



**FMC 212**

**VISUAL LANGUAGE OF FILM**

**Course Team**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

You are welcome to FMC 212 - Visual Language of Film. This course is designed for communication students in the Faculty of Social sciences. It is designed to help you acquire detailed knowledge of visual communication. After going through this course, you would be able to master the art of making use of all forms of visual communication. You will also be equipped with the knowledge needed to work in different sectors where the skills of visual communicators are needed.

This Course Guide provides you with the necessary information about the contents of the course and the materials you need to be familiar with for a proper understanding of the subject matter. It also provides you with the knowledge on how to undertake your assignments. In all, this module will help you appreciate the principles and practice of visual communication as a whole.

## **WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE**

Visual Communication as a course of study is expected to equip you with the basic knowledge about the strategies and principles of visual representation of ideas. The course examines the principles and methods of visual representations that are more readily understandable, supporting perception, cognition and usability. Design being an extremely expansive field includes experts with highly specialised skills. While excelling in their respective areas, many lack the basics of good visual communication design, relying on commonplace or trendy graphic design expressions.

This course also intends to address this gap and develop the essential skill of any advanced designer. In addition to the basics of visual communication, this course also introduces the idea of balancing the needs of the communicators and the qualities of the topic/offering to guide appropriate choices for visual representation.

The first module which considers Communication as a concept would help you understand the meaning of communication, types and forms of communication and advantages cum disadvantages of each medium of communication. Other modules look at what visual communication means, the types, forms, features and advantages cum disadvantages of forms of visual representations.

## **STUDY UNITS**

FMC 212 is a 2-credit units 200 level course for communication students. There are four modules in this course and each module is made up of five units. Thus, the modules and the 20 units in the course are detailed as follows:

### **Module 1: Starting Point: Overview Of Communication**

Unit 1 Meaning of Communication  
Unit 2 Types of Communication  
Unit 3 Forms of Communication  
Unit 4 Motives of Communication  
Unit 5 Barriers to Effective Communication

### **Module 2: Visual Communication**

Unit 1 Defining Visual Communication  
Unit 2 History of Visual Communication  
Unit 3 Forms of Visual Communication  
Unit 4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Visual Communication  
Unit 5 Perspectives of Image Analysis in Visual Communication

### **Module 3: Theories Of Visual Communication**

Unit 1 What is a Theory?  
Unit 2 Importance of Theory in the Study of Visual Communication  
Unit 3 Categories of Visual Communication Theory  
Unit 4 Discussing the Perceptual Theories  
Unit 5 Discussing the Sensual Theories

### **Module 4: Understanding Visual Language**

Unit 1 What is Visual Language?  
Unit 2 Importance of Visual Language  
Unit 3 Principles of Visual Language  
Unit 4 Elements of Visual Language  
Unit 5 Creating a Visual Language: The Basics

## **TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCES**

There is a list of relevant reference materials at the end of each unit. You are expected to consult as many relevant materials as possible because this will help you in attempting the given exercises.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Self-Assessment Exercises (SAES) is an assessment required in this course. Your answers to SAEs are not meant to be submitted. They are meant to help you assess and acquaint yourself with the contents of each unit. They are therefore important for your understanding of the course content.

## **FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING**

The final examination for FMC 212 will take one and half hours and carry 70% of the total course grade.

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED FOR THIS COURSE**

A brief review of what you were taught in the course, no doubt will help you in understanding this next level in the study of communication as a whole. You also need to purchase one or two of the recommended textbooks, especially those within your reach.

## **FACILITATORS/TUTORS AND TUTORIALS**

Fifteen hours of tutorials have been mapped out for the course. Dates and locations, name and phone number of the tutor, as well as your tutorial group, will be made available to you very soon. It is the responsibility of your tutor to mark and comment on your assignment, so send in your assignment promptly and contact your tutor in case of any difficulty with your SAE or grading of the assignment.

## **CONCLUSION**

This course is theory-based, hence there may not be practical exercises in the form of class productions.

## **SUMMARY**

This course guide has been designed to furnish you with the necessary information needed to succeed in this course. The onus, however, lies on you to put in your effort and get the best out of the course in order to succeed as a seasoned visual communicator or designer.

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- Unit 1 What is a Theory?
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### **Module 4: Understanding Visual Language**

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- Unit 2 Importance of Visual Language
- Unit 3 Principles of Visual Language
- Unit 4 Elements of Visual Language
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## **MODULE 1: OVERVIEW OF COMMUNICATION**

You have been taught the basics of communication under ‘Introduction to Mass Communication’ in your 100 level. The main aim of this module, therefore, is to provide you with a “mind refresher” on the concept of communication. It is necessary to begin tutorials in this course with a quick look at what communication is all about. The essence is to refresh your mind and get you ready for the upcoming tutorials.

In this module, which is made up of five units, you will be introduced to the concept of Communication, types of communication, forms of communication, motives of communication and barriers to effective communication. The five units that make up this module are linked together. At the end of this module, you would have refreshed your memory on the general concept of communication.

Unit 1	Meaning of Communication
Unit 2	Types of Communication
Unit 3	Forms of Communication
Unit 4	Motives of Communication
Unit 5	Factors to Effective Communication

## **UNIT 1: MEANING OF COMMUNICATION**

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- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 What is Communication?
  - 3.2 Inherent Features in the Definitions of Communication
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor- Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

You must have been taught what communication means in 100 level under “Introduction to Mass Communication” and I also assume you must have read the course guide. This unit is simply to refresh your mind on the concept of communication as earlier mentioned. The main thrust is to expose you to various definitions of communication given by different scholars. The theoretical problem of arriving at a universally accepted definition is also explored. In the end, the major features that should appear in any comprehensive definition of communication are explored. This

unit forms the bedrock upon which the course is built. You are therefore advised to give it the necessary attention it requires.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- ☐ discuss what it means to communicate
- ☐ identify various definitions of communication
- ☐ explain inherent features in the various definitions of communication

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 What Is Communication?**

Communication can be described as the exchange of messages, ideas, opinions, information, etc between and among people. Note the word “exchange”. Communication is not the “transfer” of messages, ideas, opinions etc. to people but the “exchange”. It is therefore the establishment of a kind of understanding and relationship between and among individuals. This means that when one uses vocabularies or language not understood by the audience, the person is not communicating.

Many scholars have defined communication in various ways. Hassan (2013, p.3) defines “communication as a process of sharing or exchanging of ideas, information, knowledge, attitude or feeling among two or more persons through certain signs and symbols.” This means that communication as has been reaffirmed earlier in this chapter involves the exchange or sharing of something in common. Nwabueze (2014, p.4) opines that communication “is the exchange of information, ideas, experiences and data of all sorts that ensure the normal and organized existence of people in every society.”

Communication shapes how people conduct their daily lives as well as spread knowledge, values, and social norms (Mojaye, 2008). Balls and Gilliam (2003) clearly outline that effective communication helps people to see an issue from a different perspective. Effective communication can also make stereotypes to be reinforced, civic participation suppressed and hopelessness confirmed. Communication, no matter how it is carried out, is seen as “the achievement of very similar meaning in the person initiating a message and those receiving it” (Defleur and Dennis cited in Nwanne, 2012, p. 239).

Anaeto (2008) sees communication as sharing meanings and trying to affect or influence behaviour. Dance in Okunna (1999, p. 5) concludes on the meaning of communication thus: “the connecting thread appears to be the idea of something being transferred from one person to another”. Nwosu (1996 P. 2) describes it as “a process of information, ideas and opinions exchange within, between or among individuals, groups, organizations or nations in a social societal context.”

In agreement with this description of communication by Nwosu, Baran (2004 P. 5) outlines that the best way of describing the communication process is by answering these questions: Who?

Say? What? Through which channel? To whom? And with What effect? By this question, Baran (Supra) maintains that communication must produce an effect or feedback from the receiver before the process is said to be complete.

### **3.2 Inherent Features in the Definitions of Communication**

All these definitions and descriptions of communication point to some features enumerated by Nwabueze (2014, p.5) as follows:

- ❖ Communication is a process.
- ❖ It involves a sender and receiver.
- ❖ The process could be verbal or non-verbal.
- ❖ A medium is used to convey the message.
- ❖ There is feedback.
- ❖ The process is made meaningful with a common frame of reference.

Communication is therefore an indispensable tool and underpins all areas of human interactions.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Communication is the exchange of messages, ideas, opinions, and information between and among people. No matter how it is defined, communication is a process that has inherent features which have been described in this unit.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit focused on a brief discussion of communication. Emphasis was laid on its definitions and features.

### **SELF-ASSESSED EXERCISE**

Study the definitions of communication given by various scholars and examine whether there are any differences in the definitions

### **6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Using your own words, define communication, pointing out its inherent features.

### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Okunna, C. S. (1999). *Introduction to Mass Communication*. Enugu: New Generation Books.

Akpunonu, C.N. (1999). *The Producer's Notebook: A Vital Tool*. Enugu: Five Senses Production

Nwabueze, C.D. (2008). “Imperatives of Broadcast Commentaries in contemporary society”. In V.N Agbanu & C.D. Nwabueze (Eds.). *Readings in Mass Communication: Global Perspectives on Communication Issues*. Owerri Top Shelf Publishers.

## **UNIT 2      TYPES OF COMMUNICATION**

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- 1.0 Introduction
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- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Intrapersonal Communication
  - 3.2 Interpersonal Communication
  - 3.3 Group Communication
  - 3.4 Mass Communication
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0      INTRODUCTION**

Communication has been defined in Unit 1 as the exchange of ideas, messages, opinions and so on, between and among people. But how one communicates with close friends is different from how one sends a message to a group of friends or even to his or her classmates. This accounts for the different types or levels of communication which we are to discuss under this unit. They include intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, group communication and mass communication.

### **2.0      OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- ☐ distinguish the different levels or types of communication
- ☐ explain each type of communication.

### **3.0      MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Types of Communication**

Communication normally occurs at different levels, for this reason, it has the following types:

- (a) Intrapersonal
- (b) Interpersonal
- (C) Group
- (d) Mass

### **3.2 Intrapersonal Communication**

This is the first level at which communication occurs which triggers other levels or types of communication. Bittner (1989) describes it as the type of communication that occurs within individuals. It occurs as individuals communicate with themselves Or engage in the organisation of ideas or thoughts. This type of communication therefore precedes human actions and speeches. Kenechukwu (2014) explains that in this type of communication, the individual is both the sender and receiver because the entire message is made up of his or her thoughts and feelings. The brain is the channel while the feedback is the sense organ. This type of communication usually involves the active engagement of the individual in the processing of the message. It comes in various forms like day-dreaming, hallucination, interpretation of symbols or codes, and in reflections and meditations.

### **3.3 Interpersonal Communication**

This is the type of communication that occurs between two persons in which immediate feedback is received. It can be face-to-face or machine-assisted like in a phone call between two friends. The essence of this type of communication may be to influence, express feelings or emotions, provide, receive or exchange information. Interpersonal communication may involve the use of spoken words or written words or even gestures and postures.

### **3.4 Group Communication**

This type of communication occurs between three or more individuals who influence each other in a variety of ways. Such persons usually derive some forms of gratifications or satisfactions for being in such a group. They may engage in communication to inform each other, carry out assigned duties and to help each other achieve goals set by the group. It may be a cultural group, professional group, educational group, social group or any other type of coming together by persons who have a common goal to achieve by combining talents.

### **3.5 Mass Communication**

This is the type of communication in which information is disseminated simultaneously to a large, scattered audience through the use of mass media forms. These mass media forms are categorised into print and electronic media. The print media forms are newspapers, magazines, books, posters, brochures and the likes. The electronic media forms on the other hand include radio, television, and by extension, the internet. Bittner (1989) outlines the characteristics of mass communication to include the presence of the following: delayed feedback, a mass medium, limited sensory organs, and anonymous audience. Similarly, Vivian (2003) identifies the components of mass communication as the following: a mass communicator, mass messages, mass media, and a mass audience.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The types of communication as we have explained in this unit include intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, group communication and mass communication. Intrapersonal communication is the basic form of communication which starts at the personal level within an individual while interpersonal communication occurs between two persons. Group communication is the interaction between and among three persons and above who have a common goal to achieve while mass communication refers to the process of dissemination messages to a wide, scattered audience through the use of mass media forms.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

The emphasis of this unit is basically on the types of communication.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

What is the foundation of all types of communication?

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Critically outline the processes involved in intrapersonal communication.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

- Baran, S.I. (2002). *Introduction to Mass Communication, Media Literacy and Culture*. Boston: McGraw Hill Inc.
- Nworgu, K.O. (2010). "Introduction to Mass Communication" in K.O.Nworgu (Ed.) *Mass Communication, Theory and Practice*. Owerri: Ultimate book Ltd.
- Kenechukwu, S. (2014). *Mass Communication: An Introduction to Sociology of Mass Media*. Nnewi: Cathcom Press.
- Bittner, J. (1989). *Mass Communication: An Introduction*, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Englewood Cliffs.

## **UNIT 3      FORMS OF COMMUNICATION**

### **CONTENTS**

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  - 3.3 Nonverbal Communication
  - 3.4 Visual Communication
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- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

There is a difference between the types of communication and forms of communication. Types of communication could be said to be the different levels at which communication takes place. And based on these levels, we have intrapersonal, interpersonal, group and mass communication as the types of communication. Forms of communication, on the other hand, refer to various ways in which information is exchanged or disseminated among individuals and group. Communication among individuals and groups therefore manifest in verbal, nonverbal or visual forms.

