

**GUIDED IMAGERY: A PRACTICAL SOLUTION FOR THE
CLASSROOM TEACHER**

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ABSTRACT

Working with students to better help them understand and appropriately respond to their emotions, ADHD status and Learning disabilities are primary goals of the Learning Assistance Program in Medicine Hat. Literature suggests that students who are emotionally well have a far greater chance of succeeding academically than those students who are not emotionally well. Through further investigation of guided imagery, I discovered that many of the chronic problems experienced by SLD students are often the areas of which guided imagery contributes many positive implications. For example, SLD students suffer from disorganized thinking and written work. Congruent implications of guided imagery are often an increase in one's focus, organization, written precision, as well as an increased motivation and/or desire to write. In addition, inattention, distractibility and short attention spans also characterize and plague the SLD student. Guided imagery is noted for its ability to dramatically relax individuals, positively resulting in an increase of one's focus and attention. Finally, SLD students are characterized by having difficulty in social relations, lowered self-esteem, depression, truancy, inappropriate behaviours and a lack of confidence. Likewise, guided imagery promotes the acceptance of others, overall wellness, creative and/or serious emotional expression and a positive self-concept; all of which help students achieve more positive work outcomes. Therefore, my question was: will my grade seven and eight SLD students consider guided imagery a positive, safe, and confidential method or medium for the promotion of the following Learning Assistance Program goals: positive behavior, positive work outcome, positive self concept, positive means for creative and/or serious emotional expression, overall wellness in students, the acceptance of others, increased focus and attention and increased motivation and/or desire to write?

In order to answer my research question, I carefully prepared pre and post interview questions that focussed on the various implications that guided imagery could promote. Following the pre-interview sessions, I subjected the students to one guided imagery activity a week over a five week period. Throughout the five weeks, I made detailed notes with regard to what I observed of the students' behaviour and their written responses. In addition, I developed a class period into what became known as Wellness Time. Every Monday morning during Wellness Time I would read the students' guided imagery responses from the previous week to the class. This experience not only revealed to the students the various differences in personalities that existed in our classroom, but also the emotional commonalities that were shared amongst them. Following the five weeks of guided imagery sessions, I interviewed the students asking the same questions that I had asked in the pre-interviews. A culminating discussion was written using the information gathered from the interviews, the guided imagery sessions, and the responses heard during Wellness Time.

From the various forms of information gathered, four major themes became apparent. The themes were motivation to write, wellness, creative expression and positive behavior. I believed the students received from this whole guided imagery experience, a feeling of positive power. Since these students had so few means of attaining power in a productive manner, much of their life was spent attaining negative power through drug use, crime and sex. Guided imagery provided my students the opportunity to attain positive power; consequently, I was thankful that I had the tool of guided imagery in my teaching bag of tricks. There is nothing more heart warming than giving a child the gift of positive power.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Preface

The goal of this project was to determine how guided imagery would influence the behaviour of the special needs students in my combined grade seven and eight Severe Learning disabilities (SLD) classroom. I first discovered what guided imagery was while enrolled in Michael Pollard's "Gender in Education" class. My excitement for the topic of guided imagery began on the day that Michael used a guided imagery exercise as an opener for one of his classes. Michael began the activity by first turning on a tape of Pachelbel's "Canon in D". While the music played, Michael then read a guided imagery exercise from Maureen Murdock's book Spinning Inward. Once the exercise had been read, the class was asked to personally respond to the directions that were given in the exercise. I felt both inspired and driven to express a number of emotions that were awakened in me by the guided imagery exercise. Once the class had completed their responses, Michael asked for any volunteers to share their writings with the class. I had always felt that I was an extremely poor writer, but for some strange reason I was wanting and almost needing to share my response with the class. It was quite an overwhelming inner experience. After listening to several responses, I was amazed by the powerful emotions that were elicited by that one simple guided imagery exercise. Michael's imagery exercise heightened my emotions, my creativity, my need to resolve personal conflicts, and my desire to write. It was at this moment that I realised how powerful these exercises may prove to be with my hard-core, seemingly insensitive students. My students are emotionally tough; consequently, they have a great deal of emotional turmoil with which to deal. This turmoil is released, unfortunately, in the forms of inappropriate behaviour and defiant attitudes. My students' inappropriate behaviour and defiant attitudes are evident in their responses to authority, community rules, other's personal property and personal space, and their academic and personal successes.

I felt that these types of exercises would help my students release their emotions in a more appropriate manner than they are presently accustomed. I believed that these types of guided imagery exercises would prove successful with my students because of the absence of confrontation and negative consequences within each exercise. In fact, I believed that my students would find guided imagery to be a safe, private and positive means of self expression. I believed the implications of this project would include the following:

- a. Guided imagery promotes positive behaviour
- b. Guided imagery promotes a positive work outcome
- c. Guided imagery promotes a positive self-concept
- d. Guided imagery provides a positive means for creative and/or serious emotional expression
- e. Guided imagery promotes overall wellness in students
- f. Guided imagery promotes the acceptance of others
- g. Guided imagery leads to increased focus and attention
- h. Guided imagery leads to an increased motivation and/or desire to write

A Theoretical Definition of Severe Learning Disability (SLD) Students

Numerically coded as a 54, the student with a learning disability has many definitions. Medicine Hat School District #76 defines the SLD student using three categories: Intellectual Functioning, Educational Prognosis and Social/Emotional Development. The categories are described as follows:

1. ***Intellectual Functioning:*** These students on an intellectual evaluation show average or above average intelligence levels but might show a serious deficiency in one or more subtest areas.

2. Educational Prognosis: If the problem is detected at an early age, the student has a greater chance for successful school experiences. If, however, the problem goes undetected during his early years in school, the remediation process may be much more difficult. Special areas of difficulty may be reading, writing, spelling, or mathematics.

3. Social/Emotional Development: Chronic difficulties in a particular subject area may strengthen expectations by the student of automatic failure with attendant feelings of inadequacy and dislike for the subject. These emotional responses could conceivably be accompanied by problem behaviours such as withdrawal and daydreaming, truancy, or acting out behaviour.

Alberta Education provides a variation of the same definition of Learning Disabilities. The definition of Learning Disabilities is as follows:

Learning disabilities is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders to identifiable or inferred central nervous system dysfunction. Delays in early development and or difficulties in the following areas may manifest such disorders:

- * Attention
- * Memory
- * Reasoning
- * Co-ordination
- * Communication
- * Reading
- * Writing
- * Spelling
- * Calculation

- * Social Competence

- * Emotional Maturation

Learning disabilities are intrinsic to the individual, and may affect learning and behaviour in any individual including those with potentially average or above average intelligence.

Learning disabilities are not due primarily to visual, hearing or motor handicaps, to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental disadvantage, although they may occur concurrently with any of these.

Learning disabilities may arise from genetic variations, biochemical factors, and events in the pre - to perinatal, or any other subsequent events resulting in neurological impairment.

Alberta Education goes even further by describing five elements crucial to the defining of learning disabilities. The five elements are as follows:

- * Underachievement as indicated by uneven patterns of development; e.g., well-developed oral language skills vs. poor written language skills, and/or by discrepancies between potential and academic achievement; e.g., average performance on a test of intelligence but significant delays in reading or mathematics.

- * Central nervous dysfunction indicating that the source of the difficulties is found within the person and is not the consequence of outside factors.

- * Difficulties with one or more of the basic psychological processes, such as attention, memory, etc.

* Specified areas of difficulty in which learning disabilities are often noticed. Common areas included are spoken language, academic and conceptual. Less frequently included are difficulties involving social skills, self-regulation, spatial orientation, integration or motor abilities.

* An exclusionary clause which reinforces that learning disabilities are different from other handicapping conditions and do not arise from them nor do they arise from environmental influences. Even though a learning disability may co-exist with other handicapping conditions (sensory impairment, cognitive delay, social and emotional disabilities) and environmental influences (cultural differences), it is not the result of those conditions or influences.

Description of Student Demographics in my Junior SLD Classroom

Grade	Males	Females	SLD (Code)	Severe Emotional Behavioural Disorder (Code 42)
8	5	3	7	1
8	8	0	8	0

There were a total of sixteen full time students in my classroom. The students' grade placement is determined by their chronological ages. In reality, in each of the core subjects such as Math, Social Studies, Science, English, and/or Health, the students' academic performance falls somewhere between the third and the seventh grade levels. Taking into consideration poor academic performance as well as other variables related to the SLD and the severe emotional/behavioural population, students in my program receive programs that are quite individualized in nature.

A Description of the Eclectic Array of Learning Disabilities Found in My Classroom Under the Umbrella of SLD and a General Listing of My Students' Complex Problems

I have found that the label SLD, is an umbrella term that is used to encompass students with other disabilities who are placed in the SLD Learning Assistance Program. Many times students in my classroom have disabilities far more severe and not even remotely related to that of an SLD student. There is one such student in my classroom who attends the SLD program, yet, who is coded with a Severe Emotional/Behavioural Disability (SIS Code 42).

A student with a severe emotional/behavioural disability displays chronic, extreme, and pervasive behaviour and requires close and constant adult supervision, as well as intensive guidance from other support services in a highly structured environment in order for him to function in an educational setting. The behaviours interfere significantly not only with both the learning and safety of the student in question, but of the other students as well. The following is a listing of some of the most common behaviours displayed by students with severe emotional/behavioural disabilities:

1. Dangerously aggressive, destructive, violent, and impulsive behaviours
2. Self-stimulation, self-abuse, perseveration, echolalia, and/or aphasic behaviour
3. Psychosis including schizophrenia, manic depression, or obsessive compulsive-disorder

Overall, my students require assistance with regards to a number of complex problems. Their problems vary in type and severity. One common problem shared by all my students is the inability to maintain attention/focus. This lack of attention is a serious problem because it affects how well or how poorly these students cope and function within a school and community setting. Problems such as this inhibit my students from fully integrating into the regular school programs. Besides their SLD status, other variables which influence the likelihood of my students participating fully in the regular programs include sexual deviancy, behaviour disorders, and

extreme anger management problems, poor parenting and/or foster care placement, and low socio-economic status.

Overview of the Learning Assistance Program - SLD - At W.R. Myers High School

The SLD Learning Assistance Program at W.R. Myers High School is divided into two sections: the Junior and Senior classes. The Junior class consists of grades seven and eight students and the Senior class consists of students in grades nine to twelve.

The program philosophy of focus of the SLD Learning Assistance Program at W.R. Myers High school is placed on the development of functional academic skills which will assist students in becoming well rounded, productive citizens. The program maintains a language-based approach to instruction while emphasising the use of written and oral language to facilitate more effective communication.

The focus of instruction in the SLD Learning Assistance Program is on the development of learning skills as well as content mastery depending upon the nature of the learning disability. There are no content objectives in the program of studies for special education teachers; therefore, teachers have been given a great deal of autonomy in which to be creative and to teach the students' interests. With this prerequisite, what we teach will vary depending upon student interest and academic needs.

The Learning Assistance Program at W.R. Myers High School maintains a language based approach to instruction, emphasising the use of written and oral language to facilitate more effective communication. Courses within the program include Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Math, and integrated courses, which may include an option, a core subject, or both. Students are given the opportunity to experience many different integrated courses in a

supportive environment. These courses present the occasions to gain valuable skills and knowledge, as well as the opportunity to learn appropriate social skills and peer interaction. The curriculum for the SLD Program falls within the following five domains:

1. Metacognitive Domain

This domain involves the active control, co-ordination, and monitoring of learning processes and strategies: e.g., problem solving, generalizing, studying and organizing.

2. Information Processing

This domain includes how information is received through the senses, attended to, perceived, organized, stored (memory), retrieved and expressed (unobservable and observable responses). The metacognitive domain provides the active control of the processes in the information-processing domain.

