Preface

Many people think verbally. The spoken language flows through the thought processes like a typewriter creating a story. All people think visually, continually translating words and ideas into pictures so that concepts and thoughts surface. In other words, we all understand, or decode, the visual language, but a true visual thinker has nonlinear thought, as if to be exercising cognition through computer simulation, then transforming the data into animation, or encoding. Thoughts become movies, images, and symbols. Language becomes multidimensional scenarios of concepts and ideas instead of the audible resonance of language. Ideally, the visual thinker has the ability to think beyond the meaning of language, using personal referents to meaning that cannot be translated into words. Visual thinking involves classification that is both parallel and holistic. Though linguistic thinkers may believe that visual thinkers center on detail, in fact this occurs because of the powerful memory of visual thinkers. They literally "see" the answers to problems. This is a tremendous advantage, enabling students to build entire information systems using their imaginations. If you would like to witness what happens in the mind of a visual thinker, look over their shoulder as they construct a jigsaw puzzle.

Bob Horn, a visiting researcher at Stanford University, believes visual language will change the world. He maintains that it is far more effective at conveying convoluted ideas than conventional methods of communication. The practice of visual thinking becomes a weapon against the "fire hoses of data" that threatens to overwhelm us in the twenty-first century. Visual language has its own formal rules of syntax and semantics. These have been subliminally etched in our thinking from years of visual media, particularly through the ten techniques of persuasive advertising: Humor, Macho, Friends, Family, Fun, Nature, Sexy, Cartoon, Celebrity, and Wealth. Every day someone is "renting your eyeballs."

There are very rigid rules in the syntax of the written or spoken language. For example, "What time it is?" is understandable, but incorrect.

The visual language rules are far more casual, since the visual language summons the unique, creative, internal-visual diction of its user. Consider the power of integrating the spoken or written language with the visual language. I can tell young children over and over how to tie their shoes and they may never learn. However, if I model the act while describing the process, in little or no time at all every child will master the art and it will very quickly become second nature. Because the brain processes verbal and visual information in different pathways, these children receive the information in two forms, forcing them to use more of the brain.

Visual learning is not new. From the Paleolithic cave paintings, to the Egyptian hieroglyphics, to the visual language used in our modern-day world, we have always been a visual society. The visual language remains an important component of our evolution, which begs the question "Is the visual language an important component of our educational strategies?" *Visual Impact, Visual Teaching* is written to expose educators, administrators, and parents to the framework that defines the visual teacher by highlighting the methodology and research to areas such as visual learning and critical visual thinking. The intent of this book is to give the reader a sense of where we've been, where we are, and where we need to be in our learning environments.

In the twenty-first century, we know so much more about how the human brain functions. The brain-compatible learning approach outlined in this book aims to open the gateway to such important areas as differentiating instruction, multiple intelligences, character education, and lateral thinking skills. Readers will be armed with the visual communication tools necessary to encode and decode the visual language, while given knowledge of the applications of graphic organizers and glyphs.

Technology is the cause of one of the largest paradigm shifts in the world; our students are coming of age as the fabric of this shift cloaks their everyday lifestyle. That is why it is essential for educators to embrace technology-based instruction, using the Internet as a learning tool, and media literacy instruction.

There is much research on how fine arts are often the pivot point of instruction. It is difficult to teach any subject without including art. You will learn new ideas, such as the unique Watergraph process. When the budgetary axe falls, it is often the fine arts programs that are lost, thereby passing the instructional torch to the individual teacher. The visual strategies in this book are directed at those teachers, and at fine arts teachers as well.

With each passing day, the United States is becoming the example of a global community. Our educational system strives to meet the needs of the

many English language learners through many effective programs and instructional modifications. Understanding the visual language is an effective universal language, this book emphasizes its importance by guiding students through a visual process, which ultimately translates to the comprehension and use of the oral and written language.

Visual Impact, *Visual Teaching* walks the reader along the path of becoming a visual teacher. Having reached the end of that path, you will find hundreds of practical, ready-to-use, subject-specific, multilevel visual-learning activities, all of which are designed to reinforce the information set forth throughout the book's entirety. The purpose of this book is to complement existing teaching styles and, quite literally, to change the way we perceive our world. Once the mind's eye has its opportunity to decipher information, the brain is able more easily to put that information in sync with spoken or written information. What takes place is a permanent change in the students' awareness and understanding. When our students' minds begin to change, so too does their ability to change the world.