If any man has any poetry in him he should paint it, for it has all been said and written, and they have hardly begun to paint it. Every man who has that gift should paint.
—DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Beyond Visualizing a Community of Learners

JOAN A. MULLIN

Although our culture comprises both visual and verbal images, students know that school culture for the most part promotes the latter. When the visual is brought into the classroom, it is more often for relief from the day-to-day (a movie) and the ordinary (a TV show), or as a stimulus for writing a paper. These are valuable when they're part of a larger instructional plan (often they are not), but they still fragment and separate the visual from the verbal: seeing (the visual) from writing (the verbal). Even when visual images are used in the classroom, their component parts—organization, color, image, placement, and so on—involve separate acts of seeing and writing and thus never tap into the intimate bond between image and language. Moreover, these activities do not take advantage of the place where critical thinking may actuate itself: by working at the intersection of the visual and verbal, students can draw upon images that make visible their conception of an idea, and teachers can see whether students have understood or whether they are merely repeating information.

Creating opportunities for students to work at the intersection of language and vision supports what we know about language in theory and through practical experience. Recent neurobiological research by Mark Sereno at the University of California at San Diego provides another promising link. Sereno's primary area of research is the neurological architecture of vision in primates and rodents, and he has developed a complex interdisciplinary theory about brain evolution and the origins of human language.

> Reduced to almost haiku proportions, Sereno's idea is this: language
> ability arose in the human brain not through the development of a
> new, uniquely human language organ, as most accounts have it, but
> by "a relatively minor rewiring" of a neural system. That was already
> there. And that neural wiring belonged largely to the visual system,
> a part of the brain that recent research—including Sereno's own—
> has shown to be almost unimaginably complex. (Gutin 1996, 84)

It would seem advantageous to stimulate the visual connection when
we want to improve verbal articulation.

The Problem: Theirs, Mine, and Ours

Introducing activities that ask students to produce a concrete visual
representation arouses all the anxieties experienced in childhood. De-
spite what art educators know about the importance of encouraging
original expression in children, few of us grow up without a sense of
artistic inadequacy. By the second grade, most of us know who is a
"good drawer" and who is not; by middle school, familiar names ap-
pear and reappear on the walls of the art room; in any high school
everyone knows who can produce graphics for the newspaper or art-
work for the group project. Moreover, since so few students seem ca-
pable of producing "art" (something good enough to be sold for
profit), many schools ignore or marginalize these activities. Art is also
one of the first program budgets to be cut when fiscal prudence deems
it necessary. Thus, convincing adolescent and adult students to engage
in visual activities means changing their minds about the role of the
visual in cognitive development.

As I do with any classroom method that will encounter student
reluctance, I first talk with the class about why I am asking them to
do something—in this case, I discuss the connection between the vi-
sual and verbal. Students quickly point to the visual impact of adver-
tising (billboards, commercials, magazine ads), music videos, CD
covers, and book jackets. Thanks to TV, movies, talk shows, and pop
psychology, students already believe that what one produces by hand
often reflects the inner workings of the mind. So it is not difficult to
convince them that their own artistic creations might well reveal a
key to how they think about a subject they are studying. Students
are eager to discover further insights into themselves. The first time I
connected the activity described below to the course material being
studied, we were all amazed at the results. In successive iterations of
the activity in writing classes at the high school and college levels, I
continue to be pleasantly surprised at how revelatory and engaging it
continues to be.

The idea started forming a few years ago when a poet-colleague at the university and I taught an experimental upper-level writing-intensive class on visual language. We hoped that by focusing students' attention on their own visual experiences, they would experience the collaborative nature of interpretation, sharpen their observational skills, and explore the intersections of the visual and the verbal. The course would include slides, videos, guided museum trips, students' drawings and journal writing, readings and discussions of artwork (e.g., by Paul Klee's *On Modern Art*), and use of the famous Bareiss book collection of rare books, many by artists, at the Toledo Museum of Art.

