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Chapter #3 Visual Literacy Quiz

Prof. Willard

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Question #1

What was the result of Florence Owens “Migrant Mother” photo?

Florence Owens was a migrant farm laborer and mother who worked on a California farm during the Great Depression. Dorothea Lange, a photographer working for the administration of President Franklin Roosevelt, was sent to document the conditions of migrant workers, and others during the depression. While visiting the farm, Dorothea Lange, met and took a photo of Florence Owens and her starving children. This dark depressing photo, along with the accompanying news coverage, would capture the attention of government officials, sparking them to rush food aid to the starving workers. This image probably saved the lives of many starving children and adults. Seeing the actual faces of the people impacted, led to swift action. This image represents the power of visual literacy and the impact it can have on its viewers.

Question #2

Why should teachers be concerned about teaching visual literacy?

In the past, visual literacy was taught in the confines of the art classroom. Students were taught concepts such as lighting, color and composition, and how to read and analyze techniques used by the artist. However, today the need for visual literacy has spread to other disciplines. Since a

vast majority of information received is communicated visually, it is very important for students to learn what it means to be visually literate. Every visual image is created with a purpose in mind. In order to read or deconstruct an image, students must be able to understand the purpose and recognize the techniques. Images can be used to influence and persuade so it is vital for teachers to learn how to teach with images, teach about images, and help students understand the language of visual literacy. (*Chapter 3 Visual Literacy - ISTE / Chapter-3-Visual-Literacy-Iste.pdf / PDF4PRO, 2018*)

Question #3

What are five ways a photo conveys meaning?

Photographers use a variety of techniques to convey messages or meaning. Listed below are five ways to convey meaning.

1. **Angle** - The vantage point or direction from which the artist photographs the subject.
2. **Framing** - By deciding where the edges of the image will be, the photograph determines what the viewer will see or wouldn't see, whether the subject will fill the frame and appear close up or be seen at a distance as part of the larger context.
3. **Light** - One of the most powerful tools of the photographer, manipulation of light and dark and the sharpness of contrast between light and dark, contributes to the overall mood a photograph conveys.

4. **Focus** - This is the clarity and blurriness of the image. The range between the nearest and farthest things that appear in clear focus defines the photograph's depth of field.

5. **Composition** - What's in the foreground? Are the elements arranged in any particular pattern? Do you see geometric shapes? Are the lines of the photograph straight or crooked. Are there repeated visual elements? These are all carefully crafted decisions that the photographer makes to get his/her message conveyed. (*Chapter 3 Visual Literacy - ISTE / Chapter-3-Visual-Literacy-Iste.pdf / PDF4PRO, 2018*)

Question #4

After reading "Infamously Altered Photos", I found it quite alarming that the practice of altering photographs is so commonly accepted in this industry. Although not surprising to me, since in most cases, there is a financial component attached to this practice. Photographers have been known to change the subject's color of clothing, background scenery, people's facial features, skin tones, omit or add objects, etc. Authenticity becomes secondary and the question becomes, "How can we sell more magazines and newspapers? One of the most important things that a photograph sells is its ideas, opinions and beliefs, all which are embedded within the image. When photographs are altered, the truth is altered along with the mood and meaning, and that can lead to misconceptions and misunderstandings. It can also be dangerous. How can we teach students to navigate through this altered reality? Sometimes it's hard for us adults to know what's real and what's altered. There was a time when altered truths were the practices of tabloid magazine editors. Today, even reputable magazines like **Time** and **National Geographic** are employing these flawed practices. I believe that strict guidelines are

needed in photojournalism to ensure the authenticity of every photo. Veteran photojournalist Michael Kimber stated that, *"People have to be able to believe, 'I'm seeing this picture, this picture was vetted by a professional, it really happened, and it happened as I'm seeing it in front of me. Once you start making it permissible that editors and photographers can change things, you get to a point where nothing means anything anymore"*(as cited in WIRED staff, 2015)

Reference

WIRED Staff. (2015, July 29). *Infamously Altered Photos, Before and After Their Edits*. WIRED; WIRED.

<https://www.wired.com/2015/07/bronx-documentary-center-infamously-altered-photos-edits/>

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PDF4PRO. (2018, September 9). PDF4PRO.

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