



Krystal Bishop



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By Beholding We Are Changed

The Apostle Paul believed that spiritual influence is an important factor in transforming lives: “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image” (2 Corinthians 3:18, KJV). Ellen White concurred that lives are transformed through the experience of beholding: “There is a peculiarly close union between the transformed soul and God. . . . It is impossible to find words to describe this union. . . . The Christian sees the Saviour ever before him, and by beholding, he becomes changed into the same image. . . . He bears the signature of God” (*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 9, p. 380). Contemplation of this principle led us to recognize the potential for transformation in classrooms when teachers and students learn through experiences that immerse them in different types of writing. In the discipline of literacy, this is referred to as genre studies.

We invited classroom practitioners to share the impact that genre studies have had upon their professional practice, as well as upon student learning and engagement. In this special issue of the *JOURNAL*, these classroom teachers welcome readers into their elementary, secondary, or university classrooms. Each article tells a story of students being transformed as readers, writers, and thinkers while participating in a genre study, and of teachers being transformed as they employ these techniques. Although the articles are situated in specific grade-level classrooms, they include principles relevant to teaching the genre at any grade level.

The theme issue begins with “The Genre Study Journey” by Kimberly Lane, who introduces readers to genre studies through the metaphor of a “guided tour.” Following are a series of narratives that guide readers through several types of genre studies. “Reading and Writing Memoir With 4th Graders and Teacher Candidates” by Krystal Bishop provides vignettes demonstrat-

ing the influence of immersion within the context of genre study in reading and writing workshops.

How does knowing how to write in the genre of persuasion benefit students in their walk with Jesus? This question is explored in “I Wanna’—The Art of Persuasion” by Sarah Coulter. Following this, Jan Haluska offers advice based on his experience with expository writing: “The Formula Essay Reconsidered,” in which he contends that this type of essay accommodates every type of persuasion, giving students a framework for academic writing from elementary through university level.

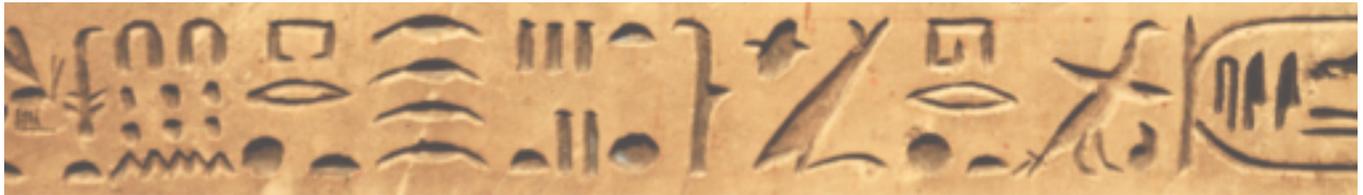
A 2nd-grade teacher confesses that her obsession for teaching the mechanics of writing reduced her students’ efforts to “voiceless strings of words.” Wanting to see their “hearts revealed in their writing,” Eudora Stephens risked engaging in a different type of teaching and learning. “Setting Students Free With Poetry Writing” demonstrates the process and impact of this genre study.

Leaving the primary grades, the reader journeys to a middle school classroom to observe how students learn to see the world with writing eyes. “Writers Read Differently—Empowering Students to Read Like Writers” by Kelly Cauley Rivinius demonstrates both the process and the product of translating “seeing” into thinking and writing.

The issue next features several articles that describe how teachers support the writing process through their own immersion in writing. “Living Like a Writer—Thinking, Experiencing, and Writing Enthusiastically” by Rebekah Bonjour demonstrates one aspect of living like a writer within the context of reflective reading, thoughtful experiencing, and enthusiastic writing. “If You Can Teach, You Can Write” by Sonia Krumm makes a powerful argument for the influence of teachers as writers at all levels, prekindergarten through university.

Finally, Valerie Hunt writes compellingly of the im-

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of the writing craft across the genres. Numerous books and Internet resources provide specific step-by-step approaches and lessons for picture-guided writing, or teachers can add pictures to writing lessons they have already developed.

Finding images is not difficult. In addition to Internet banks of photographs and illustrations, books, magazines, photographs, television, billboards, even one's own image as reflected in a mirror can be the basis for creative writing.

Pictures Evoke Deep Thinking and Better Writing

A single photograph or drawing can take students through every level of Bloom's taxonomy from basic knowledge about the concrete things they see in the picture to the deeper, more abstract skills of questioning, inferring, synthesizing, and evaluating.

Teachers often ask students to create "word pictures" with their writing. Yet the way writers choose words depends on what they, themselves, see. As Aristotle noted, "The soul can not think

without a picture."¹⁰ Unfortunately, if students haven't learned to be visual observers instead of just watchers, they will have nothing to put into words.

When I first learned to read, my basal reader friends Dick, Jane, and Sally advised me to "look" and "see." That advice is just as relevant to writing. When students learn the art of observation through picture-guided writing, they will "look," and "see," and have much more to "write." ✍



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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Robert I. Fitzhenry, ed., *The Harper Book of Quotations*, Third Edition (New York: Harper-Collins Pub., 1993), p. 321.
2. <http://www.museumca.org/picturethis/visual.html>. Accessed June 16, 2009.

3. Beth Olshansky, "Making Writing a Work of Art: Image-Making Within the Writing Process," *Language Arts* 71:5 (September 1994):351.

4. <http://www.picturingwriting.org/combined.html>. Accessed June 16, 2009.

5. Mem Fox, *Radical Reflections: Passionate Opinions on Teaching, Learning, and Living by: Mem Fox* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1993).

6. Hart Day Leavitt and David A. Sohn, *Stop, Look, and Write! Effective Writing Through Pictures* (New York: Bantam Books, 1964), p. 37.

7. It's important for the teacher to monitor and guide students' writing to prevent negative stereotypes and hurtful statements about various cultural or racial groups from becoming part of the descriptions.

8. Mary Ann Hoberman, *The Seven Silly Eaters* (San Diego: Gulliver Books Harcourt, Inc., 1997); _____, *Roller Coaster* (San Diego: Harcourt, Inc., 2003).

9. Lina Lee, "L2 Writing: Using Pictures as a Guided Writing Environment," paper presented at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association Conference (1994), p. 12.

10. Aristotle as cited in http://thinkexist.com/quotation/the_soul_can_not_think_without_a_picture/147168.html.

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portance of "Opening Students' Eyes Through Picture-Guided Writing." She contends that illustrations are the "universal blood donor" that will pump life into the teaching of any genre. The benefits of this type of study are legion, as outlined in the article.

It is our hope and prayer that the readers of this themed issue will see the boundless opportunities for transforming every aspect of reading and writing when students are encouraged to learn under the influence of genre studies. And furthermore, it is our wish that readers discover that their own living and teaching are transformed as a result of "beholding" the experiences of teachers who have shared their journeys.—Krystal Bishop and Valerie Hunt.

Krystal Bishop, Ed.D., the Coordinator for the special issue of the JOURNAL, is a Professor of Education at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee. She conducts a genre study in an elementary classroom and with undergraduate students every year; has done personal narrative, memoir, literary nonfiction, and poetry genre studies in multigrade classrooms; and has made presentations at regional and national conferences on genre studies. The editorial staff expresses appreciation for her assistance in preparing the issue.

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