Since my colleague was the primary instructor, and I was there in the capacity of writing consultant, I had the luxury of observing how the students interacted and how they reacted to the works presented. We tried many writing activities and tried to set up collaborative groups to work on responses to material, but students primarily sought out my colleague (who was the official grader) for direction, worked alone, and failed miserably at collaborating. As I watched students wrestle with the concept of visual language, a major problem stood out: Although we looked at many visual images, most students kept trying to define the "language" of these images in words. And there was another problem: I didn't know the students' names.

Drawing on my earlier experiences with the visual (Mullin 1994) and a previous experiment in a composition class, I designed an activity that

- identified and named a community of learners
- provided practice in effective feedback and critique
- established a vocabulary for articulating visual concepts

I have since discovered that this activity can be tailored to classes in other subject areas to identify the visual characteristics of a subject area (especially abstract areas) and to create a collaborative working identity among students at all levels.

Creating a Solution

I wanted to get to know the students in the course, but I also wanted to know how each of them was beginning to define visual language. Most of class discussion had been tentative, and many students were reluctant to articulate a personal definition. This might be because images defy our descriptions, and lacking a vocabulary, we often lapse into cliché.

The other problem—students' identity—seemed to be related to the lack of participation and collaboration in class. It is always easier for me to remember students' names when I associate them with their ideas: individuals assume a personality. But students were reluctant to participate and hesitant as most basic writers are to share their thoughts when they had little encouragement, practice, or success. It seemed ironic that so many students could not express themselves in a class exploring how meaning was carried through signs, how groups or individuals create signs to carry meaning, and how a group comes to agree on or explore the interpretation of those signs. I was aware of only the few voices that dominated discussions.

One day I arranged on a side table an assortment of tools and visually interesting materials: colored paper, lick and stick strips in fluorescent shades, pieces of patterned wrapping paper, glitter, stars, ribbons, colored foam, packing materials, corks, buttons, colored pencils, crayons, markers, chalk, tacks, scissors, glue (colored and white), tape, staples, and paper clips. As students wandered in, their eyes went to the table. "Is this for us?" they asked. "What do we get to do?" I told them yes, but they would have to wait and wondered whether another element had been lacking: the tactile and textural experience offered through the visual.

I told the students something along these lines: I had trouble remembering their names. We were studying visual language. I wanted them to create a tag that would represent their definition of visual language and serve as a name tag. I wanted to know who they were conceptually in this class. Since I made it clear that this name tag was to be their own creation, there were none of the usual questions about "how long," "how big," or what form the tag should take. They could use any of the materials on the table, should share tools but work alone, keeping their eyes on their own work. They would have twenty minutes or so for this task. When they were done, they were to place their tags in a cardboard box in the center of the room and go about cleaning up their own area. When I said they could start, they rushed for their materials and got to work.

Prior to this project, the class had been typical of many: all of us could count on a few students to participate, most students were willing to sit back and be talked to, interaction was limited to those students with whom they sat or whom they already knew. The class was held in a studiolike room, where we sat around an open rectangle of tables, and eye contact had been limited to the instructor or the text in front of each person. That day, the atmosphere in the classroom changed dramatically: there were calls for scissors, giggles, friendly jostling for materials, polite requests for the "blue star paper when you are through," queries about "Who has the black marker?"

I gave them a ten-minute, and then a five-minute warning as I also completed my tag. Oddly enough, everyone finished within the time allotted, most within the last five minutes.

When all the tags were in the box, all the mess righted, and all the students seated, I took the box and walked around the room asking each person to take one tag, not his or her own, and study it. I asked them to think about what this object represented—what it said, how it said it—and to explain why they read that meaning into it. Since this was to denote a name, I asked them to think about

- what this object said to them about that person's definition of visual language
- how the object named the person and the concept

I said they should study their piece and whoever wanted to should begin. Patience paid off; as the silence got heavier, someone shrugged and said, "I guess I'll start."

