

Guided Visualizations for Integrating Education in Human Values into Curriculum Subjects

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Abstract

As a tool, the guided visualization aspect of silent sitting can be introduced into subjects across the curriculum relatively easily, without taking up too much lesson time. This chapter contributes some sample guided visualization scripts designed to integrate education in human values into curriculum subjects, using science, information technology, mathematics and English/history topics as examples. In line with Taplin's extension of a model of holistic education that was developed originally by Buchanan and Hyde,

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these scripts are designed to achieve three aims: to reinforce and consolidate the cognitive subject knowledge; to address the affective aspects of the topic; and to create an opportunity to reflect on a values message that underpins the topic.

Keywords: Guided visualization; Cross-curricular integration

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to offer some examples to illustrate how silent sitting, and particularly guided visualization, can be integrated into curriculum subjects to achieve the dual purpose of consolidating or enhancing the subject knowledge while also addressing the affective (feelings and attitudes) and spiritual dimensions.

In the past decade schools have needed to go beyond focusing only on cognitive development. They are also expected to provide effective preventative and intervention strategies to address the academic, social and emotional needs of the children they serve (Van Acker and Mayer 2008). This expectation means an emerging focus on the relationships between cognition, emotion and socialization, which are no longer seen as separate outcomes (Lovat et al. 2011). Terms such as “non-cognitive skills”, “21st century competencies”, “personal qualities”, “social and emotional skills” and “soft skills” are now common vocabulary (Joksimović et al. 2018).

In other words, the call is for a holistic education that not only includes the above-mentioned dimensions but also develops a vocabulary, conceptualization and reflective experience of the values that are inherent in developing the whole person. Thus, teaching needs to become a “cultivating of hearts as well as minds across the curriculum” (Mustakova-Possardt 2004, p. 261), essential

for promoting connectedness, meaning and empathy (De Souza 2004).

Nevertheless, while educators generally agree about the importance of this type of values pedagogy, there are challenges associated with implementing it. Teachers are not always equipped sufficiently with the skills to promote a pedagogy that addresses all aspects of a student's development (Lovat et al. 2011), and many teachers think that values education is a subject to be taught by specialists, having little to do with their own subjects (Hill 2004). Additionally, teachers are prone to feeling stretched beyond their means when implementing a values-based pedagogy:

Educators are beyond weary as they face the added demands...calling for greater academic accountability... they cannot be all things to the children and communities they serve. There is no "free energy" available to tap into efforts to promote the delivery of needed mental health services within schools. (Van Acker and Mayer 2008, p. 101)

Hence the problem remains that there is a tendency, especially in secular education systems, to focus mostly on the cognitive aspect of development (Buchanan and Hyde 2008). Without emotional development it is difficult for such systems to nurture the human spirit (Semetsky 2009). Clearly, if any kind of affective and/or spirit nurturing is to be achieved within a system of

education, it needs to be done in a way that will not add pressure to students or teachers.

To address this gap between what is required of teachers and what they are equipped to do, and particularly to illustrate a way in which holistic education can be integrated seamlessly into school curricula, Taplin (2014) drew on the work of Buchanan and Hyde (2008), in which they called for “students in schools not only to achieve the cognitive competencies that comprise any given curriculum area, but engage in the type of learning experiences which have the power to be transformative”, and for learning to go “beyond the surface and touch the soul of the student” (Buchanan and Hyde 2008, p. 318). Taplin’s (2014) version of the model refers to a holistic type of education that combines cognitive, affective and spiritual dimensions. The first of these refers to cognitive knowledge of the curriculum topic, direct teacher-talk about the values message embedded in the topic. The affective dimension refers to creating a classroom environment that encourages teachers to use words and body language that model the values important to them in order to contribute to positive mental health, emotions, self-esteem, collaboration, etc. The spiritual dimension involves encouraging students’ reflection on the values message in daily life and what it means to themselves and others if this value is put into practice. Examples of learning outcomes for these three dimensions include define, describe or recall (cognitive); show awareness of, experience, accept or appreciate (affective); and empathize with,

reflect inwardly on, contemplate or accept responsibility for (spiritual) (De Souza 2004).

