

The reason visuals in presentations work-whether in a classroom of elementary school students or a boardroom of CEOs-is simple: Visuals make the right side of the brain (responsible for visualization) and left side of the brain (responsible for processing) work together more synergistically.

### **Why Visuals?**

Technology has become a nearly inescapable part of all our daily lives. For children and young adults this is doubly true, as many cannot remember a time when the Internet didn't exist and communication was done through letters rather than email. Students today have been taught that technological tools-from computers and PDAs to video games and cell phones-are common and useful in the same way that older generations thought of toasters and telephones.

Knowing this, it probably comes as no surprise that one of the most beneficial ways of reaching students in the classroom is through the incorporation of visual technologies such as computer projectors.

Over the years, there have been several studies conducted that examine the benefits of using visuals in a structured learning environment. Are they actually effective? The conclusion has been a resounding "Yes!"

All educators understand that learning style is as unique as each student. But it has been proven that no matter what an individual's unique learning preference, there is a marked improvement in retention and comprehension of presented information when visuals are introduced. For example, a survey of 250 educators, conducted by the market research firm IDC, found that 98 percent of respondents felt using visuals through projection technology significantly increased student attention. A majority of these educators also cited improved retention of information as a key motive for utilizing projectors in the classroom.

In another study sponsored by 3M and the University of Minnesota, audiences who were presented information with visual supports were 10 percent more likely to retain what they had learned. In addition, these individuals were significantly better prepared to use and apply their new knowledge.

The reason visuals in presentations work-whether in a classroom of elementary school students or a boardroom of CEOs-is simple: Visuals make the right side of the brain (responsible for visualization) and left side of the brain (responsible for processing) work together more synergistically.

For years, business professionals have known that the use of visuals in their presentations greatly improved their audiences' perceptions of their messages and professional images. This is confirmed by the 3M study, which found that presenters using visuals are perceived as significantly more prepared, persuasive, credible, and interesting by their audiences.

In addition, not only do we learn better by using visuals, but it seems that many of us are better able to organize our thoughts and materials when we use them in our presentations. This in turn gives the presenter, whether a college professor or student, more confidence-which will be apparent come show time!

### **Computer Projection: Visuals Simplified**

Many educators, understanding the benefits of visuals in learning, already incorporate slide, overhead, or film projectors in their daily lessons. Unfortunately, these tools, while useful, are

limited in their abilities. Often, a classroom or lecture hall will require all three types of projectors, which can be expensive and cumbersome to use and store.

On the other hand, a computer projector can be all things to all presenters. Most units are capable of displaying a variety of files, including spreadsheets, word processing documents, electronic pictures, Internet pages, and animation. Computer projectors can also connect to other devices, also known as peripherals, such as VCRs and DVD players.

Computer projectors come in a variety of sizes and weights—from portable units that can be easily shared between departments to ultrabright multipurpose models that are perfect for large auditoriums. While the only use of slide and overhead units is simply to project, computer projectors add a whole new through a myriad of features that allow you to have total control over how the information is presented.

Simply put, a computer projector can help you engage and inform your students as never before. With all their benefits, projectors will soon become synonymous with pencils and paper as necessary tools for education.