This unit is aimed at looking at these forms in which communication takes place.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- ☐ identify the forms of communication
- ☐ differentiate the forms from the types of communication
- ☐ explain what verbal, nonverbal and visual communication means with relevant examples.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Forms of Communication**

As we have explained earlier in this unit, there is a difference between the forms of communication and the types of communication. Types of communication refer to those levels at which communication takes place but forms of communication refer to those ways or manners in which messages or information is exchanged between and among individuals and groups. The forms of communication therefore are verbal, nonverbal and visual communication. Let us take a detailed look at these forms:

### **3.2 Verbal Communication**

Verbal communication refers to the use of words or language in the dissemination of messages. It is the exchange of information, ideas, and opinions with the use of words whether oral or written. Verbal communication according to Hasan (2013 P.21) refers to “messages that we transmit by using words.” It involves all communication activities we participate in either as readers, listeners or as speakers. Verbal communication can therefore be in forms of oral or spoken words or written words. Written communication obviously means communication through written or printed words. Therefore it is primarily verbal in nature because words are used. But while oral communication is personal, spontaneous and flexible, written communication is more formal, literate and follows rules of grammar strictly. This refers to the basic mode of all mass communication generated messages.

### **3.3 Nonverbal Communication**

This is the manner of communication which does not involve the use of words whether written or spoken. We pass messages to people either intentionally or unintentionally even when words are not used. Wood in (Agbanu 2013, p. 28) defines non-verbal communication as “all aspects of communication other than words,” while Nwabueze (2014 p. 14) describes it as “the use of silent communication channels such as signs, touch, behaviour, clothing, gestures and expressions of all kinds and sounds such as clapping of hands, gunshots, and tone of voice to pass the message to the audience.” This implies that nonverbal communication makes use of body language or behavioural expressions which can send messages without the use of words. And because communication here does not involve the use of words, there is a problem with the interpretation of the messages by the receiver. For instance, a touch or a hug can be misinterpreted by different people in different places and in different moods.

### **3.4 Visual Communication**

Visual communication incorporates designs and science in which ideas are expressed and communicated to viewers or readers through the use of diagrams, photographs, graphs, collages, and posters. All these relate to the message sent and the sensitivity of the message received and how it is interpreted. Communication visuals are signs and symbols that always involve the use of visual signs. These symbolic messages are then transmitted through some channels or media through which someone else could interpret them. Examples include but not limited to road traffic signs, tracks, trademarks, international road maps and symbols, maps, charts, graphs, illustrations and drawings. All human beings, according to Oladumiye (2005), tend to draw through graphic or visual communication forms.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

We have achieved the major objective of this unit which is to discuss the various forms of communication such as verbal, nonverbal and visual communication. These forms of communication are the ways in which messages are exchanged between and among individuals.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, effort has been made to explain the various forms of communication such as verbal, nonverbal and visual communication. You have learned these three forms of communication and can now differentiate them from the types of communication discussed in unit two.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Differentiate forms of communication from types of communication.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Differentiate verbal communication from nonverbal communication. Explain the one you think is the most important for effective message transmission. Give reasons for your answer.

## **7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READING**

- Agbanu, V.N. (2013). *Mass Communication: Introduction, Techniques, Issues*. Enugu: Rhyce-Kerex Publishers.
- Baran, S. (2004). *Introduction to Mass Communication: Media Literacy and Culture*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Hasan, S. (2013). *Mass Communication, Principles and Concepts*. New Delhi: CBA Publishers and Distributor Ltd.
- Nwabueze, C.D. (2014). *Introduction to Mass Communication: Media Ecology in the Global Village*. Owerri Topshelve Publishers.
- Owuamalam, T. O. (2006). *Introduction to Broadcasting*. Owerri: Top Class Agencies Ltd.

## **UNIT 4      MOTIVES OF COMMUNICATION**

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- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

There is a reason for every communication activity. Individuals do not just interact for nothing. They do so because there is a purpose for that. Even the morning greetings we have taken for granted in our various traditional settings, serve some purpose. The moment a child fails to utter the morning greetings to an elder, the punishment that follows in form of a knock or bashing will definitely bring the child to his or her right senses. This unit discusses the different motives of why people communicate.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- ☐ discuss the motives behind communication activities.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Motives of Communication**

Individuals cannot live and relate effectively with each other without effective means of communication. This is why man is termed “social being”. We express ourselves through verbal means, through nonverbal means and through visual or graphic means. But the motives or reasons why we do so are numerous. The following motives are few of them:

##### **1.      To express feelings and thoughts**

Without verbal, nonverbal or visual communication, it would have been difficult for human beings to effectively express their feelings and thoughts. For human society to function effectively, individuals who are members of that society must express their feelings and thoughts in order for them to understand others and be understood as well. Communication aids the conveyance of feelings and thoughts. For instance, feelings of love when conveyed, understood

and reciprocated, makes life easy, pleasant and enjoyable for the lovers whether in a school setting, family setting, market place, church premises, offices and the rest. Love when expressed through an effective mode of communication, makes the society heaven on earth.

## **2. To effect change in attitude and behaviour**

Have you wondered about the kind of energies, pains and difficulties some parents go through in order to change the attitude and behaviour of a deviant, stubborn and recalcitrant child in a family? They do through various forms of communication. Spoken words are used to admonish the child and talk some senses into him or her. Nonverbal forms are used as well. Some mothers even cry while expressing pains caused by such a child. Visuals are also employed in trying to correct the child. This is just one out of many examples of how communication can be used to effect a change in attitude and behaviours of individuals.

What about various forms of communication employed by the government to effect change in the attitudes of the governed? Road signs are meant to teach road users something and help them adopt and imbibe good road habits. Similarly, most health messages are meant to help people change negative attitudes, behaviours and beliefs that impede good living in the society. A typical example is the campaign on the use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, campaign on family planning, campaign on immunisation, campaign on the administration of oral rehydration therapy to children who have diarrhoea and so on. Culturally speaking, most societies in the South Eastern parts of Nigeria have abolished the Osu Caste System through effective means of communication employed in changing such negative attitude and behaviour.

## **3. To increase an individual's cognitive horizon and affective domain**

It is through effective communication that teachers teach and learners learn. Communication is employed in both formal and non-formal education settings to impact knowledge. It is through communication that individuals develop their mental powers. It looks like magic when we observe one-year-old kids and two-year-old kids memorising Nigeria's 36 states and their capitals especially during graduation ceremonies in most kindergarten schools. It is through effective teaching accomplished through adequate communication. The cognitive and affective domains of children are developed and increased by communicating effectively to them using verbal, nonverbal and visual communication forms. The same applies to adults, learning and development of cognitive and affective domains spans across our lifetimes.

## **4. To convey messages easily and achieve the intended goals**

Dissemination of messages and information is critical in every society. Communication can be used to inform, educate, entertain, enlighten, and mobilise citizens. Information dissemination is done in all ramifications wherever human beings find themselves. Messages are conveyed in schools from teachers to students and from student to teachers, messages are spread in churches, in town and village meetings, in political gatherings, in markets and in families. Friends and groups also convey messages to each other. Various communication forms help individuals to convey intended messages to their target audiences with ease. Feedback helps the source to

ascertain whether the conveyed message is understood by the receiver or not. Feedback also helps the source or conveyor to ascertain whether the intended goal is achieved or not.

## **5. To close gaps in communication**

Communication forms are employed to solve all communication-related problems and close gaps which often exist when information is misunderstood. Most crises or conflicts in many societies today are caused by gaps in communication. To broker peace and end the crises or conflicts, communication is used to talk to the parties involved in the conflicts. In settling quarrels in homes, offices, villages, towns, churches and even among friends, effective communication is the only remedy employed by the concerned individuals who pose as peace brokers.

These are some of the motives behind communication activities. The list is not exhaustive. These points will guide you in thinking about the remaining ones.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Although people communicate in all societies in the world, the motives for such communication activities vary from society to society and from individual to individual. It can be for the conveyance of messages, to increase one's cognitive and affective domain, to express feelings and thoughts, to bridge gaps in communication and so on.

It is therefore important to carefully think about what to communicate before engaging in any communication activity with an individual or group in order to achieve the intended goals and objectivities.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit x-rayed five motives behind communication activities. The five motives discussed in this unit are not the only reasons why people communicate. The list is expected to help you think about other reasons why people communicate.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Which form of communication do you think is mostly used by teachers in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions to impart knowledge to learners?

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Explain five other motives behind communication activities which were not discussed in this unit.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Kenechukwu, S. (2014). *Mass Communication: An Introduction to Sociology of Mass Media*.  
Nnewi: Cathcom Press.

## **UNIT 5 BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Barriers to Effective Communication
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

You have seen in the previous unit that there are motives behind every communication activity. People engage in communication in order to achieve some intended goals. These goals are often not achieved due to some factors which pose as barriers to the free flow of such communicated ideas, opinions and so on. This implies that knowledge of the barriers to effective communication is necessary if the goals of communication are to be achieved. This will help the source in eliminating the barriers totally or in minimising their effects on the receivers of his or her messages.

This unit handles the discussion on the factors that pose barriers to effective communication.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- ☐ discuss the factors that pose as barriers to effective communication
- ☐ explain how to handle such barriers.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Barriers to Effective Communication**

Communication is effective there is a smooth relationship and understanding between the source and receiver of communication. The receiver and the sender must be in the same frame of reference for them to understand each other. Some of the factors that make it impossible for the goals of communication set out by the initiator of the communication process to be achieved are discussed as follows:

##### **1. Noise**

Noise is anything in any form which obstructs the free flow of information and which affects the receiver's ability to decode properly the message sent by the source. It is any factor which interferes with the way the feelings, thoughts and messages are shared and understood. In

intrapersonal communication, ill-health, maybe, severe headache may make the source unable to communicate effectively with himself or herself and once this happens, the brain will automatically fail to think properly. In interpersonal communication, the use of wrong language, words, signs and symbols, gestures and postures by the source will make it impossible for the receiver to understand what the source is trying to communicate. The same applies in group communication; wrong choice and usage of forms of communication will make it impossible for the group members to understand themselves. How can group members accomplish a task when they find it hard to understand themselves. In mass communication, channel noise, poor weather conditions and other technical issues may make it hard for the audience to get the signals loud and clear from the transmitting station. These problems interfere in the free flow of information from the source to the receiver and are therefore noise.

To control noise in any level of communication, the individuals involved must think critically of the causes of the noise in order to remedy it. Good communicators guard against noise interference and use some techniques like the adoption of conversational style or the use of everyday language in interacting with people. Simple words are better than professional jargons and high sounding grammars when one is communicating messages to all sectors of the audience.

## **2. Language and words**

This is a major problem to effective communication because words have both denotative and connotative meanings which mean different things to different receivers at the same time. Language makes it easy for individuals to express themselves specifically and distinctively. This implies that effective communication takes place when the source uses codes, words, signs and symbols which can be understood by the receiver. Whenever there is any problem in the choice and usage of words, signs and symbols by the source, the meaning of the communicated message is lost and hence, the message is bound to be incomprehensible, misunderstood and misinterpreted by the receiver. Katz in Kenechukwu (2014) explains that certain obstacles need to be taken care of when deciding the choice of language and words to be used while communicating with any audience. The obstacles are (a) the failure to refer language to experience and reality; (b) the inability to transcend personal experience in intergroup communication; (c) stereotypes; (d) the confusion of concepts.

To overcome these barriers, it is advisable to always convey messages in forms as simple as possible and also in forms the receiver can easily identify and comprehend.

## **3. Inherent personality disorders**

Some people have personality traits and disorders that make it hard for others to understand them when they are communicating or interacting with them. For instance, a person with stage fright will find it hard to speak very well when addressing a group of people. A stammerer will find it hard to pronounce words easily, audibly and clearly. An introvert or a person who lacks good oratory abilities will equally fail to communicate and engage a listening audience to a meaning conversation. All these problems are personality disorders which hamper the comprehension of intended messages.

To solve these problems, an expert is needed to help the communicator overcome some of the personality disorders. The major issue to handle is lack of courage. A good communicator must imbibe courage and must organise his or her thoughts very well before communicating with others. This goes to support the fact that intrapersonal communication is the basis or foundation of all other forms of communication. A person who fails to communicate very effectively and efficiently with himself or herself, cannot do so with others.

#### **4. Emotional Barriers**

The emotional disposition of a communicator at a particular time goes a long way in dictating how successful a communication activity will be. Fear, anger, hatred, jealousy, mistrust, envy and so on, are all negative emotions which hamper the free flow of messages and conveyance of feelings and thoughts. These emotional barriers can affect the overall pitch, tone and mood of the communication activity which may indirectly affect how the message is understood and interpreted. For instance, how are you? when said with hatred and anger will definitely be given a different meaning by the receiver.

To overcome emotional barriers, the communicator must not allow bias and some negative traits to take hold of him or her while interacting with others.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Some factors pose as barriers to effective communication among individuals and groups and unless these issues are handled and eliminated, communication will never achieve the intended goals and objectives. The need to overcome these barriers has been emphasised in this unit.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit dealt with barriers to effective communication and various ways of handling them. The barriers range from emotional, and personality disorders to noise and wrong use of language and words.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Critically, analyse the particular factor that poses a barrier to your interaction with your friends. How would you handle it?

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

In your own words, discuss two other factors which you think pose as barriers to some of your friends. Recommend how these barriers can be overcome.

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Kenechukwu, S. (2014). *Mass Communication: An Introduction to Sociology of Mass Media*.  
Nnewi: Cathcom Press.

