

# Discussion Board: Are You Hiding Behind a Curtain?

## Discussion Prompt

In *Write Like This: Teaching Real-World Writing Through Modeling & Mentor Texts*, Kelly Gallagher states that many reading, language arts, and writing teachers are like the Wizard of Oz. What does this mean?

He explains that, like the Wizard, many teachers hide behind a curtain. Before class, they do all the hard work as they prepare for their writing lessons. Although these teachers may save valuable class time when they model using their already written and beautifully polished and sometimes perfect examples, they conceal the difficult steps or strategies that good writers use. As a result, their students see only the product, not the process.

When these teachers do come out from behind the curtain and stand in front of their students, they often convey the idea that writing is an effortless task. The truth about what good writers do to construct meaning has not been clearly demonstrated. So, students get the false impression that writing should be easy. They end up frustrated when they realize that they are unable to emulate the same type of “perfect” writing that their teachers have modeled for them.

## Discussion Questions

1. Why is it important for us to come out from behind the curtain and demonstrate/model the difficult steps and processes (the confusion, the messiness, the stopping and starting, the hesitation) that we go through as we try to write?
2. Would you describe yourself as a “Wizard of Oz” writing teacher? Give reasons to support your answer.
3. What are the challenges of using impromptu writing to model writing?

REFERENCE: Gallagher, 2011.