Types of images

Visual assets are integral to enhancing both comprehension and engagement in online courses. Different types of images—literal, figurative, metaphorical, and instructional—serve unique purposes in this context, each contributing to the learning experience in distinct ways.

Literal Images

Literal images depict exactly what they represent, providing an exact representation of reality. Examples include:

Photographs of Historical Events: In a history course, photographs provide a direct visual reference to past events, helping students to better understand and remember the historical context.

> Ngāti Toa's protest of the fast-track consenting legislation on the steps of Parliament. Photo / Adam Pearse[source: NZ Herald]

- **Detailed Anatomical Drawings**: In a biology class, precise drawings of anatomical structures aid in the accurate understanding of the human body and its functions.

Literal images help clarify facts and provide concrete examples of the concepts being taught. They are invaluable for the accurate representation of material, ensuring that students have a clear and direct visual reference for the content they are learning.

Figurative Images

Figurative images offer an artistic representation that captures the essence of a subject with some level of abstraction. They may not depict reality exactly but aim to convey the feel or spirit of the subject matter. Examples include:

- **Impressionistic Paintings**: In an art course, impressionistic paintings might be used to illustrate different artistic techniques or movements, conveying the overall atmosphere and emotion of the scene rather than precise details.

- **Abstract Diagrams**: In subjects like mathematics or physics, abstract diagrams can represent complex concepts in a simplified, visual form.

- **Stylised Illustrated Scenarios**: A stylised illustrated image of a scenario, like a cartoon depicting a busy marketplace, can be used to convey the essence and dynamics of the scene, often employed in storytelling or scenario-based learning.