Students talked about the tag they held, and when they finished, I would ask whose work it was. Once the creator was identified, the person who described the name tag would carry it over to the owner and present it. This ritual provided the necessary break between each description. The class progressed, sometimes with moments of silence between presentations, sometimes with two people starting at the same time and then negotiating who would speak. Once everyone finished, I asked for observations from the class on two levels:

1. What definitions of visual language emerged?
2. What did they notice about the class itself during this activity?

The Results: Part One

From the beginning I had clearly stated that a definition of visual language would emerge from this class. But afterwards, students commented that they now realized there were contending definitions, and that some of those definitions were dependent upon disciplinary perspectives. Rather than privileging anyone's answer, students began to collect possible answers. This approach opened up the possibilities and freed students from looking for a correct (teacher-provided) definition. And since the tag was intended to represent themselves and their own names, students knew that each one would be different, that while one's talent was important, it was not significant. As one student pointed out: "I have no artistic talent, but then, that's part of

who I am—a nonartist. So, I didn't care if this didn't look like a van Gogh." I would not claim that competition was never a factor, but each time I have tried this exercise, students become totally involved in producing a personal piece, one that signifies them alone. The individuality is reflected in the analytical responses.

When a nineteen-year-old female student picked up the name tag shown in Figure 7–1, she responded:

> This person's life is filled with a variety of activities. She—I think it's a she—feels very positive about all the variety in her life: as if it was a gift. I think that's why these ribbons stream out from the horn; life for her is an endless package she opens—'cause, look, as you go deeper into the horn, there's all kinds of little icons stuffed in there: one is a kid, one looks like a pair of shoes, dance shoes, so she must be a dancer. There are crayons and paper represented, so she must have something to do with art or maybe teaching kids. Everything in here is some aspect of her life. The colors are all bright and this gives me a positive, busy, energetic feeling.
>
> I think for her, visual language would be connected to art—that it's something you, you know, do. I mean, look at this! It's the biggest name tag here, and so elaborate! This person likes color, action; it's all out there.

When Patty received the cornucopia she had made, she agreed that the analysis was pretty close: she was a dancer and taught dance as well as art in a local school system. As a mother, she was busy all the time, loved what she did, and continued to feel blessed by all that was given her. Whether in her church, at home, or in school, she confessed, she worked art into the lives around her through lessons and activities, or by offering to put up bulletin boards or help with set designs.

The forty-something, poet-instructor carefully described another tag:

> This person likes color. It's a simple card, really, with all the colors of the rainbow in stripes across one side of this 3 × 5 card. Regular rows, drawn straight, but freehand, and colored in with pencil. I'd say this is a woman who is into rainbows and color. But on the other side there's this; here, you probably can't see it. There's just a small rectangle in the middle of the back of the card, drawn in regular lead pencil, with the word "me" inside. She seems to be talking about two sides of herself: maybe this is the public one, the contained person, and this is the one inside or vice versa. Maybe she's colorful outside and very closed in and small inside. Maybe it's both. On the other hand, you know, this could be a young man coming to grips with the female side of his personality. You know, he's trying to find out how all of this—these two sides—fit together.

Joan A. Mullin

Figure 7–1
Patty's name tag

When Ray, a young man, received his name tag, he grinned sheep-
ishly and said that was about right. Always quiet before, Ray agreed
that there were two sides of him that he was exploring. Although he
didn't respond much more than that during the class, he later made a
point of telling me how important the activity and analysis were to
him: he was exploring his sexuality and deciding to come out. The rain-
bow he drew referred to the one used by gay rights activists.

Holding the tag shown in Figure 7–2, a traditional college student (woman) reacted:

> This has got to be a woman! Okay, she took strips of pink paper and made this incredible sphere—like a biosphere! On the inside of the sphere is trapped, no caught, no I guess she is placed inside. I think she's just feeling fragile, delicate, I mean this whole piece, you feel like you have to be very careful holding it. I think she sees herself that way, maybe as protected by her pink world.

