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# You Ought To Be in Pictures

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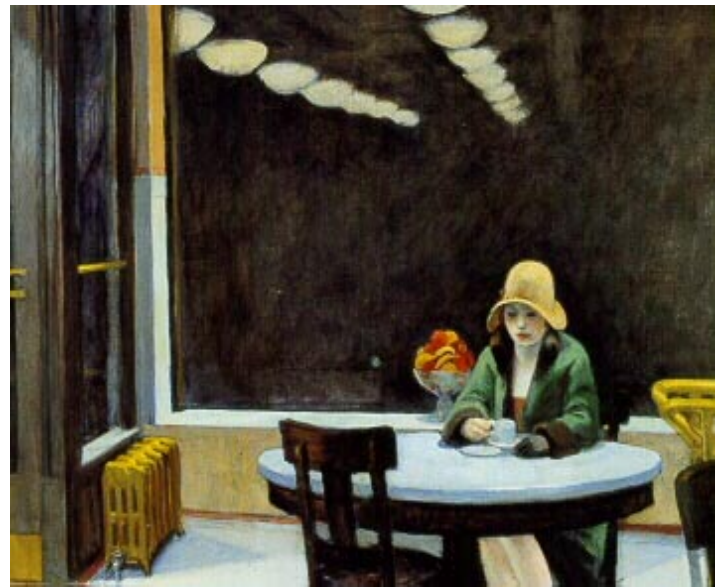


By Bonnie Valdes

I have fallen in love with Doug Buehl's strategy "You Ought To Be in Pictures"!!! (Buehl, 2001 and CRISS Manual pg. 166) I have used it many times as a culminating writing and discussion piece to reflect and enhance understanding of topics studied. I thought I would share a couple of my examples with my fellow trainers.

**Example 1:** After completing the Learning Plan on "The Restless Decade," I ask participants to turn to page 166 in the manual. I talk them through the strategy and take them into the picture at the bottom of the page. I think it is necessary to model with this mental imagery exercise. Then I tell my participants that we have just finished an extensive study in our social studies class of the 1920s, and I am using the painting *Automat* by Edward Hopper (1927) for a guided practice activity. I place the painting on the overhead, and I ask them to respond to these questions:

- What is your name?
- Where do you live?
- What are the date and time?
- Where are you?
- Why are you there?
- What is the situation?
- How are you feeling?
- What are you thinking?
- What are your plans for the future?



*Automat* by Edward Hopper

After a few participants have shared their writings, and there are always some good examples, I share mine.

What is your name? *My name is Louise.*

Where do you live? *I live in Chicago.*

What are the date and time? *The date is December 1927.*

Where are you? *I am at the train station, sitting at the automat.* (You may need to explain what an automat is for our younger teachers. I don't have any trouble remembering, myself. HA!)

Why are you there? *I am thinking of getting on the next train, running away, escaping!*

What is your situation? *I am "Big Al's" girlfriend, and I am very well cared for by him. He gives me money and provides me with everything I want. However, I just found out what "Big Al" does for a living. I am scared and I want no part of this life with him.*

How are you feeling? *I am feeling frightened and uncertain of my future.*

What are you thinking? *I think I need to get on the next train and leave with only the clothes on my back. I know if I do, I will not ever be able to return to this great city.*

What are your plans for the future? *My plans are to go home to my family in Iowa and live a happy, secure life.*

**Example 2:** After completing the "The Two Sides" Learning Plan, I tell my participants to imagine that we just completed an extensive study of the Civil War. I use "You Ought To Be in Pictures" as a culminating activity again. This

time I use the picture *Untitled (The Soldier)* by N. C. Wyeth.

To set the stage, I ask them to study the picture (at right). Look at the soldier's face. Study his body language. Now draw your attention to the horse and the colors the artist has included. What do you think these colors represent? What body language does the horse portray? These are the questions I give the participants:

- Imagine you are this soldier.
- What is your name?
- Describe yourself.
- What is your situation?
- What happened this day?
- What are you thinking?
- How do you feel?
- Now imagine you are sitting with a good friend ten years later. You are looking at this picture. Describe your present situation and what memories you have of this day.



*Untitled (The Soldier)* by N.C. Wyeth

I have participants share their writings with one another in groups, and I ask that one person from each group be selected to share with the whole group.

After all have shared, I share this example that was given to me by a social studies teacher in one of my workshops.

What is your name? *I am Thomas Jackson, known to my soldiers as Stonewall.*

Describe yourself. *I am very religious and deeply involved in military discipline. I have been through many campaigns and I am well known for the Shenandoah Campaign where General Nathaniel R. Banks was defeated.*

What is your situation? *I am feeling great sadness because of the loss of the soldiers in the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Volunteer brigade who were the victims of Yankee bullets.*

What happened this day? *I have just accomplished the great task of my victorious flanking movement at a place called Chancellorsville.*

What are you thinking? *I am wondering how my dear Esposita and my dear daughter Julie are doing today at home in Lexington, Virginia. I am longing to see them both.*

How do you feel? *I feel loneliness, but I know God is with me in this terrible war. I hope to return home soon, victoriously!*

Now imagine you are sitting with a good friend ten years later. You are looking at this picture. Describe your present situation and what memories you have of this day.

*I am sitting with my dear friend General John Reynolds, and we are reminiscing the war. We are lamenting the fact that we were both shot on the front lines while on horseback, where we were easy targets. We are also debating that if we had lived is it possible the outcome of the war would have been different.*

(Note: Stonewall Jackson was shot by friendly fire. Many believe his death was the emotional turning point in the war.)

Of course, I always end by having participants reflect on the benefits of using this strategy and by asking them to share how they could incorporate this wonderful strategy in their content classrooms. I think the greatest benefit is the high interest and engaged learning for our students. I always encourage my participants to post the pictures they choose for this strategy and then place the students' writings around them on a bulletin board or wall. I tell them you won't be able to keep your students away from this part of your room!!!

About the author: Bonnie J. Valdes is a CRISS Master Trainer and coauthor of both the CRISS training manual and *Project CRISS for Students: It's a Brain Thing ~ Learning How to Learn!*

The Project CRISS training manual is not for purchase. It is available only to participants in CRISS Level I trainings.

For more information about the Level I training, please go to [www.projectcriss.com](http://www.projectcriss.com) and click on What We Do.

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