

15<sup>th</sup> TEA Summer School, August 18 to 22, in Leibnitz, Austria

One of the trainers at the TEA Summer School was Andrew Wright, who focused on storytelling and story writing, the writing of poetry, and on how to encourage students to publish and perform their work. As Andrew puts it in his article *The Place of Stories in ELT* (published in “Storytelling in ELT” edited by Amos Paran and Eleanor Watts, ISBN 1-901095-16-9), “The food we eat makes our bodies and the stories we hear make our minds. In using stories in language teaching we are using something bigger and more important than language teaching itself!”

In a number of delightful and instructive workshops Andrew opened wide his treasure chest of experience and ideas and shared his wisdom with the participants. One way he suggested of how to help students write stories was the ‘tool’ of visualization. Three of the following texts were written in Andrew’s workshop, the fourth was produced later and has already been tried out quite successfully with 8<sup>th</sup>-graders (14-year-olds) in Wien West.

Visualisation (Maria Garschall)  
floating in music

On a warm summer afternoon imagine yourself visiting an old abbey church on a rock above a medieval town.

In front of the church you read a sign: “Bach Concert”

You lean against the heavy wooden entrance door to open it. You feel the cool air on your face as you slowly walk in. As your eyes are getting used to the dark you notice the incense smell. You look around and you see golden angels, redish marble and dark wooden pews. Rays of sunlight come in from the windows high above. Lots of people are waiting for the music to start. You feel the silence. You look around for a comfortable place to sit and you find a space on a red carpet on one of the side altars. You cuddle up and you feel warm as the organ music starts to play. The tunes come in waves and surround you. Music fills up the air above, beside and below you. You are floating in a bubble, warm, safe and lightened. No gravity left.

After a timeless period, the music ends. People applaud and you can feel the ground you’re sitting on. In your own speed you leave the concert and come back to the room where you are. Wiggle your fingers and toes and open your eyes.

Visualisation (Candy Fresacher)

Sit back in your rocking chair to visualize a country scene just off the porch. High grass waves in the slight breeze and you are feeling very calm and peaceful. As you study the landscape, you see just the tops of the floppy ears of a large, brown hare as it jumps through the grass. As you concentrate on the hare, you realise that you can accompany him on his journey. How powerful you feel – such strong legs – excellent for jumping high and wide and fast. And your ears – they are long, and sleek and beautiful and you suddenly hear so well that all the sounds of the countryside are magnified. The bird calls, the movement of the ants, even the leaves falling to the ground thunder in your ears. You feel powerful. This power goes from your ears, through your head and body, down to your very paws and claws.

But! Now your ears are warning you – you are startled by what you hear and immediately your heart starts pounding and your legs want to run and jump in all directions. The

thunderous noise drowns out the sounds of your heart. You recognise fear: your enemy, Mr. McGregor, is near.

After only a few second of panic, your heartbeat slows down and your legs speed up. You know you are more powerful, faster and more atune with nature than that Other. As you push off the ground, using all the muscles of your legs, you feel like you are flying. You feel wonderful as the grass lies far beneath you as you jump high. The countryside blurs at this fast pace and you awake, once more, comfortable in your rocking chair.

### The last duchess

I remember seeing a picture once of a duchess in Venice. She was painted so beautifully her husband was jealous of the painter. But her eyes were so sad. I stood in front of her portrait for some time comparing her beauty with my own. But that was all so long ago.

I have travelled to many other places in the world, have seen many other beautiful women, but the duchess stays in my mind. Was she more beautiful than I? Were her clothes, so red and vibrant, of better quality than my own? Did her husband love her more than mine did me? And what of her children? The painting must have been painted before she had any. Otherwise she would surely no longer be as beautiful? Did a lover cause the sadness seeping from her eyes? Or her husband?

As I sit here, in the garden of my small villa, I wonder at the size of her palace. I stare at the trees above me and wonder why they remain beautiful for so many years and I have come to this. Where is the woman who compared her beauty to those others? Who is left to admire my brocade and lace and silk? Or my vast bosom and soulful eyes? Oh, that I could compare myself so favourably with that duchess once more.



Visualisation to prompt free speaking or free writing (Jutta Zopf-Klasek)

Close your eyes and imagine walking down a street in a town that you haven't been to before. You're walking along this street until you come to a square.

What does the square look like? – Is it lined by houses? - What does the space in the middle look like? - Are there any trees? – Maybe you can tell what season it is by looking at the trees. - Is it spring or summer? – Has autumn come or maybe winter? - Look around and find some place to sit down. Now you can take a really good look at everything around you:

Are there people in the street? - Do they seem to be heading somewhere or is there anyone who's obviously going for a walk? -

What are the houses around you like? - Are they big or small? - Are they all the same colour or have they been painted differently? - How many floors has each of them got? - What about the roofs? - Have a look at the windows: Are they closed or are there any open ones? - Anybody to be seen in a window?

Now listen to the sounds around you: Can you hear car engines? - Can you hear people walking by? - Any voices to be heard? - Any other sounds like a dog barking, a child calling out or probably a bird? -

Can you smell anything? - Is it a pleasant smell or an unpleasant one? - What exactly is it that you can smell? -

Can you feel anything on your skin or in your hair? - Maybe the sun or the wind?

When you've taken all that in, try to find out whether this is a place you enjoy being at or one that you don't like. - When you've found out, look around a last time, get up and return to where you've come from. - Take your time to come back to the classroom and when you're ready, open your eyes.

If you like, make a sketch or a little drawing of what was most important to you when you were at the square.

Tasks:

Option 1: Find a partner and tell her/him about your impressions of the square you visited in your visualization. In return, listen to what your partner saw in his/her visualization.

Option 2: Write down your impressions of the square.

Option 3: Write down your impressions of the square, decide on who you would like to read them and ask for their comment.

Visualization to prompt free writing or free speaking (Jutta Zopf-Klasek)

Think of something that took place in the summer – maybe something exciting happened to you or did anything boring occur? - It might have been an unexpected incident - or an event that you knew would come.- Did anything funny happen - or something strange - or maybe something annoying? -

When you've decided, think of the day when it all happened. - What was the weather like that day? - What time of day did your little story occur?

Remember the place. – Where were you? - Was it indoors or outdoors? - Where exactly were you?

Were you alone or was someone with you?

What did you see when you looked around? - Could you hear anything? Any noises? - Did you smell anything?

What was going on - and how did you react? – How did you feel? - Did you do something or say something? What about the other people around you? -

When you can see all this with you inner eye and when you remember clearly what was going on that day, slowly come back to the classroom and when you're ready, open your eyes.

Make a little sketch or drawing to illustrate your story.

Tasks:

Option 1: Write down what you've just visualized and find a title for your text.

Option 2: Find a partner and tell her/him what it was that happened that day. Be careful to give as many details as possible. In return, listen to your partner's story.