Visual Research Lesson Plan

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Learning objectives

- By the end of this class,
    - Students will be able to find reliable and high-quality images of their chosen topic.
    - Students will be able to critically evaluate the images for their visual research assignment.

Materials

- Lesson plan
- Assignment prompt
- Worksheet
- Computer and internet access
- Projector

Library class

Preliminaries (5 min.)

- Introduce myself to the students and do an emotional checking to gauge their motivation and expectations.
- Review the assignment prompt together with the students to make sure everyone knows what their informational needs are and where they come from.

Anticipatory set (5 min.)

- [Sesame milk recipe](#) analogy
    - As in recipes, the research process has common components and steps to follow. However, each person has a different method to find the answer to their question or the solutions to the problem presented.

Introduction (5 min.)

- Explain to the students that I will be presenting the way I do research. In doing so I'll explain the main research components and steps to address a Visual Research Project Assignment.

Lecture (Topic exploration, 10 min.)

- Briefly explain to the students the importance of finding high-quality images with reliable metadata that meet their research needs.

- Go over what questions to ask about the images they decide to use[1].

    - Why do you need the image?

    - What is the Topic You are Exploring?

    - What do you know about your topic?

        - Think about the what, when, where, who

    - Where Should You Look for Quality Images?

- Emphasize the importance of mapping out what they know about their topic before beginning their search. By identifying what they don't know they can learn what they need to in order to find the images for their assignment.

- With this information the students can identify the keywords and phrases to search for information in a database, digital collection or Google Images.

Demo (Searching for images, 25 min.)

- Do background research in Google.

    - Find information about the architectural Georgian Style.

    - Talk about encyclopedia articles. Reference entries and encyclopedia articles are helpful to find general information about a topic.

        - Show students how to use Wikipedia for background research and stress the importance of evaluating the reference list of the articles.

- Perform a search using the library catalog.

    - Show the students how to find encyclopedia articles using the library catalog.

    - Show students how to find books[2].

        - Perform a search using these keywords: history of architecture AND georgian style (Book: A pictorial history of architecture in America)

- Online places to search for images: JSTOR and Google Image Advanced Search

    - Perform a search in JSTOR using the filters the database provides.

        - Select an image and go over the metadata record. Explain to the students the value of the information found in the metadata record.

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[1] For this class students were looking for images about architectural period styles (e.g. Art Deco, Gothic, Georgian). Before jumping into a database or Google to search for images, I asked them to brainstorm what they already know about their style. I used the following questions to guide them.

[2] When doing visual research for a scene design class, books are very useful to find images about a specific topic as these contain reliable-edited information and are subject specific. Sometimes it is more effective to find a couple of books on the subject than searching the open web for images.

- Perform a search using Google Image Advanced Search. Select an image.
    - When using Google images it is important to evaluate who is publishing the image. Briefly explain the difference between images found in a digital museum/library collection and those retrieved from commercial websites such as Etsy.

Activity (25 min.)

- Distribute the worksheet (Visual Research_Scence Design_Worksheet.pdf)

Individual consultations

- Each student will meet with me while the other students perform their research with the guidance of the worksheet.

- I will mostly use the JSTOR database to search for images as it provides the information needed to determine if the image is suitable for the scholarly assignment. However, if the institution doesn't have access to JSTOR or A&Ae Portal databases you can use open access collections such as: [The Met Open Access Collection](#), [Europeana](#), [Google Arts and Culture](#) and [Digital Public Library of America](#).