## **MODULE 2: VISUAL COMMUNICATION**

We briefly discussed what visual communication means under module one as we tried to explain forms of communication. Visual communication helps communicators to achieve intended goals and objectives in any communication activity.

This module is aimed at discussing visual communication as a concept. Detailed discussions which will help students to fully understand the concept will be outlined and X-rayed in this module.

The module is divided into five units as follows:

- Unit 1: Defining Visual Communication
- Unit 2: History of Visual Communication
- Unit 3: Forms of Visual Communication
- Unit 4: Advantages and Disadvantages of Visual Communication
- Unit 5: Features of Visual Communication

### **UNIT 1: DEFINING VISUAL COMMUNICATION**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Definitions/meaning of Visual Communication
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Many scholars have defined visual communication in different ways based on their academic inclinations. You are expected to know these various definitions of visual communication so that you can come up with a definition based on your understanding of the basic ideas which should be contained in the definition of the concept. The essence of this unit is basically to help you understand the concept of visual communication and come up with a definition.

#### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- ☐ discuss the meaning of visual communication
- ☐ explain the proper way to define visual communication.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Definition/meaning of Visual Communication**

As we emphasised in unit 2, visual communication is a form of communication in which vision or anything that can be visualised by the human eyes is used to communicate. It has been defined by many scholars as follows:

....the conveyance of ideas and information through visual aids such as signs, typography, drawings, illustrations, graphic designs, colour and electronic resources (Kenechukwu, 2014,p. 24)

.....the conveyance of ideas and information in forms that can be seen. Visual communication in part or whole relies on eyesight and includes signs, typography, signs, drawings, graphic design, illustration, industrial design, advertising, animation, colour and electronic resources (Wikipedia, 2019,p.1)

..... the use of images to communicate an idea whether it's a sign, poster, drawing, photograph, or television advertisement (Nwabueze, 2014,p.52)

..... the use of images to persuade, entertain, inform and enlighten an observing audience of products, ideas and messages (Smith, 2005,p.2).

....the delivery of messages through the use of visual elements such as charts and graphs, clip art and electronic images, to convey ideas and information to the audience (Lovelybuzz, 2012,p.4).

..... the communication that relies on vision or on the use of visual elements (Eztalks, 2018p.2)

.....the way of communicating through a visual aid and it refers to the presentation of information through visible mediums like images or text. The images or text used in visual communication helps in entertaining, enlightening, persuading, and informing the audience (Eztalks.com, 2019,p. 1).

..... something that can be achieved through sight. It can be anything like eye contact, map, chart, facial expression, signals, and poster. You can also include graphics, books, animation, illustration, painting, interactive web design, advertising, and short film. All these come with a message in a beautiful way (Lester, 2006, p.6).

..... a way of the communication that people get through the reading or seeing.... It expresses an idea and gives a piece of information with the use of different signs, gestures, postures, and anything that can be expressible (Dan, 2010,p.4).

....a type of Communication that expresses emotion, feelings, ideas, information and thoughts with a combination of words and pictures, art, typography, photography, symbols, movies and/or sound.

... it is nothing but using visuals like charts, graphs, diagrams to represent information (Nworgu and Nwabueze, 2005, p.12)

The above eleven definitions of visual communication by several scholars have shown that there are common features in all the definitions. These features are as follows: that visual communication deals with visuals; it is a means of communicating an idea, message or entertainment, it comes in forms of signs, drawings, illustrations, graphs, photographs, charts and diagrams.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Visual communication is a good combination of words, pictures, photography, symbols, and signs. These are more expressive and can be used both in the personal and professional levels. In fact, now these forms are widely used in different types of organisations and industries to communicate to different classes of audiences. People are using these tools to promote their businesses and to express their view uniquely and beautifully. It has been widely used in different communication tools including traditional and modern. Moreover, you can start a career with this communication medium and start to earn huge money due to its better-earning potential.

Visual communication is whereby messages such as advertisements are delivered using visual aids. Day by day, the level of technology has been increasing, and audiovisual communication is the new mode of advertisement for businesses. The ability of human beings to receive, view and process images is the selling point of visual communication. In the business world, communication is very important, as it helps in marketing the products that a business is offering. Based on research, a combination of both audio and visual aids is more effective.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit discussed what visual communication is. Thus, various definitions that would help students fully understand the concept has been presented.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

In one page of writing, identify the difference/s in the definitions presented above.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

In a two-page write-up, make an argument for or against the use of visuals in advertisements.

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Smith, K.L. (2005). *Handbook of visual communication: theory, methods, and media*. Routledge

Lester, P.M. (2006). *Visual Communication: Images with Messages*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth[h](#).

Dan, R. J. (2010). *In the Company of Others: An Introduction to Communication (3rd ed.)*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Eztalks (2019). *Types of Visual Communication*. Accessed on July 20<sup>th</sup> 2019 from <https://www.eztalks.com>

Nwabueze, C.D (2008). *The Art of Investigative Reporting: A Practical Guide*. Enugu: Daisy Press.

Nworgu, K.O. & Nwabueze, C.D. (2005). *Mass Media Writing: Form and Style*. Enugu: Ultimate Books.

## UNIT 2 HISTORY OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 History of Visual Communication
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

There is a history underlying the practice of visual communication. It is a long history which is worth tracing. This unit is therefore designed to teach the students this background information about visual communication and how it has come to stay as a form of communication.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the history of visual communication
- explain how it spans across different disciplines, organisations and industries.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 History of Visual Communication

As has been stated earlier in the introductory part of this unit, visual communication has a long history. This long history as narrated by dpr-Barcelona (2010,p. 1) gives a thorough overview of how visual communication started and where it is today with the emergence of the computers and the World Wide Web. This long history is divided into 10 sections to explain the complete history of visual communications, from the Cro-Magnons to the ultimate use of computers, let's take a trip:

**Rocks and Caves:** When Cro-Magnons arrived in Europe about 40,000 years ago, they brought with them sculpture, engraving, painting, body ornamentation, music and the painstaking decoration of utilitarian objects. From that times we have cave paintings which most common themes are large wild animals, such as bison, The horses, aurochs, and deer, and tracings of human hands as well as abstract patterns, called Macaroni by Breuil. By that time we can also find **Petroglyphs**, which are images etched in rock, usually by prehistoric, especially Neolithic, peoples and **Geoglyphs**, drawings on the ground, or a large motif, (generally greater than 4 metres) or design produced on the ground, either by arranging clasts (stones, stone fragments,

gravel or earth) to create a positive geoglyph or by removing patinated clasts to expose the unpatinated ground.

**Ideograms:** These are graphical symbols that represent an idea, rather than a group of letters arranged according to the phonemes of a spoken language, as is done in alphabetic languages. Examples of ideograms include way-finding signage, such as in airports and other environments where many people may not be familiar with the language of the place they are in, as well as Arabic numerals and mathematical notation, which are used worldwide regardless of how they are pronounced in different languages. The term “ideogram” is commonly used to describe logographic writing systems such as Egyptian hieroglyphs and Chinese characters.

**The Alphabet:** The history of the alphabet starts in ancient Egypt. The first pure alphabets (properly, “abjads”, mapping single symbols to single phonemes, but not necessarily each phoneme to a symbol) emerged around 2000 BC in Ancient Egypt, as a representation of language developed by Semitic workers in Egypt, but by then alphabetic principles had already been inculcated into Egyptian hieroglyphs for a millennium (see Middle Bronze Age alphabets).

**The Art of the Book:** This section is divided into the topics Scriptorium, Techniques and Classifications, where art historians classify illuminated manuscripts according to their historical periods and types, including (but not limited to): Insular script, Carolingian manuscripts, Ottonian manuscripts, Romanesque manuscripts and Gothic manuscripts.

**The Printing Press:** Starting with incunabula, in the times when printers tended to congregate in urban centres where there were scholars, ecclesiastics, lawyers, nobles and professionals who formed their major customer base. Standard works in Latin inherited from the medieval tradition formed the bulk of the earliest printing, but as books became cheaper, works in the various vernaculars (or translations of standard works) began to appear.

**The Masters of Type:** In the 12th century, a rediscovery of Greek and Roman literature occurred across Europe that eventually led to the development of the humanist movement in the 14th century. In addition to emphasizing Greek and Latin scholarship, humanists believed that each individual had significance within society. After that, In 1543 Copernicus wrote *De revolutionibus*, a work that placed the sun at the centre of the universe and the planets in semi correct orbital order around it; his work was an attempt to revise the earlier writings of Ptolemy. In such times, focused on technical developments and inventions, it was inevitable that the upheaval described above would also affect our subject matter. One of the major benefits of this new milieu of learning and enquiry was the spreading of literacy, i.e. the ability of not only to be able to read but also to write.

**Breaking the Grid:** The Industrial Revolution was the major technological, socioeconomic and cultural change in the late 18th and early 19th century that began in Britain and spread throughout the world. During that time, an economy based on manual labour was replaced by one dominated by industry and the manufacture of machinery.

Printing techniques using movable type had restricted graphic design to an inflexible grid: Anything that was to be mass printed in the great volume needed to adhere to a system whereby type was set in consecutive rows of parallel lines. Illustrations, maps and the like were hand-drawn and engraved, only allowing for limited, costly editions due to the wear of the engraving plates. The mass productive milieu of the industrial revolution manifested itself in a unique

invention called lithography and this technique was to set type free from the bondage of the compositor.

**The Avantgarde:** The term avant-garde in French means front guard, advance guard, or vanguard. People often use the term in French and English to refer to people or works that are experimental or novel, particularly with respect to art, culture, and politics. Over time, avant-garde became associated with movements concerned with art for art's sake, focusing primarily on expanding the frontiers of aesthetic experience, rather than with wider social reform. In our context, the avantgarde will cover the avantgarde's movements of the early 20th century that specifically focused on visual communication design and/or implemented it as a *modus operandi*.

**The Modernist:** The term “modernism” covers a variety of political, cultural and artistic movements rooted in the changes in Western society at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. Broadly, modernism describes a series of progressive cultural movements in art and architecture, music, literature and the applied arts which emerged in the decades before 1914. By 1930, Modernism had entered popular culture. With the increasing urbanization of populations, it was beginning to be looked to as the source for ideas to deal with the challenges of the day.

**The Computer:** An important point was reached in graphic design with the publishing of the *First Things First 1964 Manifesto* which was a call to a more radical form of graphic design and criticized the ideas of value-free design. This was massively influential on a generation of new graphic designers and contributed to the founding of publications such as *Emigre* magazine.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

The history of visual communication dates back to a time where writing was not yet invented. It dates back to a time where history was preserved in paintings found on rocks and in caves dating back more than 40.000 years ago. Fast-forwarding to the usage of ideograms up to the invention of the alphabets. It is safe to say that visual communication has always been a part of our existence. The invention of the alphabet was a beautiful time because books were being published and beautifully illuminated scriptures were presented as a piece of art. We can fast forward a bit more in time and we would reach the avant-garde, modernist and finally the computer era.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit narrated the long history of visual communication up to this computer era. To this end, we can now move on to other aspects of visual communication.

## SELF-ASSESSED EXERCISE

What can you say about this history of visual communication? Is it worth studying?

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Critically narrate the major events in the history of visual communication.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING**

Dpr-Barcelona (2010). *History of Visual Communication*. Accessed on July 20<sup>th</sup> 2019 from <https://www.arkinetblog.wordpress.com>

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## **UNIT 3      FORMS OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objective
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1 Forms of Visual Communication
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

Visual communication is basically described as communication through the use of visual aids. It is communication through means that can be seen, read or looked upon. Visual communication relies heavily on aspects of vision. It is represented mainly in diagrams that are two dimensional such as graphs and charts. It is the most effective method of communication available. Types of two-dimensional images represented by visual communication include; drawings, pie charts, industrial design, animation illustration, animation colour and electronic sources. In the modern age, some tools aid the process of visual communication for people that are far apart from each other. Words are describing but they can be tiring to read through. Even listening to someone needs a visual aid to actually picture the information, especially if there are a lot of numbers involved.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- know the different forms of visual communication.

### **3.0    MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Types of Visual Communication**

##### **1. Public Signs**

A sign is a mark or shape that always has a particular meaning, for example, in mathematics or music. We can see many public signs that play an important role in our daily life. Their advantages lie in the cross-cultural communication which is not limited by language barrier. See some examples below.



## 2. Visual Symbols

Visual symbols are used from long ago. For example, pigeon, heart, and gold are used as the symbol of peace, love and wealth respectively.



