# Integrating Language Skills through Storytelling

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## Abstract

This paper reports the effectiveness of using storytelling in integrating the four language skills and enhancing the language proficiency level of adult English language learners. Forty adult English language learners participated in the present study on a voluntary basis. They were instructed and trained in the four language skills through a storytelling-based suggested integrated instructional model developed by the writer. The effectiveness of the integrated instructional model was measured by using a pre-post test and applying Blake's modified gain ratio. The findings of the study indicated that the scores obtained by the participants on the post-test were higher than those on the pre-test. The suggested model proved to be effective in integrating the four language skills and enhancing the language proficiency level of the participants.

**Keywords:** language skills, storytelling, integrated instructional model

## 1. Introduction

Teachers of English generally acknowledge the close links among the four strands of the language arts: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. For the context of the present study, the integration of language skills is defined as the process in which each language skill is learned in terms of the others.-Learning to listen, talk, read, and write always involves something-some content to listen, talk, read, or write about. The teaching of language skills cannot be left to chance. The integration of language skills can best be achieved through involving students in hands-on communicative language learning activities. The active involvement of students in communicative language learning activities enhances the integration of the language strands. According to Hiep (2007), the students' communicative skills are developed by interacting with each other on meaningful things. Shen (2003) argues that using 'Language + Communication (L+C) Approach' improves the learners' communicative skills. School environments for integrated learning must be safe and structured, with ample opportunities for long periods of reading, writing, and carrying on task- or topic-oriented conversations in the classroom. Teachers can serve as models by engaging in all of these activities with their students. Students can learn sub-skills efficiently within meaningful interactions with others and with print.

## 2. Theoretical Background

Children's literature is not just for kids; it can be used successfully with adults. Its successful use in adult ESL programs is enhanced by age-sensitive book selections, clear class presentations, and the creative development of related lesson and unit plans. Children's literature can be one of the most effective teaching materials available for students of all ages and can be adapted to adult ESL programs (Smallwood, 1992). One of the different forms of children's literature is storytelling. It is sometimes called oral literature.

### 2.1 Integrating Language Skills

The issue of integration is clearly raised in language learning than in other school participants. Nunn (2006) asserts that the language learning theory has seen a gradual move towards a more holistic view of language use. According to Wagner (1985), integrating the language arts means providing natural learning situations in which listening, speaking, reading, and writing can be developed together for real purposes and real audiences. Literature on language learning supports the integration of the language arts and asserts its significance in developing language learners' communicative competence and enhancing their language proficiency level (e. g., Darn, 2006; Jing, 2006).

Numerous articles and papers have discussed the benefits of storytelling in integrating the four language skills,

developing language abilities, inspiring students to talk, write, perform, listen, communicate and learn (e. g., Colon-Vila, 1997; Cooter, 1991; De Ramirez, 1996; Evans & Strong, 1996; Houston, 1997; Kalfus & Van Der Schyff, 1996; Pedersen, 1993; Reynolds, 1992; Sasser & Zorena, 1991; Schaafsma, 1996; Van Groenou, 1995; West & Donato, 1995). The storytelling process is enjoyable for both teachers and learners. Storytelling emphasizes a positive, collaborative, and supportive classroom learning environment in which English language learners could develop skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It decreases the students' affective filter and encourages their imagination and cooperation. Engaging English language learners in storytelling-based language learning activities encourages their oral expression and improves their oral communication skills. The integration of storytelling into the language arts curriculum could lead to an improvement of general language proficiency in listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing.

*2.2 Storytelling and Language Learning*

Storytelling is an old tradition that has existed since the dawn of time in every culture. It is as old as speech. According to Bruner (2002), storytelling is universal, perhaps the dominant form of discourse. Schell (2004) states, "Our daily communication with others and our understanding of history rely heavily on storytelling and storytellers" (p. 1). Green (2004) claims, "Indeed, some writers have even claimed that all knowledge comes in the form of stories" (p. 2). Zacher (2006) supports the finding that when people hear or read stories, they create their own identities and compare their ideas to those of others. Daiute (2004) writes that telling one's story creates self concept and identity claims.

