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Teaching the legacy of Hellenism in an Australian university – an interdisciplinary adventure

Abstract

Teaching the legacy of Hellenism to students enrolled in an Australian university in the twenty-first century is a particular challenge when addressing non-specialists, that is, those who are not studying ancient history as part of their university degree program, and who may have had only limited exposure to ancient history as part of their high school studies. This article will present preliminary findings into the value of employing visual media as a means of illustrating the influences of classical antiquity on contemporary Australian society and in the broader context of our global society. It is informed by recent research which stresses the importance of images for teaching and learning in the twenty-first century. The article accepts a priori that the legacy of Hellenism continues to be a subject worthy of exploration within an undergraduate bachelor degree program in Australia. It proposes that by directing attention towards public monuments in the greater Sydney area, students can discover the influence of Hellenism on Australia's political and cultural institutions from the early days of colonialism through the twentieth century and develop skills in the critical analysis of images.

Introduction

The legacy of Hellenism in Australian society and culture is a theme[1] which underpins core subjects in the Bachelor of International Studies at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. The Department of International

Specific minimum requirements:				
100 level				**Credit points**
Required		ASN101	Asia in the Global Context (3)	3
Required		EUL101	Societies of Europe (3)	3
Required		INTS100	Cross-Cultural Communication (3)	3
Required	one of	CHN157	Contemporary China (3)	
		INTS102	China in World History (3)	
		JPS121	Japan - Past and Present (3)	3
200 level				
Required		INTS202	Citizenship: Past, Present, Global (3)	3
Required	two of	EUL202	The European Union (3)	
		INTS203	International Studies Internship (3)	
		INTS204	Latin American Histories (3)	
		INTS210	Modern Chinese History (3)	
		JPS221	Modern Japanese Society (3)	6
300 level				
Capstone		INTS304 C	Global Issues (3)	3
Required		INTS300	International Studies In-Country Study (12)	12
Any level				
Required	one of	18 cp from CHN units		
		18 cp from CRO unit		
		18 cp from FRN units		
		18 cp from GMN units		
		18 cp from ITL units		
		18 cp from JPS units		
		18 cp from MGK units		
		18 cp from PLH units		
		18 cp from RSN units		
		18 cp from SPN units		18

Fig. 1. Specific requirements for the Bachelor of International Studies from the 2012 Handbook of Undergraduate Studies, Macquarie University. URL: accessed 10 February 2012.

Studies first offered the Bachelor of International Studies in 2006.[2] The degree program is outlined in Figure 1. The two core subjects which address the legacy of Hellenism are EUL 101 Societies of Europe (a first year requirement) and INTS202 Citizenship Past Present Global (a second year requirement). Students choose the Bachelor of International Studies degree program because they consider it a qualification relevant for a globalised world. These students, by and large, are looking towards the future, and as a result have expressed some resistance to examining the past.[3]

In response to student feedback and to educational research into visual literacy, the content of some lecture material has developed into an analysis of

contemporary public institutions and monuments which document the past within the present. This methodology opens students' eyes to landmarks in their local environment with the intention that students can then examine the material evidence of public expressions of cultural values and ideals.

The article is organised in three parts:

- An overview of first year students' knowledge of the ancient world
- A discussion of some issues around 'visual literacy' and the 'digital native'
- A proposal for an approach to increasing awareness of Hellenism through images and symbols.

Part 1
An overview of first year students' knowledge of the ancient world

A record number of students sat the 2011 New South Wale Higher School Certificate (HSC) Ancient History exam (Olding 2011). Ancient History has grown in popularity within the New South Wales secondary school syllabus over the past few years. This trend of increasing enrolments in years 11 and 12 Ancient History may, in part be attributed to a peculiarity in the NSW secondary school curriculum – a mandatory history syllabus. The trend raises the hopes of philhellenes since the situation in NSW secondary schools appears to run contrary to the decline in Classical Studies at the secondary school level world wide.[4]

