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Leveraging visual literacy to engage and orient first-year college students in the Library

Melissa Clark, MA-LIS, MA-HDEP, Ralph W. Steen Library

Introduction

Too often incoming students leave library orientation sessions feeling overwhelmed and overstressed, which results in the library becoming one more intimidating obstacle to them. However, this does not need to be the case. Visual literacy and visual culture can be leveraged to engage students and improve library orientation sessions.

In the fall of 2017 and 2018, students in 28 SFA 101 sections engaged in an alternate approach to library orientation.

Assessment

legen, 1988)

Task Completion: Each of 174 groups was assigned 3 items to find (N = 522).

Students found and uploaded a photo successfully 494 times, for an overall success rate of 94.64%.

Affective Response: Student photos were also rated according to an adaptation of the PANAS (Figure 3).

Of the photos available for scoring (N = 398), students appeared to

show significantly more positive (M = 2.97, SD = 0.61) than negative (M = 1.09, SD =0.10) emotions, t(397) = -55.28, p = .000.

l very slightly or not at all	2 a little	3 moderately	4 quite a bit	5 extremely
	interested distressed excited upset strong guilty scared hostile enthusiastic proud	:	irritable alert ashamed inspired nervous determined jittery active afraid	
Figure .	3. Positive	e and Ne	gative Affe	ect
Scale (PANAS), (Watson,	Clark, & T	el-

The Activity

Working as a group, students were assigned 3 items to locate in the library, using visual cues instead of traditional directions, such as title, collection, or call number.



card

After finding each item, students:

- Took a picture and uploaded it to a cloud-based, multimedia sharing application,
- Returned to the classroom to give a short presentation on what they found,
- Listened and learned from their peers and their experiences.

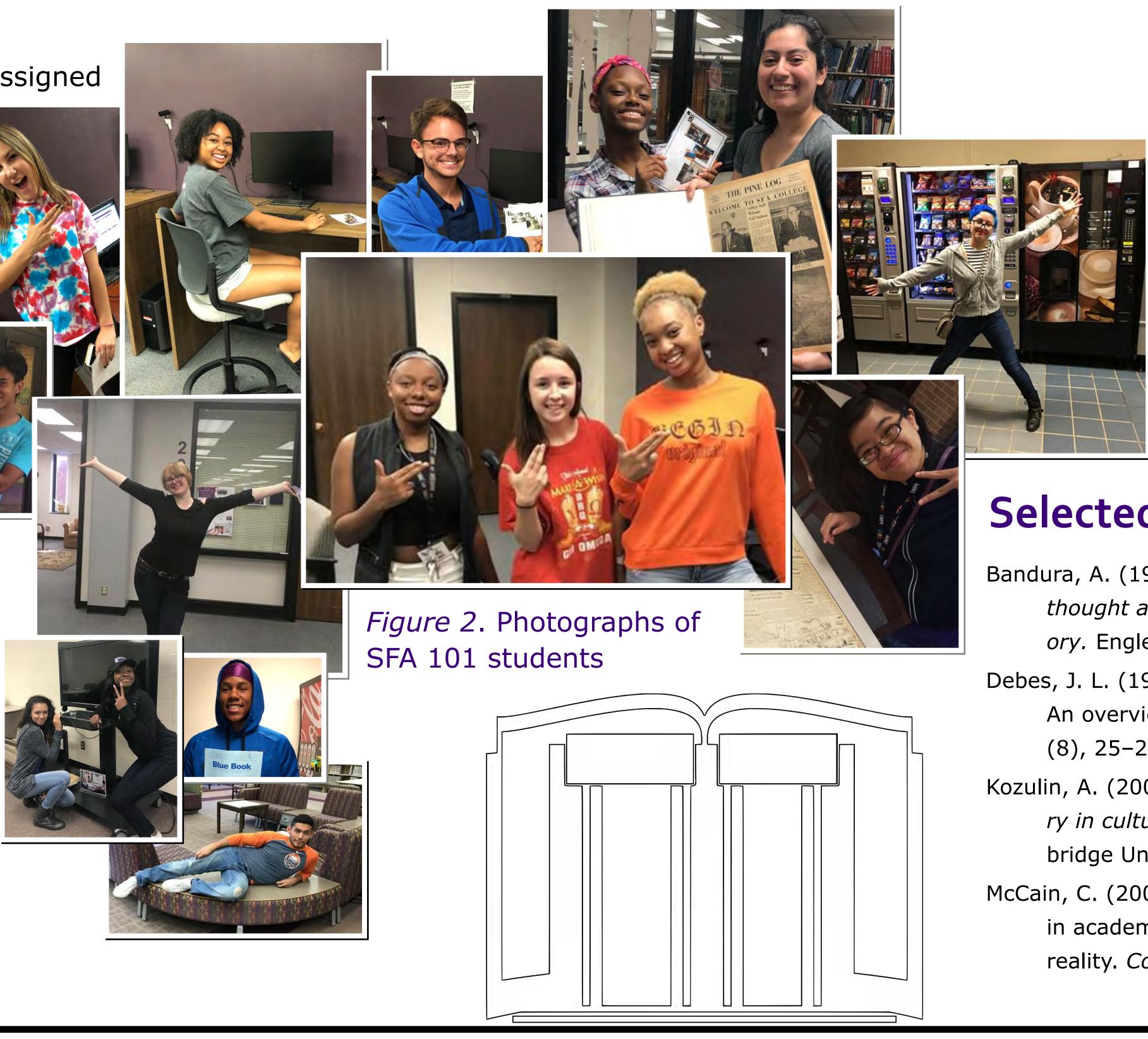


Figure 1. Sample activity

Definitions and Theories

Visual Literacy — "a group of vision-competencies a human being can develop by seeing and at the same time having and integrating other sensory experiences" (Debes, 1969)

Social Development Theory (Lev Vygotsky) — mediators, such as people (e.g., peer teachers) and structured activities (e.g., scaffolding), are required for development of higherlevel cognitive skills (Kozulin, 2003)

Social Cognitive Theory (Albert Bandura) — skill can only be gained from enactive experience and analysis of the resultant sensory feedback (Bandura, 1986)

Next Steps

- and Negative scales in PANAS.

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Watson, D., Clark, L. A., & Tellegen, A. (1988). Development and validation of brief measures of positive and negative affect: bridge University Press. The PANAS scales. *Journal of Personality* and Social Psychology, 54(6), 1063–1070. McCain, C. (2007). Scavenger hunt assignments https://doi.org/10.1037/0022in academic libraries: Viewpoints versus 3514.54.6.1063 reality. College & Undergraduate Libraries,

 \rightarrow Present activity and data analysis at the Association of College & Research



Libraries' Annual Conference in Cleveland this spring.

 \rightarrow Develop a Neutral Affect scale to supplement the Positive

 \rightarrow Introduce a self-reported measure of students' affective response to complement and confirm observational data.

14(1), 19–32.

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