Storytelling as a pedagogical strategy is not new or unique. It is one of the most accessible teaching tools available to all teachers, especially language teachers. Storytelling is widely used in language teaching. It is a special activity that may be reserved for special times or for all times. It can be exploited at all learning levels and ages for varied purposes. Many studies have been conducted to look at the plausibility of storytelling in ESL and EFL classrooms (Lin, 2003; Yao, 2003).

In ESL settings, many language teachers consider storytelling the cornerstone of their teaching profession. They use stories to enhance English language learners' abilities to acquire and integrate the four language arts: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and raise their cultural awareness. Storytelling is beneficial in teaching and learning of languages. Using storytelling in ESL settings enhances the language teaching and learning process as well as the learners' process of transformation.

Findings of studies utilizing storytelling showed that storytelling enhanced the integration of language skills (Egan, 2005; Sadik, 2008; Tsou, Wang, & Tzeng, 2006), developed language abilities, (Colon-Vila, 1997; Houston, 1997), improved students' listening comprehension, (Neugebauer & Currie-Rubin, 2009; Verdugo & Belmonte, 2007), improved students' reading comprehension and inferential skills (Craig, Hull, Haggart, & Crowder, 2001), built vocabulary (Bishop & Kimball 2006; Kuyvenhoven, 2009; Neugebauer & Currie-Rubin, 2009), enhanced grammar learning (Taylor, 2000; Wajnryb, 2003), developed students' literacy (Brand & Donato, 2001), developed oral language skills (Neuman, 2006; Sadik, 2008), improved students' writing skills (Ballast, Stephens, & Radcliffe, 2008; Gakhar & Thompson, 2007), enriched students' learning experience (Xu, Park, & Baek, 2011), encouraged students to express their ideas and thoughts (Lee, 2005; Shin & Park, 2008), helped students develop competence with print literature (Roney, 2009), empowered students' critical and visual thinking (Gakhar & Thompson, 2007; Myatt, 2008), and improved social interactions and language outcomes (Maier & Fisher (2007).

Using storytelling in ESL and EFL settings improves learners' general language proficiency in listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Storytelling is effective in fostering diversity in the classroom of students from different cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds. It enhances global networking by increasing the awareness and understanding of cultural differences. Storytelling emphasizes a positive, collaborative, and supportive classroom climate in which students could develop skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The benefits of using storytelling in the classroom include decreasing the students' affective filter, encouraging their imagination and cooperation, and enhancing their listening skills and verbal proficiency.

Adult learners can benefit in many ways from storytelling. The stories are contextually whole and inherently meaningful. They provide an authentic source of comprehensible English language input and can lower inhibitions. Storytelling can help develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Therefore, teachers should integrate storytelling into their teaching. After a story has been enjoyed and understood, numerous listening, speaking, reading, and writing opportunities can emerge. The teacher can adjust the story to learners' interests, needs, and levels of second or foreign language proficiency by carefully selecting appropriate books and by modifying the language during telling the story or reading it orally. Picture books offer the advantage of

illustrations to explain much of the vocabulary. Repeated patterns provide an additional aid for language learning.

The writer strongly believes that storytelling, the art of orally sharing a story or experience to an audience, is one of the best techniques that can be used to integrate language skills. Storytelling is an invaluable teaching technique. The present study attempted to answer the question: "How effective is the use of storytelling in integrating the four language skills and enhancing the language proficiency level of adult English language learners?" In light of reviewing the most related literature, the present study was concerned with testing the following directional hypotheses:

1.  There would be significant differences (favoring the post-test) between means of scores obtained by the participants on a pre-test, post-test comparison.

2.  The suggested integrated instructional model of storytelling would prove to be effective in integrating the four language skills.

3.  The suggested integrated instructional model of storytelling would prove to be effective in enhancing the participants' language proficiency level.