The NSW syllabus includes the study of ancient civilisations in stage 4 (Years 7 and 8), providing younger students with a 'taster' prior to the point in time when they must select their areas of specialisation for the HSC.[5] Although exposure in Year 7 or 8 ensures that most NSW school-leavers enter university with some knowledge of the Graeco-Roman world, both the breadth and depth of this knowledge is highly variable and limited. Those students who select Ancient History for the HSC (stage 6) may also have very limited knowledge of ancient Greece because of the scope and structure of study within the New South Wales stage 6 Ancient History syllabus (NSW Board of Studies 2011). As can be seen from the NSW Board of Studies website, stage 6 of the Ancient History syllabus is divided into two parts (Years 11 and 12), and each part is then subdivided (NSW Board of Studies 2011). Statistics from past exams provide information about the topics within each of the three

sections: *Ancient Societies, Personalities in Their Times,* and *Historical Period.* In 2010 the three most popular topics in *Ancient Societies* were (in random order):

- 'Spartan Society to the Battle of Leuctra 371 BC'
- 'The Bronze Age-Society in Minoan Crete'
- 'Society in New Kingdom Egypt during the Ramesside Period, Dynasties XIX and XX'.

No Greek options ranked among the most popular for the topic *Personalities in Their Times.* For *Historical Period,* 'The Greek World 500–440 BC' was one of the most popular along with two Egyptian and three Roman options. It should be noted that the popular Ancient Societies option 'Spartan society to the Battle of Leuctra 371 BC' will provide little evidence to elucidate the legacy of Hellenism. The Spartans lacked the institutions one most often associates with the ancient Greek polis – courts, philosophical schools, and public meeting houses for the practice of democracy. Archaeological exploration in Sparta has churned up little evidence of monumental architecture and sculpture from the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Sparta may have provided an educational model for some in the Victorian era (Brown 1989), but it was neither a cultural nor an artistic centre like Athens, Alexandria, or Rhodes. Modern nation-states are not founded on the ideals of the Spartan political system.[6]

It is somewhat surprising that neither Pericles nor Alexander the Great appear among the most popular *Personalities in Their Times* since each is regarded as the most significant political figure of his era. Their contributions to the legacy of Hellenism are considerable. The Periclean building program on the Athenian acropolis still stands as a universal symbol of democracy and the benchmark for classical architecture. The image of Alexander on coins, statues, paintings, even mosaics, provides the most salient example of widespread exploitation of portraiture for political propaganda prior to Augustus (Stewart 1993).[7] The popularity of his legend continues into the twenty-first century with its most recent manifestation in the 2004 Hollywood film, *Alexander* (albeit a box office flop), and the 2012 press coverage of the Australia Museum's launch of the exhibition *Alexander the Great: 2,000 Years of Treasure* (news.com. au 2012). The popularity of the *Historical Period* topic 'The Greek World from 500–440 BC' provides the only suggestion that many high school-leavers might be familiar with the contributions of classical Greece to western culture.

This analysis of the New South Wales Ancient History Syllabus indicates that one should not expect first year university students to share a basic common knowledge of ancient Greek history and society.

In light of this situation, one needs to create a pathway for students to understand the influence of classicism on contemporary society. There is a need to create opportunities for them to discover for themselves Australian civic and national institutions based on European norms that were inspired by Hellenism. The choice of public monuments as the media with which to teach the subject matter stems from the pedagogical research which encourages the development of visual literacy as a necessary skill for success in the twenty-first century (Oblinger & Oblinger 2005).[8]

Images assist because they allow students to recognise the physical manifestation of European cultural norms in the Australian landscape, and by extension, Graeco-Roman traditions. The latter is a significant cognitive leap. From this platform, students are encouraged to identify patterns in the expression of power and authority which trace back in origin to Graeco-Roman forms and ideals.