Sandy quietly chuckled when she received her name tag. She pointed out that what had been overlooked was her name on the inside; that the pink, of course, stands for all the "girl" stuff. She pointed out that while we had been spending a lot of time in class talking about artists' renditions of language and the word, we had not yet looked at

Figure 7–2
Sandy's name tag
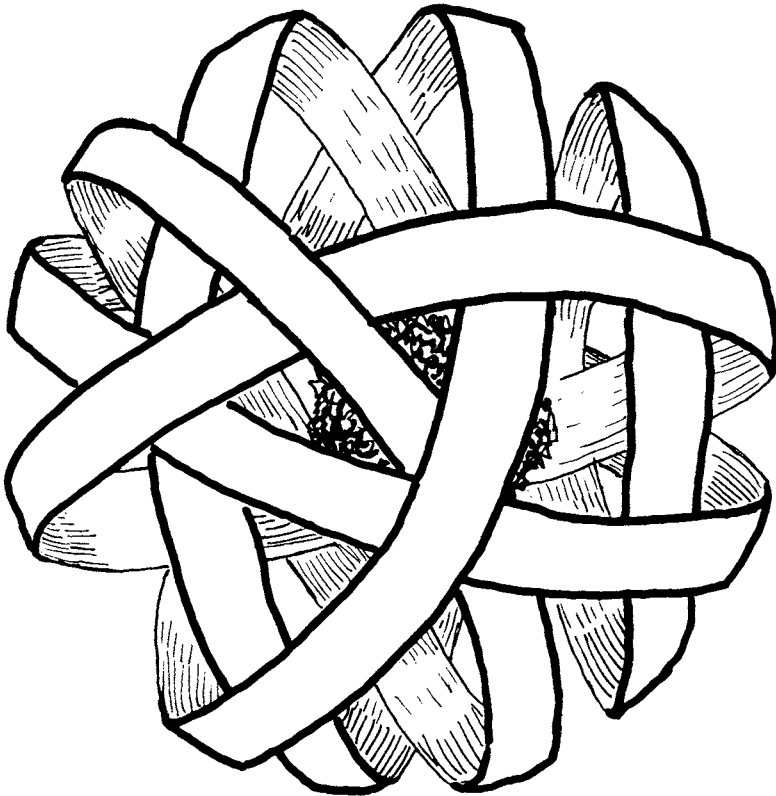
what any women artists said. So, Sandy insisted, her womblike name tag was also a response to the lack of representation of women in the class (a situation that was remedied by the next class meeting).

The Results: Part Two

The original goals of this activity were to help me visually associate names with persons and to see what kinds of conceptual representations of visual language students could produce. We met these goals but went much further:

- I was able to remember students' names because I had a conceptual and visual association for each one of them.
- I asked students to wear their tags or place them in front of them for the next class, and about half of them brought in their tags and pinned them on or placed them on the table in front of them for the next couple of weeks.
- Students began talking to each other before and after class, calling each other by name, and interacting during class discussion (this also occurred during a similar experience in another class).
- This new community extended beyond that quarter's course. According to students I see on campus (and those who have left but still e-mail me), they still remember each other from that class, or, as one student said, "When I see people from that class, I say hi to them on campus—I don't do that usually because I don't really get to know others in my classes."

This sense of connection was heightened by the ritual action of delivering each name tag to its owner—by knowing that one would have to get up, walk around the room, and hand the tag to whoever created it. When we discussed the activity afterwards, students pointed out how aware they were that they were holding someone else's work—that this object was an expression of who that person was. As a result (and this is something we all observed) they handled each piece carefully, as if they were handling the person. Indeed, that was an apt analogy, for in this case each person's idea was concretely visible, and each person's conceptual self was equally vulnerable to critique. Here and in other classes, the project engendered respect for ideas and a genuine willingness to listen to each other. Students commented that they were careful about how they said anything because they wanted others to be as careful with their name tag. Some indicated that the activity provided them with an opportunity to see what others thought. Student evaluations sug-

gested that the exercise had made them think about visual literacy through personal engagement. One student commented that he felt the pressure wasn't on him to answer a question; we were building an idea together, so he felt "safe to participate" in that attempt. Finally, the activity produced a vocabulary from which we could continue to look at other works.