3. Communication Domain

This domain includes auditory skills, language skills (receptive and comprehension) and the output or expression of language. It is separated from the information processing domain because of the significant impact that difficulties in communication have upon academic and social/adaptive functioning.

4. Academic Domain

This domain includes the following areas:

- * Reading
- * Written Expression
- * Spelling
- * Mathematics

As students proceed through school, their learning disabilities may influence performance in content areas subjects; e.g., science, social studies.

5. Social/Adaptive Domain

This domain encompasses social competence, which involves being able to engage successfully interpersonal relationship and adapt to the environment. Social competence is influenced by affective characteristics, which are included in this domain. Important concepts also include self-esteem, prosocial skills, and self-monitoring.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by the small sample size and the preponderance of boys in the sample. It was possible that the results were influenced by my presence in the classroom. As the regular teacher of this group, there may have been a tendency on the part of the students to want to meet my unstated expectations for them. Would the results have been the same if someone other than myself had administered the guided imagery exercises? Would the student responses to the guided imagery exercises have been different if I had not known the students personally?

A random sample is a random selection of subjects that is less likely representative of the general population a researcher is attempting to research. For my project a random sample would be representative of the general SLD special education population. Selection bias may have occurred in my research resulting in a sample of students that may not have been representative of the general SLD special education population. Therefore, there was limited confidence that my results correspond to any other given sample.

Another variable that could have effected the reliability and validity of my results was what is called the “observer effects”. Observer effects refers to the biases that the researchers unknowingly bring to the experiment. It is possible that I may have used leading questions and

biased statements while introducing my students to the guided imagery exercises. His may have skewed the way in which my students responded to the guided imagery exercises and, therefore, altered my results.

My results may have also been effected by the limited data collection period in which I gathered my results. This may have been a threat to the validity of my results because if the data had been collected over a more extended period of time, I could have seen if things might have changed. For example, would the success of guided imagery have continued to increase, or would I have found that the students became bored with the exercises? That being a possibility, would I have then observed a decrease in the success of guided imagery?

The setting in which my students experienced the guided imagery exercises may have also modified my research findings. Although the background music, the dimness of the lighting and the presenter were always the same, the fact that my students were in heir own personal desks in their safe and comfortable classroom may have possibly skewed the results. I wonder if the results would still be the same had I taken my students down the hall to another classroom with different desks, but still having maintained consistency in the background music, the dimness of the lighting and the presenter.

It is difficult to know whether or not the information or responses given by the students were in-depth or rather vague and ambiguous. It is difficult to say if a child actually responded as best he or she could if, he or she intentionally avoided revealing certain information.

Inconsistent student attendance could have had an influence on the results of the study. I had a number of different students from my class participate at different times in the study due to jail terms, court appearances and school suspensions.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

History

When I first discovered the concept of guided imagery, I thought that I had made a ground-breaking discovery. Guided imagery proved to be a new and successful tool in my classroom, but one that was discovered long before I came to realize it. According to Twemlow and Cohen (1981):

Guided Imagery was originally developed by two independent European pioneers, Hanscarl Leuner, a German psychoanalytically oriented psychiatrist, and Robert Desoille, a French psychotherapist who developed his technique within a more Pavlovian framework. (p.259)

The first reported application of guided imagery in the treatment of children and adolescents was documented by Leuner in the 1950's. During this time, Leuner was working in the field of child psychiatry, for some years as director of a child guidance center. In the book, Guided Affective Imagery with Children and Adolescents, authors Leuner, Klessmann, & Horn (1983) described guided imagery's literary beginning and their initial ideas of the implications that it may offer clients:

Since guided affective imagery first appeared in the literature in 1955, it has developed into an internationally recognized approach to the use of mental imagery in psychotherapy. It occupies a unique position among the imaginal procedures currently available to psychotherapists. On the one hand, it is distinguished by the possibility of systematically structuring the broad imaginal field of experience and, on the other hand, by its wide range of diverse technical procedures, which are flexible and can be adapted to the individual case. (p.xi)

Eclectic Uses

Guided imagery is used as an effective psychotherapeutic tool. Authors Twemlow and Cohen (1981) described guided imagery in the following manner:

Guided imagery is a procedure in which fantasy and imagery material is evoked in the client and guided by the therapist during the therapeutic sessions. Desoille calls this a process of “directing the waking dream” (Desoille, 1966). The guided imagery sessions begin with relaxation and an internal focussing of attention which is usually followed by a developing awareness and experience of free-floating imagery as well as thoughts, emotions, and sensations. The imagery is guided either verbally by the therapist and/or by imagery affect-inducing music. In America, the use of music in guided imagery has been pioneered by Helen Bonny at Maryland Psychiatric Research Institute (Bonny & Savary, 1973). (Twemlow & Cohen, 1981, p.10)

In addition, guided imagery also has relevance to medicine. Leading guided imagery author, Jeanne Achterberg (1985), in her book, Imagery in Healing: Shamanism and Modern Medicine, gave the following description of guided imagery:

What is imagery? Imagery is the thought process that invokes and uses the senses: vision, audition, smell, taste, the senses of movement, position, and touch. It is the communication mechanism between perception, emotion and bodily change. A major cause of both health and sickness, the image is the world’s oldest and greatest healing resource. (p.3)

Despite guided imagery’s positive implications for helping individuals that are in need of physiological or psychological assistance, guided imagery is also a powerful tool for helping those healthy persons seeking personal growth and a higher level of creativity. In her book, Mind, Music and Imagery Unlocking the Treasures of Your Mind, Stephanie Merritt (1996), described guided imagery as follows:

Guided imagery is a method of self-exploration in which a person listens to specifically programmed classical music in a relaxed state,

allowing images and feelings to come to awareness. The listener or “traveller” shares these images with a guide while the music is playing. Rather than providing a background, the music is an active agent. It may evoke visual images, feelings, memories, colours, fragrances, sounds or kinesthetic responses. After the music has ended, the “traveller” shares insights about the images and their connection to her current life issues. The guided imagery experience may then be expressed through drawing, creative writing or other artistic media. (p.23-24)

Educational Implications

Despite the many exciting uses of guided imagery, I was most interested in its use in the educational setting. According to Akhter Ahsen (1989) of the Image Institute in New York, “The use of guided imagery is widespread in education where imagery activity is used for cognitive gain in such tasks as sharpening attention skills, affective development, and transpersonal awareness” (p.165). In addition, Andrew Schwartz (1995) has his own perception of the value of guided imagery in education:

Guided imagery is one of the most potent tools we have as individuals to manage stress, unleash our creativity, change our attitudes, set and reach goals, tap into our inner wisdom, relax, stimulate peak performance, and activate our natural healing powers. It is also intended to help people in the areas of stress management, well being, problem-solving, and personal fulfilment. (p.10-11)

Gaylean, director at the Center for Integrative Learning in Long Beach California, and graduate program director in Integrative Education for the International College of Los Angeles, deemed guided imagery as a useful curricular tool. Gaylean (1983) believed that, “Teaching with imagery can help students focus on lessons, retain information, improve psychomotor skills, and accept themselves and others” (p.54). Similar support for guided imagery was shared by Schwartz (1993) in his book, Inquire Within, when he stated that, “Exercises in guided imagery may enable you to increase your physical, emotional, and intellectual self-awareness” (p.10). Lusk (1992), in her book, 30 Scripts for Relaxation Imagery & Inner Healing, noted that:

Guided imagery encourages people to experience internal harmony, to heal emotional and physical upsets, to increase body awareness, enhance relaxation, to get in touch with the healing source of energy for emotional and spiritual strength, to receive direction from their own inner guide, and to connect with the environment. (p.viii)

In her book, Mind Body Magic, Belknap (1997) commented that, “Guided imagery helps people relax and focus on their issues, enhance self-awareness and personal strength, energize a person physically and mentally and stimulate creative change and problem solving” (p.1).

More specifically, Maureen Murdock (1987), a leading advocate of the use of guided imagery with children, explained in her book, Spinning Inward, what she felt was the value of using guided imagery in the classroom:

Imagery is an extremely effective learning tool. We increase concentration and memory skills, improve academic learning, and excel in sports through the use of imagery. The use of positive, relaxing images helps us to reduce stress. Children think in images all the time. They know things with all of their senses. But they lose this natural ability to learn with their sensory images unless we reinforce it. (p.6)

In her book, Murdock explained that the brain is divided into two hemispheres; the left and the right. The left and right hemispheres of the brain prefer to do the following types of tasks:

Tasks Preferred By Left Hemisphere	Tasks Preferred By Right Hemisphere
Time-oriented tasks: Doing first things first Step-by-step tasks Sequential analysis	Space-oriented tasks: Three dimensional images Patterns Connections
Logic	Synthesizing tasks, whole view
Verbal tasks	Non-verbal tasks
Facts, lists, computations	Images, pictures, metaphors
	Dreams, insight, intuition

(Maureen Murdock, 1987, p.7)

Upon looking at the above tasks preferred by each hemisphere, it would appear that most schools are formatted to promote the left hemisphere much more than the right. This conduct seems unfair to those students who are more right brain oriented. Support for this idea was offered by Carey (1986) who wrote, “Although schools tend to focus on verbal-mathematical, linear-logical skills and the processes of the left brain, the use of the right brain is more or less left to chance” (p.150). Murdock (1987) in agreement stated, “. . . we can say that schools have favoured one type of learning: a verbal, linear, sequential, fact-oriented format. A child who does not fit into this way does not fit in the format” (p.8). According to Murdock’s research, this is most unfortunate because it is a biological fact that different people learn according to which of their two hemispheres is dominant. Interestingly though, Murdock found research to suggest that, if programmed, the brain does function as a whole. Therefore, Murdock (1987) claims, “Using imagery followed by a verbal, written, or art task is one way of exercising the whole brain” (p.8). Using instructional methods and activities that promote the use of the entire brain would provide a more equitable form of instruction for both right and left brain oriented students. Unfortunately, few schools engage in activities that promote whole brain learning. Since most educational instruction and activities are formatted to suit the left brain dominant students, those

students who do not learn well in this manner often have frustration and difficulty with learning.

Murdock (1987) reported that:

If they do not learn in the manner in which the schools educate, they are ignored or labelled "Learning Disabled." Through the use of guided imagery, parents and educators can both reinforce this natural ability to learn with the senses and improve our children's learning at school.
(p.8)

Echoing this plea for an education system that truly accommodates both sides of the brain, is

Prince (1978) cited in Wheatley, Maddox & Anthony (1989) who said:

By linking the rational and emotional cognitive processes, full utilization of the brain is obtained. It is this full, co-operative involvement of both hemispheres that facilitates the necessary synergy that produces that greater thinking referred to as imagination and creativity. (p.37)

Further insights into why guided imagery would be effective in the educational system are offered by Miller and Ahsen (1988) who claimed:

Education is more than the assimilation of facts, and self-actualization is a major goal of many curricula today. Visualization or guided imagery is a tool recommended for both enhancing learning and facilitating personal growth. (p. 13)

Ahsen (1989) made an even bolder statement having suggested:

. . . schools need to step back from the limited goals of the current system and work toward "the full emotional experience of being one with the universe". Imagery is a way to put students in touch with the primary imagination and the ground of our being. (p.18)

At this point in the literature review, it appeared clear to me, having been a teacher who has taught in both regular and special education programs in a number of different school districts across Alberta, that guided imagery was a multipurpose, eclectic tool useful in many educational settings.

