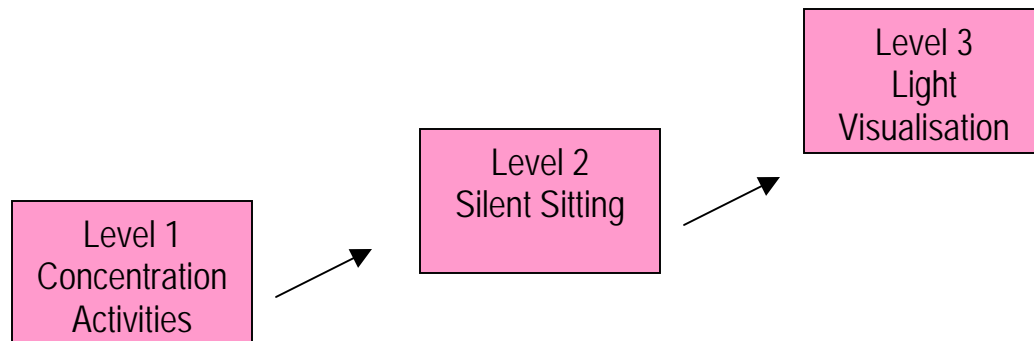


Progression



** Top tip:

For all Silent Sitting activities, it is useful to put a sign on the door during the exercise, so that people do not come in and disturb what is going on. The sign should be removed after the activity is over.

Concentration Activities

Counting

Pebbles in a jar

Standing at the back of the room (or where the pupils cannot see you), drop (at varying speeds) pebbles into a jar. Encourage the children to close their eyes and count the number of pebbles dropped into the jar. Ask the children how many? Then repeat the exercise.

Extensions:

This activity can be linked to the mental starter in a mathematics lesson by asking the children to double/halve the number of dropped pebbles or multiply it by another number and so on. Coins can also be used as a substitute for the pebbles.

Time

Ask the children to sit comfortably and close their eyes. When you say 'Start', they need to start counting the number of seconds that have passed until you say 'Stop'. Ask the children to share their answers and strategies. Repeat the exercise.

Tip: Avoid having a clock at the front of the room, or a clock that ticks loudly.

- Colours



Encourage the children to close their eyes and as they breathe in imagine a particular colour filling their lungs and as they breathe out another colour leaves their body and enters the environment. Colours have both positive and negative attributes. The teacher must be aware of cultural sensitivities when using this technique. A colour may have a very positive attribute in one culture, but viewed differently in another.

In general, the following positive values can be linked to colours:

- **Red – energy and strength**
- **Orange – joy, confidence and creativity**
- **Yellow – wisdom, discernment and determination**
- **Green – balance, harmony and generosity**
- **Blue – peace, calm and trust**
- **Indigo – Compassionate, loving and forgiving**
- **Violet – self-respect and dignity**

Variations could be developed linking the seven colours of the rainbow with the seven notes in a scale.

Silent Sitting

Use the photos in the Resource Section of the CD ROM to project visuals on the interactive whiteboard. These will help children either understand the context and/or focus their attention. Some children might find it easier to close their eyes straight away and rely on their imagination/own experience. The teacher must cater for the varying needs and learning style preferences of the children.

Other visuals can be sourced through the Internet (e.g. National Geographic website). Quotations and words of inspiration can be used as an alternative focus point.

In addition the visuals can be used to develop writing skills in terms of context, setting and description.

Background music can also be used to supplement this kind of activity. Naturally the teacher must speak in a slow and soft tone. Teachers are encouraged to practice this beforehand. Recording yourself on tape is a good way to practice and check. It is best if all Silent Sitting activities are led live in the classroom, rather from a tape or CD although a pre-recording may be used initially.

Top tip: Towards the end of the Silent Sitting activities, care should be taken to fade out the music, rather than switch it off abruptly.

Naturally care must be taken to ensure the context is appropriate sensitive (e.g. a child who has been in a wheelchair from a young age may not necessarily relate to a imaginary journey that involves walking)

Example:

Close your eyes and relax. I am going to take you on a short journey. Before we begin, I would like you to take 3 deep breaths. 1...2...3 Good now we can begin.

I would like you to imagine it is a warm day. A very warm day. The skies are clear and blue and you can see whispers of clouds in the sky – floating along like fluffy cotton wool or candyfloss without a stick.

You are walking along the beach barefooted. You can feel the sand between your toes, as you take each step. In the distance you can hear the waves of the sea swishing in and out, in and out.