Of course, at the conclusion of the activity, we also discussed what these pieces said about visual language—a topic we had not always addressed during the name tag analysis. Students later said they were more interested in the personal revelation within the visual representation. If they were so drawn to the personal, I asked, was visual representation and interpretation in general largely personal? This discussion resulted in a number of class-generated questions that could well have served as a guideline for the rest of the quarter:

- If visual representation is personal, are there universal human elements to it?
- What do colors mean in other cultures and how did they come to take on those meanings?
- If colors have meaning in other cultures, what about shapes? objects? placement?
- What does gender have to do with how one uses visuals? language?
- Does a viewer read gender? How does one learn to do that?
- How did we learn what visuals stood for?
- What is the role of parents? school? media? in shaping what we think of visuals?
- Has media extended our ability to represent the world, or does it homogenize the way we are supposed to see the world? And who dictates what we're supposed to see?
- If we are supposed to become visually literate, what language do we then learn?
- Is it necessary to analyze a visual representation in order to enjoy and understand it?
- Is it appropriate to use language to describe a three-dimensional representation?

As these questions shaped our areas of inquiry, we all began to look at how others wrestled with them, adding to our shared vocabulary. We uncovered far more questions than answers, the high quality of students' final art/written projects represented their deep engagement with these questions. Among other items, we received

- a small felt bag of handmade tiles etched with an imaginary alphabet one could almost understand
- a research paper illuminated like a medieval manuscript
- a fully developed cartoon strip
- a series of prints exploring shades, light, and the alphabet
- a uniquely personal alphabet book for a child of handmade paper sewn together

The name tag activity encouraged lively discussions and achieved a heightened awareness of the role of critique and response. When students pointed out the care with which they handled each other's work, they also discovered that evaluating anything, including written texts, is a personal engagement between the maker and the audience. On their own they began to talk about

- point of view
- the importance of asking questions about a work
- producing not judgments but responses, for which there must be reasons

Students also discovered that some of their reasons for responding to a work in certain ways might well be based on a very personal experience, an aversion, an assumption. They began to discuss their own vulnerability in being evaluated, agreeing that at least within this class, we saw assessment as a part of learning. Students believed that since we were all struggling, feedback from each other contributed to our growing understanding. I always encourage the discussion in this direction, but students noted that the atmosphere in class that particular day was very different, very caring and communal. It wasn't difficult to drop the inner critic each of us carry. The "competitive jousting" that usually exists in our classrooms had no place that day.

Summary and Repercussions

In that class I learned the names of students, but what is more important is that they had also taken on identities for each other. We were more comfortable as a class. Discussion involved many more students, and the initial excitement about this new class was furthered by their own inquiry. Perhaps one of the best results was that this newly bonded community of learners did not end at the door of the classroom. I still communicate with students from this class, which took place three years ago, and I asked two of them, via e-mail, what they remembered about the name tag activity.

Sandy (of the pink womblike sphere) replied:

You know, I remember that day in class in a sort of surreally vivid way, I'm not sure if it's because I had just read *Mrs. Dalloway* and everything looked that way, or if the name tags gave me a heightened awareness of myself, but I remember wearing a long blue and orange batik print dress with my black sweater tied around my waist. I took the bus to the art museum [where we had class], and I sat between Charlie and Ray. Making the name tags I was thinking about Christmas tree ornaments my family has, ugly ones. They're shaped like eggs and you have to sort of look inside the egg and there's a little crèche or something. I wanted you to have to look inside and change perspectives a little to see my name, come into my own territory. And I wanted pink, pink for girls, it was something I needed to do in order to get my bearings at the time. When we traded name tags and heard ours interpreted by someone else, I was thinking "Okay, yeah, could be" as someone described me as fragile and delicate, careful about coming out of my shell. I was surprised to see you shaking your head thinking she had it wrong. Later, when we talked about it, you told me I might want to "revise my self-image" if I understood myself as fragile and delicate. So that had me thinking all day.

