



Students write magnificent stories through collage with an innovative program called...

Image-Making



Image-Making Within the Writing Process is a literacy program that provides an alternative pathway

papers he's created, David immediately discovers a "swirling blue tornado" in his marbled paper. He traces the swirls of his twister with his finger and then uses scissors to free his tornado shape from the page. He spins his tornado in circles, making great whooshing sounds. For David, there is little separation between his textured papers, his story idea, and his physical body.

As a visual and kinesthetic learner, David chooses to map out his entire story visually first, cutting and tearing shapes, arranging them into collage illustrations, and gluing them in place. When invited to tell his tale, he eagerly puts his collage pictures in a row. "I am looking out my *strong* window at the *big* storm. The wind is whipping." David's arms fly wildly in the air. He points to a marbled paper dotted with blobs of purple paint. "We are caught in a meteor shower....Huge rocks like pumpkins hit me from all sides! It's raining rocks!"

All around him, David's classmates are engaged in this same story-making venture. Not only is the process extremely enticing to children, but it results in the publication of magnificent picture books.

"Writing used to be hard for me before, but now it's easy!" says David. "All I have to do is look at each page and then I describe some things I see. Now writing is my favorite part of school. I love my book. I'd like to marry it. My parents are going to love it, too."



into writing for children with diverse learning styles. This is certainly the case with David, a very active eight-year-old who once confessed to his teacher, "I hate to write.

The words fly out of my head before I can get them down on paper." With Image-Making, though, David's writing soars.

Kneeling amidst a spread of hand-painted

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By Beth Olshansky

KIDS AS AUTHOR-ILLUSTRATORS

The Image-Making program starts by defining children not just as authors, but as authors *and* illustrators. After studying the methods of collage author-illustrators such as Eric Carle, Leo Lionni, and Ezra Jack Keats and exploring the concept of texture, children create their own portfolios of hand-painted textured papers. They use a variety of texturing techniques including marbleizing; splatter painting; straw painting; and printing with plastic wrap, bubbles, and sponges. They will use these papers to make collage pictures.

WRITING FROM STRENGTHS

Once their portfolios are done, teachers tell the children: "Your stories are hidden inside your textured papers. It is your job as author-illustrators to discover these stories." With that, the children are encouraged to follow their own creative process to make stories. This could mean making all their collage pictures first, writing all their words first, or weaving back and forth between the two. With this creative license, all children have the opportunity to enter writing from a position of personal strength and enthusiasm—to create stories in whatever way makes sense to them. Interestingly, most children—even children of the upper grades—begin the process with a visual image.

REHEARSING THE STORY

Children who rely on their pictures to inspire their narrative "read" their collages, drawing vivid detail and descriptive language from the colors, textures, and designs. They are encouraged to

orally rehearse their story lines before transcribing them into written text. This rehearsal is helpful for students like David, who struggle with putting words on paper. By retelling the story repeatedly, students are able to revise and memorize the story line before tackling writing. And if they should forget the words, all they need do is refer back to their pictures where their stories are all "written down."

After children revise their stories, parent volunteers type them on computers. The words and pictures are then spiral-bound to create beautiful collage picture books.

TO FIND OUT MORE

Image-Making Within the Writing Process has been awarded federal funding for teacher training nationwide.

To find out about subsidized teacher-training programs in your state, write to Beth Olshansky, The Laboratory for Interactive Learning, University of New Hampshire, 89 Main St., Hood House, Durham, New Hampshire 03824-35777; or call (603) 659-6018.



Lauren in the midst of bubble printing.



Ross hanging a marbled paper to dry.



Chelsea shares her collage story about a rainbow.