Part 2
Visual literacy and the digital native

> The ignorant gaze is as blind as the innocent eye
> *Bätschmann, 2003*

The use of visual material as a primary teaching tool presents a number of challenges to negotiate. The most significant is establishing the levels of visual literacy of students entering university. These students make up a cohort who have been dubbed 'digital natives' or the 'net generation' in scholarly literature as well as popular media.[9] Digital natives are most often described using the list of characteristics below (Oblinger & Oblinger 2005):

- Ability to read visual images (intuitive visual communicators)
- Visual-spatial skills (linked to gaming?)
- Inductive discovery (learn by finding rather than demonstration)
- Attention to deployment, i.e. shift tasks rapidly
- Fast response time
- Digitally literate (intuitive use of a variety of IT devices)

- Connected
- Experiential (preference for learning by doing).

Initially the delivery of lecture materials for both EUL 101 Societies of Europe and INTS202 Citizenship: Past, Present, Global were designed for an audience characterised as above, with particular concern for the 'intuitive visual learners'.

There is a substantial body of educational research which espouses the need to adapt teaching methods to address the skills of the current generation high school and university students (Elkins 2007; Felten 2007; Metros and Woolsey 2006; Kress 2003). Research into visual literacy is a relatively new field. In the latter part of the twentieth century, the discussion of visual literacy shifted its focus from aesthetics, which were explicitly or implicitly informed by art historians, to a broad multidisciplinary approach drawing upon such disparate fields as psychology, optics, neurology, physical anthropology and media studies, to name a few (Davis 2011).

The scholarly literature is vast and interdisciplinary. It is also dynamic in its attempts to keep up with the effects of the rapid pace of innovation in digital technologies. The term itself 'visual literacy' lacks a universally recognised definition among researchers, nonetheless there is a clarion call for visual literacy to be an intrinsic element of the twenty-first century university education.[10] One of the more ambitious set of skills which should be associated with visual literacy comes from a 2003 report entitled '21st Century Skills: Literacy in the Digital Age' produced by the North Central Regional Educational Library (2003: 24) in the United States:

- Understand basic elements of visual design, technique, and media
- Aware of emotional, psychological, physiological, and cognitive influences in perceptions of visuals
- Comprehend representational, explanatory, abstract and symbolic images
- Are informed viewers, critics, and consumers of visual information
- Are knowledgeable designers, composers, and producers of visual information
- Are effective visual communicators
- Are expressive, innovative visual thinkers and successful problem solvers.

The list concerns itself largely with higher order thinking and proposes ambitious goals rather than a viable set of outcomes save for disciplines which focus on visual materials such as Art History, Media Studies or Marketing.

A practical approach to increasing or enhancing visual literacy is to adopt methodologies from art history and the arts (Dake 2007: 11; Bätschmann 2003: 182).[11] Training in art history places emphasis on the visual through the autopsy of objects d'art or photographic images of them (Rabb & Brown 1988: 1-6; Haskell 1995; Bätschmann 2003: 181).[12] Since the technology in the early twentieth century became available, lecturers have relied on photographic slides to allow the examination of art works in a classroom setting. The introduction of slide software such as PowerPoint has facilitated the use of slides in lectures into disciplines which traditionally did not analyse visual materials, especially because it allows the introduction of text into slides.[13] In teaching art history, images of objects were the primary tool for study in the lecture hall since the objects themselves - sculpture, painting, and architecture - were usually inaccessible. In only rare circumstances would a university student be able to view works of art first hand, and in such cases, the number and scope of objects would be limited. The lecture hall provided the best opportunity to expose students to as many images/objects as possible. It was through viewing a multiplicity of images/objects that students would build up a mental database of images, creating the opportunity to explore matters of style, chronology, provenance, composition, context and contextualisation.

It has been common practice to instruct students on how to analyse images in introductory art history lectures, so that they had a technique to apply to future lectures, assessment tasks and their own research. In the past decade a growing number of university lecturers have widely adopted the use of slide software such as PowerPoint, and lectures are often accompanied by slide presentations full of text and visuals. There is an underlying assumption that students are equipped to read the slides competently. These are, after all, students whose 'digital immersion has given [them] the visual skills that make them superior scanners. They've learned to develop filters they need to sort out what's important from what's not.' (Tapscott 2009).