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to meditation and visualization, but a large body of recent research, including neuroscience studies of effects on the brain, has provided evidence of various types having positive effects on different aspects of the practitioners that include cognitive, affective and spiritual dimensions. A brief overview below of some of this research illustrates the potential of silent sitting and visualization-type practices.

At the cognitive level, research on various types of meditation activities has identified evidence of positive effects on the parts of the brain that relate to cognitive performance. One such effect is enhanced attention and memory consolidation, which may be explained by activation of the hippocampus (Basso et al. 2019; Tomasino et al. 2014). Others have reported activation in regions involved in the voluntary regulation of thought and action (inferior frontal gyrus, posterior dorsolateral prefrontal cortex/pre-motor cortex, and dorsal anterior cingulate cortex/pre-supplementary motor area), as well as activation in the insula (Buckner et al. 2008; Spreng and Grady 2010; Vincent et al. 2008). These areas of the brain are associated with cognitive control, self-reflection and the processing of internally and externally produced information.

At the affective level, there is evidence of meditative techniques having positive effects on mood and emotional regulation (Basso et al. 2019). In particular, loving-kindness and compassion meditations have been found to cultivate positive emotions, such as joy and compassion, as well as such social skills and tendencies as empathic concern and altruistic behavior. In this type of activity, the focus is on active “mentalizing” in the form of taking the perspectives of others and imagining their emotional experiences. A growing body of research suggests that these strategies can be effective in increasing empathy and prosocial behavior toward others (Condon et al. 2013; Kang et al. 2013; Leiberg et al. 2011; Lim et al. 2015; Weng et al. 2013).

One of the tools of silent sitting is guided visualization, in which the imagination is used to create mental visual images of suggestions and goals (Khare 2013). According to Khare, “a suggestion can be direct or indirect; a direct suggestion addresses the problem or the desired goal in clear, overt and explicit terms; whereas an indirect suggestion addresses a problem in a disguised manner” (p. 378). These creative mental images can have an effect on programming the subconscious mind which, in turn, “empowers people to discover and develop strengths in themselves they didn’t know they had” (Jaloba 2011, p. 18). Programming of the subconscious mind can lead to significant positive effects on self-concept (de Vos and Louw 2009). Teachers can use this type of visualization to foster development of the cognitive, affective and

spiritual domains. Depending on the nature of the prompts they use, teachers may help students recall what they have learned (cognitive), focus on feelings and emotions associated with the lesson topic and/or its values message (affective), and look deeply within themselves to reflect on their own lives, in relation to the lesson topic or the values message (spiritual).

Another reason why silent sitting can be a useful tool in promoting holistic education is that it can be done in just a few minutes of class time and can have the added benefit of settling the class down or giving them a “brain break” before or during a lesson. However, despite the argument that this is an effective way to achieve multiple goals in curriculum subjects, it can be challenging for teachers to develop suitable visualization scripts that can enhance the subject learning and encourage students to reflect on values messages at the same time. The next section of this chapter offers some examples, with some discussion of how they have been designed to meet the dual purpose of subject learning and reflection on values. Taplin’s (2014) model has been used as a framework to illustrate how silent sitting, and particularly guided visualization, can be integrated into curriculum subjects to achieve the dual purpose of consolidating or enhancing the subject knowledge while also addressing the affective and spiritual dimensions.

3.2 Examples of Visualization Scripts Integrating Values Messages and Subject Topics

3.2.1 Science²

Topic: Body Systems (Digestive System, Nervous Systems, Skeletal Systems, etc.)

