



# Sample Literature Review – MLA Style

## Visual Designs as a Technical & Intercultural Communication Tool

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### Abstract

Visual design is in a long-standing relationship with technical and intercultural communication for the benefit of humanity since before the 14th century (Hubbard). The interconnectedness shared by text and images serves as the conduit by which we all can come together on a common ground to communicate (43). The visual design creates an inclusive opportunity to serve cultures globally which allow peoples of varying languages to comprehend and communicate efficiently. When individuals have access and the chance to communicate, our world benefits because lives can change for the better, inventions come to fruition, and families are created. My literary review will discuss and critique various works from scholars who are committed to researching the link between visual design, technical, and intercultural communication and its importance for students, pedagogy, and diverse communities worldwide.

**Keywords:** Intercultural communication, visual design, diversity, globalization, technical communication, students, writing, rhetoric, language, and pedagogy.

### Introduction

Humanity's desire to come together and share information was the impetus for the expansion of technical communication. As people evolved and moved out of their respective areas, it became necessary to be able to converse with diverse cultures for many reasons such as for provisions, commerce, religion, politics, and to establish personal relationships. During the developmental stages of technical communication, people of differing ethnicities, languages, and cultures needed to be able to communicate efficiently. Diverse languages, dialects, and pidgins are so important because they are the key means to have dialog amongst various peoples. A miscommunication

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could result in a person becoming offended, which leads to negative responses. Intercultural technical communication and visual design are related and just as important today as they were when Aristotle lived.

In my paper, I will discuss several scholars' works that show a connection between visual design and intercultural communication. Also, why these writers say that, from a global perspective, this association is essential for the continued success of the technical communication discipline. Also, I will offer my critique by comparing the writers' perspectives along with my opinion and questions for further study. Each review will begin with an appropriate visual design element that I acquired or created which will serve as a segue into the upcoming discussion.

### **Visual Design, a Communication Tool**

Visual design, Intercultural and technical communication are related in that their early stages were created at approximately the same time. Hubbard and Williams informs their readers that during the twelfth century the first software documentation writer, Muhammad ibn Musa Al' Khwarizimi, a Tashkent cleric, created the first detailed writing process to be followed so the reader could achieve a goal; this same technique is used in nearly all computer programming languages today. The cleric published a book and called the process an "algorithm".

Hubbard's research led him to early writing artifacts from the Aztecs, Chinese, Egyptians, and Babylonians. These writings showed images as a means of written communication (41). Between the 14th to the 17th centuries, various disciplines came out of these writings such as science, religion, medicine, mechanical and graphic arts, and literature. More developments brought about the social infrastructure that we enjoy today for example, language, travel, trade, and public buildings, road, and water systems (Hubbard, Williams, and Hill). Figures 1 and 2 are

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examples of the early writings that manifested into the visual/graphic design and intercultural and technical communication.

Hubbard's piece's dates contrasts with the others in my review. However, it compares in that the information therein is timeless because it is historical (40). And, in his research, he gives a breakdown of the kinds of jobs that declined between 1994 and 2005 because of the kinds of software that is now available for non-technical communication and visual artist paraprofessionals. The sobering part is that jobs that were once highly specialized are now all but eliminated, such as typesetting and composing machine operators, which plummeted by -70.2 percent, and letterpress operators which dipped to -70.5 percent, large-computer operators dropped by -35.3 percent and many others such as paste-up workers. Typists and word processors which dove by more than -30 percent each are virtually unheard of in today's job markets. The visual design and technical communication disciplines became the birthmother of invention which streamlined jobs and opened the door for intercultural communication to join the family. Allowing this enhancement to connect is an opportunity to expand research, devise inquiries, develop a concise definition, and foster global inclusiveness.

All figures are captioned using keyword "Figure" followed by Arabic numerals



Figure 1, Dezalb "Egypt Tomb Deir-el-medina" Digital Image. Pixabay. April 16, 2018

<https://pixabay.com/en/egypt-tomb-deir-el-medina-3323819/>

Everything has a beginning which is the commencement of its historical record. Hubbard's opus, although brief, elucidates for his readers how visual design, intercultural and technical communication came into being at approximately the same time (42).

A key component in his work is the early and current research methods which were "standardized and adopted by science" (Hubbard, 45) he outlined for his readers. The classic examination paradigm contains five steps; the revised version has four.

1. State the problem
2. Form a possible explanation or hypothesis
3. Observe, experiment, and record data
4. Interpret the data
5. Draw conclusions

Updated formula:

1. State the problem
2. Describe the method
3. Display the results
4. Draw the conclusions

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Figure 2, Vogue Montage "Sculpture Pharaoh Hieroglyph" Digital Image. Pixabay. April 17, 2018.

<https://pixabay.com/en/sculpture-pharaoh-hieroglyph-3326208/>



successful, both sides had to commit to compromising their ideas based on feedback from the other group. This study, which is a sharp contrast to the others in my review is that people, in this case, the Americans left their comfort zone to venture into someone else's territory. Moreover, they were armed with nothing more than faith, hope, design skills, ideas, and formal education.

Hubbard uses visual design as a communication vehicle to close cultural gaps and to build lasting bonds. The author believes that a visual arts curriculum is germane, and a necessary component to moving students toward competent and confident intercultural collaboratives. This effort is the most striking because the American students not only learned about the egregious social problems facing Oaxaca, Mexico but saw the harsh realities for themselves. And, they had an opportunity to work closely with non-English speaking designers, artists, and painters. It was as if Hubbard took King's inclusion message to heart and acted upon it in a way that King himself would have respected and honored (np).

Jones shares the same passion for diversity that Hubbard does in that she challenges technical communicators to take a social justice approach to research and pedagogy with the same passion that King had during the Civil Rights Movement (345). Jones opus points the finger of responsibility for diversity, inclusion, and social issues at technical communication scholars. She believes that intercultural communication should be a standard in our field, not an exception. She asks pertinent questions that give pause and cause scholars to ponder about what it is that we study and our stance on the lack of diversity in our field. "What must be done on a practical level? How do we move forward to legitimize our field further and empower our scholars but also value and legitimize other perspectives and experiences?" (Jones, 345).

For scholars to answer these questions, Jones explains that: "our scholars must emphasize the humanistic perspective because it is directly related to the human experience...how individuals

experience the world in which they live” (345). For Jones and the other scholars in my review, human understanding is a “core concern” for diversity, inclusion, and intercultural communication. Visual design is a component that brings meaning and understanding of messages. Hubbard used visuals to send a message of peace and hope to a poor Mexican community. Coleman and McTigue discussed using graphics as teaching tools for youngsters. Hubbard enlightened his readers on visual design’s rich history, and how this communication form enhances economies worldwide.

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