The arrival of the digital native has raised some teachers' expectations. This has resulted in some teachers designing complex slides for classroom consumption (Tufte 2006), and I include myself among them. Each individual

slide offered a great deal of visual material. In the first instance, the visuals were meant to give students sitting in class a range of images to consider in reference to the lecture text. Lecture slides were subsequently uploaded onto the unit webpage via a password protected software program. Within an hour after a lecture, students were able to access the slides. A further rationale for such visually rich slides was the provision of material which students could view critically as part of revision.

A recent survey of university students in West Virginia demonstrated that despite having ready access to a range of digital technologies, the overall level of visual literacy was quite low (Brumberger 2011). This is interesting since this group is arguably more privileged than their age-peer compatriots who are not enrolled at university, as well as a significant proportion of university students in other parts of the world. For the students who were surveyed, digital technology was readily accessible on campus as well as at home and in high school prior to undertaking university studies. The cohort had been exposed to a variety of computers, a range of computer software programs, digital cameras and video cameras as well as smartphones equipped with cameras, so it seems reasonable to conclude that the students surveyed were comfortable viewing lots of visuals and had the ability to read images. This was a study that seems to indicate that the skills base of the digital native in America is not as consistently high as educators and media experts anticipate. The ability to read visual images, however, is not the same as the ability to read images critically, and it is the latter skill that allows students to recognize and comprehend cultural symbols.

Part 3.
A proposal for an approach to increasing awareness of Hellenism through images and symbols

> The problem of the 21st century is the problem of the image
> *Mitchell, 1994*

Students are arriving at university with quite varied and usually limited background knowledge of Graeco-Roman culture. Since this generation is characterised as 'experiential learners' one aim is to provide the opportunity to discover Hellenism's legacy by means of a visual journey backwards in time.

A possible method for achieving this is to adopt a visual format which both informs students through cultural materials and scaffolds into the lesson the provision of the skills necessary for the critical evaluation of images. The explicit aim is to get students to recognize and understand cultural influences with specific emphasis on the role of Hellenism in western culture. An implicit goal must be to teach a generation of students to look carefully at images and think about them critically – a highly valuable and transferrable skill. This is a significant challenge not only because students have varied abilities and/or inclinations to engage with digital technologies and visual materials.

An additional complication is that the digital native is regularly exposed to a myriad of visual images and often multiple images which are competing for attention. Neurological and optical studies present encouraging data which may be of assistance to teachers. The eyes, independent of the brain, have the ability to make decisions about the visual field in the process called global scanning, in which the eyes carry out surveys of the whole visual field to make general or 'rough determinations of areas of interest' (Dake 2007: 10). The eyes do this without our being consciousness of the process. This type of behaviour, like others involving rapid cognition, is a necessary tool for negotiating the world, allowing active control over the environment. Global scanning is an unconscious, spontaneous action, yet it can be modified or enhanced through experience and heightened awareness.

Of particular importance for teaching with visual material is the research which demonstrated that the way in which the eye scans visual materials differs among groups of people. In an experiment conducted by neuroscientists in 1995, the eyes of two groups of people classified as 'visually experienced' (professional artists and 'sophisticated art viewers') behaved differently from the group described as 'untutored science students' (Zangmeister, Sherman and Stark 1995 cited in Dake 2007). The groups were given similar images to look at, and the eye scan-paths, maps of where the eye travelled over the images, showed that the visually experienced group had the ability to survey much more of the visual field and to provide the brain with both detailed and contextual information. The 'untutored science students' eye scans indicated that their eyes were involved in parsing and detailed local scanning. These latter activities lend themselves to labelling and classification, and close off openness to interpretation. The implications of such findings impact on the learning and teaching environment in an image rich environment/culture.

Fig. 2. Large screen. Macquarie University, 12 March 2012. Photo by the author.

Fig. 3. Large screen in Federation Square, Melbourne. Federation Square, 24 November 2011. Photo by the author.