Specific Educational Value

When I was first introduced to the concept of guided imagery, I was unaware of the impressive consequences that it could have in the classroom setting. Upon further research, I discovered the use of guided imagery influenced four areas including:

- a. Student motivation to write
- b. Overall personal wellness
- c. Creative self awareness
- d. Positive behaviour

Too often I have found that schools are militant in their expectations and treatment of students. So much emphasis and discipline in schools is formatted around left hemisphere tasks, that it seems as though schools are losing sight of the human aspect of students and of teaching. According to Oddleifson (1994) cited in Drake (1996), “. . . the use of guided imagery facilitates increased creative and critical thinking, higher levels of abstract thought, increased self-esteem, and fewer dropouts” (p.9). These implications are all favourable to the educational system, allowing many right-brained students a greater opportunity to succeed in a left-brain dominant school system. Sauter (1994) cited in Drake (1996) gave further insight into the value of guided imagery in the educational setting when he found, “The arts also teach us about being human, rather than just concentrating on logical thinking skills” (p.9). Therefore, the remainder of this literature review will be dedicated to exploring what the leading authors of guided imagery research have to say about the value of guided imagery in the classroom setting.

a. Motivation to Write

The majority of the students in my classroom have an intense hatred of writing. When they do write, it is often violent in nature and greatly lacking in structure and fluency. According to Hubbard (1989) cited in Drake (1996), “. . . writers such as C.S. Foster and Coleridge made conscious use of images in their writing. Similarly, students could use the technique to improve their writing skills” (p.10). Further insight into how guided imagery could improve students’ motivation to write was offered by Corsi (1992) cited in Drake (1996):

. . . after guiding grade eight students to visit a safe and relaxing place in their imaginations, there was a remarkable difference in the quality of their creative writing: descriptive writing was substantially richer and violence, previously evident in many stories, virtually disappeared. (p.10)

The advantages of using guided imagery in writing classes seemed to be numerous. Gaylean (1980) wrote that:

Advantages of using mental imagery in writing activities include the dispelling of distractions and the quieting of students’ mind chatter. Students using mental imagery scored significantly higher on measures of oral and written communication skills than students who did not use mental imagery. (p.88)

b. Overall Personal Wellness

A common theme found amongst many junior and senior high schools students is a lack of confidence in themselves and their academic ability. An unfortunate behavioural consequence of this theme is students putting each other down so that they themselves may feel more self-confident. The travesty of this situation is that the putting down of others does not provide the guilty party with a healthy self-concept, but rather only a facade that they are happy with themselves. Fortunately, literature described the growing capability of guided imagery to combat a poor self-image.

Speaking from the standpoint of an SLD teacher who on a daily basis has watched the unjust treatment of many special education students and regular program students, it is no wonder that they feel poorly about themselves academically and/or personally. Fortunately guided imagery can and has made a difference in many of these students' lives. In support of this idea, leading author Lowenthal (1986) cited in Drake (1996) revealed that, "Visualization is not merely the luxury of an enriched education program. In fact, visualization has the capability to reinforce a more positive self-concept in the learning disabled" (p.4). In addition, Twemlow and Cohen's (1981) research endeavours determined that, "the experience of guided imagery tends to result in an increase in psychological well-being, independence, and the capacity to be self-supportive" (p.262).

The reason that it is difficult for students to attain a positive self-image is that it requires them to consciously think positively about themselves. Thinking positively about oneself is not only difficult for teenagers but for adults alike. Consequently, guided imagery is able to provide a safe, secure and comfortable forum for this task. Research demonstrates that through guided imagery, self-concepts can be changed for the better with very little pain. Drake (1996) believed:

. . . guided imagery is useful for goal rehearsal to build confidence and skills, overcoming fears and anxieties, break negative habits, and overcome sadness and despondency. Imagery is a tool that can help an individual construct a vision of the ideal self. The images are self-fulfilling prophecies – negative images result in negative experiences. Conversely . . . if we systematically and repeatedly picture ourselves being successful and achieving our goals, there is generally a predictable transfer from imagery to reality. The self-fulfilling relationship of image to reality has been used to promote self-improvement in a variety of educational settings. Ciglen and Ciglen (1989) developed imagery techniques for elementary school students where students would set realistic goals, then relax and visualize those goals accompanied by affirmations. They report increased confidence for students (p.14)

What I found most rewarding about the power of guided imagery was not only the ability for it to change the way in which people look at themselves, but how they look at others as well. This overall acceptance or understanding of oneself and others is documented in research collected by Twemlow and Cohen (1981) who found that:

Guided imagery results in a significant change in how we see ourselves and others. The change in how participants viewed themselves was reflected in increased scores on the following Personal Orientation Inventory Scales: Acceptance of Self; Self-Regard; and particularly, Acceptance of Aggression in Self. Participants' views of others were altered as reflected in increased POI subscale scores on the "Nature of Man" scale (p.262).

c. Creative Self Awareness

Many teenagers in special and regular education programs struggle with creative writing. These students are often asked to do writing tasks that are reflective of their inner thoughts, feelings and emotions. Unfortunately, many teenagers are too afraid or bound by feelings of anxiety to adequately attempt to express their inner most feelings. It seems that many junior high school students believe that true self expression, that is, a serious reflective examination of one's feelings, thoughts and emotions is difficult if not impossible to accomplish. Having spoken with many junior and senior high school English teachers, it appeared that accomplishing the creative writing portion of the curriculum was often very difficult if not impossible for some students. I have experienced this same difficulty in attempting to motivate my SLD students, ninety-five percent of who are boys, to express their true feelings in a thoughtful and cohesive manner. I have left many writing classes frustrated, angry and convinced that junior high students of today have absolutely no inner feelings whatsoever. Fortunately, having found guided imagery, my stress as well as the students has evolved into excitement and anticipation for each and every writing lesson. Amazing results! Similarly, in her study

of the guided imagery process and the effects on awareness and discovery of personal meaning, Farr (1990) discovered that, “The purposeful use of the imagination through guided imagery appears to be a most effective and fruitful means to explore inner processes” (p.45). In addition, Brokett, 1979; Witmer & Young, 1987 cited in Myrick & Myrick (1993) proposed that, “ Many educators are experiencing success through the use of guided imagery in hopes of increasing artistic expression and personal awareness” (p.63). Further support for the positive outcomes from guided imagery is confirmed by Hammer, 1967; Kosbab, 1974; Leuner, 1969; Trussell, 1977; Vargiu, 1970 cited in Twemlow & Cohen (1981) who revealed, “Guided imagery tends to facilitate awareness of unconscious material and integrative type experiences” (p.260). Twemlow & Cohen (1981) summarized the message of their study by reporting that, “The results of this study support the notion that guided imagery facilitates increased awareness of imagery, fantasy, and grieving during the experience itself” (p.262). Similarly, DeSoille, 1966; Leuner, 1969; Wolpe, 1974 cited in Anderson (1980) found:

. . . in the relaxed state of inwardly focussed attention, a person is able to bring out material that they need to acknowledge and deal with. Fantasy can be used to facilitate the release of blocked emotions, the learning of new behaviour, or the development of individual insights. (p.41)

Further support for the use of guided imagery and its ability to enhance written creativity and individual self-expression was explained by Anderson (1980) who discovered that:

Guided imagery or fantasy can enrich the growing/learning process in children. By employing fantasy approaches children can be taught to understand and manage their emotions. Students respond with more creativity and motivation and are more relaxed when guided imagery or fantasy is used as a mode of instruction. (p.41)

In essence the literature is suggesting that guided imagery is a safe and unobtrusive means for encountering and eventually revealing a person's inner most thoughts, feelings or emotions. At the root of guided imagery and its resulting success is trust. A trust in the method and feelings being discovered by the person. According to Drake (1996):

Guided imagery is the path to the highest expression of human nature. At the transpersonal level there is a connection with the Self, the center of the highest consciousness from which one discovers the meaning and purpose of one's life. Mental imagery is often the language of the unconscious and through it we can communicate with the unconscious mind and our higher consciousness; this process is under the direction of the Self and thus can be trusted. (p.16)

It is through self-reflection that people best learn from their mistakes, successes and missed opportunities. It is the reflection on and evaluation of a person's innermost thoughts, feelings and emotions that help him/her to best understand them and to continue to grow and develop in a healthy manner. I conclude by quoting Harner (1980) cited in Frost (1995) who suggested that:

Working with images . . . has a strong tendency to turn people on to their creative genius. This, in turn, produces several desirable results. People are more likely to be aligned with their own inner healing processes. It gives what Albert Schweitzer called "the doctor who resides within" a better chance to go to work. (p.354)

d. Behaviour

The primary concern of any principal or superintendent is that their teachers are able to maintain a controlled classroom with the students focussed and attentive to the task at hand. According to my superintendent, learning only occurs when a classroom is well disciplined and students are kept focussed and on task. Given the curricular demands, time constraints, everyday school interruptions, various moods of the students and teachers, and the ever increasing array of behaviour disorders in our school systems

today, establishing a well disciplined and attentive classroom can be quite challenging. So often the demands placed on teachers and students during the course of the school day are so extreme that performance stress never decreases. This tension continues to build throughout the day until some minor event brings both a student and teacher to the office. Both parties are often angry, hurt and demanding instant justice from an administrator whose day was most likely no better than the student's or the teacher's. According to the literature, guided imagery has been an appropriate means of releasing tension. This release allows both the students and the teacher an opportunity to regain a clearer perspective of the reasons why they are at school. This idea is consistent with Murdock (1987) who proposed that:

Possibly one of the most valuable things that we can teach our children is how to attend. How to be in attention, how to be aware of the conscious existence of ourselves as human beings. How to be fully present in mind and body at each moment. Teaching children attention to their breath and suggesting ways to relax their bodies enable them to quiet or calm their emotions. Thus they gain fuller understanding of themselves. (p.17)

Oldfield & Petosa (1986) cited in Witmer & Young (1987) suggested that, "Pleasant and quiet imagery increases readiness for learning. Imagery is one relaxation strategy for increasing students' 'on task' behaviour" (p.9). In addition, Matthews (1986) cited in Witmer & Young (1987) found that, ". . . guided imagery is one relaxation technique useful in reducing disciplinary problems among preadolescent students" (p.9). Speaking for themselves, Witmer & Young reported that, "Teachers, as part of their curriculum, use guided imagery to help children to focus attention on their lessons, and retain information" (p.61). According to Anderson, 1980; Dunn & Howell, 1982; Matthews, 1986; Oldfield, 1986 cited in Myrick & Myrick (1993), "Guided imagery can help students stay on task and manage their classroom behaviors" (p.61).

In the long run, taking the time to prepare students for learning takes less time than dealing with the consequences of not having adequately prepared the students for learning. Gaylean (1985) reported that:

. . . helping prepare their minds, bodies, and emotions for learning is as important as the instruction itself. Besides reducing anxiety and hyperactivity, guided imagery focuses the mind for attending to a particular task or process. Openness of the mind and anticipation of a mental event create a state of readiness and orientation for whatever is to be learned. (p.10)

Numerous studies have been conducted in order to determine the effect that guided imagery has on behavior. According to Matthews (1986):

Studies that have focussed mainly on learning-disabled or emotionally disturbed children (Braud & Braud, 1974; Dunn & Howell, 1982; Kerasotes, 1980.1981; Lupin, 1977; Lupin, Braud, Braud, & Duer, 1976; Rivera & Omizo, 1980; Watson & Hall, 1977), indicate a reduction in hyperactivity, anxiety, phobic reaction, fatigue, temper tantrums, fighting, cutting classes, and other disruptive behaviors with the use of guided imagery. (p.195)

It would appear that guided imagery is a highly effective tool appropriate for use in a wide variety of educational settings. I close with a quote from Singer (1974) cited in Farr (1990) who suggested:

The ability to generate images, mental pictures of people, objects, and things which are not immediately available to the senses, and then to reshape these into new and complex forms, is thought to be a specifically human capacity. This ability may be evolution's greatest gift to humankind, because it can be a powerful constructive tool for living, for self-fulfilment, and for shaping the future. (p.45)

The review of the literature indicates that guided imagery is effective in helping people better manage stress, unleash creativity, change attitudes, tap into

inner wisdom, relax, stimulate peak performance, and activate natural healing powers. Research also suggests that in the educational arena the use of guided imagery promotes student motivation, overall personal wellness, creative self awareness and positive behavior. Overall guided imagery is seen to have merit in a wide variety of settings and with a diverse population of students and adults.