Imagine a bright light entering your head and filling your head and your heart... Now imagine the light moving through your [insert name of the body system you are working on]... Let the light fill your [one by one go through the parts of the system. The teacher might need to remind the students which part of the body each is in]... Let the light join each system part together so they can work together in harmony for your health... Now imagine that you are sending the light to the person sitting on your right hand side.

From there it goes to the next person... and so on until you have sent light to every person in the room... Imagine the light connecting everyone in the room to everyone else. Say to yourself, “Just like the parts of the [body system], we are all a team, and we support each other to be the best that we can be, so that the team can be healthy.

² The examples in this section were contributed by Gita Singh, a teacher in the Sathya Sai College, Australia.

This visualization begins with an affective task of imagining the bright light, which in SSEHV represents purity and wisdom. It then goes on to give a cognitive revision of the components of the body system, as the light is imagined moving to each one. As students imagine the light joining each component of the system so they will work in harmony, there is an overlap between the cognitive scientific fact of the inter-dependence of the system parts and the values message that we too are healthiest and most effective when we work together in harmony. The visualization finishes with an overt affirmation of this values message.

Topic: Atoms

Do a shortened version of the Light Meditation (see Sect. 2.1.5.1) but concentrate particularly on the part where the students are asked to send light to people who are being unkind to them or who they perceive to be unkind. Ask them to imagine that they are sending the light in the form of bright stars from their hearts to deflect the negative thoughts or words coming their way.

The cognitive message here is that atoms are made up of subatomic particles: neutrons, electrons and protons. The teacher can reinforce the values message by sharing stories about a time when you have used this technique successfully to improve a situation with somebody who has been sending negative thoughts to you.

For homework, you can challenge the students to choose somebody who they think is negative towards them and to practice

this activity every day for one week. Suggest a timeframe, such as two minutes per day, to focus on sending the stars from their hearts. Remind them every day to do this. At the end of the week, ask students to share any success stories. To encourage students to do the activity and report on their experiences, you could display stars on the wall with the names of the students who report a success story.

Topic: Photosynthesis

This cognitive message is that plants carry out the process of photosynthesis—using the sun’s energy to produce food and giving out oxygen. The message then moves to the affective dimension, concentrating on the feeling of strength that students can invoke in themselves and the values message that they can learn from nature’s photosynthesis process about sharing and uplifting others. This visualization can be used at the end of the lesson for consolidation.

Recall and consolidate the process of photosynthesis, step by step. This will help students to transfer the information to their long-term memories. Then ask the students to imagine they are like a tree, drawing in the sun’s energy, filling their bodies and minds, giving them strength... then to imagine that, like the trees, they are sharing their strength with their friends, with their family members, with their school, with the community, and with the whole country and whole world.

As a homework challenge, having established how important trees are to sustaining life, challenge students to do Ceiling on Desires (see Sect. 2.4.1) to save some money that can be used to buy trees that they can plant and nurture.

Topic: Neutralization Reactions

Imagine yourself as a piece of litmus paper. You can choose whether you are blue or red. Imagine some of the things that can make us feel negative emotions... Imagine something that has made you feel angry recently, and then watch as you manage to stay the same blue or red that you have chosen to be. Now think of something that has made you feel jealous recently—and again imagine that this has not affected you and you are still able to hold your blue or your red color. Now think of a time when you have felt disappointed. Once again imagine that this disappointment is not able to affect you at all and that your litmus paper still keeps its original blue or red color. Before you open your eyes, make a promise to yourself that you will not change your color whatever negative things might happen around you—you will still continue to keep your blue or your red balance.

In this visualization, there is a brief revision of the role of litmus paper, which changes color according to the acid or alkaline balance of the liquid being tested or remains the same if this balance is neutral. The next part is affective, inviting the students to focus on negative emotions they may have felt recently and to link to the notion of remaining neutral rather than being affected by these

feelings. It finishes with a values message reminder to keep this equilibrium in daily life, no matter what happens around them.