The untutored student of the twenty-first century unconsciously looks at a wide range of images with little control over the quantity and quality. Paradoxically, the twenty-first century student is also exposed to the repetition of particular images through the popular media and marketing, again with little or no control. There is an unprecedented amount of visual material that calls for an individual's attention on a daily basis. Smartphones and tablets have become commonplace. Large format information screens and televisions appear in public venues such as university libraries, in prominent positions on university campuses (Figure 2), in public parks (Figure 3), streets, on public transportation. These make up 'landscapes' crammed full of digital images relaying information, with or without accompanying text, and the eyes are scanning this with or without our conscious awareness.

The consequences of the amount and types of images a learner is exposed to prior to entering a particular learning environment also needs to be taken into account in any approach to teaching. Today's learners bring their own archive of imagery from popular media and educational materials which would have been unimaginable only ten years ago. This has a number of consequences, one of which is that learning from certain images has become automatic and unreflective (Santas & Eaker 2009: 176). Another is that despite the number of images available, students/learners find that particular images dominate the collective consciousness through their accessibility via the Internet.

There is also a trend for conceptual images to replace documentary images.[14] Students carry a 'vast history of associated imagery ... ranging from cartoons and video games to school textbooks'(Santas & Eaker 2009: 171) and bring this into a lecture hall. These images may strengthen the tendency, or habit to read images for reinforcement of simple and pre-existing social arrangements rather than to challenge them. At its most insidious, it results in the 'Disney effect' (Grant & Van Sledright 2006: 49 cited in Santas & Eaker. 2009), a term used to describe the phenomenon where primary school students in the US judge the validity of textbook accounts of Pocohontas against the storyline in the Disney film. It is easy to understand how this happens; it is more difficult to counterbalance the effects of students' experiences. Digital natives have grown up watching their favourite films and television shows not just once or twice, but multiple times and possibly more than once in a single day. Stories and the images associated with them

watched over and over again embed their details into the subconscious, so one role of the educator is to challenge those 'views'. In teaching about the legacy of Hellenism, for example, the popularity of the Hollywood film *Troy* can be used as a point of departure for a discussion of the *Iliad* as a central component of formal education in western cultures up through the early twentieth century.

In such an environment, it is useful for teachers to know that scientific research demonstrated that verbal suggestions can modify an individual's scanning process (Dake 2007: 11). Working through the students' experiences of their local/regional landscape presents another path. The fabric of a city tells much about its history and culture, and by directing the students' gaze at its architecture, public monuments and other features of the cityscape, they may be able to discover for themselves the legacy of Hellenism. This is possible in Sydney where a number of highly visible monuments reference the classical world. An excellent example is a nineteenth century sculpture in the Royal Botanic Gardens (Figure 4).

This garden folly was originally commissioned between 1856 and 1868 for the private residence of Sir James Martin, a leading figure in Sydney and Premier of New South Wales in 1870 (Nairn 2011). The sculpture is a replica of the fourth century BCE Lysikrates Monument still visible in Plaka in Athens (Figure 5).

Martin had an abiding interest in the intellectual and artistic life of Sydney, and through his choice of garden sculpture he invoked classical ideals as a means of promoting his social and political status. This was, of course, just one aspect of the £20,000 he spent designing, decorating and landscaping Clarens, his Potts Point mansion where he hosted Sydney's political and social elite. The sandstone replica is approximately two thirds the size of the Greek marble original, and while the replica adorned the private property of a wealthy politician, the Greek original was located on a busy street in ancient Athens and served as a public monument celebrating the winner of a civic competition.

Changing the medium, the scale, and the context of any image or icon alters the meaning for the viewer, but it is the experienced viewer who is conscious of this. While quite a few students in EUL101 Societies of Europe were able to recognise the imitation sandstone choragic monument and could locate it in the Royal Botanical Gardens in a survey taken in August 2011,

Fig. 4. Nineteenth century garden
sculpture in imitation of the Lysikrates
monument (334 BCE). Royal Botanical
Gardens, Sydney, 21 April, 2011.
Photo by the author.