CHAPTER THREE

THE STUDY

Rationale

Working with students to better help them understand and appropriately respond to their emotions, ADHD status and Learning disabilities are primary goals of the Learning Assistance Program in Medicine Hat. Literature suggests that students who are emotionally well have a far greater chance of succeeding academically than those students who are not emotionally well. Through further investigation of guided imagery, I discovered that many of the chronic problems experienced by SLD students are often the areas in which guided imagery contributes in positive ways. For example, SLD students suffer from disorganized thinking and written work. Congruent implications of the use of guided imagery are often an increase in ones focus, organization, written precision, as well as an increased motivation and/or desire to write. In addition, inattention, distractibility and short attention spans also characterize and plague the SLD student. Guided imagery is noted for its ability to dramatically relax individuals, resulting in an increase of ones focus and attention. Finally, SLD students are characterized by having difficulty in social relations, lowered self-esteem, depression, truancy, inappropriate behaviours and a lack of confidence. Likewise, guided imagery promotes the acceptance of others, overall wellness, creative and/or serious emotional expression and a positive self concept; all of which help students achieve more positive work outcomes. Therefore, my question was: Will my grade seven and eight SLD students consider guided imagery: a positive, safe, and confidential method or medium for the promotion of the following Learning Assistance Program goals?

- a. positive behaviour
- b. positive work outcome
- c. positive self concept

- d. positive means for creative and/or serious emotional expression
- e. overall wellness in students
- f. the acceptance of others
- g. increased focus and attention
- h. increased motivation and/or desire to write

Setting

This project was undertaken at a high school in Southern Alberta. This is a grade seven through twelve school, with a junior high population of 644 students and a senior high population of 506. The school draws from six middle class feeder schools with heterogeneous clientele.

The pre and post interviews were conducted in the Special Education Interview Office, which is just down the hallway from all five Special Education classrooms. The actual guided imagery sessions were held once a week, on Tuesday afternoons in my classroom, for five consecutive weeks.

Data Collection Methods

Data was collected using a number of methods. These methods included pre and post interview questions, anecdotal notes of each guided imagery session, and in-depth analysis of each of the guided imagery responses written by the students. A brief description of each of the following methods is as follows:

i. Pre-Interview Questions

- a. What can you tell me about guided imagery?

- b. On a scale of one to ten where one means that you are completely unable to get rid of your stressful emotions or stressful feelings

appropriately and ten means you are completely able to get rid of your negative emotions or stressful feelings appropriately, where would you place yourself on the scale? Explain.

c. On a scale of one to ten where one means your level of self-esteem is extremely low and ten means it is extremely high, where would you place yourself on the scale? Explain.

d. On a scale of one to ten where one means your behaviour in school is extremely inappropriate and ten means your behaviour in school is extremely positive, where would you place yourself on the scale? Explain.

i. In LAP classes

e. I am now going to ask you a question that refers to the wellness in our classroom. Wellness refers to such things as how happy students in our classroom are and how well the students in our class understand and get along with one another. On a scale of one to ten where one means the level of wellness in our classroom is extremely low and ten means that it is extremely high, where would you place yourself on the scale? Explain.

f. On a scale of one to ten where one means your ability to focus and pay attention in school is extremely low and ten means that it is extremely high, where would you place yourself on the scale? Explain.

i. In LAP classes

g. On a scale of one to ten where one means you hate writing and ten means you extremely enjoy writing, where would you place yourself on the scale? Explain.

Student responses were recorded on paper as well as on tape recorder. It was decided that tape recording each session would help ensure that the information collected maintained the flavour by which it was shared. Following the discussion of the pre-interview questions, I briefly described the guided imagery process to each student. This description was laid out as follows:

- * When we will be using guided imagery in the classroom
- * Classroom expectations for each guided imagery session
- * A brief explanation of the methodology/procedure of the guided imagery sessions

ii. Classroom Observation

During each of the guided imagery sessions, I wrote copious anecdotal notes of what I observed of the students' behaviour in the classroom. My notes included two specific observations: the students' actions throughout the reading of the guided imagery exercises and their actions during the written response section of the guided imagery session.

iii. Post Interview Questions

- a.** What can you tell me about guided imagery?

- b.** On a scale of one to ten where one means that you are completely unable to get rid of your stressful emotions or stressful feelings

appropriately and ten means you are completely able to get rid of your negative emotions or stressful feelings appropriately, where would you place yourself on the scale during guided imagery? Explain.

c. On a scale of one to ten where one means your level of self-esteem is extremely low and ten means it is extremely high, where would you place yourself on the scale during guided imagery? Explain.

d. On a scale of one to ten where one means your behaviour in school is extremely inappropriate and ten means your behaviour in school is extremely positive, where would you place yourself on the scale during guided imagery? Explain.

i. In LAP classes

e. I am now going to ask you a question that refers to the wellness in our classroom. Wellness refers to such things as how happy students in our classroom are and how well the students in our class understand and get along with one another. On a scale of one to ten where one means the level of wellness in our classroom is extremely low and ten means that it is extremely high, where would you place our class on the scale since we have begun guided imagery? Explain.

f. On a scale of one to ten where one means your ability to focus and pay attention in school is extremely low and ten means that it is extremely high, where would you place yourself on the scale during guided imagery? Explain.

i. In LAP classes

g. On a scale of one to ten where one means you hate writing and ten means you extremely enjoy writing, where would you place yourself on the scale during guided imagery? Explain.

iv. Analysis of Journal Entries

An in-depth analysis of each of the guided imagery responses was conducted after the completion of all five guided imagery sessions. The journal entries were scanned for themes including those that were mentioned as anticipated outcomes at the beginning of the study. Those anticipated themes or outcomes included:

- a.** Guided imagery promotes positive behaviour
- b.** Guided imagery promotes a positive work outcome
- c.** Guided imagery promotes a positive self-concept
- d.** Guided imagery provides a positive means for creative and/or serious emotional expression
- e.** Guided imagery promotes overall wellness in students
- f.** Guided imagery promotes the acceptance of others
- g.** Guided imagery leads to increased focus and attention
- h.** Guided imagery leads to an increased motivation and/or desire to write

Methodology/Procedure

i. Pre-Interview

1. I met with the students individually for approximately thirty minutes.

2. Pre-interview occurred one or two days before the guided imagery session is to begin in class. Also during this time, my expectations of the guided imagery sessions was discussed in detail.

ii. Classroom Preparation

1. Set the CD player to the appropriate music selection and pause
2. Turned off all classroom lights except for the blackboard light
3. Took the classroom phone off the hook
4. Put the “Do Not Disturb” sign on the outside of the classroom door
5. Students’ cleared their desks of all materials except for a pen/pencil and a few sheets of lined paper
6. My stool and guided imagery exercise ready in the front of the classroom

iii. Brief Description of Guided Imagery Exercise

1. Briefly repeated my “student expectations” during the imagery session.
2. Briefly gave an overview of the main idea or concept that was to be addressed in the following guided imagery exercise.
3. Clarified any words in the exercises that might have caused some confusion for the students.

iv. Guided Imagery Exercise Begins

1. Students sat in their desks in a comfortable position with their eyes closed.
2. Music began.
3. I began reading the first guided imagery exercise.

v. Student Role

1. The students responded in writing to the guided imagery exercise as soon as I completed reading the selection.

vi. Teacher Role

1. I walked to my desk and began taking anecdotal notes on the students' attentiveness and any other pertinent observable happenings that occurred within the classroom.

2. Two minutes before the bell rang, I quietly asked the students to complete their imagery responses, bring them to my desk, and quietly chat with one another until the bell rang.

3. Briefly reviewed the student responses and my anecdotal notes of what I observed of them while they were writing.

4. Repeated steps (ii) through (vi) for the remaining four guided imagery sessions.

vii. Completion of Fourth Session

1. Once the fifth session had been completed, the post-interviews were scheduled in thirty-minute intervals.

Analysis of Data

- i. Anecdotal observation of student behaviour during the verbal and written portions of the guided imagery sessions.

ii. Analysis of the attentiveness and level of personal awareness, emotion, discovery and/or symbolism found in student responses.

iii. Taped pre-interview responses

iv. Taped post-interview responses

v. Scaling Questions

***Note:**

By using multiple indicators, I hoped to receive a more accurate level of measure. In particular, one that has convergent validity or an equivalent theme(s) between all indicators.

CHAPTER FOUR STUDENT RESPONSES

Over the five weeks in which this project took place, I had the opportunity to interview the students. I interviewed the students once before and once after the five guided imagery sessions. During both the pre and post session interviews, I tape recorded the discussions and made in-depth notes about the primary themes and ideas that were expressed by the students. The interview questions and responses are noted in the following section.

Pre-Interview Responses

a. What can you tell me about guided imagery?

- It is relaxing and relieves
- Music goes on and everything in your mind goes dark. It is like flashlights go on in your mind
- I know nothing about guided imagery
- You read to us and we listen and then “bang!” we write a lot and a lot and a lot!
- I don’t know anything about guided imagery
- It makes you feel much better. It helps you deal with your bad emotions i.e., when kids pick on me. You just feel so good about yourself after each session. You feel like falling asleep but you don’t. It is a fun and exciting way to release all of your stress and tension. I’m not sure how your body lets go of all the tension, but it just seems that your body has the time to clam down and reorganize in the brain what is going on throughout the body.
- This is new to me!

- I don't know much about it.
- It helps you to think, to think positively and to become creative.
- Guided imagery relaxes you, helps you concentrate better, is so restful and just makes you feel so good.
- Guided imagery is calming, relaxing and fun. You always feel totally weightless. You also feel as though you are going to go to sleep but you do not. You sometimes even feel like you will be too tired to write but instead you feel energized.
- It's a relaxing exercise
- It's amazing how it works. You don't really get hypnotized but you think about things that you would never think about before.
- It relaxes and calms most people down.

b. On a scale of one to ten where one means that you are completely unable to get rid of your stressful emotions or stressful feelings appropriately and ten means you are completely able to get rid of your negative emotions or stressful feelings appropriately, where would you place yourself on the scale?

Explain.

- 6 - when I am mad I listen to music like Marylyn Manson. When I feel confused and all bundled up inside I just leave it alone and try not to think about it.
- 10 - In always tell people what is on my mind when I am upset. This way I always feel better after I have finished talking.
- 7 - I just get mad and start to swear at people. I swear at myself, other people and teachers.
- 3 - I find it very hard to get rid of my emotions because I am afraid to talk about my feelings in case they are too deep or personal.

- 5 - sometime I can and sometimes I can't. Most of the time I just try no to think about them because it makes me feel bad and I just don't know what to do about them.
- 6 - I go for bike rides, play a game, listen to soft music, or talk it over with my mom once in a while. Sometimes I take my stress out on my sister, which is not the most appropriate way to do it.
- 9 - I try to do things that take my mind off of the problem. For example, I might doing something that I normally don't do like read a book. Mostly, I talk to my mother.
- 4 - I have many stomach problems because I worry continually about everything. I talk to my mom and that works some of the time.
- 5 - Some stress I can get rid of and others I can't no matter what I do. I just tell myself to get on with life when my emotions get too much for me to think about.
- 7 - I just force myself to forget about my stress for a little while. I can do this because I don't know how else to get of my stress.
- 4 or 5 - It depends on the problem or the emotion. If it is something in school it is easier to get rid of because you are always here for me to talk to. When my cat died it was a 1 or a 2. It just depends on the situation.
- 5 or 6 - When I become really stressed I pull out my pain-ball gun and shoot things. If that does not work then I go to my room, turn on the television and try to not think about my problem and hopefully go to sleep.
- 5 - sometime I can and sometimes I can't. Most of the time I relieve my stress by punching things.
- 8 or 9 - I just don't think about my problems and they seem to go away.

c. On a scale of one to ten where one means your level of self-esteem is extremely low and ten means it is extremely high, where would you place yourself on the scale? Explain.