As with many silent sitting activities, this one can be followed up with a homework task that can take the students' reflections on the values message to a deeper level. Individuals can be asked to write down one negative emotion and to think of a positive thing that they could think, say or do to balance it. To encourage students to do this activity, they could be divided into groups to see which group could come up with the best set of ideas. Here you can talk to them about strength in unity and how the group working together can come up with better results than individuals working alone.

Topic: CELLS Organelles make up the subunits of a cell. There are numerous each with their own function.

Just like the organelles, each one of us has something special and unique about us, and we have a responsibility to discover what ours is and how we can use it to make ourselves and others happier. Imagine that you are very, very tiny, and you are walking inside the brain. It looks like a library, with lots of shelves and books. Inside the books are all the things you have ever learned. You walk along the shelves until suddenly you find what you are looking for. It is a big book on a very high shelf. You take it off the shelf and look at the cover. On the cover it has your name, and it is called *My Book of Special Strengths*. Imagine that you open the book. On the first page is a list of all the special strengths that

you have and all the things that you are good at. It might be words, or it might be a picture, or it might be like a movie. If you can't see anything, don't worry because it will pop into your mind later. Have a good look at what is on the page and make sure you take careful notice of the information that is given to you. When you are ready, close the book and put it back on the shelf.

The values message in this visualization is concerned with inter-dependent teamwork—that everyone has a unique and special strength and if each contributes their strength to the team, the result can be more effective than individuals working alone. The opening cognitive message reinforces the concepts of organelles having unique functions, then the script goes into a reflection on the students' own unique qualities.

3.2.2 Social Media

Topic: Unhealthy Addiction to Social Media

Close your eyes and take some deep breaths to relax... Now in your mind's eye imagine your mobile phone. Imagine how it looks, how it feels... As you look at it, you hear a *ping* as a message arrives... How do you feel when you hear a message arriving? Where in your body do you feel the sensation? Is it a good feeling, a bad one or a neutral one? ...Now imagine that you send a message to a friend or friends. You can see that they are online. Your message was important, and you are excited to get their reply. You wait and wait and wait... but no reply comes. All day and that night, still no reply comes. How do you feel about

your friends not answering? Where in your body do you feel this feeling? What do you do? What do you feel about yourself because your friends have not answered you? What are the thoughts going through your mind? Take a moment to listen to the thoughts going through your head... Let yourself feel any of the feelings that these thoughts bring up... Now imagine that you have a bright light shining in your heart. Let the light get bigger and bigger until it fills your whole body. Imagine that it is especially bright and strong in the parts of the body where you felt reactions to your friends not answering your messages. Allow the warmth of the light to burn away any bad feelings, until you feel strong and powerful... Then when you are ready, open your eyes.

This visualization focuses primarily on the affective dimension, although it uses the social media context as the catalyst for this reflection on the topic. The cognitive reminder is the actual psychostimulant effect that can be aroused by social media. The values message is: Are we drawing our happiness and self-validation from our social media or from inside ourselves? This visualization can lead to some useful discussion:

- Invite two or three students who are willing to share what they felt during the visualization.
- Hopefully some students will talk about annoyance or impatience when their friends failed to reply instantly. They might have had thoughts like, “I know they are online, but they are not answering. Why? Are they angry with me? Have I said something to upset them? Have they unfriended me? Should I unfriend them?”

- Social media are about “different places/different times” (that is, the people are in different places, and the person receiving the message might read it at a different time from when it was sent). But using social media has caused us to expect “different places/same time.” So when we do not get a reply in the “same time,” especially when we know the other person is online, we have doubts and ask questions about ourselves and whether they like us, etc. Also, when we hear the *ping* of a message coming in, the chemical dopamine is released, which makes us feel good, so we start to get addicted to this feeling and want more and more messages to *ping* into our inboxes.
- Discuss how students felt when they allowed the good feelings to come from inside their own hearts instead of from the social media.
- What advice does this activity give us about our happiness? What, if anything, can we do in our lives to put this into practice?