### 3. Methods

*3.1 Participants*

Forty male and female adult English language learners served as the participants of the present study. They were involved in the study on a voluntary basis. Their ages range from thirty to fifty years old. They were exposed to English as a foreign language for six to twelve years before moving to the United States of America.

*3.2 Data Collection*

The writer used two data collection instruments: A pre-post test and a suggested training model.

3.2.1 The Pre-post Test

The test utilized in the present study (Appendix 1) has been developed by the writer to be used as a pre-post test. It has been designed to assess the participants' language proficiency level. It has been judged and piloted on a pilot study group (different from the group of the study). Modifications have been made in the light of the judges' comments and the results of the pilot study.

The modified version of the test consisted of four components: listening, reading, writing, and telling a story. The maximum score on the test was one hundred points. The time allotted for responding to the questions on the test was three hours. The test has been constructed in light of the specific behavioral objectives and content area points of the training activities of the suggested integrated instructional model of storytelling. The instructions of the test were simple, brief, and clear. They contained information about the objective of the test, the time allowed for the participants to complete the test, and the directions of how to record their answers. The intra –rater reliability of the test was (0.96), and the statistical validity of the test, which was obtained from the square root of the reliability score, was (0.98). The scores of the participants on the test indicated that it has discriminated among the participants' language proficiency level. It was administered to the participants twice before training as a pre-test to measure the participants' language proficiency level, and after training as a post-test to measure the effectiveness of the suggested integrated instructional model of storytelling in integrating the four language skills and enhancing the participants' language proficiency level.

3.2.2 The Suggested Training Model

*The training model utilized in the present study was a suggested integrated instructional model for the language arts that required careful planning and implementation. It capitalized on the centrality of language. Skills to be taught have been clearly defined and consciously included in setting –up activities. The ideas and activities in the model have been designed to help students to communicate with each other; increase knowledge across the curriculum; strengthen creative abilities; develop fluency in listening, speaking, reading ,and writing; and engage in both cooperative and independent learning.*

The model contained fifteen stories adapted for classroom use. The writer used three types of stories: a) spoken stories (folktales) whose language is folksy, and b) written stories to be read and retold; some of these stories included repeated patterns: rhyming, as well as repetitions of words, refrains, or entire sentences to provide an additional aid for language learning, and c) picture book stories to offer the advantage of illustration to explain much of the vocabulary in the story. To enhance the students' communicative abilities, the writer used the following classroom interaction models: a) Teacher tells stories and students listen, b) Student(s) tell stories and

other students listen, and c) A student tells a story and both the teacher and the other students listen. Most of the techniques used in telling stories to students aimed to encourage them to hear stories, see them, act them out, retell them, revise and rewrite them. In telling stories to the students, the writer used the following four techniques: picture book storytelling, total physical response storytelling, mime storytelling, and into- through- beyond storytelling.

Before, during, and after telling the stories, the students were involved in a variety of communicative language learning activities that aimed at providing them with ample opportunities for active participation and enhancing their abilities to use the four language skills. These activities were classified as follows: a) oral activities (listening and speaking), b) writing activities, c) reading activities, d) visual activities, and e) drama activities. To train students to develop their own stories, the writer used these story eliciting techniques: a) imitating the models provided by the teacher as a storyteller; b) developing stories based on their own experiences; c) developing stories based on illustrations; d) translating stories from Arabic; and e) modifying the original stories they read at home as home assignment to make them more interesting and more humorous. The writer also used different activities to elicit stories from the students such as: story models, story web, story pyramid, story games, clustering, pairing-off, create and write, think-pair-share, draw and tell, and jigsaw puzzles.

The activities and tasks of the model were written on handouts. The activities were intended to be worked through individually, in pairs, and in small groups (Appendix 2). During students' participation in the activities, the writer served as a facilitator, director and monitor, making sure that communication was taking place. Teaching the suggested integrated instructional model lasted for 28 hours (four hours per week) excluding the time devoted to the orientation of the training model and the administration of the pre-post test.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

To test the first hypothesis, "There would be significant differences (favoring the posttest) between means of scores obtained by the participants on a pre-test, posttest comparison," the 't-test ' was used (Table 1).

