STORY RETELL

Preparation
Work on the Constructivism-Language unit, particularly

- schema
- scaffolding
- motivation
- output
- nativisation

Exercises
Try the exercise below, using the above link for any sites cited.

Sample answers
Download the answer sheet from the above link.

Exercises

These 8 year-old French learners of EFL retell Two Monsters, a story by David McKee, where an argument between a red monster on one side of a mountain and a blue one on the other escalates into a fight. The mountain is destroyed, allowing each monster to see the other's point of view, and thus be reconciled.

The class worked on the story in three 90-minute sessions, first hearing the story with the illustrations on the interactive whiteboard and retelling in French and English, then working individually on audio and video recordings of a simplified version of the story. Learners practiced individual words in small groups with flashcards: nouns (monster, monsters, mountain, stone), adjectives (angry, happy) and verbs (shout, throw, break, crack). They also rehearsed subject-verb constructions (the monsters are angry, the monsters throw stones) and made group audio recordings to accompany a slideshow of the story.

In a final task in the third session, the learners drew their own versions of the story on worksheets with 3 boxes (6 for the more advanced learners). They were instructed to write any words they knew alongside each illustration, and volunteers retold their stories orally at the end of the class.
1. Look at the drawings and videos for Pupil 1 and Pupil 2. What differences do you notice?

2. How does this task allow for learner choice and autonomy? What support do the learners have to complete the task?

3. Look at the five different drawings. How can we account for the differences with Bartlett’s notion of schemata?

4. What learning opportunities are provided by this task, and in what sense can it be considered a constructivist classroom activity?