Fig. 5. Lysikrates monuments, Athens, Greece.
Photo by the author.

none could name it. Additionally no student had any knowledge of the Greek
original it was modelled after ,and none knew of other examples of the reuse
of this particular classical Greek model.

Martin's choice of monument to decorate his estate involves layered
meanings and demonstrates complex motivations. On the one hand, it
reflects broadly colonial tastes (Borngässer 2006: 57; Zabiello 2004),[15] while
on the other, it references perceived Greek democratic ideals which informed
nineteenth century liberal politics (Poynter 2004). The symbolic appeal of the
Lysikrates monument extended beyond James Martin's milieu in colonial New
South Wales. The form had been adapted to copulas by the American architect
William Strickland for both the Philadelphia Merchants Exchange and the
Tennessee State Capitol building in Nashville (Moss & Tatman 2012). The
Americans applied the Greek Revival style to civic and mercantile buildings,
imbuing them with gravitas and authority. Several imitations of the Lysikrates
Monument appeared in Great Britain, too. In Edinburgh, two greats of the
nineteenth century intellegentsia – Dugald Stewart, professor of philosophy,
and the poet Robert Burns – were honoured with public memorials based on
the design of the Lysikrates Monument. In England, the form was adapted
to church towers and garden follies. The building type functions as a shared

symbol but one that is adapted to different uses and interpretations. It provides an opportunity for students to examine cross-cultural and diachronic changes in meaning.

This imitation choragic monument is only one example among quite a few structures that demonstrate the legacy of Hellenism in Australia. St. James Church in Sydney (Figure 6), and the Collins Street Baptist Church in Melbourne (Figure 7) follow the tradition of nineteenth century churches such as St Pancras (1822) in London, St Issac's Cathedral in St Petersburg (Figure 8), and many examples in the United States from rather humble local churches to St John's Cathedral in Washington, DC. The mere fact that Christian institutions chose to adapt an architectural style originating in a pagan society demonstrates the malleability of symbols of authority. Other public institutions were commissioned in the neoclassical style, including the Library of Victory, and the Art Gallery of New South Wales (Figure 9). The Art Gallery of New South Wales provides a fascinating example because its architrave pays homage to great artists from the Classical and Renaissance periods, none of whose works are held within the collection.

Society's gaze is increasingly being drawn to screens which narrow our field of vision and effectively shut out the rest of the physical world. Younger people in particular embrace new technologies such as smartphones and tablets and through them are exposed to a myriad of images on a daily basis. Studies on the impact of the small screen have not yet been published, but one obvious consequence is that public works of art which adorn the cityscape are disappearing from our line of vision (Figure 10).

The classically inspired buildings and public art works cited above were commissioned in an era when there was less visual clutter in daily life. They were designed to attract public attention and relate explicit and implicit narratives about the dignity, the importance and the political significance of civic institutions, and the people who created and sustained them. They were created to be focal points. The Archibald Fountain, for example, still draws the attention of tourists who happily photograph it, but the average Sydney-sider walks past it without looking at the sculpture.

As a means of drawing students' attention to their local cityscape in August 2011, they were asked to complete an online survey prior to attending a lecture entitled 'Images of Power and Authority in Europe: the legacy of Hellenism'. The survey measured students on how well they knew their
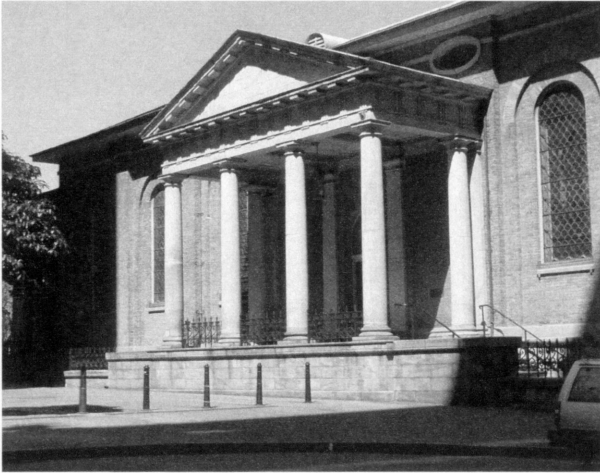
Fig. 6. St James Church, (1824), Sydney. 14 April 2011.
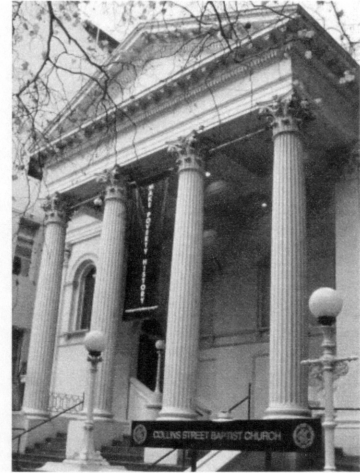Photo by the author.