The sun is shining down on you. You feel such joy in your heart. Walking over to the water, you place your toes in. The water is cold and refreshing. You can feel little bits of seaweed float around your toes. You stand there, still in the moment, whilst the waves swish in and out around your ankles. Your feet feel cold, yet the top part of your body is warm through the heat of the sun. You step out of the water and back onto the sand. The wet sand sticks to your feet. You can feel every grain, as you walk back in land.

You continue walking, until you see a small shell on the sand. Picking up the shell you place it next to your ear. What can you hear? Enjoy the sound for a moment.

You decide to take the shell back with you as memory of this moment. Slowly you turn and walk back across the sand towards home. The sun is setting and it is beginning to feel a little cold. The joy in your heart has changed to a contented feeling of peace and tranquillity. You are happy. You smile to yourself as you open your eyes and return to the room.

Turn to the person next to you and smile at them. Good, now stretch. We are now ready to begin the lesson.

Light Visualisation

Some children prefer to start this activity looking at the flame of a candle and then closing their eyes. For situations, where health and safety may be an issue, use an electric (non-inflammatory) candle.

Again appropriate background music can be used to enhance this experience.

Example:

Close your eyes and take 3 deep breaths. (Pause) Good. Now imagine the light of a candle flame sitting in-between your eyebrows on your forehead. Imagine this light filling your head with light and helping you to think clearly. See your whole head filled with this light. Your head has been filled with peace. Enjoy this moment.

Now picture, this light travelling down your body to your heart and filling your heart with light. Your heart has been filled with this light; it can no longer entertain any negative emotions. Your heart has been filled with love. Enjoy this feeling.

Feel this light travelling down your legs and across your arms so that your whole body is filled with light. See yourself sitting in a bubble of light. Your body has been filled with Right-Conduct. It can no longer be used to hurt anyone or anything. Instead it will be used to help. Experience the strength of Truth.

Imagine, all the bubbles of light in the room coming together to form one big light that fills the entire room. We are all one. There is no longer any space for differences or disagreements.

This circle of light continues to grow and you can see the whole school in this light. Everyone is happy; everyone is filled with joy.

The light continues to grow beyond the school into the community. See your neighbours, friends, and family all in this light. Picture now, different animals, pets and creatures in this loving circle of light. The light is growing and you can now see the whole of the country in the light. Everyone is happy; everyone is filled with joy.

The borders of the country cannot contain this light. It expands further across the seas and to other lands – sharing the joy of love and light with all. See the seas changing from blue to golden.

Now picture the whole world bathing in this light. Everyone is happy; everyone is filled with joy.

The light continues to expand out into the universe, touching all the stars, planets, and galaxies. The light merges with the Sun. All there is light and everyone is happy; everyone is filled with joy. Enjoy this moment. You have shared your love and light with the universe. This is a special moment. (Pause)

Now picture the light bubble around body again and remember the promise to use your body for good actions.

See the light in your heart and remember that special feeling of a heart filled with love.

Now bring the light back to your forehead and see your head filled with light, enabling you to think clearly.

Take 3 deep breaths and when you are ready, in your own time, return to the classroom and open your eyes.

Look at the person next to you – smile and stretch. Well done.

For more examples look at "To Teach, Not to Punish" (2004) By M. Taplin & A. Devi
[ISBN 962-8430-08-4]

Silent Sitting before sitting an exam or test

You can do this visualisation the day before and again the morning of your exam, but it can also be a good idea to take 2-3 minutes when you are actually sitting in the examination room, after you have looked at the questions on the paper, but before you start to write.

This will help you to clear your mind enough to be able to access the information that you have stored in your memory.

- *First, take three, long, deep breaths. This will help you to relax and will settle any feelings of nervousness that you might have, which can block your thinking.*
- *Next, just close your eyes and concentrate at looking at the blackness behind your eyelids. Sometimes you might see imprinted colours or images – if you do so, just observe them and let them fade away.*
- *Imagine you are a tiny person and that you are walking inside your brain.*
- *Picture yourself going to the section where the knowledge that you need for your exam is stored. Imagine that this is stored in cupboards and you are unlocking the doors and opening them so the knowledge can be released.*
- *The knowledge you need is neatly arranged in a row, in the correct order that you will need it. Any extra knowledge that is not relevant is stacked to the side on the shelves. You are the one in control.*
- *When you give the signal, the knowledge will jump down from the shelf and move out, ready for you to use it. Repeat to yourself, 'I have the wisdom and the commonsense to use this knowledge in the most appropriate way to answer the questions'.*
- *Take three more deep breaths, and begin writing.*

(Taken from Sathya Sai EHV – an Innovative Approach to Character Development, A. Devi,
September 2001)