



NATIONAL ART EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
SHAPING HUMAN POTENTIAL

Position Statement on Visual Literacy [Adopted April 2014; Reviewed and Revised March 2017]

NAEA supports visual literacy across disciplines and learning goals related to the focus on close reading, logical evidence-based inferences, meaning-making through analysis and group discussions, and creating visual imagery. The National Visual Arts Standards and National Media Arts Standards, organized around the processes of creating, presenting, producing, responding, and connecting, enable teachers to build students' comprehensive literacy skills.

Visual literacy is the ability to interpret, comprehend, appreciate, use, and create visual media, using conventional as well as contemporary and emerging media, in ways that advance thinking, decision-making, communicating, and learning. NAEA believes that being visually literate is a critical factor for success in society and helps us understand our world.

- Close readings of works of art and other media as text empower students to build strong content knowledge in a range of disciplines, as well as key skills such as critical thinking, evidence-based reasoning, and meaning-making.
- Engaging and conveying ideas in a visual language, through an art medium, is a crucial aspect of visual literacy.
- Discussions about works of art and design develop speaking and listening skills that support collaborative meaning-making and the articulation of ideas.
- Students communicate artistic intention through the visual, verbal, and written presentation of their own work.
- Visual literacy, when coupled with the ability to read, write, think mathematically, and express oneself competently, prepares students for productive futures.

Footnote: This Position Statement was originally adopted in 2014 with the title “Position Statement on Visual Literacy and its Relationship to the Common Core. The Position Statement was reviewed and revised in 2016-2017 to continue to reflect the importance of visual literacy in the context of reduced political support for “Common Core.” In addition to the change in the title, and in the second sentence the phrase “learning goals” in the first sentence replaced “the Common Core goals” and the “National Core Arts Standards” was changed to the more commonly used “National Visual Arts Standards and National Media Arts Standards.”