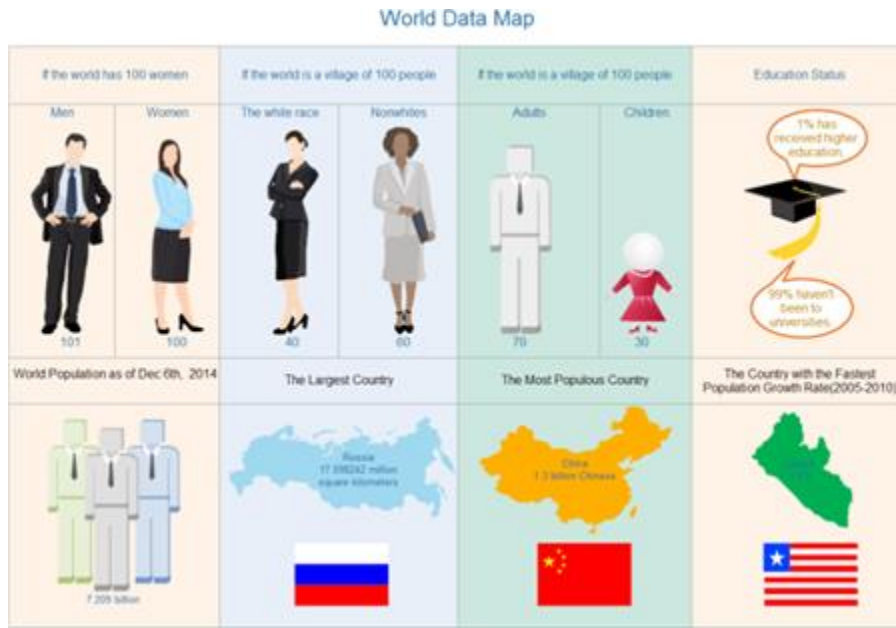
## 3. Charts and Graphs

This form is very perfect for data analysis. It includes many types such as bar, column, pie and doughnut chart. To analyze your figures more effectively, you can combine them. See an example below.



## 4. Maps

A map can represent a place vividly. Paper maps are portable and can be carried around easily. Online maps are gaining increasing popularity. For example, Google Map, a reliable mapping service, provides useful location information. Check out some amazing slides made with vector maps provided by Edraw (2019):



## Visual Communication - Other Diagrams



Flowchart Example

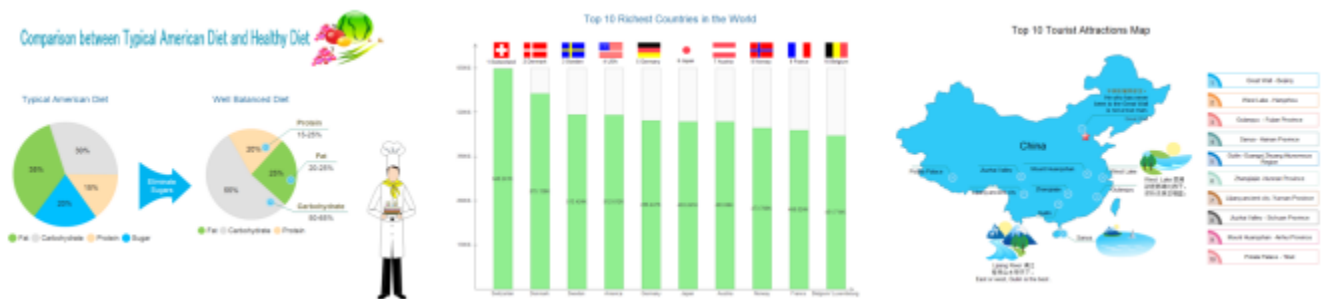


Org Chart Example



Mind Map Example

## More Examples of Visual Communication



Pie Chart Example

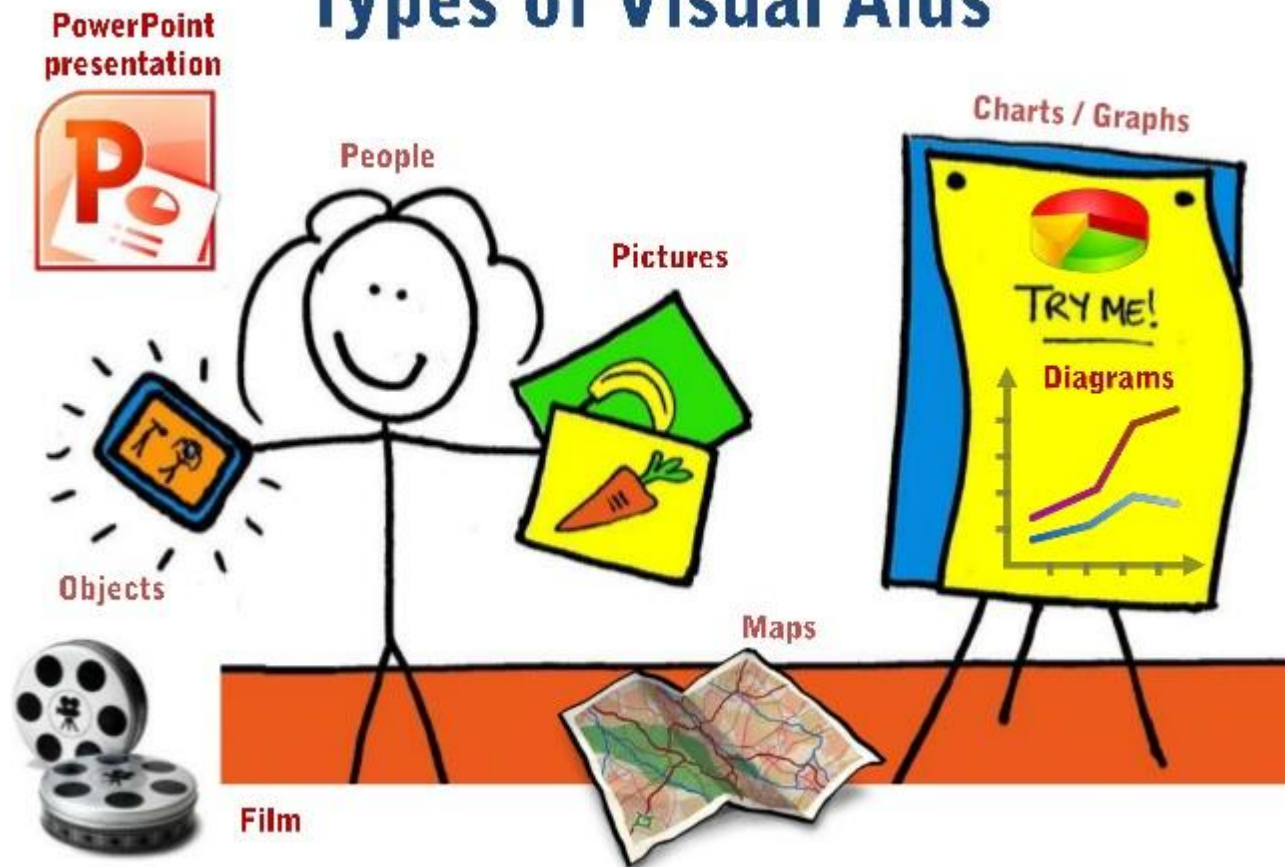
Column Chart Example

Map Example

## 5. Visual Aids

Visual communication is done through visual aids. Visual aids are essential because they help the audience understand the information being put across. They can do a large role in convincing the audience being addressed. There are different types of visual communications used in business and they all depend on the use of visual aids. The type of visual aid being used in a presentation varies on the content being passed. The visual aids range from making PowerPoint presentations to flyers and handouts. Each type of visual aid has its pros and cons and the speaker has to really weigh them before choosing one. The different types of visual communication include:

# Types of Visual Aids



## i. Objects

This is used especially in instances where you are talking about a mobile object. It involves bringing the object in question to the stage and using it for demonstration as you are putting across your message. It is a suitable visual aid because the audience being addressed can clearly see exactly what you are talking about. For example, if you are giving a talk to campers about tying excellent knots, bringing a rope along could be a powerful visual aid.

The advantage of this is the object that you are speaking about is often the centre of discussion. So it would definitely be the most suitable object to help the audience understand the message fully.

The disadvantage is that some objects are just impossible to get on the stage due to their size or immobility.

## ii. Models

These are representations of the objects the speaker is addressing. They represent the object on a much smaller scale especially for objects that are too large or largely immobile. An example of a

model is the model of the solar system that most science teachers use to teach about the solar system or a model of the human skeletal system.

The advantage is the models can serve as perfect representations of objects that are impractical for the speaker to bring on stage with them. This will enable the audience to fully comprehend the message.

The disadvantage of models is they may not represent the actual object accurately as the proportions may be off. It can be hard to relate the size of the model of the solar system to the actual size of the solar system.

### **iii. Graphs**

Graphs are an important visual aid when showing the relationship between two different quantities. There are numerous types of graphs including line graphs, bar graphs and pie graphs.

The major advantage is the graph allows the audience to fully comprehend the differences in quantities as opposed to just stating them verbally. This creates a bigger impact.

The biggest disadvantage with graphs is they can easily get crowded by inputting a lot of information in them. This will give it a cluttered look that makes it hard to comprehend.

### **iv. Maps**

In a geography speech, a map would be the most suitable item to use. A map can be used in showing different locations in the region and comparing them. This makes the audience know exactly where the speaker is referring to.

The advantage of using a map is it is simple to understand and can be used to make points of geographical reference. A map, for example, can be used to show the locations of all the hospitals in an area or the number of people with STIs in a certain region.

If a map has too much information on it, it may become cluttered therefore removing the focus of the audience from the message you wish to pass on. They will simply become distracted.

## **5. Photographs**

Their main advantage is they are great tools to explain points. For example in giving a talk about slums, pictures about the slums can give an accurate description of the slum life. A photograph, if too small, will only serve as a distraction.

These are the platforms on which visual aids can be projected. They vary from the simplest methods to the most sophisticated. They include:

- Whiteboards or chalkboards for writing and drawing
- Poster boards for posters

- Handouts for displaying pictures
- Projectors
- Computer-assisted presentations.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Visual communication is the most effective means of communication as it involves vision. Many people can easily comprehend communication that they can see. The most important aspect of visual communication is visual aids that increase comprehension of the subject matter.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit examined the different types of visual communication. Visual communication can be represented in the form of a graph, a map, a chart, a Vann diagram, a pie chart, a model, a table, or even multimedia like gifs, videos, and images.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

How would knowledge of the forms of visual communication help you in choosing a particular form to use in communicating to kids between the ages of two to five?

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Get a daily newspaper of your choice and identify forms of visual communication employed in the adverts. Page limit: Maximum of three

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Dpr-Barcelona (2010). *History of Visual Communication*. Accessed on July 20<sup>th</sup> 2019 from <https://www.arkinetblog.wordpress.com>

Edraw, S. (2019). *Visual Communication Forms*. Accessed on July 20<sup>th</sup> 2019 from <https://www.edraw.com>

## **UNIT 4      ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0      Introduction
- 2.0      Objectives
- 3.0      Main Content
  - 3.1 Advantages of Visual Communication
  - 3.2 Disadvantages of Visual Communication
- 4.0      Conclusion
- 5.0      Summary
- 6.0      Tutor-marked Assignment
- 7.0      References/Further Reading

### **1.0      INTRODUCTION**

The adoption and usage of visual communication forms in many organisations and industries show that there are inherent advantages and benefits derived by the users and adopters. However, this does not mean that there are no disadvantages of such communication forms. This unit is designed to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of visual communication forms.

### **2.0      OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- ☐ discuss the advantages of visual communication forms
- ☐ explain the disadvantages of visual communication forms.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Advantages of Visual Communication Forms**

Imagine reporting to you about the dropout rates and admission rates in all universities in Nigeria. The information will be interesting as this will enable you to compare such rates in universities of your interest but the problem is to see the whole picture. It will definitely be hard to remember so many numbers. Even if you did, it takes significant mind space that is unnecessarily wasted on capturing information. The idea of visual communication is to make this capturing of information easier for the audience so that they only have to observe and draw inferences. The following are therefore the advantages of using visual communication:

**1. Makes the aesthetics of a presentation better:** They not only are easier to read, but they also make the information more attractive to look at. Charts, graphs, tables, etc are colour coded making them easier to perceive. Imagine numbers thrown on a sheet vs numbers visually arranged on the sheet using shapes that are easier to comprehend. A human brain can only take in

limited information and that should definitely not go into making sense of information. That should go into why the information is being presented to them in the first place.

**2. Visual communication supports the audio mostly:** The literal aim of an ideal visual communication should be to not need any other communication at all. This way it's optimised well. But Visual communication goes hand in hand with verbal communication to explain what inferences are to be drawn from it.

**3. Efficient instant conveyance:** Compared with verbal communication, visual communication prevails in the efficiency of communication. For example, a bar chart helps the audience find out the first and last item at a glance. A line chart on sales with an uprising arrow tells readers immediately that the sales trend is increasing and favourable.

**4. Ease of Understanding:** One of the primary advantage visual communication offers is simplicity. For example, when you get lost, you can find the place easier and faster by looking at a visual map and a 3D directional map will be much better.

**5. Flexible - Cross-cultural Communication:** Just think about cross-cultural communication, when people cannot understand a foreign language, a symbol or a picture will remove the language obstacles. This is the reason that many public places use signs in addition to words to send a message. Visual charts and graphics can be posted online, put beside the highway and stacked on anywhere audible. Such flexible communication form can bridge geographic distance and cross-cultural differences.

**6. Enjoyable - Generation of Enjoyment:** Visual materials are relatively more eye-pleasing. If highly artistic, it brings aesthetic enjoyment. When presenting an amazing shot, it makes people relaxed. A funny picture makes people laugh and will help people memorize the information better.

**7. More effective as compared to oral communication:** Audiovisual communication is more effective as compared to words. Some facts cannot be delivered in form of words, thus diagrams and pictures are used. Graphs and maps are self-explanatory and can be used to show customers how the business is performing, rather than using oral communication. Visual communication is also attractive, and most people will focus on such communication rather than other modes of communication. This form of visual communication is rather effective and appealing as compared to oral communication. People from different departments can relay information to one another easily, and the information can be understood easily.

