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UNESCO Chair
on Visual Anticipation
and Futures Literacy
towards Visual Literacy



TROJAN WOMEN RE-IMAGINED

ACTIVITY 2: THE POWER OF WORDS

Text Reference

At 13' 29" of the film we hear the statement "Words: innocent, seductive, consoling, ambiguous always in their pretense of accuracy".

Objective

The objective of this activity is to analyze the impact of words on emotions, mindsets and decisions, and examine how language shapes perceptions and creates meaning – or confusion.

Instructions

Share with learners ambiguous or generic statements or phrases (e.g., metaphors, slogans, media headlines or political rhetoric), or emotionally charged concepts such as freedom, justice, war etc.

Their task is to interpret the meaning individually and then compare interpretations in small groups.

Discuss how context, emotions, assumptions, biases and beliefs alter the power of words and influence their understanding.

Ask learners to bring examples from their own experience where words influenced their thinking and decisions.

Indicative Discussion Questions

-  How do authority figures of any kind, leaders included, use language to inspire or manipulate?
-  Can ambiguity be used intentionally to manipulate or inspire? What examples can we draw from real life?
-  Can words capture complex ideas like freedom or truth when individual and collective parameters alter their perception?
-  How and why do words shift their meaning over time or across cultures? How do we need to address our mental rigidities if change is inevitable?



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Recommended Application of Visual Literacy tools

This activity is mostly compatible with the “Babel”, the “Frame”, the “Sensing instead of Making Sense”, and the “Identity Triangle” visual literacy tools.

NOTE: The Visual Literacy tools list is accessible at <https://vickykaraiskou.com/> Check the “Visual Literacy” tab and go at the “Tools” page.

