

Preface

Although most teachers would agree that visualization plays an important role in literacy, most have not intentionally taught visualization. At a time when students are influenced more than ever by visual media, they and their teachers seldom use visualization deliberately as a strategy and skill to promote learning. The purpose of this “how-to” book is to provide educators with a series of stages, goals, and lessons on using visualization to improve student writing.

Although writing is essentially a visual/kinesthetic activity, it cannot be divorced from the oral communication on which it is based. Many of our students, however, are much more aware of links between oral language and visual imagery than of links between oral language and written text. To some students, written text seems superfluous. Teachers are used to hearing struggling students beg for the film version of any literary work—perhaps because today’s students live in a world so rich with visual images that they are rarely required to create images for themselves. One hundred years ago, teaching methods could be based on a culture without video. Unfortunately, much writing instruction is still based on literacy linked to orality, despite the fact that today’s students are accustomed to sophisticated visual images. Teachers can capitalize on their students’ familiarity with the visual by helping them develop visualization as a strategy to strengthen their writing. The lessons in this book encourage students to establish links between oral language and written language through visualization. Integrating visualization into the writing process helps students think as they create text.

This book is intended to help classroom teachers, writing instructors, and other professionals involved in writing instruction. It can also be used for staff development programs and as a supplement in a variety of writing education courses at colleges and universities.