- 8 - Deep down I feel pretty good about myself. Sometime I don't like what I do, say or think, but for the most part I feel good about myself.
- 5 - I sometimes feel real down and other times I feel really happy with myself. I feel down when I get people upset and happy when I am drawing or winning prizes.
- 5 - I feel mad when I do bad in school and feel great when I succeed in school.
- 8 or 9 - I am glad who I am. I am a great skateboarder and snowboarder. I am proud of myself. This does not include how I feel about myself in school.
- 6 - I don't put myself down, but I don't always do the right thing. However, I am kind to people and am helpful to them when they are in trouble.
- 8 - All the name calling that I have to endure really brings me down, but then I just remember that I am better than al of them in math.
- 8 - Because I have a good mom who teaches me everything and listens to me always. For example, when kids were bugging me at school, she told me to just ignore them and I did and it worked.
- 6 - I don't think people like me. I think that they hate me because I am fat and am very shy.
- 7 - Before coming to your class I thought I was a 1. I felt that I was stupid and would never learn anything. Now that I am in your class I feel that I am smart and can truly believe in myself.

- 6 - I never think about how much better I could be because that just makes me upset. I just do whatever makes me happy all the time.
- 4 or 5 - I feel like this when I am out with my friends. I feel like a 6 or 7 when I am by myself because then there is no one to bug me and I can relax and be myself.
- 5 - sometime I feel bad about myself because I am not very kind to some of my siblings, but then I help my dad out and feel pretty good.
- 5 - sometime I don't think that I am the greatest and other times I really do.
- 9 - Every time I do something I know that can do it. I know this just from the way my body feels just before I do it. If I feel I can't do something that I just don't do it.

d. On a scale of one to ten where one means your behaviour in school is extremely inappropriate and ten means your behaviour in school is extremely positive, where would you place yourself on the scale? Explain.

- 9 - I am not a spaz who gets detentions. I'm calm and relaxed. When I am given work I just get it done.
- 10 - Because school is fun because of you being such a psycho awesome teacher.
- 1 or 2 - I am the class clown and have to make people laugh because that is all that I am good at in school.
- 6 - Sometimes I slack off and other times I do what I am suppose to do. What gets me into trouble is when I feel like being funny.
- 5 - My behavior depends upon what we are doing in class. If what we are doing is fun then I will behave. If it is not fun then I will misbehave.

- 8 - I goof off once in a while but that is healthy to once in a while let loose if you are not hurting other people.
- 10 - Because I like our class. It is fun and we get to learn a lot of neat new stuff.
- 9 - I am quiet because I am just not a loud person.
- 6 - This is very hard to explain. I use to get mad easily but now I do not because you have taught me to believe in myself.
- 5 - Well, at certain times I can be very good and do my work. Other times I can be disruptive and not do my work, so it seems that it is a half-and-half type of a situation.
- 6 or 7 - I'm not ever really trying to be bad, I'm just trying to have a good time while I am at school. I am not really trying to bug anyone, just having a good time and not meaning anything bad by what I say.
- 6 or 7 - Sometimes good and sometimes bad.
- 3 - I feel that I am allowed to be who I am with you and some people think that that is bad behavior. You just make me feel like I am great.
- 7 or 8 - Because you know everyone in class and care about them. I sometimes act like a goof but it is not for mean reasons.

e. I am now going to ask you a question that refers to the wellness in our classroom. Wellness refers to such things as how happy students in our classroom are and how well the students in our class understand and get along with one another. On a scale of one to ten where one means the level of wellness in our classroom is extremely low and ten means that it is extremely high, where would you place yourself on the scale? Explain.

- 7 - I am friends with some of my classmates and other I am just an acquaintance. There are only a few who do not care about any of us except themselves.
- 10 - All the kids in our class are so out there and funny!
- 9 or 10 - We never fight. We may go bonkers but we do not fight.
- 10 - Because it is a good class. We all get along, care about each other and take care of each other.
- 8 or 9 - Usually we are kind to one another. We help each other out when help is needed. We cheer people up and make them laugh!
- 8 - I get along with everyone but one person. We are enemies but would like to change that.
- 9 or 10 - Most of the time all the kids in our class are really cool to one another. On the days that some are not so nice I just say that everyone is allowed to wake up on the wrong side of the bed once in a while.
- 9 - Sometimes people in the class fight, but generally we are a very happy class.
- 8 - I think are class is an 8 and not a 10 because some of hem are still a little immature. They still feel that they have to show off to get attention.
- 7 - We all pretty well get along with one another because we are all alike. We all understand that school is hard. This brings us together. Once in a while we may not get along with one another, but then we always resolve it later on in the day.
- 7 or 8 - I believe that our class is really quite happy. Sometimes certain kids get up on the wrong side of the bed. But for the most part we all talk to each other and tell jokes. O one in our class hates anyone. That is very important.

- 7 - Most of the time we get along with one another and make jokes. Whenever there is a problem we always talk, sometimes argue, but always get the problem resolved.
- 3 - There are some enemies in class and some friends in the class. I feel like I am not part of the cool kids even though they say that I am okay.
- 8 or 9 - Most kids don't do well in school but feel good in this class. We all can relate to one another and you treat us like we are normal smart kids.

f. On a scale of one to ten where one means your ability to focus and pay attention in school is extremely low and ten means that it is extremely high, where would you place yourself on the scale? Explain.

- 10 - You have a very soft voice and that seems to really calm me down. In the other classes the teachers are more focussed on what they have to do for the rest of the day and not what they have to teach you. In our class there are fewer kids and far less noise.
- 10 - In our class there is always someone helping you.
- 3 - It is hard to listen for a long time. My body just needs to move constantly.
- 6 - I am not at a 10 because I always want to listen to you talk to the other students because what you have to say is always so funny.
- 7 - the stuff that we have to learn in our class will help us get a job. It is fun and useful.
- 7 - The only reason I am not a 10 is because the jokes in class keep me laughing.
- 10 - I always pay attention because you tell us stuff that we can learn from. It is easier to pay attention when things are not so boring.

- 8 - I am tired in the mornings, but still like to listen to what you are teaching.
- 7 - Once in a while I get caught up in listening to others conversations or just daydreaming about things that make me happy. The main reason why I listen is so that I can make it to college, get a good job and then slam my success in all the teachers faces who thought I was dumb all the years that I was in school.
- 5 - If I like what we are doing then I will pay attention. If I don't like what we are doing than I find it very hard to pay attention. It is one of those half-and-half situations.
- 6 or 7 - Now that I a in your class I can pay attention much greater than before because things are broken down into much smaller and more understandable pieces.
- 7 - Our class is a whole lot more interesting then the integrated courses.
- 7 or 8 - You make learning so much more fun than other classes and; therefore, it is more interesting to learn.
- 7 or 8 - If I listen to music I can do all the work that I want because I can't hear anybody. I am not allowed to listen to music in the other classes.

g. On a scale of one to ten where one means you hate writing and ten means you extremely enjoy writing, where would you place yourself on the scale?

Explain.

- 6 - I like to write but I do not like my handwriting or printing. I like to write, but if I had my choice I would rather tell the story. I like to think about what I am going to write, but it never comes out on the paper as good as it seems when the ideas are in my head. I do have good ideas, it's just that they somehow don't come out on paper all that well.

- 10 - I like to write stories especially about things that I draw.
- 1 - I absolutely hate writing. It takes so long and is so very boring to do.
- 3 - I do not like to write because it is boring, it hurts my hand and I am a very bad writer.
- 1 or 2 - I hate writing because I never have anything to write about and everyone else around me seems to always have so much to write about. Writing makes me frustrated and angry.
- 6 - I can not spell very well and; consequently did not find writing to be very fun.
- 9 - I love to write because it calms a person down and allows you to write about whatever you daydream about or imagine. It gives you the right to be creative.
- 3 - I hate writing stories. I was never good at writing and when I read back to myself what I write, it just sounds demented.
- 10 - I love to make up stories. I am not the good at writing, but I do enjoy creating and telling other people the stories that I make up.
- 1 - I hate writing because it s stupid. I want to write fast but I can't spell and then my handwriting gets messy and then I get mad and frustrated and then I just want to break something.
- 8 or 9 - I hate reading but I do like writing about different stories and actions. I just find writing a whole lot more enjoyable than reading. Writing is better because you can make it up or you can base it upon a true story. Plus, I have a great imagination and so writing is so much easier for me than reading.
- 6 - Sometimes when I am bored I write anything that I can to get my neatness up. Other times writing is just something that I do not like to do.

- 5 - Sometimes I feel like I have just got to write some things down and other times I have absolutely nothing to write. I mainly write because I am stressed, excited, or interested in what is happening around me or what I am thinking about.
- 6 - I don't always like to write, but if I get bored I often just sit down and start to write about whatever pops into my head.

Post-Interview Responses

a. What can you tell me about guided imagery?

- Guided imagery is kind of like meditation. You see pictures like a dream.
- It is something that I am finally good at! It is the ultimate in story telling and relaxation.
- It is a fun thing that relaxes you and gets everything off of your mind so that when you go home you feel good about yourself. I am always happy after guided imagery because it makes my day better.
- Relaxation! It calms you down, you participate in an adventure and then write about it afterwards.
- Something that requires you to daydream, listen, and prepare yourself for an awesome adventure.
- Something that helps kids relax so that they can write awesome stories.
- It is similar to hypnosis but not really. It is by far one of the most enjoyable experiences in school.
- It is an activity where someone places you into a different world and in that world you do different things.

- It's like you go to sleep but you are not asleep. It's like daydreaming. You feel so relaxed that you forget where you are and even who you are for a little while.
- A relaxing exercise.
- Guided imagery is something that allows you to see things in your mind that gets you to relax. It allows you and others to see the worlds in your mind. A chance to share with others the adventures of the mind.
- Sort of like meditation. You become really relaxed and comfortable.

b. On a scale of one to ten where one means that you are completely unable to get rid of your stressful emotions or stressful feelings appropriately and ten means you are completely able to get rid of your negative emotions or stressful feelings appropriately, where would you place yourself on the scale during guided imagery? Explain.

- 9 - Allows me to write killing stories. It allows me to get rid of the killing feelings that I have for my dad.
- 6 - Most of the time when I m upset I get it out with writing. It takes me away from constant reality and pressure. It is an escape to a world of true happiness. A world that I can create.
- 10 - It relaxes you so well that your bad feelings just seem to go away without any effort. After guided imagery you feel so happy that you don't care about school stresses or how people tease and bug you. It makes you feel so peaceful with life.
- 8 or 9 - While you are doing guided imagery the edge of the big stresses in your life are taken off. Things that are bothering you from a while ago completely go away and sometimes don't return.

- 8 - It relaxes me. It makes me forget for just a little while that my mom is an alcoholic, that my dad does not want to see me and that we don't have any money. It takes my anger away for those minutes. It is so good that I wish that I could live in my mind forever. I am never angry there.
- 9 - It really works. You can't help yourself your hand just writes and writes and writes. I feel the tension and bad things in my life just get forced out of my body. This is why I could do guided imagery everyday. It makes me so free from stress.
- 5 & 6 - 5 means that some things still bother me while doing guided imagery. 6 means that guided imagery makes me a little more calm and a little more relaxed. It takes the edge off the problems in my life. The words relax me and so does being able to write. The stress sort of leaves as I write.
- 5 - Sometimes all my anger leaves and other times my anger is just too much for guided imagery to take care. In these cases I just need to talk to you about my problems.
- 8 - There are certain things that you remember one you get home, but other stressful and negative stuff guided imagery just eliminates from your brain.
- 6 or 7 - It relaxes you so much that it takes everything out of you; your bad feelings and problems. The story just takes you to a great and fun and peaceful place.
- 3 - Lots of stuff is happening in my mind these days but guided imagery does help a bit. Without guided imagery I would be at a level one. My problems are big and guided imagery does give me some relief. A short escape from my everyday issues.