3.2.3 Mathematics

Topic: Problem Solving

In mathematical problem solving, silent sitting can help students to connect to their own “inner computers,” the deeper levels of their minds where creative solutions can often be found. This helps to reinforce some key ideas:

- We all have the deep inner resources to solve problems—this is an extremely powerful tool.
- We all need to learn to be dependent on our own inner strength rather than relying only on other people and things around us for our strength and happiness.

- To tap into our inner computer, it is important to do silent sitting so we silence the chatter in the outer parts of our minds.

In the curriculum, there are many occasions when students are required to solve problems. Teach them that silent sitting for 30 seconds to one minute before trying to solve a problem or doing these activities will help them to do the work better and more quickly.

At the cognitive level, the following two visualizations give a reminder that we all have this inner wisdom to solve problems. The visualizations create the opportunity, at the affective level, for students to experience the positive emotions associated with solving a problem successfully. The values message is reinforced that in life, as in class, using silent sitting can empower students to solve their own problems.

Visualization 1

First read the problem. Then put it aside. Close your eyes and just listen to the inner silence of your mind for a few moments. Focus your concentration on the back of your closed eyelids at the point where your eyebrows meet. Don't try to think about anything—just allow your mind to be still and empty, and concentrate on the blankness behind your eyes. When you feel that your mind is completely still, think for a moment about the problem you need to solve. You can either repeat the whole question in your mind, or you can simply say, "I need to find the solution to the problem I

am about to tackle.”Once you have asked this question, return your attention to focusing on the silent, blank emptiness of your mind behind your closed eyelids for a few more minutes. Then visualize your subconscious mind working like a computer. First it sorts the knowledge you already have to solve the problem. Then it sorts out what else you need to know. Next, it puts this knowledge together in a logical way. Finally, it sends the output into your conscious mind so it can work on the problem. Take three slow, deep breaths, then open your eyes and start to work on the problem.

Visualization 2

Take three deep, slow breaths. Each time you breathe out, let go of any frustration or anxiety. Each time you breathe in, breathe in inspiration. You can decide what this might look like—a light that lights up your mind like a bulb, a color, or a shape. Just keep drawing it in each time you breathe. Now imagine that your mind has gone completely blank—as if the power has been cut and it has been plunged into darkness. Sit there for a few moments in the total blackness. If any thoughts or images come into your head, just let them go and return to thinking about the darkness.

Now imagine that you are going down a long, dark tunnel, right into the deepest part of your mind. This tunnel leads you to your inner mathematician, deep inside your brain. This is the place where you have all the answers and all the techniques you need to solve the problem. All you need to do is unlock the door behind which the inner mathematician is sitting. The door is golden, and

in the lock is a big golden key. Slowly turn the key, open the door, and all the knowledge you need can be seen right there. As you return along the tunnel, imagine that you are dragging the knowledge along behind you, bringing it closer and closer to the front of your conscious mind, where you can put it to good use. Now open your eyes. Don't worry if the inspiration isn't there immediately, as it will come.

Topic: The Pyramid

Prior to this visualization, you can show some pictures of pyramids made from blocks, such as the pyramids in Egypt. The following visualization can be used to tell the history of the Egyptian pyramids and provide some information about their significance:

Close your eyes and imagine that you are inside a pyramid. Imagine the base. What is its shape? How many angles does it have? What kind of angles are they? Now imagine each side. How many are there? What is their shape? Imagine the pyramid opened out flat. If you need to find the areas of these shapes, what formulae will you need to know?

A pyramid is extremely stable even during its building. No earthquake can destroy it. Repairs to parts already built are seldom required, and the builder can work efficiently on the construction of the pyramid. Take a moment to imagine yourself as a pyramid, so strong and stable that nothing can upset you.