Charlie had been writing a cartoon strip for his tag . . . he wanted to work for Disney when he was done with school. I wonder where he is? And of course I remember the person who read a random group of squiggles as Charlie. Knowing that it belonged to neither Charlie [in the class], I was interested in how language appears where none is intended. I was thinking that literary criticism does the same and shouldn't. Someone made a simple rainbow the size of a 3 × 5 index card I remember, and we were so caught up in gender after my project that whoever was guessing decided it had to be a female person, and of course, it was a man. Ken's was in rainbow colors too, wasn't it? And it looked like a cross between a paint brush and a wrench. I was surprised by how few people incorporated their written name into theirs. Maybe they hadn't time, but I honestly think it didn't occur to people; the project had taken on a nonliteral dimension.

Ray, another student, remembered:

Oh, name tags. Mine was pretty forgettable. It was a series of labels: white, male, college student, something like that, with "More Than This" on the last card you turned. I was going through my white male anxiety phase at that time. Plus, suffering from lack of creativity. Myself, I loved the stuff other folks did with tags, and the interpretation part was very interesting, mainly because it showed the discrepancy between what you thought you'd put out there, and what others thought you were displaying. I remember Jack's vividly, that thing with wild colors. He was neat. Is he still there? I

remember he'd just come back after a long absence, had been in the
Navy, and was interested in archetypes.

    My name tag experience was pretty good, subdued, not flashy,
like me, and yet it talked a lot, so it was somewhat accurate, more in
retrospect than at the time.

In these and other conversations, students from the course re-
membered people and details but also continued to reflect on the im-
pact of visual interpretation, of language. What we discovered as a
class about visual language (as well as about visuals and language)
was best summed up in Ray's final words: "You reveal yourself more
in your pretensions and attempts to put something solid of yourself
out there than you often know. I mean, other things besides what you
think you are putting out there."

Implications for Other Classrooms

The first class in which I used this approach was a college composition
class, and I used it primarily to learn students' names. I didn't connect
it to the course objectives (though I should have done so). At first I
thought this visual language class project was so successful only be-
cause visual language was our content. But then I began to explore
other possibilities. I taught an Honors Readings Conference course,
basically a traditional great books course, with an expanded canon,
which covered literature from the twelfth to the beginning of the
eighteenth century. After a few introductory discussions and readings,
I asked the class to create name tags that represented their concept of
this time period. Since the texts included, among others, Abelard and
Heloise's letters, Dante's *Inferno*, *The Confessions of Lady Nijo*, and Mon-
taigne's *Essays*, students had a range of perspectives they could draw
on and draw together. Of all the shapes and convolutions students
created, what impressed all of us was the array of color—or lack of it.
Why would some associate this period with brilliant color and others
with darkness? This led to questions about illuminated texts, our as-
sumptions about the Dark Ages, the place and evolution of art during
this period, the place of metaphor in the art of logic—and we had
plenty of examples. We also ended up with a lot of questions to re-
search and invited campus experts to come in and help us understand
some of the questions—and misconceptions—we had generated.

    Another significant result: the class bonded. While this may
sound irrelevant, those who teach honors students in large competi-
tive settings know that, too often, students are in such intense compe-
tition with each other that they focus on performing in class rather
than contributing to the community of learners, or they focus on

manufacturing a product rather than challenging themselves to take inquiry risks. As a result, while honors classes may appear to be ideal—several students participate and most complete high quality work—students are often involved in the game of giving the teacher what he or she wants, of doing only enough work to get the A they need, of reducing learning to formula. What is often missing is a community of learners contributing to each other's knowledge-making, students willing to take risks by following challenging questions or by writing about subjects that cannot be tied up in formulaic papers.

In one of the honors classes, we began talking about how important names are in our culture, how the sound of a name produces images. This led to a discussion of language and expression, and somehow, to an argument over papers and five-paragraph themes. Caught using my own jargon ("five-paragraph-theme"), I was asked what is wrong with this kind of writing. What began as a discussion of names ended in a heated discussion of writing theory, with the students challenging some of my own assumptions about how and why they write according to formula. The discussion also provided students with a forum for asking questions about writing they had never asked before. We decided that we were being too abstract, that we needed concrete evidence before we continued the discussion, so we agreed to write two papers on the same topic—one in five-paragraph form and one that ended without a pat answer, that explored rather than gave definitive answers. We composed these together and then discussed the visual and verbal differences. The results are worth another chapter, but the point here is that this level of interaction and learning grew out of the name tag activity.