Fig. 7. Collins Street Baptist Church,
(1862), Melbourne, 24 April 2011.
Photo by the author.

Fig. 8 St. Issac's Cathedral (1858), St Petersburg, Russia, 24 April 2010.
Photo by the author.

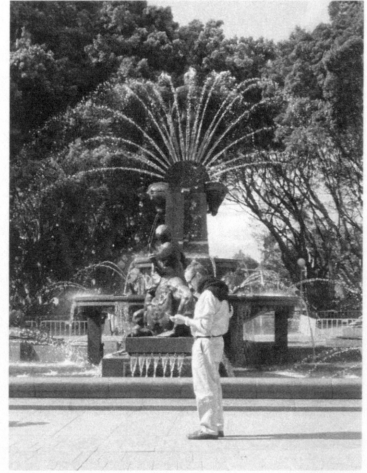Fig. 9. NSW Art Gallery. 21 April 2011.
Photo by the author.

Fig. 10. Man reading phone in front of
Archibald Fountain, Hyde Park, Sydney,
21 April 2011.

Photo by the author.

Fig. 11. Statue of Athena on Barrack Street, Sydney, 26 June 2011.
Photo by the author.

relatively local environment in order to move them from the known to the unknown. The task was set in order to tap into two of the characteristics of the digital native: intuitive visual communicators and having a propensity for inductive discovery.[16] Among the most interesting results were that only 46 per cent of the students recognized the imitation of the Lysikrates Monument; 58 per cent, however guessed that it was created in 1870. It was surprising to learn that only 47 per cent could identify the dome as the common architectural feature of the Pantheon, Hagia Sophia, St Peter's Basilica, US Congress and State Library of Victoria. The students themselves were surprised to learn that the statue in Figure 11 was in Sydney. The results were shown to the class at the start of the lecture as an introduction to the theme of the lecture. The survey generated lively discussion at the start of the lecture, and this continued in the subsequent tutorials. The survey will be repeated in EUL101 Societies of Europe in semester 2, 2012 with the new cohort of Bachelor of International Studies and the full results will be incorporated into further research into visual literacy.

Conclusions

> The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled
> *Berger, 1972*

Berger's statement above is arguably more important for the twenty-first century educational environment than when he published it forty years ago. It is worth directing our gaze to our surrounding world, beginning with what is closest at hand as a point of departure for teaching students to critically evaluate historical imagery. Contrary to Talcott's assertion that digital natives know how to filter out useless information from their visual field, Santas and Eaker (2009: 163) claimed, 'Experts know what to look for and what to screen out. Non experts can be confused by too much and/or irrelevant information present in the perceptual field'.

Pedagogical studies into multi-literacies explore the use of images and visual 'metalanguages' as components of the 'new literacies', but much of the discourse places images as ancillary to text. The discussion surrounding digital technology and education has, by and large, moved away from explaining technology and towards more time teaching critical reflection. In light of this, it is interesting that Brumberger's (2011) survey of Virginia Tech students

indicated that undergraduates in the United States may not only struggle with critical analysis of images, but that they may also have a low level of competency with a wide range of software which assist in learning and creating with visual materials.

