PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

Jampole (1994) uses guided imagery practice as a prewriting technique to generate original writing that contains more sensory descriptions. Geske(1992) finds that guided imagery is an exercise that allows students to enter a story in a creative mode wherein they are able to develop ideas and visualize images using both sides of their brain. Samples (1977) states that among other things, the guided imagery technique (1) builds a structural base for inquiry, discussion, and group work, (2) explores and stretches students' concepts, and (3)encourages problem solving.

Images that authors use in their work include mental pictures, emotions, or physical sensations. Images can be literal or figurative. *Literal images* call up a realistic, sensory representation of the object or scene. The sky was a ragged blaze of red and pink and orange, and its double trembled on the surface of the pond like color spilled from a paintbox. *Figurative images* are symbolic. The wood was at the center, the hub of the wheel. All wheels must have a hub. A Ferris wheel has one, as the sun is the hub of the wheeling calendar. Fixed points they are, and best left undisturbed, for without them, nothing holds together. Understanding the meaning of the passage requires interpretation of the ideas formed by the image. (From: *Tuck Everlasting* (1979) by Natalie Babbitt, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 60; 4)

DIRECTIONS:

STEP 1

BUILDING THE DREAM

Begin by asking students to first stretch, inhale slowly, exhale, and relax, find a comfortable position to curl up in and then to close their eyes and listen. By talking softly, take the students into the desired world that you want them to imagine. Soft music playing in the background, dimming the lights in the classroom, or burning a fragrant candle or some potpourri can be used to heighten the mood.

STEP 2

READING

Read the story slowly, giving students time to visualize each image. Counting to 30 in between statements, works well. (For this imagery, you may want to speed up the reading in the middle for the shipwreck.) The students listen with their eyes closed. If they are uncomfortable with this, they may draw on a sheet of paper as they listen.

STEP 3

WRITING

Invite students to open their eyes and jot down as many of the descriptive images that they can recall. Give them several minutes to write. Have them close their eyes again and listen to the music and relive the
experience. What more can they see? Have them write about their experience at length and encourage those who wish to share, to do so.

ASSESSMENT

There are no required “assessments for this strategy; it is a prereading technique, a way of opening up a vision for your students that connects what they are able to see with what they will read.

STORY

Close your eyes and relax. You are aboard a ship. Where are you on the ship? Are you standing on the deck? In your cabin? How does the air feel? What can you smell? Is it early morning? Afternoon? Midnight? Are you alone or are there other people around?

Suddenly the wind changes and the ship is caught in a terrible storm. Someone pulls you off the ship and into the water, and then starts pulling you toward the shore. You feel the water splash in your face and slide around you. Then your feet feel the cold, wet sand under your feet. You drag yourself onto the shore and lie on the beach, breathing the cool, dry air.

You open your eyes and realize that you have no idea where you are. What does this new country look like? Are there trees? Animals? People? What can you see? How does it smell?

As you lie there, you decide that you can’t panic. You breathe slowly and steadily and try to decide what to do next in this new country.

[pause for a minute]

Now, get out a piece of paper and write about your experience. What was it like being on the ship? Where did you end up? What will you do now that you are in this new country? You have about 7 minutes to write.