The activity does not work only in college classes or with honors students. I asked a colleague who teaches high school in a multicultural urban setting if I could use this activity in her class of juniors and seniors. I had intended to have them relate their name tag making to American literature, but when I got to the class I learned that all week they had been writing letters of application to college or for summer jobs. What I then asked them to do was to represent in visual form who they were, what they thought made them unique enough to be chosen by this college or that employer. With the same enthusiasm as their college counterparts, these high school students went to work. They were noisier and they teased each other because they were friends, but their diligence and concentration were equal to any college or honors class. What is more, their analyses were just as insightful, their name tags as varied, creative, and individual, and the activity itself as useful for class discussions in the following weeks. When asked to evaluate the activity (anonymously), students responded:

> It was a little scary to see what I had done and what [Elissa] said about me. She could read me like a book just from what I did, and she was right!

> At first I thought this was just a stupid thing to do, but then I started thinking about who I was and what I was saying in my college letters! It was boring what I wrote! I'm more interesting than that! I'm going back and rewrite my letters.

> When I walked thru the hall with my name, everybody looked at it and I was proud. I started thinking about what else I could of done. Who else was I?

> I took my name tag home and put it on the refrigerator. There it sits, a constant reminder of who I am and what I have accomplished.

> It sits on my dresser now and I feel like it's a little piece of me there that I can look at and think about. I pick it up and turn it around thinking about how this might look in three years, or five years.

These responses can serve as a resource for other ways of using this activity across age levels and disciplines:

- Have students make name tags as an ice breaker activity at the beginning of the year or semester; repeat the activity at the end of the year and accompany with a compare-and-contrast paper. Students often don't have a sense of how far they have come in a term or what they have learned. This is one way of concretely demonstrating their own learning.

- Instead of having an oral analysis of the name tags, use them as a writing experience to launch into a discussion of symbol, color, point of view.

- Include the name tags in student portfolios. If students create one at the beginning and end of the year, have them speak to their progress as writers, visualizers, and thinkers. If portfolios travel with students from year to year, the tags can serve as a stimulus for self, peer, or teacher assessment.

- Use name tags as resources for writing a character sketch or story.

- Ask students to create a name tag that exemplifies how they perceive individuals in a particular cultural or historical context (if you were a Puritan, what would your name tag be? If you lived during the 1960s, etc.). Students then take on an identity that reveals misconceptions, prior knowledge, and assumptions about that period.

Name tags function as visible windows to students' ideas, not as activities that "break up the day" or "give the kids (and you) a

breather." The application of this activity across disciplines is limited only by imagination and your willingness as a teacher to allow students to use their visual faculties, which precede conceptual language, to explore how they are processing images or concepts, what they already know, or what they have learned.

It seems foolish to ignore not only the practices of many teaching professionals who find visual pedagogy a powerful teaching tool, but also the mounting scientific evidence that supports this pedagogy. While the technical equipment to prove Sereno's biological theories is only now being developed, he has drawn on his extensive interdisciplinary studies—in linguistics, communication systems of animals, philosophy, and the neurological architecture of vision (Gutin 1996, 83)—to pose a persuasive theory that traditional language theorists must now disprove. Over twenty-five years ago he "began to see a similarity between what the mysterious language system in the brain was doing as it tacked together the meaning extracted from individual words in a series, and what the visual system was doing as it put together the information gathered from a series of glances. If the mental tasks were so similar [he wondered], why couldn't the brain be using some of the same wiring?" (86).

As Sereno and his colleagues discover more about the connections between visual processing and language ability, the demand for pedagogy that supports, enriches, and enhances the interconnective system will grow. But teachers and students can begin now to create the community and the means by which we will name those concepts in startlingly new visual and verbal ways.