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Thinking Visually

Stephen K. Reed



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Language is a marvelous tool for communication, but it is greatly overrated as a tool for thought. This volume documents the many ways pictures, visual images, and spatial metaphors influence our thinking. It discusses both classic and recent research that support the view that visual thinking occurs not only where we expect to find it, but also where we do not. Much of comprehending language, for instance, depends on visual simulations of words or on spatial metaphors that provide a foundation for conceptual understanding.

Thinking Visually supports comprehension by reducing jargon and by providing many illustrations, educational applications, and problems for readers to solve. It provides a broad overview of topics that range from the visual images formed by babies to acting classes designed for the elderly, from visual diagrams created by children to visual diagrams created by psychologists, from producing and manipulating images to viewing animations. The final chapters discuss examples of instructional software and argue that the lack of such software in classrooms undermines the opportunity to develop visual thinking. The book includes the Animation TutorTM DVD to illustrate the application of research on visual thinking to improve mathematical reasoning.

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