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations and 't' Value of the Scores Obtained by the Participants On a Pre - Post Test Comparison

| Test | N | X | SD | t |
|------|----|-------|-------|--------|
| Pre | 40 | 41.48 | 7.818 | |
| Post | 40 | 79.35 | 4.764 | 25.83* |

Df = 39    * p < 0.001

As shown in Table 1, the mean of the participants' scores on the post-test was higher than that on the pre-test. The 't' value was (25.83). It is significant at the .001 level. This means that a significant improvement of the participants' four skills has occurred. These results imply that the suggested integrated instructional model has been effective in enhancing the participants' language proficiency level. These findings are in line with the view of Van Groenou (1995) that the use of storytelling in the classroom can promote language development, enhance the language program, and develop adult English language learners' language skills. Thus the first hypothesis has been supported.

To test the second hypothesis, "The suggested integrated instructional model of storytelling would prove to be effective in integrating the four language skills," the 't-test' was used (Table 2).

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and 'T' Value 0f the Participants' Scores of the Four Skills on the Pre-Post Test Comparison

| Item | Listening | | Reading | | Writing | | Speaking | |
|------|-------|--------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Test | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post | Pre | Post |
| X | 7.825 | 19.35 | 13.725 | 22.3 | 10.3 | 19.43 | 9.625 | 18.28 |
| SD | 2.735 | 1.406 | 3.121 | 1.324 | 2.334 | 1.583 | 2.009 | 1.739 |
| t | | 23.41* | | 15.80* | | 20.22* | | 20.34* |

Df = 39    * p < 0.01

Table 2 describes the improvement that has occurred in each of the four language arts. The means of the participants' scores of the four skills on the post-test were higher than those on the pre-test. They became (19.35) with a standard deviation (1.406) for listening, (22.3) with a standard deviation (1.324) for reading, (19.43) with a standard deviation (1.583) for writing, and (18.28) with a standard deviation (1.739) for speaking on the post test instead of (7.825) with a standard deviation (2.735) for listening, (13.725) with a standard deviation (3.121) for reading, (10.3) with a standard deviation (2.334) for writing, and (9.625) with a standard deviation (2.009) for speaking on the pre-test. The data results presented in table (2) point out that the increase of scores on one skill has led to the increase of scores on the other skills. The 't' values were (23.41), (15.80), (20.22), and (20.34) for listening, reading, writing, and speaking respectively. They are significant at the 0.001 level. This means that the use of storytelling has led to a significant improvement in the four skills of the participants. Such findings confirm the findings in the literature (Ballast, Stephens, & Radcliffe, 2008; Brand & Donato, 2001; Craig, Hull, Haggart, & Crowder, 2001; Gakhar & Thompson, 2007; Neugebauer & Currie-Rubin, 2009; Neuman, 2006; Sadik, 2008; Verdugo & Belmonte, 2007). The finding of the present study implies that when students are instructed and trained in a certain skill, their ability to perform such a skill develops. In other words, the suggested integrated instructional model based on storytelling has been effective in integrating the four language skills. These results support the second hypothesis.

To test the third hypothesis, "The suggested integrated instructional model of storytelling would prove to be effective in enhancing the participants' language proficiency level," the modified gain ratio was used (Table 3).

Table 3. The Effectiveness of the Suggested Integrated Instructional Model on the Basis of the Participants' Scores on the Test

| Test | N | X | Maximum Obtainable Score | Gain Ratio |
|------|---|-----|------------------|------------|
| Pre | 40 | 41.48 | 100 | |
| Post | 40 | 79.35 | 100 | 1.03 |