- 10 - It's like when you are sleeping. Everything goes away. You don't have to worry about how you look, passing a test or being popular. You are freed from all stresses completely and are given the chance to be exactly who you are.

c. On a scale of one to ten where one means your level of self-esteem is extremely low and ten means it is extremely high, where would you place yourself on the scale during guided imagery? Explain.

- 9 - It is fun. You get all of these dreams that you have never seen before. The dreaming makes me feel powerful because in them I can defeat my dad.
- 7 - This is finally something that I am good at. I never knew that I could write so fast, so much, and so well. It makes me feel like a powerful person.
- 10 - Because no one can bug me there. It is my world, my space. They are truly the most wonderful places I have ever been in my life. I feel so happy.
- 6 or 7 - It makes writing so easy. It is not hard to write creatively because I just lived a wild adventure in my mind and all I have to do is close my eyes and recall what happened. I feel so smart because it comes so easy to me!
- 7 or 8 - It all goes away! All the horrible feelings that I have about myself, my anger it all is gone and I feel so happy, in control and peaceful with life.
- 10 - It lets everything out and you just love yourself and all the neat sensations that are all over your body. I feel like there is nothing wrong with me . . . in fact, I even felt smart. I just love it.

- 7 - I am always about a seven, but if I am a little lower than guided imagery brings me up to a seven.
- 5 - Sometimes it makes me feel great, but other times when I think about my dad who does not want to see me, it just makes me cry. It seems like my emotions don't go away but actually get worse. But, the neat part is that after they get worse, I mostly feel better. It really is weird.
- 9 - I forget about people calling me names, all my homework, problems and how hard I find school. My mind is totally clear and I can smile for a little while again. Then back to six again because I realize that I am still at this school.
- 6 or 7 - If you are interested in the guided imagery exercise, it takes you to places that you like and that you feel great. If you don't like it than you feel bad for not being able to have as fun a time as other kids are in the class.
- 6 - You get to feel what you have in yourself, your potential, and your capabilities. Once you find this out, you begin to feel better and better.
- 10 - I feel I could do anything. Nobody in guided imagery brings your self-esteem down or makes you feel bad. Guided imagery is the ultimate experience in feeling positive. It's a true high!

d. On a scale of one to ten where one means your behaviour in school is extremely inappropriate and ten means your behaviour in school is extremely positive, where would you place yourself on the scale during guided imagery? Explain.

- 9 - It makes me relaxed so I don't have the need to bug others in the class.

- 10 - I don't want to move around and bug others because I am too busy writing. I have too much to say and write down, stuff that is so exciting, I just can't stop for anything.
- 10 - I love guided imagery and don't want to be licked out otherwise I would miss the one most special thing that I look forward to every week.
- 6 or 7 - It is easy to be good because there is no one making noise and saying stuff. Everyone is just as relaxed as I am so I don't have to be worried about being bugged. We all look forward to it and do not want to destroy it with bad behavior.
- 9 - You are not asked to do anything but sit, listen and get ready for an awesome adventure. Who would want to be bad and miss that?
- 10 - I like it, it's awesome! You can have your goals come true. Anything that you want to have happen will. I talked to my grandma that died four months ago and she said that she loved me. Guided imagery is the greatest thing in my life because my grandma died before I got to the hospital to tell her that I loved her, and because of guided imagery I got to!
- 7 - If you behave then you go on a good trip. Plus, if you are bad you destroy it for everyone else and even yourself. That's not fair because guided imagery is one of the best things about school.
- 10 - I listen a lot better because all distractions are pushed out of your mind and I feel confident that I can always do a good job of writing because all it requires is for me to write down what I saw in my mind. How hard is that! Plus, it feels so good.
- 9- Everyone is so relaxed and feeling good and having fun in their mind adventures that there is no need to be bad and quite frankly, if anyone is bad, it pisses the rest of us off because we like guided imagery so much. It takes us away from what we hate the most . . . school!

- 5 - If it is a guided imagery exercise that I like than it is great, but if it is one that I don't like than my attitude is a little lower and I try less hard.
- 10 - It is hard to misbehave when you are under the spell of guided imagery. If I were to misbehave I would ruin the one class that I love. I would never want to do that to myself.
- 9 - First, guided imagery is not normal. It causes you to feel so different than normal classes that you can't help but be good. It draws you away from wanting to be a bad ass.

e. I am now going to ask you a question that refers to the wellness in our classroom. Wellness refers to such things as how happy students in our classroom are and how well the students in our class understand and get along with one another. On a scale of one to ten where one means the level of wellness in our classroom is extremely low and ten means that it is extremely high, where would you place our class on the scale since we have begun guided imagery? Explain.

- 8 - People always treat each other with more kindness during guided imagery and afterwards because they realize that we all have sensitive thoughts. We all become equal for a short little time.
- 9 - Most of the time when we share our stories with the class, they are stunned by the quality of writing. You can never guess whose stories they are because they are so wild and different from how the students act everyday. Somehow everyone becomes more kind and respectful. We all love to hear what each other felt and saw.
- 10 - when we read our guided imagery stories to the class everyone listens, curious of what others wrote. They appreciate and respect the inner feelings of everyone in the class. They don't laugh.

- 7 or 8 - On Mondays when we read guided imagery we are excited because we all know what kind of a mood we were all in when we wrote the stories, so it is exciting to hear what everyone else had to say. We are more sensitive and respectful of others writing because we want them to be respectful of ours.
- 6 or 7 - I am not the sharing type so sharing our guided imagery stories even if we don't tell names makes me nervous.
- 10 - We don't have problems because everyone likes it and we don't want to ruin it. This thing, guided imagery makes us all feel great and we are missing that in our lives. Most of us have hard lives so this makes us feel good and we appreciate it.
- 7 or 8 - We all get along, listen and respect each other because it's fun to hear what kind of adventure everybody had. These are kind of our sensitive emotions and cause everyone did it, we respect each other. It's not cool to disrespect each other when we are honest.
- 6 - Sometimes kids can't handle hearing about others emotions and so they misbehave to make themselves feel more comfortable. Other days they can handle things really well.
- 8 - During guided imagery everyone is quiet. While we listen to each others' stories we are all quiet and respectful because these feelings are honest and if we disrespect someone then they will disrespect ours. This is where we have to respect otherwise there is trouble after school.
- 7 - Mostly we listen to each others stories respectfully because it is their most inner thoughts and it is interesting to hear how different each others' stories and adventures were even though we all had the same story. It's just cool.

- 8 - This causes us to know and understand each others' inner thoughts and personalities better. They understand that your mind is powerful and can take you to great places. There is a bond because of the depth that our whole class goes to in our minds because of guided imagery.
- 8 - If this would happen in other classes the students would become more than just people in class. They would be friends and companions of mind adventures. They would better understand the different levels of life of a person. It has truly brought our class to a deeper level of awareness and understanding.

f. On a scale of one to ten where one means your ability to focus and pay attention in school is extremely low and ten means that it is extremely high, where would you place yourself on the scale during guided imagery?

Explain.

- 9 - I don't hear anything but your voice and I don't see anything but my images. It is so exciting to write down what is in my head. I just can't stop writing because there is just so much in my head to write down. This has never happened to me before. I never used to be able to write this much.
- 10 - Even if something happens outside I don't look up because I am scared that if I do I will lose my images. They are so important, they drive me to stay down no matter what and complete the story from my head. It is so powerful. A power I never ever feel otherwise.
- It is so interesting. I am always so excited to see what I am going to write. The stories from my mind are always new and exciting. If I don't pay attention than I would miss them.

- 8 or 9 - Just sit there and drown out everything else that is happening in the class, hallway and school. Just listen to your voice and the music. They take me so far away. It is wonderful to leave because life is so hard and I find it hard to focus anywhere else because I'm always worried about my problems and life.
- 7 - I fall asleep and only hear the sound of the music and your voice. It's not worth being bad because these assignments are fun to do.
- 10 - You like it so much, you are right into it. I love the things I see, feel and hear. I love it and wouldn't do anything ever to wreck it.
- 6 or 7 - Guided imagery helps you concentrate on what you have to do. It gets rid of any other thoughts which kind of forces you to write because you feel you have to do something. And writing about your adventures feels so good.
- 3 - It is hard to pay attention because you are scared of waking someone up or ruining it for others. I just can't sit still. I love guided imagery, but I have to keep my body moving. But this makes me worry about ruining it for the others.
- 8 - You block out all the sounds around you except for your voice and the music. It is very easy to pay attention because the feelings of relaxation actually pull you away from all the distractions of the school.
- 8 - Mostly they are easy, but they also help you to feel sad and get your emotions out. The one day that I could not write on the topic, but then I did finally understand that my dying uncle and my sister and her babies birth problem was upsetting me. When I found this out I could talk to my mom about how I was feeling. So guided imagery really does help. It focuses for you what is wrong on the inside of your body.

- 10 - It's hard not to go with the flow of guided imagery. The music and your voice just draw you in even if you don't want to. It is a powerful force that draws you into a state of total focus. I couldn't not focus even if I tried. I love it!
- 10 - Your mind becomes clear and you can think deeper than you've ever imagined before.

g. On a scale of one to ten where one means you hate writing and ten means you extremely enjoy writing, where would you place yourself on the scale during guided imagery? Explain.

- 10 - I love to write and draw. Through guided imagery I can see the pictures so it is easier to write the story cause all I do is re-live what I went through in my head. Also, I can tell the story even better by drawing the pictures that go with the story. The pictures that were in my mind.
- 10 - Just something that I love to do. Most of the time when I don't write things down I don't understand the messages that I am sending myself. When I write, the messages become clear and my body feels so peaceful. It's amazing the things that I have learned me while doing guided imagery.
- 9 - You write down all your thoughts and places that you have been in your memory. It is amazing to share with other people the adventures that I had. They are always so excited to hear where I have been. It is just so fun to share with the class.
- 10 - Enjoy writing - It's weird how just whatever you say just pops in my head but in 10 times the color, excitement and my senses go wild. After an experience like that you are forced by something inside to write. You just have to . . . it is a powerful need or desire.

- 6 - I don't like writing, but guided imagery makes it so easy to write because all I have to do is follow in my mind what happened. I hate writing, but this is sort of a fun and easy way to write.
- 10 - You can't really help it you just write. I don't like writing at all, in fact, I hate it. But in guided imagery you feel forced to write. You got to write and you just keep writing and writing. It is just so exciting, you never want to stop. In fact, I get angry when the bell rings because I always have hours more to say!
- 2 or 3 - I despise writing, but I do it because what I saw was so cool that I have to get it down. It's so exciting that you just have to write about it even though I do hate writing . . .and I do hate writing!
- 5 - Sometimes I have nothing to write about because I worried about wrecking it for the others the whole time. Other times I have everything to say and can't stop because my body was calm and allowed me to not worry about wrecking it for everyone.
- 9 - You are always just so relaxed that it is always so easier to tell the story that you just experienced rather than make one up. Guide imagery makes writing so easy because it gives you ideas and makes them bigger and all you have to do is write what happened. I just love this way of writing!
- 6 - Depends on what I am writing about but mostly in guided imagery I like to write. Even if this topic is boring, I still seem to have something to write about.
- 8 - I love to get all my feelings out. It makes me feel powerful. It's also great to write because of the excitement of sharing your mind adventures with the class later on in the week. Guided imagery rocks in my books!