**8. Presentations in business workplaces:** In a business setting, the workers at times may be required to perform presentations on how the company is performing. The information to be displayed can be difficult using words, and thus visual communication can be used in place of words. Graphs, charts, figures and other modes of visual communication can be used to represent mathematical data. It can be difficult for some people to understand data displayed in tables, but charts and graphs make the work easier. The figure below shows world population growth in 2006. Visual aids help greatly in displaying such information. When the Coca-Cola company is displaying statistics on how the company is performing, as well as growth forecast, charts and graphs are used. This is easily understandable and self-explanatory.

**9. Effective in decision making:** Another main benefit of visual communication in businesses is that it is very effective to illiterate people. People may not have the ability to read, but they have the visual ability. Furthermore, the amount of time taken in understanding a visual communication set is less as compared to other types of communication. Exchanging information is made easier since the audience will view and interpret quicker. When the information is processed quickly, then people can make quick and correct decisions. Most businesses have realised that using visual communication attracts more customers when compared to other modes of communication. This can also be based on the fact that visual communication is self-explanatory. McDonald's, Crunchies, Tantalisers, MrBiggs and other fast food industries use visual appeal rather than words or oral communication when displaying the products they offer. This helps the customers to make quick and efficient decisions.

### **3.2 Disadvantages of Visual Communication forms**

However, there are also disadvantages of visual communication despite its numerous advantages. There are always two sides to a coin. Some of the disadvantages include but not limited to the following:

**1. Costly:** One of the main disadvantages is that it is costly. As compared to other modes of communication, visual communication is more costly. The process of coming up with a video, chart, diagram or map is expensive, and it requires the involvement of different stakeholders in the organization. In addition, the mode and area of the display are expensive. Hiring a television station, newspaper or magazine at times can be costly. It is such reasons why only large companies tend to use this mode of communication.

**2. Insufficient and incomplete:** All the topics cannot be represented at once, in a single visual communication set. This, in turn, means that visual communication is incomplete and insufficient. The audience will require more time to understand the concept of visual aid, thus leading to time wastage. Furthermore, when the audience does not understand what the message being portrayed, then the meaning is lost. In such a situation, the incorporation of oral communication is vital.

**3. Time-consuming:** The amount of time needed when creating visual aids is considerably longer as compared to other forms of communication. This is because different parties are involved, and the software used may be unavailable at times. In addition, it takes much time for the receivers to understand the message being conveyed. For example, visual communication that uses hand gestures and facial expressions may be complicating to normal or illiterate people.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

There are several benefits of visual communication just there are also its disadvantages. Technology has allowed us to use visual aids in delivering important messages for business enterprises. Visual communication helps in emphasizing oral communication. When an individual is explaining something that the business offers, it is always vital to use demonstrations for better understanding. Visual aids come in handy for such situations. When an

individual is reading about the portfolio of an organization, visual aids can help in explaining the key features of the organization. Moreover, visual communication is more appealing as compared to oral communication. But despite all these, they are costly, time-consuming and insufficient as communication forms.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit discussed the various advantages and disadvantages of the visual communication forms.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Critically study the advantages of visual communication forms. Which one do you think is the reason why most advertisers use them?

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSESSMENT**

Outline other points which you think can fit into the disadvantages of visual communication forms.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Dpr-Barcelona (2010). *History of Visual Communication*. Accessed on July 20th 2019 from <https://www.arkinetblog.wordpress.com>

Edraw, S. (2019). *Visual Communication Forms*. Accessed on July 20th 2019 from <https://www.edraw.com>

## **UNIT 5: PERSPECTIVES OF IMAGE ANALYSIS IN VISUAL COMMUNICATION**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Perspectives to Image Analysis in Visual Communication
  - 3.2 Making Visual Communication Appealing
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Visual communication contains image aspects. For the visuals to be appealing to the eyes, some principles must be applied before the images are interpreted. The interpretation of images is subjective and to understand the depth of meaning, or multiple meanings, communicated in an image requires analysis. Images can be analysed through many perspectives, for example, these six major perspectives presented by Lester (2006), are worth studying.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- ☐ discuss the perspectives to the analysis of images in visual communication
- ☐ explain how to make visual communication forms appealing.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Perspectives to Image Analysis in Visual Communication**

There are six major perspectives on the analysis of images in visual communication. They include the following:

**Personal perspective:** When a viewer has an opinion about an image based on their personal thoughts. The personal response depends on the viewer's thoughts and values, individually. However, this might be sometimes in conflict with cultural values. Also when a viewer has viewed an image with a personal perspective, it is hard to change the view of the image on the viewer, even though the image can be seen in other ways.

**Historical perspective:** An image's view can be arising from the history of the use of media. Through times sort images have been changed because of the use of different (new) media. For example, the result of using the computer to edit images (e.g. Photoshop) is quite different when comparing images that are made and edited by craft.

**Technical perspective:** When the view of an image is influenced by the use of lights, position and the presentation of the image. The right use of light, position and presentation of the image can improve the view of the image. It makes the image looks better than reality.

**Ethical perspective:** From this perspective, the maker of the image, the viewer and the image itself must be responsible morally and ethically to the image. This perspective is also categorised into six categories as categorical imperative, utilitarianism, hedonism, golden mean, golden rule and veil of ignorance.

**Cultural perspective:** Symbolisation is an important definition for this perspective. Cultural perspective involves the identity of symbols. The uses of words that are related to the image, the use of heroes in the image, etc. are the symbolization of the image. The cultural perspective can also be seen as a semiotic perspective.

**Critical perspective:** The view of images in the critical perspective is when the viewers criticize the images, but the critics have been made in interests of the society, although an individual makes the critics. This way this perspective differs from the personal perspective.

### **3.2: Making Visuals Appealing**

The more aesthetically a graphic is perceived, the longer the viewer will try to decode the meaning of it or extract certain information. To produce your diagram as a pleasurable experience to any viewer, several features are thought to contribute to it and determine it, like symmetry, balance, complexity, figure-ground-contrast and more. Follow these principles to make your info-graphics more visually appealing.

**i. Principle of Simplicity:** Make it as simple as possible so that readers can understand it easily. Take away everything which is not essential.

**ii. Principle of Symmetry:** A symmetrical object would be more beautiful than an asymmetrical one most of the time.

**iii. Principle of Consistency:** Avoid using more than one encoding to communicate the same information. Do not use visually similar encodings for different variables, otherwise, readers will be confused.

**iv. Principle of Proper Colour:** "Colour used poorly is worse than no colour at all" - Edward Tufte.

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## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Visual communication is the way of communicating through a visual aid and it refers to the presentation of information through visible mediums like images or text. The images or text used in visual communication helps in entertaining, enlightening, persuading, and informing the audience. For this reason, the images must be made appealing to the eyes. In interpreting and analyzing the images, six perspectives are used. They include personal perspective, historical perspective, critical perspective, cultural perspective, ethical and technical perspectives.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit centred on the perspectives to image analysis in visual communication as well as on how to make images more appealing.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Which of the perspectives is more interesting to you and why? Explain in two pages.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

(a) Critically analyze the advertisements on any newspaper of your choice, which of the perspectives did they adopt? Give reasons for your answer.

## **7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READING**

Lester, P.M. (2006). *Visual Communication: Images with Messages*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

## **MODULE 3: VISUAL COMMUNICATION THEORIES**

The basic idea guiding visual communication is based on the fact that visuals have a greater power to educate, inform, entertain or persuade a person or audience. And just like we have so many theories guiding the act and principles of communication, there are also some theories guiding the use of visuals as forms of communication. This module therefore examines the theories of visual communication.

Unit 1 What is a Theory?

Unit 2 Importance of Theories in the Study of Visual Communication

Unit 3 Categories of Visual Communication Theories

Unit 4 Discussing the Perceptual Theories

Unit 5 Discussing the Sensual Theories

### **UNIT 1 WHAT IS A THEORY?**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
  - 3.1 What is a theory?
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the study of all aspects of communication, theories are used to explain all structures of society and human behaviours. This is the reason why the definitions of a theory are as complex as its applications. In the study of visual communication, theories are used to make predictions and to explain how visual communication works in real life.

This is the essence of this unit. It is aimed at helping you understand what a theory is. The various definitions of a theory by some authors are therefore presented so you can master the various ways it defined.

#### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

This unit is meant to expose you to the various definitions and descriptions of a theory by some authors so that you can fully understand what the concept is all about.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 What is a Theory?**

A theory could be described as a set of principles or statements developed in order to explain certain facts. These principles or statements are developed and accepted after having subjected them to tests repeatedly. It is only after these tests that they can be used to make predictions and explanations about natural phenomena in society. Many scholars have attempted to define a theory based on their perceptions of the concept. Some of the definitions that will help you fully grasp the meaning of a theory are presented as follows:

.....A theory is a set of systematic generalisations based on scientific observations and leading to further empirical observation (Severin and Tankard, 1982).

.....A theory is any conceptual representation or explanation of a phenomenon (John, 1982)

.....A theory is a set of ideas of varied status and origin, which may explain or interpret some phenomena (McQuail, 1987)

.....A theory is a set of assumptions, propositions or accepted facts that attempts to provide a plausible or rational explanation of cause-and-effect relationships among a group of observed phenomenon (Asemah, Nwammuo and Nkwam-Uwaoma, 2017),

.....A theory is a systematically related set of statements, including some laws like generalizations that are empirically testable and the sort of systematic relatedness is deductive relatedness (Folarin, 1998).

.....A theory is a set of generalised and more or less comprehensive set of statements relating different aspects of some phenomenon (Babbie, 1989).

.....A theory is a set of related propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relationships among concepts (Wimmer and Dominick, 1987).

.....A theory is any analytical device we use in social sciences to explain how phenomenon, fact or behaviour works in our real world (Ezeukwu, 1997).

.....A theory is a set of generalisations that guide our actions or occurrences (Kenekwukwu, 2014).

All these definitions point to one basic fact which is that theories are formulated to make sense of things in our environment. They are used to explain what something is and how it functions, what it causes and the effect of what it causes, what it can change and what can change it. This is to say that theories are purely human constructions that explain events in society.

With regards to visual communication, theories are therefore constructed to explain how its principles and how it works.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Theories are statements constructed to explain certain events and phenomena in the society. They are based on happenings in the society. Individuals postulate theories based on their experiences and this means that theories can change with time since society is also dynamic.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit focuses on exposing you to the descriptions and definitions of a theory. This is done in a bid to help you fully understand what a theory is.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Briefly state five definitions of a theory.

## **7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READING**

Asemah, E.S, Nwammuo, A.N. & Nkwam-Uwaoma, A.O. (2017). *Theories and Models of Communication*. Jos: Jos University Press.

Babbie, E. (1989). *The Practice of Social Sciences*. Belmont California: Wadsworth Thomson.

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## **UNIT 2      IMPORTANCE OF THEORIES IN THE STUDY OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0      Introduction
- 2.0      Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0      Main Content
  - 3.1 Importance of Theories in the Study of Visual Communication
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0      INTRODUCTION**

Theories are not just postulated for the fun of it. They are used to make explanations to certain phenomena in the society as has been discussed in unit one. But the question is: are theories useful in the study of visual communication? Why are theories used in visual communication? What are the reasons behind the application of theories in the study of visual communication? This unit is designed to answer and discuss these essential questions.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the importance of theories in the study of visual communication
- explain why they are applied in this aspect of human communication.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Importance of Theories in the Study of Visual Communication**

Theories are used in the study of visual communication because they serve some specific purposes which are described below:

- (a) Communicators use visual communication theories to organize and synthesize visual phenomena in human environment to enable them to get a meaning out of the phenomena. You will understand this better as we move into units 3, 4 and 5.
- (b) Theories enable communicators to clarify and categorize visual ideas into systems and sub-systems.
- (c) Theories help in generating researches in this area of study. This often referred to as the heuristic or investigative function of theories. The validation of speculation in theories generates data through research and this is vital to the growth of knowledge in this aspect of communication.
- (d) Theories enable visual communicators to predict the outcome and effects of what has been gathered. For instance, visual communicators can predict what can happen when

certain forms of visual communication are used in sending a message to a particular type of audience.

- (e) Theories are employed in the study of visual communication because they are used as observational aids. In this regard, they point out what to observe and how to observe those phenomena. Theories give precise indications about what is meant by a particular concept.
- (f) Theories not only serve as observational aids in visual communication but also clarify the observations. They specify cause and effect relationships between observed phenomena. They help visual communicators to understand the correlation between visual phenomena thereby making them easier and simpler to comprehend.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Visual communicators have postulated some theories to serve as the bedrock in studying and understanding the concept and practice of visual communication. This is based on the fact that the theories serve certain purposes as has been discussed under this unit. They are therefore the reasons why theories are used in the study of visual communication.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit is concerned with x-raying the various reasons why theories are used in the study of visual communication.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Theories are used in the study of visual communication because they are what is observed.
  - (a) True
  - (b) False
2. Theories point out what is observed
  - (a) True
  - (b) False
3. Theories help visual communicators make predictions
  - (a) True
  - (b) False
4. The heuristic function of theories imply that
  - (a) They can be observed
  - (b) They can be predicted
  - (c) They can generate more researches
5. Theories make clear indications
  - (a) True
  - (b) False

#### **7.0 REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING**

Asemah, E.S, Nwammuo, A. N, & Nkwam-Uwaoma, A.O. (2017). *Theories and Models of Communication*. Jos: Jos University Press

## **UNIT 3      CATEGORIES OF VISUAL COMMUNICATION**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Intended Learning Outcome
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1 Categories of Visual Communication
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

This unit briefly discusses the two major categories of visual communication and the groupings under them. The two major categories of visual communication discussed in this unit are the perceptual and sensual theories.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- examine the two major categories of visual communication
- differentiate between the perceptual and the sensual theories and the groupings under them.