The pyramid represents the sense of harmony and unity within ourselves and with our environment. The individual building blocks of the pyramid are lessons we have already successfully completed about ourselves. Take a moment to think about some of the things you have already learned about yourself... Now think about the things that you would still like to improve about yourself... As soon as the top of our pyramid has been built to the necessary height, we can then be in harmony with ourselves and our environment. Now take a moment to think about how it will feel when you are in full harmony with yourself and your environment. When you are ready, open your eyes and bring your full attention into the classroom to continue the lesson about the pyramid.

This visualization allows for cognitive consolidation of the properties of the pyramid—particularly by imagining it opened out flat—as well as some historical information about why this shape has been used in buildings since ancient times. Affectively, students are given the chance to focus on feelings of strength and stability invoked by the pyramid. The values message is clearly the positive effects of being in harmony with ourselves and our environment.

Topic: Sphere

The purpose of this visualization is to be cognitively aware of the properties of a sphere and, affectively, to think about how this shape can be used to help us to achieve the kind of inner peace that is not disturbed by whatever goes on around us in our lives. The

image of the golden sphere, or ball, can be used to represent security and purity. The visualization also demonstrates that, in our daily lives, we encounter other people and enjoy “traveling” with them for a while but that we need to respect their boundaries of their golden spheres, just as we need to respect our own.

Imagine that you are inside a golden sphere. You are floating around in the sphere, very safe and happy. The other children are in their spheres too. Sometimes you bump gently against each other, but you are inside your own sphere and nobody else can come in. Your golden sphere is your own special space where you can go whenever you like.

Topic: Subtraction

Start the lesson with the following visualization:

Close your eyes and take some slow, deep breaths to relax... Now imagine that you are looking at yourself in a mirror, so you can see yourself as other people see you. Imagine that you can see a big minus sign above your head in the mirror. Minus means taking away from something, or making something smaller. Look closely at yourself in the mirror and look at your own bad qualities that make you unhappy or you would like to be rid of. These are the things that take away from you being the best that you can be. As you look at your own bad qualities, one by one tell them to go away and imagine that they are leaving you. See your unhappiness growing smaller and smaller each time one of your bad qualities is

subtracted... Feel your happiness growing as you subtract the bad things.

The cognitive message here is the reminder that subtraction means to make something smaller. The affective focus is on happiness and the idea that unhappiness can become smaller as we systematically take away the “bad qualities” that can cause unhappiness. While some reflective discussion is valuable in all silent sitting activities, it would be particularly important after doing this visualization to discuss the kinds of qualities that can cause unhappiness if they are not discarded; this is where the values message in this visualization can be strengthened.

Topic: Place Value

Visualization 1 (From Sathya Sai Vidya Vahini Project, India)

We just learned that every digit in a number has a face value and a place value. The actual value of the number is the face value, and the place value depends on its place, or position, in the number.

For example, in number 59, though 5 is smaller than 9, its place value is higher than 9, due to its position on the left side of 9. If 5 is placed instead, to the right of 9 the place value of 5 decreases, even though the number 95 becomes greater.

Similarly, in this world, people initially get respect, fame and popularity due to being rich monetarily. A person’s money is the face value of that person. If the same wealth is used only for

selfish purposes and not for helping the needy, the person's place value in the society decreases. It also decreases if they are proud of their assets or wealth and look down upon other people.

Famous personalities like [insert name of appropriate local people] are loved even today because they used their personal wealth to help the poor and needy by establishing many charities. Their place value in the society will always be greater.

The possession of material things does not make persons great; it is their good nature that makes them stand out in society.

Think about your own life. Are you more concerned about your face value or your place value? Think about a time when you really did have place value, such as when you put aside your need for fame or success and instead used your unique talents to give value to somebody else. Think about how this made you feel. How did it make others feel?

This visualization can be expanded to think about face value not only as money but as fame, success, what others think of us, etc., and place value not only as what we do with our money but how we "add value" to others by making the best use of our own special, unique strengths and talents.