- 10 - I love writing this way. It is the ultimate way to express yourself and let go of your raw emotions. How incredible to feel this good just through writing. It just relaxes you. Makes your brain really think - sound out words you want. Makes you be able to write for an hour or more easily. The story really never ends until your hand hurts!

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Overview

In reviewing my anecdotal notes, the students' guided imagery responses and the interview discussions, four major themes were apparent. The themes were motivation to write, wellness, creative expression and behavior. This chapter is dedicated to my personal thoughts with regard to the reasons why these themes appeared to be of the utmost importance to this project.

Motivation to Write

The pre-interview surveys indicated that before being subjected to guided imagery, 80% of the class did not enjoy writing. Following the guided imagery sessions, the post-interview surveys demonstrated that as few as 30% of the class did not enjoy writing. Interestingly, these same students did, in fact, comment that despite their hatred for writing, guided imagery was an enjoyable and exciting means for motivating them to write.

The pre-interview surveys indicated that students are not motivated to write because they find it boring, they have nothing to say and they have difficulty making the good ideas in their heads sound appropriate on paper. My personal observation was that SLD students, in particular the males, have a difficult time with writing because it requires the writer to self reflect and then put forth on paper their inner feelings, thoughts and ideas. The idea of having to share their personal feelings is bad enough; however,

what I believed to be even more destructive to their motivation to write was the embarrassment that they felt during and after the entire writing process. This embarrassment is a result of many SLD students' inability to write effectively because they suffer from poor sequencing and organizational skills. Consequently, the students become irritated with their inability to create a coherent piece of writing and simply slap together anything that meets the minimum length requirements. Often, the grammatical and structural set-up of their writing is so poor that their ideas or thoughts are often not understood. Considering the writing frustration and embarrassment that they have had to endure for the past seven to eight years of school, it is no wonder that my students harbor feelings of inadequacy and resentment toward writing.

How does guided imagery help students who have poor sequencing and organizational skills? The answer is evident throughout the majority of the post-interview surveys. The students found that guided imagery afforded them the opportunity to experience adventures in their minds that were powerful to all their senses. Given the fact that all students are primarily either visual, aural or tactile learners, it appeared that guided imagery was a tool that could accommodate these different learning styles all at the same time. Some of the students commented that they were able to use their learning style to closely follow and consequently, recall their mind adventure vividly and accurately with little or no frustration. It seemed to many of the students that suddenly, they could write when in fact, they could write all along, but were not given the tools to write that best helped them to express themselves using their dominant learning style. This new found ability resulted in the students feeling compelled to write because,

like magic, writing suddenly seemed to be so easy. I told my students that it had nothing to do with magic, but rather guided imagery helped trigger the primary learning style in their brain. Once this strength was found, it was just a matter of using it and enjoying their ability to be a successful writer.

Wellness

Wellness refers to such things as how happy students in our classroom are and how well the students in our class understand and get along with one another. The pre-interview surveys indicated that the wellness in my classroom was quite high. In fact, there was little discrepancy between the numbers in the pre-interview and post-interview survey ratings. The difference appeared in the descriptions that the students gave with regard to their feelings before and after their introduction to guided imagery.

Prior to use of guided imagery, the students described my classroom using words that included; fun, care, happy, jokes, and funny. This description of the class pleased me; however, I wanted to know if guided imagery could force or lead the students into recognizing the more personal, real, or honest side of each other in a safe and caring fashion. Coupled with this desire and the students' curiosity to hear what their peers had experienced during guided imagery, I designated the first period on Monday mornings as "Wellness Time". This period was dedicated to the anonymous reading of the students' guided imagery responses from the prior week. The students responded positively to this activity by listening intently and by responding with mature and sensitive comments to the responses that were read. It was interesting to hear the students' interpretation of why

“Wellness Time” was so successful. It appeared that this “Wellness Time” provided the students with the opportunity to be introduced to one another at a deeper more sensitive and emotional level. Ninety-nine percent of the students felt that this activity was amazing because it showed that they had other dimensions to their personalities. These dimensions were far greater than what the limits of peer pressure allowed them to share during the course of a regular school day. As one student commented, it was on these Mondays for seventy minutes that everyone became an “Equal”. This was an anonymous activity by which the deepest of feelings could be shared stress free. Moreover, I believed that when the students deemed this activity “Cool” it was because the five minutes that it took for me to read and comment positively on the content and writing of each response, stirred within each student feelings of academic power and pride; two foreign feelings for most SLD students.

A further implication of this activity has been that the students have become more open in sharing their hopes and dreams for the future. In addition, they have also begun to feel more confident in talking about and expressing to others how they are feeling. This dramatically decreased the aggressive nature that was once prevalent in our class and has constructed within each of the students a higher level of confidence and ability in being able to communicate more effectively.

Creative Awareness

Creative awareness refers to the ability to express inner feelings through the active use of guided imagery. It was my hope that through guided imagery my students

would be able to deal more effectively with their emotions. By emotions, I mean their everyday stresses, strains and/or life long hardships that plague their daily existence. Many students in my class suffered from physical, mental, and emotional abuse. All suffered from different degrees of abuse, but they suffered nonetheless. It was my desire to determine whether or not guided imagery could indeed help my students reflect on their situations which would hopefully lead to the development of a positive, assertive and effective means for dealing with both their daily and life long issues.

The pre-interview discussions indicated that these particular students tended to deal with the issues in their lives by using many different types of avoidance techniques. Such techniques included: listening to music, bike riding, fighting, swearing, watching TV or sleeping. Due to their lack of skill in being able to deal with their life issues effectively, these students tended to go into deep denial. Too often the above mentioned escape mechanisms were not enough and my students turned to drugs, alcohol, sex and crime as a means of taking the edge off of their stress for just a short while. Unfortunately, the risk factors involved in these types of denial mechanisms intensifies with each incident, putting these students' lives and academic careers in even greater danger.

Due to the intense lifestyle of many of these students, the act of getting them to share their inner feelings, fears and frustrations was at times impossible. They have learned to trust no one but themselves and consequently have a thick exterior shell that is most difficult to penetrate. Any large movement by teachers or counsellors to examine

their inner feelings was often a lost attempt. It has been my experience that a subtle, quiet, private and secure environment is the one in which these students would begin to open up and reveal what was happening inside their hearts and minds.

For myself and my students, guided imagery was the mechanism that could create the subtle, quiet, private and secure environment that was required in order for my students to express their inner emotions. To some degree the students still saw guided imagery as a way to avoid their stress. They talked about how it took them away from all of their problems for seventy minutes. The most explicit comment supporting this statement was a comment made by a fourteen-year-old boy in my class who said, “It relaxes me. It makes me forget for a little while that my mom is an alcoholic, that my dad does not want to see me and that we never have any money. It takes my anger away for those minutes. It is so good that I wish I could live in my mind forever. I am never angry there.” I agreed that guided imagery was an escape for the students, but it was also a starting point for self-reflection and personal growth through insight. For example, one student’s grandmother died this past Fall. Unfortunately, he was not able to get to the hospital before his grandmother died. For months after she died, he refused to deal with the death. In fact, his parents were worried that something was wrong with him because he had been so close to her and now he was showing absolutely no grief whatsoever. It was not until we began guided imagery that he felt secure enough to begin dealing with the death. Interestingly, he did not use guided imagery as an escape to avoid the issue of death. Instead, he envisioned talking with his grandmother, was able to say good-bye and in the process discovered that she would forever live in his heart. He used guided

imagery to vent his feelings of sorrow, but then turned around and used guided imagery to help him confront his sorrow and turn it into positive thinking and action. Moreover, when his response was read during “Wellness Time” on Monday, the class discussion that followed was poignant and emotionally healing for this boy and others who had gone through death experiences themselves. This is one of many similar creative awareness experiences that were realized by my students with the weekly use of guided imagery.

Behavior

For the purpose of this project, behavior refers to such actions as listening and the willingness to fulfill assignment requirements. The SLD students in my classroom often displayed inattentive, off-task and disruptive behavior. I believed that these types of behaviors were the result of poor home environments, school failure, poor social skills, ineffective communication skills and emotional frustration.

I believed that the increase in positive behavior that I had observed over the course of this project had been a culminating result of many factors. First, because guided imagery did motivate my students to write, their positive energy was transformed into self-directed effort toward their assignments. This successful completion of the assignments further accentuated the students’ feelings of accomplishment. This increase in accomplishment promoted feelings of greater self-esteem, further promoting in the students, feelings of personal satisfaction and motivation to succeed. In addition, through the use of guided imagery the students began to self-reflect and gain personal insight into their in-depth emotional issues, and their stresses and strains of daily living. This

reflection and insight allowed them to develop more effective means for dealing with their issues and with the people in their lives.

Ultimately, I feel that guided imagery increased positive behavior in my students because, for once in their life, they felt that they had positive control over their feelings and academic endeavors. Guided imagery Tuesday had become a sacred time for my students. It had become a time when they knew that they could feel good about themselves, learn efficiently and work with ease if they behaved. This idea was confirmed for me when a grade eight student of mine said to me, “I like guided imagery so much. I get right into it. I love the things that I see, feel and hear. I love it and wouldn’t do anything ever to wreck it.”

I believed the students received from this whole guided imagery experience, a feeling of positive power. Since these students had so few means of attaining power in a productive manner, much of their life was spent attaining negative power through drug use, crime and sex. One of my grade seven students explained to me how guided imagery promotes positive behavior when he said, “Even if something happens outside of the classroom, I don’t look up because I am scared, that if I do, I will lose my images. They are so important, they drive me to stay down no matter what and complete the story from my head. It is so powerful. A power I never really feel otherwise.” It is human nature to crave power. Unfortunately, for some individuals like my students, positive power was not always so easy to attain; consequently, I was thankful that I had the tool of

guided imagery in my teaching bag of tricks. There is nothing more heart warming than giving a child the gift of positive power.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This project has given me the opportunity to help my students gain the power, inspiration and belief that they can succeed in life if they so chose. During the five weeks of guided imagery, I have watched my students develop into more effective communicators and more sensitive, caring and understanding individuals. Due to their feelings of positive power, I have witnessed my students develop new bonds with one another and with their other teachers.

Although this project is now complete, the journey of sharing has just begun. It is my goal to share my findings with as many teachers as I can who work with “At-Risk” students like my own. I believe the greatest gift that has come out of this project is the knowledge that all students do have the desire to succeed no matter what their background is like. The only differences between my students and the students in the regular program are the massive life issues that mask my students’ desire to succeed. I believe that every student cares about and strives to belong, to be loved, and to have power and freedom. Unfortunately, because of their complicated lives they have difficulty acting on what they care about. We, as teachers, counsellors and administrators need to enable them to feel motivated, responsible, powerful and worthy of trying succeed.

It is my belief that guided imagery is indeed a positive tool to use with SLD students. I felt that these guided imagery exercises helped my students release their emotions in a more appropriate manner than that which they are presently accustomed. The success of these exercises appears to be related to the absence of confrontation during each guided imagery exercise. As my students progressed through all of the exercises, it seemed that the consistent message from them was that guided imagery was a safe, private and positive means of releasing their enormous bulk of emotions.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that I have grown tremendously from my analysis of guided imagery. This experience has made me question my outlook on education and how I deal with my students. My journey of learning will continue, and I look forward to the process of searching, discovering and re-searching. Finally, I am grateful for my time celebrating the positive effects that guided imagery has had on my students, and look forward to observing how my career changes because of this enlightening experience.

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APPENDIX A – “THE WAVE”

Exercise

As you breathe in . . . and . . . out, imagine that you are on a wave on the sea going up . . . and . . . down . . . up . . . and down. You are perfectly safe, either lying on your back in the water, lying on a raft or surfboard, or sitting in a sailboat being gently rocked by the motion of the sea. And as you continue to move up . . . and . . . down . . . back . . . and . . . forth, you will notice the warmth of the sun relaxing you and feel a gentle ocean breeze. You may notice the color of the sky, the smell of the sea air, and the sounds of the sea birds above. You notice a sense of calm throughout your entire body as you experience the gentle rocking motion of the sea. Allow yourself to feel nurtured and supported. (Pause 1 minute) Now it is time to come back. I will count to three, and when you are ready, slowly open your eyes. One . . . two . . . three.

