

Predicting Plot Development

<input type="checkbox"/> Time Required	About 15–20 minutes
<input type="checkbox"/> Primary Skills	Writing, speaking
<input type="checkbox"/> Format	(Ex.) 4-person groups
<input type="checkbox"/> Overview and Goals	
<p>One of the pleasures of reading is that it allows readers to freely use their imagination, making the book a portal to travel to an imaginary world. Reading is a process where the reader uses textual information as stimuli to imagine situations and characters, create scenes, and build worlds in their minds. Sometimes one can feel not only the characters' inner emotions but the sounds, the lights, smells, and temperatures around them, and even sense the presence of an unknown entity within the story. Some of those inexperienced in reading, even in their native language, can become overwhelmed and lose interest in reading because they never experience the pleasure and joy of such an immersive experience. Some novice readers may also skim the English text as they turn the pages and assume they have read it despite not really understanding what is written, and some may even recognize individual words but fail to grasp the meaning of the passage as a whole, finding neither inspiration nor joy in their experience.</p> <p>The visual information in many picture books and illustrated books is rich, complementing the textual information to allow the readers to intuitively grasp the written information. Thanks to the illustrations, readers will likely be more engaged in their reading, especially as the scene described on the page stimulates their imagination to expand and unfold worlds before their minds' eyes, instead of simply recreating the illustrations of the book in their minds. Readers can learn to appreciate the inner life of the characters they read about, including how those characters relate to the outside world and what they feel and believe. The words become easier to remember in context when they are read in conjunction with certain images.</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> To Prepare in Advance (required teaching materials, equipment, etc.)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document camera • Picture books 	
<input type="checkbox"/> Procedures	
<p>This exercise uses the storybook <i>Come Away from the Water, Shirley</i>, which tells the story of Shirley and her family on vacation at the beach, with Shirley's parents depicted on the left-hand pages and the scenes she imagines on the right. See the picture book introduction page on this homepage for details.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use a document camera to show the illustration on the title page and ask learners to describe what they associate with its imagery. 	

2. Ask the students about stories, movies, and animated films featuring pirates (e.g., *Treasure Island*, *Peter Pan*, and *Pirates of the Caribbean*).
3. Show only the right-hand pages with the document camera. These contain illustrations of Shirley's imaginary adventure. Consider and incorporate events and details that are not depicted in the illustrations. It can be fun for students to include as many outlandish ideas as they can. If the teacher can improvise a story and tell it first, it will be easier for them to visualize it and its imagery. Tell the students to use their own words and expressions without a dictionary. Prioritize fluency over accuracy of language for this activity.
4. Have students write down their stories after they practice free storytelling in their groups.
5. (Application) (1) Read Shirley's adventure story to the students. (2) Have the students create a script and practice group reading. (3) Create a script and use it to perform dramatic skits.

Application/Explanation

Creating a story as a group without restrictions through *predicting plot development* is another way for your class to experience collaborative learning. However, in classes with students who may struggle with this kind of exercise, there is another method in which group members take turns creating a sentence or two each. In such cases, rather than one person providing a sentence for each illustration, instruct the students to go through one or two rounds in which they each make a sentence or two. By proceeding in this way, students will become more comfortable with expanding their imagination. They will be better able to express their creativity, leading to more sentences being created.

Also, to encourage group work, fluency can be reinforced by the teacher selecting either a nonsensical or an out-of-place word for each group during story creation and instructing them to find a way to use that word. This will allow the students' stories to take unexpected and exciting turns.

(Text: Yuka Kusanagi)