The Literate Eye

What is the literate eye?

The literate eye refers to opportunities involved in increasingly flexible literacy for the eye to play a larger role in organizing knowledge; in the making and manipulation of lists, flowcharts, diagrams, and other literate tools.

How can we engage the literate eye in teaching?

Topic: Anatomy
Subject Area: Science
Cognitive Tool: Literate Eye

In addition to the labeling of basic body diagrams, study of anatomy could include students creating inventory type lists from body diagrams, doing VENN diagrams that compare body design and systems between, say, humans and another mammal, graphing the sizes of different aspects of the body, or creating a series of illustrations that show how the body develops or how systems function.

Topic: Use technology to gather information
Subject Area: Information Technology
Cognitive Tool: Literate Eye

This example combines a few cognitive tools. One could, for example, engage students in the visual representation of the information they find, using technology of various forms, by having them design lists, tables, or charts they consider suitable to represent the information. But it would be engaging to enlist students in the search by having them participate in an on-line scavenger hunt. Once teachers have determined the suitability of sites for their students, they can create clues that lead students to find certain things out on line. What's the story? Well research is, essentially, a sort of "hunt" for information, for knowledge. Technology is a tool that can assist in that hunt.

Why does the literate eye engage our imaginations?

When literacy comes increasingly to influence students' thinking, the eye is becoming crucial in accessing information. This has many consequences, which are subject to some dispute among scholars interested in the effects of literacy. But, whatever the outcome of those arguments, it is clear that literacy leads to some techniques for organizing information that are both important and engaging for students to learn. Making and manipulating lists, flowcharts, and diagrams become value learning activities. In many subject areas, such techniques can enlarge students' engagement in gaining control over areas of complex knowledge. Use of such tools also exercises and develops them in students. Today many of these tools are built into

computer programs, and certainly learning to use databases and other programs that aid organization and retrieval of knowledge can enhance this cognitive tool in students.