After revising the concept of place value, this visualization provides a useful parallel values message about our own "place value" in life. Some questions can be asked to get the students to

reflect on how effectively they are applying the values message to their own lives.

To reinforce the values message, a homework activity could be to try to add place value rather than face value during the following week and report back on how it affected themselves and others. Discussion can incorporate the following points:

- Just like the numbers, we all have a place in the world. We all have something that is special about us.
 - John is good at playing music.
 - Susie is good at math.
 - Mary is good at making unhappy friends feel better.
 - Anne has a beautiful smile that makes everyone feel good.
- Think about what your special place value is and tell your groupmates.
- How can you use your special place value to be valuable and to help others—that is, to find and make good use of it?

Visualization 2

While reinforcing the concept that adding zeros changes the place value, this alternative visualization conveys a values message of self-love or self-worth. It also conveys the message of strength in unity, that if we work together and support each other we can

become bigger and stronger. The students are asked to reflect on the feeling of strength that this can create.

Imagine one small unit number, all alone... Then another one joins it, and there are two... then another and another until there are 10. They join hands and stand in a line. Now they are much bigger and stronger than when they were alone. Now you see other lines of 10 coming along and joining together. Soon there are 10 of them, and they have made a big, fat, strong 100...

Next, think about the number 8. It is a very small number, all alone. Along comes a 0 and stands beside it. Now with the help of the 0, the 8 has become 80. It is 10 times bigger than it was before. Then along comes another 0 and stands beside the first one. Now the 80 has turned into 800, with the help of the two zeros. What a big and powerful number it is now. Watch the number get bigger and bigger as more and more zeros come to stand beside it.

Now imagine yourself all alone. Then imagine others come to stand beside you and help you to grow bigger and stronger. Feel how big and strong you become. Say thank you to the helpers. Now imagine you are standing beside your friend and helping him or her to grow bigger and stronger. How do you feel when you are helping your friend in this way?

A follow-up to the values message underlying this visualization could be to put a photo of each child (or his or her name) on the wall. Underneath each photo, write the thing that is

special about this child that adds value to himself or herself and to others.

3.2.4 English/History

In English (or other first language classes) or history, there are many opportunities to read stories or accounts that have values messages embedded. Two examples have been included here to illustrate how visualizations can be utilized to draw out students' awareness of the key issues in the text and to reflect on these issues in relation to their own lives, through introducing an affective component.

Topic: Story with a Moral Conflict

Close your eyes and imagine yourself all alone where nobody can see you. Think about your inner diamond, your conscience, your inner voice that tells you what is right and what is wrong. What does this feel like? Where in your body do you have this feeling? Have you ever had a time when you have listened to your conscience and made a good choice because of it? Try to remember how this made you feel. Have you ever had a time when you have done the wrong thing, knowing that it was wrong, just because you knew you would never get caught? Try to remember the feeling it gave you, deep inside your conscience.

Now think about the characters in the story you have just read. Try to put yourself in their position. Imagine you are experiencing...
[insert key incidents in the story that influence the development of

the moral conflict, one by one, allowing time for reflection]. How does this incident make you feel? Now connect to your conscience just like you did a few moments ago. If you were this character, what choice would you make in this situation? How do you feel now that you have made this choice?

[The teacher may wish to extend this visualization script by adding some further scenarios, such as those below.]

Imagine that you are alone in the classroom, and you see your classmate's iPhone that he has left behind. You know it would be very easy to take it, and nobody would know. Ask your inner voice to tell you what you should do. Ask your inner voice to say, "I should do this" or "I should not do this."

Now imagine that you are hurrying to play at your friend's house, and you see your old neighbor carrying her groceries home from the market. They are very heavy, and she is struggling. If you help her, you will be late to your friend's house. Will you help her? Ask your inner voice to say, "I should do this" or "I should not do this."

[Continue with this pattern, adding in another two or three actions that are relevant to the children in the class or relevant to the story under consideration.]