Table 3 shows that the obtained gain ratio was (1.03). This means that the suggested integrated instructional model of storytelling has been effective in enhancing the participants' language proficiency level since the range for this ratio is 0 to 2, 1.0 being considered satisfactory. Thus, the third hypothesis has been supported. It is clear that the use of storytelling in the language classes can provide students with ample opportunities to be engaged in real communicative contexts and to acquire the different language skills. These results support the findings of research on use of the communicative approach to language teaching (Incecay & Incecay, 2009; Mangubhai, Marland, Dashwood, & Son; 2004; Richards, 2006)

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The current findings of the present study showed that the test designed and used in the present study has proven to be reliable and valid. They indicated that the participants' language level has been enhanced ($p < 0.001$). This means that the suggested integrated instructional model of storytelling has been effective in enhancing the participants' language proficiency level since the obtained gain ratio was (1.03). They also revealed that storytelling is a very effective teaching technique that can be utilized in improving adult language learners' proficiency level and integrate their language skills.

The results were astonishing. The students were surprised at the richness of their writing and speaking, and pleased with the final results. They ended up liking storytelling. They were always eager to share their work with peers. They enjoyed storytelling from the time it was first introduced to them. They were glad be telling a story that was of interest to them, excited to actively communicate with another person, and conscious of their success in communicating in English. Real-life dialogue activities including checking for understanding, stopping a conversation to ask for clarity, and circumlocution, spontaneously occurred in class. Students began to ask for and give information to each other in English. Some students who could not work well in a group became good storytellers. Many of the students, who had known little success previously, found success by performing for others.

It was exciting to see students communicating, and having fun doing it. Many of the students who were motivated spent a long time working on their story. Students mentioned that the vocabulary they learned during storytelling experiences provided them with a common language to facilitate discussion. They also mentioned that they had learned about plot, narration, dialogue, characterization, setting, and point of view by writing and

performing stories and folktales and acquired many concepts through listening to, telling, and writing stories. Storytelling led to story making. Students formed small groups of storytellers to produce and perform their own stories or folktales for other groups of students. In fact, the body of stories that grew from the students' initiatives expanded their collective folklore.

The results of the present study provide empirical support for the importance of using storytelling in the language curriculum. Perhaps the most significant pedagogical implication to be drawn is that any language teacher can make a good use of storytelling in the classroom

Based on the findings and conclusion of the present study, the writer recommends the following

1. Storytelling should have its place in curriculum for English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

2. The links among the strands of the language arts must be actively nurtured, so that improvement in one strand carries over into another.

3. Classroom pair work and group work should be encouraged.

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**Appendix 1: An Integrated Language Skills Pre-Post Test on Storytelling**

**Name:** _____     **Score:** _____

                                                                                       **100**

*Instructions:*

*This is a test on the integrated language skills based on storytelling. It has been designed to assess your ability to listen with understanding, to read with understanding, tell, and write a story. It has four components: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. The maximum score on the test is 100. The time allotted for answering the test questions is three hours.*

**A) Listening** **(25 Points)**

You are going to listen to a true story. Listen carefully. You will hear the story three times. The first time only listen. The second time, listen and complete the tasks. The third time, listen and check your answers.

**Task 1: Complete the paragraph.**

*Juliana left Lima on Christmas Eve _____. She was _____ Year old. The plane broke up in a _____. She _____ to the ground. Her collar _____ was broken. She decided to _____ of the jungle. She was in a bad trouble from _____ bites. She walked and swam down to a _____. She came to a _____. People found her and took her to a _____ in the next village.*

**Task 2: Complete the table.**

| Date / Time | What happened |
| --- | --- |
| On Christmas Eve | Juliana left Lima by air |
| Forty-five minutes later | …………………………………………….. |
| ……………………………………………. | Juliana lay unconscious |
| The next morning | …………………………………………….. |
| One day | ……………………………………………. |
| ……………………………………………. | she came to a river |
| For another five day | …………………………………………...…… |
| *It took Juliana ……………………….......* | to get out of the jungle |

**Task 3: Mark true [√] or false [×]:**

[     ] 1. Juliana was on her way to see her uncle.

[     ] 2. The trees saved Juliana.

[     ] 3. She did not find her mother.

[     ] 4. Her nick was broken.