Emphasis on visual evidence has been instrumental in getting students to recognize the legacy of Hellenism on Australian society in 2011. Here the aim has been to suggest that parts of the urban landscape of Sydney are informed by an elitist tradition originating in Europe which was founded in the belief in the artistic and cultural superiority of the Graeco-Roman world. Public monuments provide a ready resource for the study of cultural influences on Australian society. They are the physical heritage of the state. They are accessible, and they represent the past within the present. The adaptation of certain methodologies from traditional art history can assist students in interpreting visual evidence resulting in learning outcomes in deeper understanding of cultural heritage and skills in critical analysis of visual materials. The former maps to discipline specific outcomes while the latter maps to graduate capabilities. Nonetheless, the successful delivery of ideas through images, however, has proven a challenge for reasons which are detailed above.

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Notes

[1] See also Kenneth Sheedy's article in this same volume.

[2] This information has been gathered by the author, largely through interviews with students, in her role as Program Director.

[3] Feedback from INTS202 Citizenship Past Present Global in 2009 and 2010 was negative in regard to the module on citizenship in antiquity. The most common criticism was 'didn't see the relevance'.

[4] Classical Studies encompasses much more than the study of ancient history, but the teaching of ancient history in secondary schools world wide has declined along with the other subjects in a full Classical education, the ancient Greek and Latin languages, literature, philosophy, art and history.

⁵ A show of hands in EUL101 Societies of Europe in August 2010 indicated that almost all students attending the lecture had studied Ancient History. 363 students were enrolled in the unit, but it is likely not all were in attendance. The question did not differentiate between stages 4 and 6, so the numbers most likely do not reflect HSC studies.

⁶ It should be pointed out that Spartan educational practices were admired (in part) by Plato and Aristotle. See Heater (1990: 8).

⁷ Alexander's portraiture was broadcast after his death as a tool for legitimising the rule of his successors. His image is immediately recognisable to many university students and his legend continues to fascinate modern audiences (Stewart 1993).

⁸ Oblinger and Oblinger (2005) is the work most often cited in literature about the Net generation and visual literacy, but there are many more studies, including the highly influential work of Tapscott (1998).

⁹ Oblinger and Oblinger 2005 preferred the term net generation. I prefer Tapscott's 1998 term 'digital native' because it references much more technology than the Internet.

¹⁰ The definition most commonly referred to is found on the International Visual Literacy Association's website http://www.ivla.org/org_what_vis_lit.htm#definition. This is based on the work of John Debes in 1969, and the author of the webpage entry acknowledged the lack of agreement among visual literacists. See also Felten 2007; Bill Kim and Branch 2007; Avgerinou and Ericson 1997; Braden 1996. The term has also been widely criticised for applying terminology associated with reading texts to the analysis and interpretation of images (Dake 2007 summarises such critiques).

¹¹ Dake 2007, p. 11, summarised a number of scientific studies which demonstrate that visual training impacts perception and advocated for the incorporation of teaching techniques from the arts. Bätschmann 2003, p. 182 stressed the physicality of art works. As such, the 'disembodied' monument experienced in class through a powerpoint slide image must surely present some obstacles to interpretation.

¹² In the context of this discussion, it is ironic that the discipline of Art History is often criticized for placing emphasis on textual evidence, and for the paradox of using linguistic argument to analyse visual materials.

¹³ There are criticisms of PowerPoint, however, among other reasons because it provides 'quick and easy' solutions to design and makes it increasingly difficult to work outside templates (Tufte 2006).

¹⁴ The influence of Getty Images on what we view on the internet has yet to be measured. A search for 'Freedom' under 'Concepts', for example, brings up images which overwhelmingly show individuals or intimate groups such as couples, small family groupings or small band of friends, in leisure activities, usually located in isolation next to an idyllic body of water. The search was conducted on the Getty Image website on 16 December 2011.

¹⁵ Zabiello (2004), discussed the role of architectural pattern books on public and domestic architecture in the British colonies, and p. 859 refers specifically to the influence of Stuart and Revett's (1762) The Antiquity of Athens.

¹⁶ The survey was completed by 209 of 259 students enrolled in EUL101 Societies of Europe in semester 2, 2012.