### **3.0    MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Categories of Visual Communication**

Visual communication theories are broadly categorised into two, the first category is the perceptual theories. Perceptual theories are those theories that explain the meanings we associate with things- what our minds interpret. The various meanings and interpretations we give to the objects or images our eyes see. They are the theories that explain why and how we give meanings to certain images. They are meanings concluded after the stimuli are received. They are drawn from prior experiences compare with other senses or stored images. These theories see the human mind as being too complex and different.

The theories under the perceptual category are the semiotic and cognitive theory.

The second category of visual communication theories is sensual theories. The major concern of the theories under this category is on what the eye sees rather than what the mind perceives as is with the perceptual theories. The theories under this category explain what happens to the raw data the eye picks.

The two major theories under the sensual category are the gestalt and constructivism theories.

We shall have a detailed discussion of these theories in Units 4 and 5 respectively.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Visual communication theories are categorised into perceptual and sensual theories. Perceptual theories are made up of cognitive and semiotic theories while sensual theories are made up of gestalt and constructivism theories.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit discussed the basic categories of visual communication and the groupings under them.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Differentiate perceptual from sensual theories.

#### **7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READING**

Lester, P. M. (2007). *Visual Communication: Images with Messages* (4th ed.) . Boston: McGraw Hill.

## **UNIT 4     DISCUSSING THE PERCEPTUAL THEORIES**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Intended Learning Objective
- 3.0 Main content
  - 3.1 Cognitive Theory
  - 3.2 Semiotic Theory
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Perceptual theories are the theories that explain why and how we give meanings to certain images. They are meanings concluded after the stimuli are received. They are drawn from prior experiences compare with other senses or stored images. These theories see the human mind as being too complex and different. The differences in the structure and workings of the human mind account for the reason why individuals give various interpretations to the same stimuli.

This unit therefore, looks at the various theories under this category with detailed explanations and examples.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the various theories under the perceptual theory of visual communication which are cognitive and semiotic theories, with examples.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Cognitive Theory**

This theory is of the view that an individual does not simply witness a light-structured object, but actively arrives at a conclusion about the perception through a mental process. Carolyn Bloomer in *LovelyBuzz* (2019) identifies the mental activities as that affect visual perception: memory, projection, expectation, selectivity, habituation, salience, dissonance, culture and words

<b>Memory</b>	people use pictures as memory aids or mnemonics to recall events or verbal passages
<b>Projection</b>	We see pictures in the clouds or listen to readings of our future from tarot cards, or Rorschach test to reveal what our personality is. Here a person's mental state is projected on inanimate objects
<b>Expectation</b>	Walk into a classroom and you expect to see desks, blackboard, teacher. Having strong preconceived expectations often leads to mistakes in our perceptions
<b>Selectivity</b>	We have a choice of what we attend to. Much of what we see is not part of conscious processing. We do not think of our own breathing; most visual perception is unconscious. We focus on significant details. What the commercial below. The description on the ad is as follows: "Just how attention stealing is the new ŠKODA Fabia? We put it to the test. Will a crowd gather? Will other drivers slam on the breaks? Watch to find out. "Marketers in New Mexico believe that male teens will notice a message when they use the urinal.
<b>Habituation</b>	Habituation occurs when we stop paying attention to something. We may have seen it so much that we no longer notice it. The mind ignores visual stimuli that are part of everyday habitual activity. When we walk the same way every day we may miss the details. Too many stimuli in the culture can result in culture shock-making a person irritable and tired
<b>Salience</b>	A stimulus with meaning to an individual will be noticed more. Something that is relevant to us will stand out. An expert chess player sees more than a novice in a chess game. A scientist sees more under the microscope than we do.
<b>Dissonance</b>	Concentration is limited to one thing at a time. Loud music will distract from your studying. Too much information on a TV screen can be distracting- CNN Headline News- CP24- so much competing information. If something else is on your mind, it competes for attention
<b>Culture</b>	We are affected by the cultural artefacts, rituals and behaviours around us. We are influenced by the norms of the culture. The way people act, dress, eat behave, practice religion impacts visual perception. It includes ethnicity, economic status, work, gender, age, sexual orientation, geographic location
<b>Words</b>	Thoughts are framed by words. When words are combined with images a more impactful message can result.

### 3.2 Semiotic Theory

Semiotic is the study of signs; it is the study of anything that stands for something else. In a semiotic sense, signs take the form of words, images, sounds, gestures and objects. It is the field of research that studies signs as an essential part of cultural life and communication. According to semiotics, we can only know a culture by means of signs, through the process of signification. The science of semiotics was proposed in the early 1900s by a Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure and the American pragmatist Charles Sanders Pierce. Saussure argued that there was no inherent or necessary relationship between that which carries the meaning, the Signifier-usually the word or symbol and the actual meaning which is carried the Signified. For example, the word "Car" is not actually a car. The meaning of car can be carried by any random string of letters. It just so happens that in English, that the meaning is carried by the letters C, A, R. Pierce's idea about semiotics distinguished between three types of signs- Icon, Index, and Symbol. Whether a sign belongs in one category or another is dependent upon the nature of its relationship between the Sign itself which he called the Referent and the actual meaning.

There are 3 types of signs, namely:

Iconic: This implies to be like or to seem as something. Iconic signs most closely resemble the thing they represent.

Indexical: This means to have a logical, commonsense connection to the thing or idea something represents rather than a direct resemblance to the object

Symbolic: Symbolic signs are those ones that have no logical or representational connection between them and the things they represent. Symbols more than the other types of signs, have to be taught.

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An icon is a sign that stands for an object by resembling it. Included in this category of signs are obvious examples like pictures, maps, and diagrams and some not so obvious ones like algebraic expressions and metaphors. The essential aspect of the relation of an icon to its object is one of Similarity.

Indexes refer to their objects not by virtue of any similarity relation but rather via an actual causal link between the sign and its object. Smoke is an index of fire. A mark on a fever thermometer is an index of body temperature and so forth. The relation between the sign and its object is actually in that the sign and object have something in common, that is the object really affects the sign.

Finally, symbols will refer to their objects by virtue of Law, Rule, or Convention, Words, Propositions and Texts are obvious examples in that no similarity or causal link is suggested in the relation between, for example, the word "horse" and the object it refers. As symbols need bear no similarity or causal link to their object, the signs can be considered by the sign user in unlimited ways independent of any physical relationship to the sign user. This point is of crucial importance and in fact, lays the foundation for a semiotic view of cognition in humans.

The fact that humans can utilize signs which are arbitrary and need have no existence in their immediate experience is what makes thought possible and distinctly human. Ideas can be brought to mind and manipulated without being directly experienced. Meanings can be expressed in various ways through a variety of science systems -language, music, gestures and so forth. In essence, humans can create via signs

a world entirely separate from one of direct experience. We find it hard to imagine a world without traffic regulations, social conventions, basketball games and so forth. These are as real to us as trees and rocks. Yet they as well as our understanding of trees and rocks have come about via interactions of humans individually and collectively through the science structures we call culture."

### Three Types of Signs: Iconic, indexical and symbolic

- The three types are not mutually exclusive; one picture may have all three types represented at the same time

#### Iconic Signs – Icons

- Iconic or icons are the easiest to understand because they look like the thing they represent; examples- desktop icons- a garbage sign for the trash, prehistoric cave painting, the symbol on a restroom door
- it is easy to see the connection



These icons resemble the thing they represent

#### Indexical Signs

- indexical signs have some logical or common sense connection to what they represent
- interpretation may take a little longer than an iconic sign.
- We learn these through life experiences
- Examples- sundial, footprint on the beach (represents the person), smoke from car exhaust (represents pollution)



These signs have a connection to what they represent but take a little longer and are Learned

## Symbolic Signs

- Symbolic signs are the most abstract because they are not intuitive. We need to learn these signs.
- These symbols have no logical or representational connection between them and what they represent
- They are learned through social and cultural influence; for example, passed down from generations or learned through media- advertising
- Examples-words, numbers, colours, gestures, flags, costumes, company logos, music and religious images are symbols
- They can be passed from generation to generation and they can have strong emotions compared to indexical or iconic
- We can have our personal associations with these


The Peace sign- Doves are often associated with peace. See what happened when the Pope releases two doves in January 2014 <http://news.nationalpost.com/2014/01/26/peace-doves-released-from-popes-window-viciously-attacked-by-seagull-and-large-black-crow/>




These signs don't have a logical connection to what they represent. We learn these through culture.

## Images are A Collection of Signs

- A picture is made up of many different associations; language is linear (discursive)- one word follows another; a picture is presentational
- signs in a picture are presented in many ways
- **Roland Barthes** called the chain of associations "codes"
- **Asa Berger** suggests 4 types of codes: **metonymic, analogical, displaced and condensed**

<p><b>Metonymic code</b></p>	<p>A group of signs that causes the viewer to make association or assumptions. We make assumptions about what we see because of a group of things. An advertisement showing all the parts that make a happy family. See the 1950's happy family in the Coca Cola advert here. Coca Cola wants us to believe that if we drink Coca Cola our family will be this picture perfect vision.</p>	
<p><b>Analogical code</b></p>	<p>A group of signs that cause the viewer to make mental comparisons.</p>	
<p><b>Analogical code</b></p>	<p>A group of signs that cause the viewer to make mental comparisons.</p> <p>Yellow writing paper might remind the writer of the yellow peel of a lemon because of a similar colour.</p> <p>See this example from an American Express commercial</p>	

<p><b>Displaced code</b></p>	<p>Codes that transfer meaning from one set of signs to another. The CN Tower as a phallic symbol, for example. Liquor, lipstick, and cigarette ads frequently use phallic symbols to link their products to sex. See Winston's famous campaign. It's what's up front that counts!</p>	
<p><b>Condensed code</b></p>	<p>Several signs that are combined to form a new sign particularly images used outside the culture. Editing techniques, mixing together many different types of colours, graphics and imagery. Within the culture the message is intended for, the condensed code has relevant meaning, But for those outside the culture, the images are often confusing, without purpose. The "inside" group may get the meaning; whereas the "outside" group may not.</p>	

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

The fact that humans can utilize signs which are arbitrary and need have no existence in their immediate experience is what makes thought possible and distinctly human. Ideas can be brought to mind and manipulated without being directly experienced. Meanings can be expressed in various ways through a variety of science systems -language, music, gestures and so forth.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit focused on the perceptual theories and discussed in details the theories that fall under this category namely; cognitive and semiotic theories.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Point out the major difference between semiotic and cognitive theories.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Lester, P. M. (2007). *Visual Communication: Images with Messages*. (4th ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill.

GestaltTheory <http://chd.gmu.edu/immersion/knowledgebase/strategies/cognitivism/gestalt/gestalt.htm>

GestaltTheoryofperception <http://www.usask.ca/education/coursework/skaalid/theory/gestalt/gestalt.htm>

Gestalt Theory <http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/articles/gestalt/index.htm>

GestaltandAdvertising [http://www.qualitativdifference.com/company/news/c1107372168\\_687372](http://www.qualitativdifference.com/company/news/c1107372168_687372)

GraphicDesignGestaltprinciples <http://graphicdesign.spokanefalls.edu/tutorials/process/gestaltprinciples/gestaltprinc.htm>

Gestalt <http://iit.ches.ua.edu/systems/gestalt.html>

Perception principles- layout <http://www.indiana.edu/~vdim/Layout/Gestalt/ProxSim/Prox.HTM>

The Principles of Artistic Illusions <http://www.lhup.edu/~dsimanek/3d/illus1.htm>

Archimedes lab puzzles <http://www.archimedes-lab.org/atelier.html?http://www.archimedes-lab.org/impossible.html>

Semiotics for Beginners <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/semiotic.html>

SemioticsandAdvertising <http://www.lclark.edu/~goldman/global/pagessemiotics/menuframesem.html>

## **UNIT 5      DISCUSSING SENSUAL THEORIES**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1 The Gestalt Theory
  - 3.2 The Constructivism Theory
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

Sensual theories are concerned with what the eye sees; and not so much with what the mind makes of it. The two theories under this category are the Gestalt and Constructivism theories. These theories are built on the belief that direct or mediated images are composed of light objects that attract or repel us. This unit is therefore aimed at discussing these two theories in details.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the two theories under the sensual category of visual communication.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The Gestalt Theory**

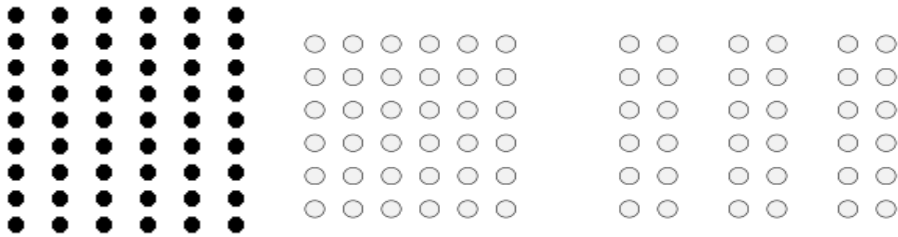
This theory is based on the fact that the whole is different from the sum of its parts. Below are the major points to note about Gestalt theory of visual communication:

- Gestalt was originated by Max Wertheimer, a German psychologist-
- Gestalt in German means "form" or "shape"
- Wertheimer says that the eye takes in all visual stimuli and the brain arranges the sensations into a coherent image
- Gestalt theory says perception is the result of a combination of sensations and not individual sensual elements
- Discrete elements are combined and understood by four fundamental principles of grouping: similarity, proximity, continuation and common fate
- The focal point of Gestalt theory is the idea of "grouping,"

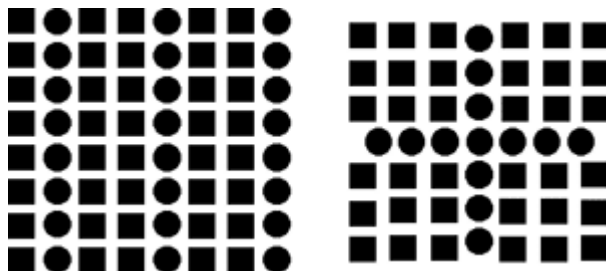
- Grouping is about the method we use to interpret a visual field or situation.