[      ] 5. She was wearing a long dress.

[      ] 6. She found many things to eat.

[      ] 7. The helicopters saw Juliana.

[      ] 8. She got out of the jungle after ten day.


**B) Reading**                                                                                    **(25 Points)**

1. Read the story.* Then answer the questions.

There was a couple who used to go to England every year to shop in the beautiful stores. This was their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. They both liked antiques and pottery and especially teacups.

*One day in this beautiful shop they saw a beautiful teacup. They said, "May we see that? We've never seen one quite so beautiful." As the lady handed it to them, suddenly the teacup spoke.*

"You don't understand," it said. "I haven't always been a teacup. There was a time when I was red and I was clay. My master took me and rolled me and patted me over and over and I yelled out, 'let me alone,' but he only smiled, 'Not yet'.

"Then I was placed on a spinning wheel," the teacup said, "and suddenly I was spun around and around and around.'Stop it! I'm getting dizzy!' I screamed. But the master only nodded and said, 'Not yet.' Then he put me in the oven. I never felt such heat. I wondered why he wanted to burn me, and I yelled, and I knocked at the door. I could see him through the opening and I could read his lips, as he shook his head, 'Not yet.'

Finally the door opened, he put me on the shelf, and I began to cool. 'There, that's better,' I said. And he brushed and painted me all over. The fumes were horrible. I thought I would gag. 'Stop it, stop it!' I cried. He only nodded, 'Not yet.'

Then suddenly he put me back into the oven, not like the first one. This was twice as hot and I knew I would suffocate. I begged. I pleaded. I screamed. I cried. All the time I could see him through the opening nodding his head, saying, 'Not yet.' Then I knew there wasn't any hope. I would never make it. I was ready to give up. But the door opened and he took me out and placed me on the shelf. One hour later he handed me a mirror and said, "Look at yourself." And I did. I said, "That's not me; that couldn't be me. It's beautiful. I'm beautiful."

"I want you to remember, then," he said, "I know it hurt to be rolled and patted, but if I just left you, you'd have dried up. I know it made you dizzy to spin around on the wheel, but if I had stopped, you would have crumbled. I know it hurt and it was hot and disagreeable in the oven, but if I hadn't put you there, you would have cracked. I know the fumes were bad when I brushed and painted you all over, but if I hadn't done that, you never would have hardened. You would not have had any color in your life, and if I hadn't put you back in that second oven, you wouldn't survive for very long because the hardness would not have held. Now you are a finished product. You are what I had in mind when I first began with you."

**Questions:**

1.  Why did the couple use to go to London?

2.  How many times have they been to London?

3.  What happened when the lady handed the teacup to the couple?

4.  What did the potter do with the piece of clay?

5.  Why was the piece of clay placed on a spinning wheel?

6.  How could the piece of clay see the potter from inside the oven?

7.  Why did the potter put the teacup on the shelf?

8.  What did the potter do with the teacup when it cooled down?

9.  Why did the potter give the teacup a mirror?

10. What did the potter tell the teacup?

11. Complete the following sentences:

    a) If the potter had left the piece of clay without rolling and patting

    b) If the potter had stopped the spinning wheel…

    c) If the potter hadn't put the teacup in the oven…

    d) If the potter hadn't brushed and painted the teacup…

    e) If the potter hadn't put the teacup back in second oven…

_____

*Adapted from the Potter and the Clay by Chelsea Chin

2. Read the text and mark true [√] or false [×]:

[    ] 1. The couple liked antiques and pottery and especially teapots.

[    ] 2. The master stopped rolling the clay when it yelled out.

[    ] 3. The oven was not hot.

[    ] 4. The potter put the piece of clay in the oven to burn it.

[    ] 5. The fumes were good.

