

Summary of the Process

This project explores the connection between the production visual images and the production of language. Photography is used in the adult ESOL classroom but in a more passive manner, either as illustrations or as language prompts. This approach explores how by constructing a visual -photographic- story, students may be enabled to produce written and spoken language in a natural and fluid way.

Students will select a topic on which they will build a story with the help of a teacher or facilitator (e.g., 'a day in my life', careers, and trades, neighborhood description, social issues in my community, etc.) The integrative multimedia approach (producing photographic images) will function as a *grammar metaphor* that will help students organize thoughts and construct a logical flow.

As students develop their story visually, they also work on the language to communicate in writing their stories, both by reading relevant material and by discussing their projects.

Stage 1

1. Meet with the students and help them select their topics. Some of the students will know their topics right away, some will need some help. You can help them brainstorming ideas based on their experiences and interests. This is a good opportunity to jumpstart the vocabulary-building process.

2. Once the students selected a topic, help them imagine the story. How many frames do they think will be appropriate or enough to communicate their message? You can ask them to draw squares and rehearse a sequence of images.

3. Start building up vocabulary by filling out weekly Vocabulary Workout sheets (see supplementary materials at the end). Also you will provide weekly related readings appropriate to their story. Students can write down known words and keep track of new words and their definitions.

Stage 2

1. If possible, help your students understand the basics of visual storytelling. Secure the help of a local photographer or anyone knowledgeable and have him talk

Visual Storytelling

Developed by Leonardo Espinosa
A First Literacy Lab Project
at Boston HERC

to the students on image composition, and how to shoot the sequenced situations (their storyboards).

2. Have your students shoot their images according to the sequences.

Stage 3

1. As soon as the students has a number of images, ask her to arrange them according to the logical flow of the story.

2. By now, ideally, students will have several Vocabulary Worksheets accumulated, with ideas about their stories, and lists of related words.

3. Use those worksheets to help them extract meaning from their images. They will be able not only to identify easily parts of the speech in the pictures but to form sentences as they talk about them.

4. Start assembling the story. Students can see how changing the place of a photography will change the flow of the story, and how that affects sentences and paragraphs, and the logic of the plot.

5. Use the Storytelling Improvement Chart to provide feedback on their drafts regarding Content, Planning, Mechanics, Story Structure, and Visual Elements. You can refer to the "Digital Story Evaluation Rubric" too see what to look for in every category. (See supplementary materials at the end).

* As they write, you can reinforce considerations about their audience and the purpose of their text; how the text fits the situations photographed and their original planning; etc.

Stage 4

1. Finish assembling the stories and decide how they will be best communicated. Help them use Instagram, Flickr, or any other digital platform to share.