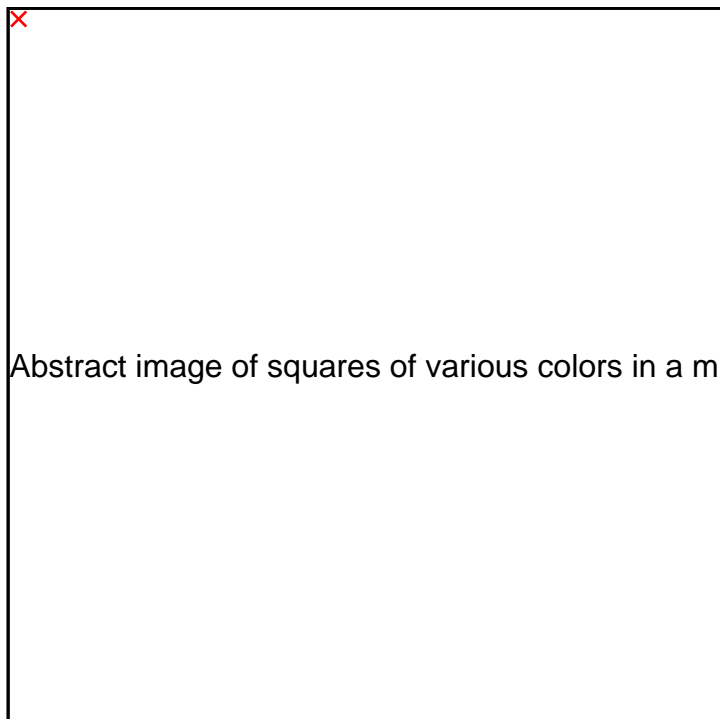


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