

Visual Imagery

Audience:

Activity can be adapted for all levels K-12

Purpose:

Students learn the process of visual imagery as a technique to help themselves calm down

Materials:

No materials needed

Content:

Teacher leads students through the process of visual imagery as a relaxation technique

Instructions:

1. Students sit comfortably for this activity
2. Use a calm, low, slow voice and give sufficient time between each visual suggestion for students to “ease” into the vision and “see” each step
3. Create your own visual scenario appropriate to students’ age, experience and interest. Example:

Close your eyes. “See” in your mind’s eye a beautiful beach. The sun is shining warmly, the breeze coming from the ocean is soft and warm, palm trees are overhead and a few seagulls circle about. Imagine walking barefoot in the warm sand, feel your feet sink in the sand with each step. Walk toward the water’s edge and let the water roll over your feet. Jump in the water; it is warm, gentle and very refreshing. Come out of the water and walk to your big beach towel, lay down and relax. Rest for a while in all the peace and beauty surrounding you. Imagine how it looks, how it sounds, how it smells. Breathe in deeply the warm ocean air, stay as long as you like.

When you are ready to leave, go to the edge of the water and throw in anything that has been bothering you, anything you wish to be rid of in your life, anything you are feeling sad or angry about, anything you worry about (e.g. problems at home, violence in your neighborhood, bullies, death of a loved one, issues with friends). Picture it as a big rock, a chain, a heavy bag over your shoulders, or any image that helps you see it as undesirable. Throw it in the ocean as far as you can. Watch it sink and get taken by the waves. When the “visit” is done, be thankful for the release of the burden, the problem, the worry; then walk peacefully back through the warm sand and take a rest on your beach towel.

4. Practice this imagery in class for 10-20 minutes, depending on grade level

5. Allow time for students to debrief and share about where they went in their visualization and what they felt about the experience/technique. This can be done in pairs, small groups or sharing with whole class. Sample guiding questions:
- Where did your visualization take you?
 - Do you feel more calm/relaxed after going through this exercise?
 - What did you see, hear, feel, smell during your visualization/did anything in particular stand out?
 - What was it like throwing your burdens into the water?
 - How does it feel to be back in the classroom?
 - Is this technique/exercise something you might do in the future to clam down, relax and reduce your stress?

Extension:

Practice visualizations with the class several times until students achieve competence with the technique. Encourage students to practice this at home or at any time to relieve stress. The activity may be reinforced by having students write down how they felt after completing the activity. They could keep a journal of post-visualization feelings and thoughts. You may also provide students with time to create their own visualizations and take turns leading the class through visualization exercises periodically throughout the school year.