**C) Writing**                                                  **(25 Points)**

1. Write a story that goes with these pictures.                (12 ½ Points)

2. Write a story about a bad day or dream in your life.        (12 ½ Points)

**D)   Speaking**                                                    **(25 Points)**

1. Say your name. Then tell a story that you know or tell about a bad or a happy day in your life.

2. Look at the pictures and tell a story. Begin like this. Last week a man…

**Appendix 2: A Sample of the Activities Included in the Suggested Integrated Instructional Model**

Activity 6

Jamaica

Objectives:

By the time this activity is completed, you are expected to be able to:

1. Demonstrate comprehension by answering some comprehension questions through discussion;

2. Identify character traits by filling out a character chart;

3. Report your character chart to the class;

4. Orally express your feelings pretending to be one of the two children in the story;

5. Write a thank-you note to Jamaica imagining that you are Kristin;

6. Summarize the story of Jamaica using a given comprehension chart;

7. Orally compare your comprehension chart with another student;

8. Use your comprehension chart to retell the story to the class;

9. Tell your partner about something special you have ever found;

10. Write a letter to Jamaica to tell her about it;

11. Write a similar  story that includes: a beginning, a middle and an end of the story; and

12. Tell your story to the class.

Class Time: 150 minutes

Organization: Individuals, pairs, groups, class

Procedure:

**Task 1**

1. Look at the title 'Jamaica' on the board and answer these questions.

2. Then work with a partner and compare your thoughts.

3. Report the agreed upon thoughts to the instructor.

a) What does this title tell you?

b) Does the title suggest where the story takes place?

c) Who is it about?

d) What might happen?

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**Jamaica**

**By**

**Juanita Havill**

</div>

When Jamaica arrived at the park, there was no one there. It was almost supper time, but she still had a few minutes to play. She sat in the swing, pushed off with her toes, and began pumping. It was fun not to have to watch out for the little ones who always ran in front of the swings. Then she climbed up the slide.

There was a red sock hat on the ladder step. Jamaica took it for a ride. She slid down so fast that she fell in the sand and lay flat on her back. When she rolled over to get up, she saw stuffed dog beside her. It was a cuddly gray dog, worn from hugging. All over it were faded food and grass stains. Its button nose must have fallen off.

There was a round white spot in its place. Two black ears hung from its head. Jamaica put the dog in her bicycle basket. She took the hat into the park house and gave it to the young man at the counter.

The first thing her mother said when Jamaica came in the door was: "Where did that dog come from?"

"The park, I stopped to play on the way home," Jamaica said. "I found someone's red hat and took it to the Lost and Found."    "But, Jamaica, you should have returned the dog, too, "said her mother.

Then she said,"I'm glad you returned the hat.' "It didn't fit me,' Jamaica said. "Maybe the dog doesn't fit you either,' her mother said. "I like the dog," said Jamaica.

"Don't put that silly dog on the table!" Jamaica's brother said. "You don't know where it came from. It isn't very clean, you know," her father said. "Not in the kitchen, Jamaica,' her mother said. Jamaica took the dog to her room. She could hear her mother say, "It belongs to a girl just like Jamaica."

After dessert Jamaica went to her room very quickly. She held the dog up and looked at it closely. Then she tossed it in the chair.

"Jamaica," her mother called from the kitchen. "Have you forgotten? It's your turn to dry the dishes."

"Do I have to, Mother? I don't feel good," Jamaica answered. Jamaica heard the pots rattle. Then she heard her mother's steps.

Her mother came in quietly, sat down by Jamaica, and looked at the stuffed dog, which lay alone on the chair. She didn't say anything.

After a while she put her arms around Jamaica and squeezed for a long time. "Mother, I want to take the dog back to the park," Jamaica said. "We'll go first in the morning." Her mother smiled.

Jamaica ran to the park house and plopped the stuffed dog on the counter. "I found this by the slide," she told the young man.

'Oh, hi. Aren't you the girl who gave me the hat last night?" "Yes," said Jamaica, feeling hot around her ears. "You sure do find a lot of things. I'll put it on the lost and found shelf." Jamaica stood watching him

"Is that all?" he asked. "You didn't find anything else, did you?" "No. That's all." She stayed to watch him put the dog on a shelf behind him. "I'm sure some little girl or boy will come in after it today, a nice little dog like that," the young man said.