This theory is based on the following principles:

**1. Proximity:** The law of proximity states that objects near each other tend to be seen as a unit. According to this law, you will see arrangement to the right not as a set of rows but rather a set of columns. We tend to perceive items that are near each other as groups. We see the arrangement of dots to the right not as a set of rows but rather a set of columns. We tend to perceive items that are near each other as groups.



**2. Similarity:** Items that are similar in some way tend to be grouped together. Visual interest is increased by dissimilarity.



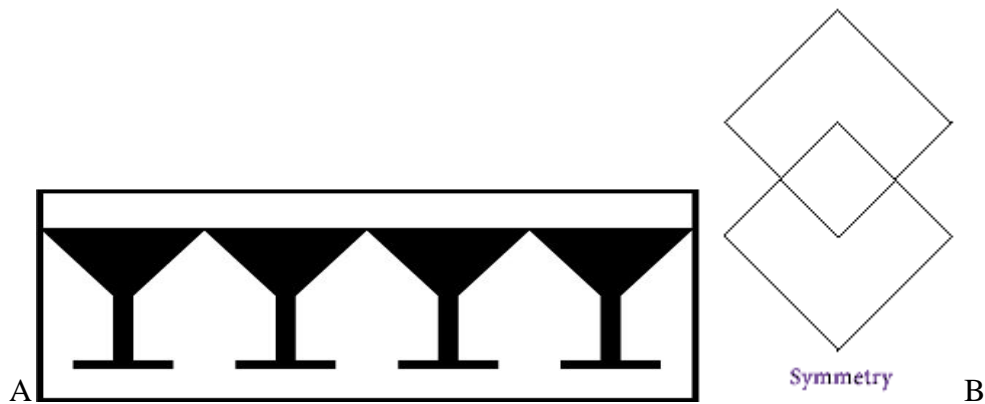
**3. Closure:** Items are grouped together if they tend to complete a pattern.



**4. Figure/ground:** The figure is the object you are perceiving, the ground is what is in the background. You can only perceive one at a time. The brain labels things as near or far, negative or positive space. The FedEx logo also is an example look between the second E and the x.



**5. Simplicity:** Items are organized into figures according to symmetry, regularity, and smoothness. Generally, on the first view, we see things in simple terms rather than complex terms.



In the image, A above, we see the most obvious- glasses lined up in a row.

In the image, B above, we see 2 rather than 3 triangles.

**6. Common fate:** The law of common fate states that when objects move in the same direction, we tend to see them as a unit.

In the image below; the right when dots 1, 3, and 5 move up and dots 2, 4, and 6, move down at the same time, the dots moving in the same direction are perceived as a group.



**7. Continuation:** The law of good continuation states that objects arranged in either a straight line or a smooth curve tend to be seen as a unit.

In the image above, we distinguish two lines, one from a to b and another from c to d, even though this graphic could represent another set of lines, one from a to d and the other from c to b. Nevertheless, we are more likely to identify line a to b, which has better continuation than the line from a to d, which has an obvious turn.

## **Gestalt and Visual Communication**

- Analysis of an image should start by concentrating on the forms that appear. What is the overall impression- the Gestalt?
- See a video explaining more about these concepts here <http://www.lynda.com/Dreamweaver-tutorials/Gestalt-principles/82822/97990-4.html>
- Check out these interesting/humorous and strange examples of the gestalt Photos you really need to Look at to Understand from BuzzFeed <http://www.buzzfeed.com/awesomer/photos-you-really-need-to-look-at-to-understand>
- To see more examples of Gestalt and graphic design see <http://graphicdesign.spokanefalls.edu/tutorials/process/gestaltprinciples/gestaltprinc.htm>
- Through the principles of Gestalt, we can learn to put together the basic elements into a meaningful whole. And to deconstruct an image, we do the same in reverse
- Gestalt theory shows our brain as a powerful organ. Our brain is influenced or modified by what we have seen in the past and by what we want to see. We bring our preconceived ideas with us.
- Gestalt theory has been criticised for describing perceptions and not giving explanations about how perceptions give meaning to images. This criticism of the viewed as passive lead researchers to the theory of Constructivism.

## **3.2 The Constructivism Theory**

Constructivism theory is an extension of the Gestalt theory. It is based on the fact that the human eye tends to move as it looks at images. Below are the major points to note about this theory of visual communication developed by Julian Hochberg.

- Julian Hochberg, a psychology professor at Columbia University used eye-tracking machines and saw that an observer's eyes were in constant motion while they view an image. The idea is that a viewer constructs the scene with quick focal fixations that combine to build a picture. (this is an active approach, compared to the passive Gestalt)
- Two South Florida researchers found that content, size and placement of photos on a newspaper page are more important than whether the image is in colour
- Impossible objects are examples of how constructivists analyze visual works



- Constructivism helps to explain why our eye's move while looking at images; however, it's only a minor clarification of Gestalt

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

The two theories that make up the Sensual category in visual communication are the Gestalt and Constructivism theories. Gestalt theory which was propounded by Max Wertheimer is of the view that perception is the result of a combination of sensations and not individual sensual elements. Constructivism theory on the other hand is an extension of the Gestalt theory but was developed by Julian Hochberg. This theory upholds the fact that the human eye moves while viewing an image and this helps the viewer construct the scene with quick focal fixations that combine to build a picture.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

The essence of this unit is to discuss in details the two major theories that make up the Sensual category in visual communication. Gestalt and Constructivism theories were discussed in details with relevant examples. See a video explaining more about these concepts here <http://www.lynda.com/Dreamweaver-tutorials/Gestalt-principles/82822/97990-4.html>

Check out these interesting/humorous and strange examples of the gestalt Photos you really need to Look at to Understand from Buzzfeed <http://www.buzzfeed.com/awesomer/photos-you-really-need-to-look-at-to-understand>

To see more examples of Gestalt and graphic design see <http://graphicdesign.spokanefalls.edu/tutorials/process/gestaltprinciples/gestaltprinc.htm>

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Gestalt theory is an extension of the Constructivism theory

- (a) True
- (b) False

2. Gestalt theory has been criticized for giving explanations about how perceptions give meaning to images
  - (a) True
  - (b) False
3. The law of proximity states that objects far from each other tend to be seen as a unit
  - (a) True
  - (b) False
4. Julian Hochberg propounded the Gestalt theory
  - (a) True
  - (b) False
5. Max Wertheimer propounded the Constructivism theory
  - (a) True
  - (b) False

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Lester, P. M. (2007). *Visual Communication: Images with Messages (4th ed.)*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

GestaltTheory <http://chd.gmu.edu/immersion/knowledgebase/strategies/cognitivism/gestalt/gestalt.htm>

GestaltTheoryofperception <http://www.usask.ca/education/coursework/skaalid/theory/gestalt/gestalt.htm>

Gestalt Theory <http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/articles/gestalt/index.htm>

GestaltandAdvertising [http://www.qualitativedifference.com/company/news/c1107372168\\_687372](http://www.qualitativedifference.com/company/news/c1107372168_687372)

GraphicDesignGestaltprinciples <http://graphicdesign.spokanefalls.edu/tutorials/process/gestaltprinciples/gestaltprinc.htm>

Gestalt <http://iit.ches.ua.edu/systems/gestalt.html>

Perception principles- layout <http://www.indiana.edu/~vdim/Layout/Gestalt/ProxSim/Prox.HTM>

The Principles of Artistic Illusions <http://www.lhup.edu/~dsimanek/3d/illus1.htm>

Archimedes lab puzzles <http://www.archimedes-lab.org/atelier.html?http://www.archimedes-lab.org/impossible.html>

Semiotics for Beginners <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/semiotic.html>

SemioticsandAdvertising <http://www.lclark.edu/~goldman/global/pagessemiotics/menuframesem.html>

## **MODULE 4:      UNDERSTANDING VISUAL LANGUAGE**

Where “language” refers to spoken or written communication, visual language goes a step further to connect with a certain community. Elements from colour to style to the type of photos or illustrations establish what a brand or company is. These visual elements tie together a group in a structured and conventional way that people understand. A visual language includes both the written and spoken elements of a website or brand, as well as every design technique, photo, icon, logo and item, users can see on the screen. This module examines the overall basics of visual language that will help you communicate effectively with visuals. The module is made of five units aimed at discussing various aspects of visual language. They are as follows:

- Unit 1:          What is Visual Language?
- Unit 2:          Importance of Visual Language
- Unit 3:          Principles of Visual Language
- Unit 4:          Elements of Visual Language
- Unit 5:          Creating a Visual Language: The Basics

### **UNIT 1:      WHAT IS VISUAL LANGUAGE?**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0      Introduction
- 2.0      Objectives
- 3.0      Main Content
  - 3.1 What is Visual Language?
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

#### **1.0      INTRODUCTION**

Visual communicators and designers are trained to solve problems, frequently in a visual way. They can form images in their mind’s eye, manipulating and evaluating ideas before, during, and after putting them on paper or the computer screen. Visual thinking used by communicators and designers institutes a cognitive system equivalent with, but different from, the verbal language system. Visuals have their own language and to effectively communicate with people using visuals, the appropriate language must be used. This unit discusses what visual language means so you can master the art of using the language where and when necessary.

#### **2.0      OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss what visual language is
- explain how to define it in your own words.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 What is Visual Language?

Visual language is a term which refers to language based on tight integration of words and visual elements and was introduced by Robert Horn, (Kehane, 2019). Where “language” refers to spoken or written communication, visual language goes a step further to connect with a certain community (Cousins, 2018). Elements from colour to style to the type of photos or illustrations establish what a brand or company is. These visual elements tie together a group in a structured and conventional way that people understand.

A visual language includes both the written and spoken elements of a website or brand, as well as every design technique, photo, icon, logo and item, users can see on the screen. Often users won't know a visual language is there; they just know that when they see your website or brand they recognize it.

The use of visuals helps individuals to remember what they have seen but effective use of visual language does more than just that. Visual language makes experiences and information memorable over a long period. Language is not just verbal or written. Speech as a means of communication cannot strictly be separated from the whole of human communicative activity, which also includes the visual.

The word “imagination” definitely suggests that we can also think in images. Visual language is defined as a system of communication using visual elements (Horn, 1998). The term visual language in relation to vision describes the perception, comprehension, and production of visible signs (Kehane, 2018). Just as people can verbalise their thinking, they can equally visualise it. A diagram, a map, and a painting are all examples of uses of visual language. Its structural units include line, shape, colour, form, motion, texture, pattern, direction, orientation, scale, angle, space, and proportion. The elements in an image represent concepts in a spatial context, rather than the time-based linear progression used in talking and reading. Speech and visual communication are parallel and often interdependent means by which humans exchange information.

A typical example to drive home this point as narrated by Kehane is what happens we are in the dream state and when we are awake. He explains that what we have in our minds in a waking state and what we imagine in dreams is very much of the same nature. Dream images might be with or without spoken words, sounds, or colours. Classical Greek philosophers believed that a replica of an object enters the eye and remains in the soul as a memory as a complete image. Amazingly, such an insight originated more than two thousand years before the workings of the brain were unravelled.

Other examples could be seen from these online sites: Robert Horn's example from <http://web.stanford.edu/~rhorn/> and Richard Saul Wurman's example from <http://www.understandingusa.com/>.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Understanding the meaning of visual language will definitely help you in communicating effectively in the language of visuals. Just like mastery of the right vocabularies helps you in engaging in verbal communication, the mastery of the language of the visuals also will help you in designing effective visual messages.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

This unit discussed the meaning of visual language with relevant examples. Useful sites that will guide you further in mastering what visual language entails are given as follows:

<http://web.stanford.edu/~rhorn/>; <http://www.understandingusa.com/> and <http://etad.usask.ca/skaalid/theory/gestalt/similar.htm> and <http://etad.usask.ca/skaalid/theory/gestalt/closure.htm>

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1: Imagination as a concept in visual Language suggests that we cannot think in images

- (a) True
- (b) False

2: Individuals have the power to only verbalize their thinking

- (a) True
- (b) False

3: Horn Richards introduced the use of the term “visual Language”

- (a) True
- (b) False

4: The elements in an image represent time-based linear progression used in talking

- (a) True
- (b) False

5: Speech and visual communication are dependent means for information exchange

- (a) True
- (b) False

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Cousins, M. (2018). *Tips for Building a Visual Language*. Accessed on 12th September 2019 from <https://www.webdesignerdepot.com/2018/11/10-tips-for-building-a-visual-language/>

Kehane, J. (2019). *Visual Language*. Accessed on 11th September 2019 from <http://www.mempowered.com/study/visual-language>

Kehane, J. (2018). *How the Brain Understands Visual Language*. Accessed on 10th September 2019 from <https://www.fastcompany.com/3047340/how-your-brain-understands-visual-language>

Horn, Robert E. (1998). *Visual Language*. Bainbridge Island, Washington: MacroVU, Inc.