The values message here is clearly concerned with encouraging students to be aware of and listen to their consciences. This script starts with an affective focus, inviting students to reflect

on the concept of a conscience and to experience the feelings of acting according to or against their consciences. It then continues with a cognitive task, reminding the students of the key incidents involved in the story that led to the moral conflict and the eventual resolution—but at the same time asking them to tune in to their own consciences before making their decisions about how they might have acted if they were the character(s) involved.

Topic: Story about a Natural Disaster (e.g., an Earthquake)

This visualization was developed for a story about a devastating earthquake that occurred in the Tibetan town of Yushu in 2010. After reading the story, the students worked in groups to suggest ideas for helping the people who were affected.

Close your eyes and listen to the beautiful music.

Imagine that you are in Yushu. Imagine you are standing in front of some children there. Now think about what you suggested in your group that you could do for them or give them. Imagine that you are really doing this now for the Yushu children standing in front of you. As you do it, feel love in your heart for them. They say thank you and go away.

Now think about how it makes you feel in your heart to have helped the Yushu children. Think about the feeling in your heart that comes from helping somebody in trouble. When you open

your eyes, try to hold this feeling in your heart for the rest of the day.

In this example, the teacher started by asking the class to listen to some relaxing music, which helped to settle them down after the group activity and to get into the right frame of mind for the visualization. The affective aspect is to experience the feelings of love, compassion and happiness that come from helping others. The values message implied here is “love all, serve all.”

Topic: Grammar (Present Tense)

During this lesson, we have done some exercises to correct the use of the present tense in sentences. Close your eyes and listen while I read aloud the correct sentences. As you listen, try to appreciate the sense of balance in these correct sentences. [Read aloud as appropriate.] Now, while your eyes are closed, think about a time in your life when you have been worried or agitated about something that is going to happen in your future. Think about the way you felt; whether it was a pleasant or unpleasant feeling; whether it caused any distress in any part of your body. Now think about a time when you were upset about something that happened in the past. Again, think about the way you felt; whether it was a pleasant or unpleasant feeling; whether it caused any distress in any part of your body. Now bring your attention back into the room. Feel the chair underneath you, the floor beneath your feet, the table if you are leaning on it. Be aware of any sounds you can hear in the room... or sounds outside the room. Be aware of the

temperature in the room. Be aware of the smells in the room. Now think about your breathing. Breathe in and out gently, just watching your breath as it flows in and out. [Allow 30 seconds to one minute for this breathing exercise.] Think about how you feel now, after focusing all of your attention on being in the present. How is it different from when you were worrying about the future or holding onto something from the past? Allow yourself to feel the balance of being in your own present tense. The breath is always with you as a refocusing tool to bring you back to the present moment.

The revision of the class exercises on present tense was used to open this visualization, as a means of reinforcing the cognitive aspect of what was covered in the lesson. It then moves on to exploring how students can be affected if they allow themselves to move away from their own present tense by worrying about the past or future, then appreciating the calmness of being in the present moment.

3.3 Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter has presented some examples of the silent sitting tool of guided visualization that can be used as a means of integrating education in human values into subject topics by combining cognitive subject knowledge, affective experiences, and reflection on a values message embedded in the topic. While silent sitting is not the only way to achieve this type of integration, it is an effective one because it is relatively easy to use and does not take up

too much of the lesson time. Of course, this type of visualization should not be done in every lesson, as to do so would be to reduce its impact if students become too familiar with the approach. That said, silent sitting should be used regularly so that students realize its effectiveness. To this end, from time to time, discuss with students the effectiveness of silent sitting as a tool for cognitive understanding of both the subject topic and the underpinning values message, for evoking affective aspects, and for reflecting on the values message in relation to their own lives.

While only a few selected subjects have been included here, it is hoped that these will be sufficient as examples for teachers to develop their own scripts for other topics.

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