Jamaica ran outside. She didn't feel like playing alone. There was no one else at the park but her mother, who sat on a bench. Then Jamaica saw a girl and her mother cross the street to the park. "Hi. I'm Jamaica. What's your name? She said to the girl. The girl let go of her mother's hand. "Kristin,' she said. 'Do you want to climb the jungle gym with me, Kristin?" Jamaica said.

Kristin ran toward Jamaica. "Yes, but I have to find something first." "What?" asked Jamaica.  Kristin was bending under the slide. "What did you lose?" said Jamaica. "Edgar, my dog. I brought him with me yesterday and now I can't find him," Kristin answered. "Was he kind of gray with black ears?" Jamaica couldn't keep from shouting. "Come along with me."

The young man in the park house looked over the counter at the two girls. "Now what have you found? He asked Jamaica. But this time Jamaica didn't drop anything onto the counter. Instead, she smiled her biggest smile "found the girl who belongs to the stuffed dog." Jamaica was almost as happy as Kristin, who took Edgar dog in her arms and gave him a big welcome back hug.

**Task 2**

1. Work with a partner.
2. Read the story of Jamaica.
3. Think about the story and discuss the following questions.
4. When you finish give your answer(s) to the instructor.
5. Check your answer(s) in the light of the correct one(s) given by the instructor on the board.

    a) Where did Jamaica play?
    b) What did Jamaica find?
    c) What did Jamaica keep?
    d) What did Jamaica want to do with the dog later?
    e) Who did Jamaica meet?
    f) What did Kristin do when she saw Edgar dog?
    g) How did you feel when Jamaica returned the dog?
    h) What lesson did Jamaica learn?

**Task 3**

1. Work with your partner.
2. Fill out the following character chart     .
3. When you are finished, read your character chart to the class.

| How the writer reveals Jamaica's character | |
|---|---|
| 1. Her appearance | ……………………………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………………………… |
| 2. Her speech | ……………………………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………………………… |
| 3. Her thoughts | ……………………………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………………………… |
| 4. Her actions | ……………………………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………………………… |
| 5.   The way she affects other people | ……………………………………………………………………… ……………………………………………………………………… |
| 6. The writer's direct words about her. | ……………………………………………………………………….. ……………………………………………………………………….. |

**Task 4**

1. Tell the class what you would have done if you were one of the two children in the story.

2. Then imagine that you are Kristin and write a thank-you note to Jamaica.

3. Read your thank you note to the class.

**Task 5**

1. Read the story of Jamaica.

2. Use the following comprehension charts to summarize it.

3. When you are finished, join the student sitting behind you and compare your charts.

4. Use your chart to retell the story to the class

| Scene 1 | …………………………………………………………………………………………… …………………………………………………………………………………………… |
|---------|---|
| Scene 2 | …………………………………………………………………………………………… …………………………………………………………………………………………… |
| Scene 3 | …………………………………………………………………………………………… …………………………………………………………………………………………… |
| Scene 4 | …………………………………………………………………………………………… …………………………………………………………………………………………… |
| Scene 5 | …………………………………………………………………………………………… …………………………………………………………………………………………… |
| Scene 6 | …………………………………………………………………………………………… …………………………………………………………………………………………… |
| Scene 7 | …………………………………………………………………………………………… …………………………………………………………………………………………… |
| Scene 8 | …………………………………………………………………………………………… …………………………………………………………………………………………… |

**Task 6**

1. Think of something special you have ever found.

2. Tell a partner about it and about what you did with it.

3. Write a letter to Jamaica to tell her about it.

4. Read your letter to the class.

**Task 7**

1. Work in a group of three students.

2. Think of a story similar to that of Jamaica and discuss it orally.

    a) Student 1 tells the beginning of the story.

    b) Student 2 gives the middle.

    c) Student 3 tells the end of the story.

3. When they are finished with your story, write it down.

4. After that, the spokesman of each group tells the story of his/her group to the class.