

Editor

BEVERLY J. ROBINSON-RUMBLE

Senior Consultants

HUMBERTO M. RASI

JOHN M. FOWLER, C. B. ROCK,

DONALD R. SAHLY

CONSULTANTS

General Conference

ENRIQUE BECERRA

Africa-Indian Ocean

EMILIEENNE RASAMOELY

Eastern Africa

HUDSON KIBUUKA

Euro-Africa

RONALD STRASDOWSKY

Euro-Asia

HARRY MAYDEN

Inter-America

CARLOS ARCHBOLD

North America

RICHARD OSBORN

Northern Asia-Pacific

MASAJI UYEDA

South America

ROBERTO C. AZEVEDO

Southern Asia

K. JESURATNAM

South Pacific

LESTER DEVINE

Trans-Europe

ORVILLE WOOLFORD

Southern Africa

PAUL W. COETSER

Southern Asia-Pacific

STEPHEN GUPTILL

Book Review Editor

CLARENCE DUNBEBIN

Research Editor

JEROME D. THAYER

Copy Editor

RANDY HALL

Art Direction/Graphic Design

HOWARD I. BULLARD

Advisory Board

ENRIQUE BECERRA, JOHN FOWLER, KATHY

GODDARD, LON GRUESBECK, DUNBAR

HENRI, BETTY HOWARD, ERMA LEE,

WARREN MINDER, RICHARD OSBORN,

HUMBERTO M. RASI, MICHAEL RYAN,

DONALD R. SAHLY, VIRGINIA SMITH

W • I • N • N • E • R

1994 • 1995 • 1996

EdPress

Distinguished Achievement Award

THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION publishes articles concerned with a variety of topics pertinent to Adventist education. Opinions expressed by our writers do not necessarily represent the views of the staff or the official position of the Department of Education of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION (ISSN 0021-8480) is published bimonthly, October through May, and a summer issue for June, July, August, and September by the Department of Education, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600. TELEPHONE (301) 680-5075, FAX (301) 622-9627; E-mail: 74617,1231 (CompuServe). Subscription price, U.S. \$17.25. Single copy, U.S. \$3.50. Periodical postage paid at Silver Spring, Maryland, and additional mailing office. Please send all changes of address to Southwestern ColorGraphics, P. O. Box 677, Keene, TX 76059, including both old and new address. Address all editorial and advertising correspondence to the Editor. © Copyright 1998 General Conference of SDA, POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE JOURNAL OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION, P. O. Box 677, Keene, TX 76059.

Using Writing to Train Thinkers



It is the work of true education to . . . train the youth to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men's thoughts."* Most of us have read and/or heard this passage as a key sermon thought; we have included it in school handbooks, have used it to promote Adventist education, and have repeated as well as reinforced it in multiple contexts with teachers in training and students in our classrooms. So, what relationship exists between this statement and the focus of this issue—writing?

Simply stated, the act of making meaning through writing requires (unlike the majority of instructional activities) the highest possible levels of cognitive processing. Language use and understanding demand the translation of symbolic representations (letters and sounds) into a form that others will understand. However, when I decide to communicate through writing, not only does my mind go through the above-mentioned mental translation gymnastics, it is also vaulted to levels of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. How? Well, I must first mentally evaluate *what*, *how*, and *why* in order to write. This leads me to analyze my mental dictionary and thesaurus for words that fit the purpose and audience I have chosen. Next, I must synthesize these word choices into a sentence structure in order to create meaning.

Once my words are on paper, I must evaluate whether I am saying what I wish to convey. More often than not, I must revise my writing before submitting it to the person with whom I wish to communicate. Throughout the process, thinking occurs—thinking that is focused, deliberate, and original.

If, as we claim, we as a corporate Adventist educational community truly want our students to become thinkers, not just reflectors, then we will devote significantly more instructional time to systematic writing instruction. However, this does not mean assigning more of the traditional type of writing assignment: "For tomorrow, write a one-page paper on item 2, page 74 in your social studies text." The methodological approach to writing I propose involves direct instruction and has as its goal writing for authentic purposes. Outcomes for students from authentic, purposeful writing activities include, but are not limited to, higher levels of motivation, increased understanding of syntactical usages, and increased confidence about the student's writing ability, as well as enhanced thinking skills.

Thus, this issue's purpose is to help teachers develop a systematic approach to writing instruction. While eight articles cannot detail every aspect of writing instruction (many others could be included, such as approaches for teaching the learning disadvantaged or persuasive writing methods), the topics included do address a number of substantive writing issues that affect teachers at all instructional levels. The lead article (Ostrander) outlines a process for developing systematic writing instruction. The second (Jensen) is a personal narrative telling how the author challenged and expanded her students' thinking abilities. The next three articles (Jones, Burton, Closser and Warren) detail specific curricular and methodological approaches for writing. The sixth article (McGuire) describes in a humorous way a very real and serious issue—what to do about writer's block. Next, Hill offers some practical advice on how to prevent and detect plagiarism as well as help students avoid this pitfall. And finally, Coffee explores ways to evaluate writing. She offers not only practical advice, but also includes sample grading rubrics and scales.

I know that some teachers are truly frightened by the thought of expanding writing instruction beyond what is outlined in a teacher's edition. Take courage. Read the articles and use the authors' suggestions to find ways to use writing to stimulate your students' crucial skills in critical thinking and communicating.—Ray Ostrander.

*Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publ. Assn., 1903), p. 17.

Ray Ostrander, the Coordinator for this issue, is an Associate Professor of Teaching and Learning at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, where he teaches, among other classes, a writing process methods course. The JOURNAL staff expresses its thanks for his enthusiasm and cooperation. During the issue's preparation, he served as a visiting professor at Newbold College in England, but faithfully dealt with requests for additional information, as well as numerous other details.