## **UNIT 2      IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL LANGUAGE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction.
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1 Importance of Visual Language
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

Having understood what visual language means, the next thing to do is to answer this question: Is it really important or useful to master the art of communicating in the language of visuals? The answer is definitely in the affirmative. This is because effective communication cannot be achieved if the communicator lacks basic knowledge of the language to be used. This means that visual language is not only important but a sine qua non-effective communication using visuals. This unit is therefore designed to expose you to the reasons why knowledge of the visual language is important in this 21st century.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss why the knowledge of the visual language is important
- examine the advantages of using effective visual language.

### **3.0    MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1    The Importance of Visual Language**

We can fully answer the question of whether the knowledge of the visual language is important or not by presenting the views of Brian Scott Carey in 2018 when asked this question. Below are his views which he started with a question:

Are emojis the modern-day hieroglyphs? Since the invention of the smartphone; images, gifs, symbols, and icons, emojis have quickly started taking the place of the written word. Visual expression in these forms can cross over traditional language barriers and serve as a universally understood language. They also serve an extremely important purpose to businesses. Companies aspire to create their own visual language through the identifying features of their brand. Many icons associated with logos are widely recognized without the need for text or the company name to understand who is being represented.

The customer experience is also becoming heavily visual. Think of Uber, Google, and Airbnb: these companies want the feel of a utility, fit for purpose, to be a tool as much as a company emblem. Aside from the actual ride with your Uber driver, or communicating with the host of an Airbnb, the tools these companies have created are mostly a digital experience. You are not developing relationships with the people behind these large and successful companies, you form your opinion on these companies based on the user experience created through sensory, type, icons, sliding windows and graphics. If you don't like these and how they work, you go elsewhere. The "personality" of a company that lives online is almost entirely communicated through graphics, colour, type, and layout. This means that their design needs to be created with a lot of thought and care. The same can and should be said about every business's brand and collateral. We are in the 21st century and visuals are simply the key in many businesses both locally and internationally. Look at this visual below culled from Carey (2018). What can you think of it?



Let us go back to emojis, also known as emoticons. They encapsulate the purpose of both symbols and icons but expand upon them by being able to express emotions and ideas. Chances are, there is the perfect gif or emoji out there to send when you just can't even articulate. Brands and celebrities are cashing in on this desire to express emotion without words. If you want to tell your friends you are pumped about your weekend plans, a Kimoji of Kim Kardashian twerking can get that message across. If you're feeling flirty and also want a beverage, Coca-Cola and Pepsi have just the bottles of soda you need to "say it with a [...either of them]." Coke even went so far as to release their own emoji keyboard in late 2015. Custom emojis are a whole new

frontier for designers...however, I do not support every company going out and creating their own emojis. Notwithstanding, it is incredibly important that they stay in the know with emoji culture to stay relevant in a generation where social media is king.

This age of rapidly increasing visual communication is a great time for designers. We now get to say even more with icons, designing them to be suited to different brands and using them to evoke a multitude of feelings. This trend has definitely opened up the playground we get to work in, which is a great thing for expanding our creativity (Carey, 2018).

### **3.2 Advantages of Visual Language**

There are many advantages to integrating word and image. Kehane (2019) lists them as:

- 1: clarifying the meaning
- 2: reinforcing the meaning
- 3: providing focus
- 4: facilitating comparisons
- 5: providing context

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

We are in the 21st century and visuals are simply the key in many businesses both locally and internationally. For this reason, adequate time and energy must be devoted to the mastery of the language of visuals. There are advantages of the use of visual language in this era of social media. such advantages as presented by Kehane (2019) include clarifying meaning, reinforcing meaning, providing focus, facilitating comparisons and providing context.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit has provided you with the basic reasons why the study and use of visual language are not only important but necessary in this 21st century which has been defined by the emergence of various social media platforms. Advantages of the use of effective visual language have also been presented to you.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Briefly outline how visual language can clarify meanings more than the use of written words only.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Carey, B. S. (2018). *Why is Visual Language Important?* Accessed on 12th September 2019 from <https://tik-talk.com/importance-developing-visual-language/>

Kehane, J. (2019). *Visual Language*. Accessed on 11th September 2019 from <http://www.mempowered.com/study/visual-language>

## **UNIT 3      PRINCIPLES OF VISUAL LANGUAGE**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction.
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content.
  - 3.1 Principles of Visual Language
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary.
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

Every communication activity has certain principles that guide its practice. Principles of visual language refer to those points to observe and follow if you want to be a successful visual communicator or designer. This unit is designed to expose you to those principles.

### **2.0    OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- examine the basic principles of visual language.

### **3.0    MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Principles of Visual Language**

The principles adopted in the visual language that can help you in becoming a successful visual communicator or designer are the Gestalt principles. Kehane (2019) explains that these principles when applied religiously make visuals convey the intended message to the target audience. He simplified the Gestalt principles in a way you can understand what each principle entails. They are as follows:

1. People tend to group elements that are physically close to each other
2. People tend to group elements that are similar in some way (e.g., same colour or size)
3. People tend to see elements enclosed by lines as one unit
4. People tend to see connected elements as a single unit
5. People tend to group elements that appear to be continuations of each other
6. People tend to make figures "complete" when some elements are missing

You can see that these principles are the ones we discussed under the Gestalt theory. They are presented to you again as follows:

1. Proximity
2. Similarity
3. Common region
4. Connectedness
5. Continuation
6. Closure

In presenting visual images, it is necessary to observe and apply these principles so the images can convey the intended messages effectively.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

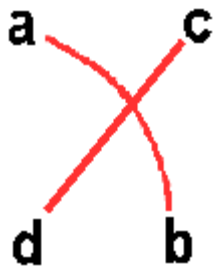
There are some principles to be observed in creating visual images. The principles are Gestalt principles and are proximity, similarity, common region, connectedness, continuation and closure.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit dealt with the basic principles of visual language known as the Gestalt principles. You can see examples of these principles at <http://etad.usask.ca/skaalid/theory/gestalt/similar.htm> and <http://etad.usask.ca/skaalid/theory/gestalt/closure.htm>.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Explain the principle which this diagram below depicts.



#### **7.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READING**

Cousins M. 92018). Building Visual a Language. Accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019 from <https://www.webdesignerdepot.com/2018/11/10-tips-for-building-a-visual-language/>

Carey, B. S. (2018). Why is Visual Language Important? Accessed on 12th September 2019 from <https://tik-talk.com/importance-developing-visual-language/>

Kehane, J. (2019). *Visual Language*. Accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019 from

<http://www.mempowered.com/study/visual-language>

## UNIT 4      ELEMENTS OF VISUAL LANGUAGE

### CONTENTS

- 1.0      Introduction
- 2.0      Objectives
- 3.0      Main Content
  - 3.1 Elements of Visual Language
- 4.0      Conclusion
- 5.0      Summary
- 6.0      Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0      References/Further Reading

### 1.0      INTRODUCTION

There are some elements which are used in structuring the language of visuals. These elements when used most appropriately make visual language clearer, simpler and unambiguous to the target audience. This unit is therefore designed to expose you to various elements used in visual language.

### 2.0      OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the elements of visual language.

### 3.0      MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Elements of Visual Language

A visual element could be described as any aspect of what we can visualize or see in any design. The elements in an image according to Zeki (1999) are those things in the image which represent concepts in a spatial context, rather than the linear form used for words. Gloag (2019), identified line, shape, direction, size, texture, colour, and value as the elements of visual language. Let us briefly explain what these elements mean:

**Line:** This could be described as a mark made by a pen or brush, or the divider between two areas. In a drawing of say, for example, a city street, a line would represent the edge of a building or the edge of the curb on the street.

**Shape:** This refers to an enclosed area that can be organic or geometric. In an image of say for example, an orange, the shape would basically be a circle, filled with an orange colour.

**Direction:** Direction in visual language refers to an attribute of a line, horizontal, vertical or skewed. The building edges would be vertical, and the curb edges would be horizontal and skewed.

**Size:** This refers to the area occupied by a shape. In a drawing of a city street, you have small buildings and large buildings. The area occupied by each would indicate their size.

**Texture:** This refers to the visual description of a surface or the tactile sensation something presents. In an image, this would be the surface qualities of any shape, dull, shiny and so on. For something physical, it would be how the object feels to the touch. It can be smooth, rough, slippery or something else.

**Colour:** This refers to the hue from the visible spectrum which an object shows or projects. For a stop sign, the colour would be red.

**Value:** This refers to the shade of a colour. That is, how light or dark it is. On a sunny day, the sky is light blue. The leaves on the trees also have various shades of green.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The elements of visual language when appropriately employed in designs help visual designers and communicators to communicate the intended message to the target audience effectively. For instance, knowing the right shape and colour to use in any design will definitely convey the mind of the designer to the audience.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit handled aspects of visual elements. What they are and examples of how they are used in conveying messages were also discussed.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1: Which element describes how light or dark something is?

- (a)Colour
- (b)Value
- (c)Texture
- (d)Shape

2: Which element describes the visible spectrum of an object?

- (a)Colour
- (b)Value
- (c)Texture
- (d)Shape

3: Which element describes the tactile sensation something presents?

- (a)Colour
- (b)Value
- (c)Texture
- (d)Shape

4: Which element describes an enclosed area of an image?

- (a)Colour
- (b)Value
- (c)Texture
- (d)Shape

5: The edge of a building stands for its

- (a)Element

- (b)Line
- (c) Texture
- (d)Shape

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

Gloag, D (2019). *Visual Elements*. Accessed on 21st September 2019 from <https://study.com/academy/lesson/visual-elements-principles-of-design.html>

Zeki, S (1999). *Inner Vision: An Exploration of Art and Brain*. New York: Arts Digest

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## **UNIT 5        EFFECTS OF VISUALS ON BEHAVIOUR**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction.
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1 Effects of Visuals on Behaviour
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

### **1.0    INTRODUCTION**

Visual communicators need not force the audience to read what they have created but the language they use persuade readers to do so even when their intention is not to do so. A good visual language has a way of speaking to the audiences. This unit is designed to help you know the two most prominent areas of effects of visuals on the behaviour of people.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the two most prominent areas of effects of visuals on the behaviour of people.

### **3.0    MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The Two Prominent Areas of Effects of Visuals on Behaviour**

In fact, the scholarship of visual effects on behaviour has been a growing theme in mass communication. Over the years, researchers have examined the power of visuals to create mental images. They developed and experimented with visuals designed to promote a particular product or idea specifically in areas dealing with advertising and political campaigns. The following section offers the two most prominent trends of visuals' effect on behaviour.

#### **Advertising Campaigns and Consumer Behavior**

The importance of advertising in creating mental images cannot be underestimated. Advertisers have long been interested in creating powerful visual imagery that would help shape viewers' behaviour about the product or service advertised. For example, if an advertisement shows a giant paint stain fading and finally disappearing after being sprayed with a stain remover spray or detergent, the viewer might feel confident that buying the product can get rid of any stain. After all, the detergent or stain remover spray successfully removed the giant paint stain. The impact of extensive use of pictures in consumer imagery has been well-documented by scholars in the field of advertising. As a result, several general applications for effective visual input in

advertising emerged, including paying relatively more attention to visuals rather than text, the use of concrete visuals, the use of colour, and the use of large illustrations to enhance emotional motivation.

### **Political Campaigns and Voting Behaviour**

In recent US history, political campaigns expressed through the mass media have been the leading form of communication in the political process using verbal and nonverbal means. Looking at the nonverbal format, theoretical studies, as well as political experience, suggest an association between visual images of politicians and voting behaviour of viewers. Information transmitted through imagery performs several functions in the political sphere, known mostly as powerful social stimuli that link visual communication and voting behaviours of viewers during political campaigns.

In contemporary politics, visual messages have been used to advance ideas, build confidence, increase knowledge about candidates, and cultivate public support for political campaigns. Technically, research on the impact of visuals and political behaviour can be viewed as a subset of visual effects in mass communication. The following section combines and integrates approaches dealing with the understanding of the relationship between electoral politics and nonverbal communication. It identifies the impact of imagery on effect and behavioural influences signalling how visual messages impact behaviour directly and indirectly. Studies found an association between news practitioners' facial expressions and voting behaviour as voters who regularly watched newscasters with biased facial expressions were significantly more likely to vote for the candidate that newscaster had shown positive expression towards. Some scholars opine that tight shots of political candidates could be specifically important for viewers during elections when they may be interested in seeing candidates' facial expressions when faced with tough questions during a debate. Similarly, some scholars have proved that manipulations in facial expressions are likely to produce changes in the evaluation of candidates. More scholars, however, looked at the indirect approach, which could be viewed as a less direct influence because it deals with the way visual messages convey emotional information. These scholars indicated that images could create an effect, a powerful predictor of electoral choice. They concluded that such affective reactions have a great impact on voting behaviour. In other words, they perceived this type of "indirect" visual impact as an important factor influencing viewers' behaviour in a political context.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

It has been said many times in this material that a good picture is worth a thousand words. This is because visuals influence peoples' behaviours and actions. The two most prominent areas of these effects are in advertisements and politics as have been explained in this unit.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit dealt with discussing the two most prominent areas of effects of visuals on peoples' behaviours and actions. The two areas discussed are effects of visuals on the audiences of advertisements, political campaigns and messages.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Briefly outline how visuals influence viewers' behaviours during elections.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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