1. Ocean Waves

It was beautiful. There was a pretty sky. It was filled with different shades of blues, pinks, purples, whites, and yellows. It was like heaven and I felt free like I was the only one who mattered. Then I stared into the ocean and saw tropical fish. There were dark and light coloured fish swimming in and out of the plants and jumping through the water.

2. Ocean Waves

I was falling but I was on solid ground. When I landed I was in darkness yet I could see .I felt as I belonged here. There were people I knew and some I didn't I loved it. My friends and me flew through the air we were at home this world of forever night. When we ate we ate in darkness yet could see what we were eating. We were children of darkness. In this world pain is a friend and fear is an ally. We flew like shadows, we were shadows. We loved life. My friends, brothers, sisters, and enemies were family all-alike. This was my real home. This was where I belonged, this was my world, and this was my home. People might call it fantasy, but they have never been there . . . I have. In my world there are no rules . . . this is my home!

3. Ocean Waves

I was going down a hole leading to three pathways one leading to a jungle, one going to be an agent and the other going to be an artist. I went to the jungle. Then I ended up in a club area that I made. Then in the year 2010, I made a secret agency. I went on missions none so much of an adventure than at the jungle. I was walking through the trees. I fell into a pole and I saw my partner Tim. We climbed out. We saw danger I took out a pistol it was out of ammo. Dropped it on the ground. Tim and me ran and ran. We heard a roar, it was a tiger. Then I said to Tim what was our mission Tim said to rescue the in danger tiger. . The last of its kind so the poacher won't get it. So we took it to mars. So we a rain forest. We let it free. I saw a poacher. He shot Tim. Then I took out a pulse rifle then I shot the poacher. Lucky that Tim was alive and we saved the last tiger.

The End

4. Ocean Waves

I went to the beach and saw trees, the sand and my grandpa. My grandpa and me talked about how he was doing and how I was doing. I said I missed him and he said he missed me too. Then we saw a starfish. The starfish was pink and white. Then we went to the ocean and we saw a shark, a fish and a sunken ship. We went into the ship and saw a giant octopus. Then grandpa saved me. Then we went to the deck and I saw the wheel for the ship. Then we went surfing on the water. Grandpa had fun and so did I. Then we had a picnic and the seagulls were there too. They were trying to get some food. Grandpa gave them a sandwich and they ate that quickly. Then we walked around for a while and he showed me a house that he built. Then we went to go look at the beach again. "One more time then" he said. He said good-bye. I did not want to go.

5. Ocean Waves

When I gently fell, I felt so relaxed. As I fell I saw each star twinkling. Then when I finally landed on the beach I lied there and felt the warmth of the sand on my back, and I felt the warmth of the sunrays on my chest. I didn't even want to move I felt so relaxed like there was known or nothing there to tell me what to do. As I became more aware of what my surroundings, The vegetation the bright blue sky, the green Ocean and the warm sand beneath me I fell more and more like I wanted to explore. As I got up and walked Ii felt the warm sand beneath my feet. Then I gently felt the waves pulling me out and allowing me too ride them. I just lied there aware of nothing letting the waves pull me along then gentle putting me back on the shore. So again I lied there feeling totally

relaxed when I felt that I started to float back to the hole in the sky. So I let it pull me back up to the classroom.

6. Ocean Waves

When I was looking at the ocean I saw a family of dolphins in the water. I went swimming with them. I grabbed its fin at the top. The dolphins brought me to my dinghy. I fell asleep. As soon as I woke up, the sun was setting. I looked at the beach and saw a girl. I swam to shore, but she was not there. I started to walk when I saw her again. She was crying so I went to talk to her. She told me a horrible story. I had a tear run down my face. Then I saw the light and was lifted before I could say anything.

7. Ocean Waves

As I was sitting on the beach and all of my thoughts went away. The only thought that stayed in my head was the death of my cat. When I was lying on the beach watching the waves, my cat was laying right under my arm. I was so peaceful. The island that I was on had palm trees and fern bushes. I also heard monkeys in the distant trees and lots of different birds and other animals. But nothing distracted me. All that mattered is that my cat and I were together again. I would give anything to have me and my cat back together again. I could feel the tears roll smoothly down my face. It was so hard to leave my cat back there, but it was so peaceful having my nice warm pretty cat laying down right beside me again. I love my cat Billy!

8. Ocean Waves

When I was at the beach I felt so good. I felt like I was free. Free to do what ever I wanted to do. Nobody would be able to stop me. I was just running around doing what ever I wanted to do. I was the only person on the beach. I was just running around having lots of fun. Fun I never had in my life. It was the best. The sand felt cool in the toes and when I fell, I just got back up and ran some more. My mind was so clear the only thing in my mind was to have fun. I wanted to have the most fun in my life. It was like I was dead. I was running and running and I didn't even get tired. I didn't even get thirsty. Some times it felt like I was floating up in the sky and then falling in to the water making big splashes in the water. It was cool I would fall in the sand and through sand everywhere gust to have fun. When I came back to life it felt like that never even happened to me. I was so relaxed I have never felt better in my life. All the thoughts in my mind are gone my anger is gone everything is gone. It was cool at the beach. The beach is a place where I have never been in my life. I hope I can go back to the beach one day.

9. Ocean Waves

It was like I could see the class as I floated out of my body. I was surrounded by a blue glow and all of us were on the island, but not on the same spot. I was in the boat fishing with my dad. He handed me a beer and Ryan was throwing rocks into the water. Matt was lying in the sand and I saw me and my wife and a child and it was kind of scary. I looked so happy with my wife and child so I laid my head down in the boat and I floated with the waves and I slowly drifted away in a deep sleep. This was so cool because in

this story there was me in the classroom, me in the boat, and me on the shore with my wife and I slowly drifted into a deep sleep and I slowly woke up into the classroom again.

APPENDIX B – “THE ALLY WITHIN”

Exercise

Close your eyes and focus your attention on your breath moving in . . . and . . . out . . . of your nostrils. As you continue to breathe at your own rate, imagine that you are on a path in a very thick forest. All around you are beautiful green trees, and you walk down this path toward the sound of water. You come upon a small stream, and you walk over to the stream and look at your reflection in the water. (Pause)

Soon you feel another presence standing next to you, and you feel completely safe. You see another reflection join yours in the water. This other presence may be that of an old, wise being, an animal, or an imaginary being who you feel is your ally, someone whom you have known for a long time, someone whom you can trust. Your ally beckons you to follow across a small bridge that crosses a stream. You follow and find yourself climbing a hill that leads to a cave. Your ally enters the cave, sits down, and your ally begins to tell you about yourself. (Pause 1 minute)

You may have a particular question you wish to ask your ally, and you do that now. You listen closely to the answer. (Pause 1 minute)

Your ally tells you that you may return at any time you wish. He or she will always be there waiting for you to help you with anything that you need. You thank your ally, walk back down the path over the bridge, looking once again at your reflection in the water.

You notice how you feel as you walk up the path, out of the forest, and become aware of sitting here, fully present. Count to three to yourself and slowly open your eyes.

1. Ally

My allies were the dolphins in the ocean. I swam with them and dived deeper in the water. The water was bluish green. I swam forever going deeper as I could go. I feel refreshed and more refreshed. I didn't come up for air once. In the bottom of the sea, were starfish, sunken ships from two hundred years ago. I found myself on a beach; the sand was so soft and warm. Behind me was fresh fruit on the Palm trees and to the right of me was a hut. In front of it was a sidewalk made out of seashells. I went in the hut and on the table was fresh fruit in a bowl made out of seashells. Then I found myself in the classroom again.

2. Ally

I was on a star cruiser getting instructions on my mission and squad. We were the Dragon squad. There were ten of us. My brother and close friend Cindy were there too. We were dropped off soon after in a forest with a few other groups. They went on their own missions. We were minutes away from our objective when they attacked, but being prepared, my team dispatched all of the attackers quickly and silently. We went on through the forest, through the green bush and the brown ground. Well distracted, an unseen defense squad took the chance to jump us. Within seconds all hell broke loose. Screams of pain all around me. All I noticed was how only moving people were being

hit. So I called the six remaining people to hold fire and stand still and on my command, fire. On exact timing, bullets flew and a nearby squad intercepted the attackers and gave us enough time to run into a bush and keep on with the mission. When we got to the building, we split into groups of three with another squad. Through the speaker, I heard Ken, my brother, yell to me to cover our other teammate Cindy because she checked the door.

When inside, we started looking for our objective; a computer chip with blueprints and guard info. on a certain fortress. We rounded a corner and came on six guards. With a swift move, we dispatched them. We used a shock grenade to take out the door. Inside, we found the chip. After taking certain measures, we dispatched the alarm system and put the chip in a small black box and got into a waiting Land Rover. Our mission went well and only ten out of sixty troops didn't make it.

3. Ally

This force was pulling me into the light. Suddenly I was on top of this wooden staircase. I slowly walked down the wooden staircase and found myself in a forest. The forest was very green and had a lot of pine trees in it. I walked around for a while and saw a doe and a fawn. They were eating quietly and had their ears up. The doe was big and brown. The fawn was brown and had white spots on her. As I walked some more, I saw a black bear. He was asleep so I did not have to worry. Then I saw a stream. I followed the stream and it led to a pond. I saw my reflection in the pond. Then I saw a native chief's reflection in the water as well. He then led me to a brig that led to a cave. In the cave

were furs, paintings, crystals and a fire. Then the native chief went in and I followed him. We sat on the furs by the fire. He said that I was smart and that I was a good person. Then I asked him what his spirit was. He said that his spirit was an eagle. Then the force suddenly pulled me back to the classroom.

4. Ally

I awoke and saw a pine tree covered with butterflies. I also saw all sorts of colorful and pretty trees and flowers that smelt so sweetly that I could taste them. All I could think about was how beautiful the forest was. It was the true description of beauty.

5. Ally

I was sitting on the edge of my lake and I noticed it was clean. So clean that I could see the bottom of it. When I was just sitting there, I felt a tap on my shoulder. I looked behind me and there was my ally. My ally and I have been friends for two wonderful years. We started to run around, chasing each other, play-fighting and then we stopped. We heard something so we went and looked around and we found it was a big waterfall. We jumped in it and we started to dunk each other. Then we went up the waterfall and jumped off of it.

After a while we got out and walked for a bit. We then decided to go and sit on the shore bank. We talked for awhile. After awhile we decided to go swimming in the lake. The lake was so clean; you could see the bottom of it. We had fun dunking each other under the water. After a long time we got out of the water and just sat on the ground not saying

a word. Then I said, "I better go now. I will come back to see you again. I will see you someday, somewhere and sometime."

6. Ally

As I was going through to a dark place, I came toward a purplish blue light. As I entered it, I felt so relaxed. I went down some stairs; I came to a small little lake. As I sat at the lake, I noticed that it was the cleanest lake I have ever seen. I saw many kinds of fish.

As the dewdrops fell into the lake, I felt so peaceful. I walked on through the woods and beside the small calm stream I rested. The trail was made of small little red pebbles and outlined with larger white pebbles. As I came to a small waterfall, I noticed the moss on the rocks in the water and the ferns beside the path. I bent over and peered into the stream of the clear slow moving water. I noticed my reflection. I looked so perfect.

Another face appeared in the water, it was my ally. It was an old wise man dressed like an old wizard. He had a long raggedy Grey beard. He was wearing a long dress like a wizard's gown. It was ripped, torn up and shredded. The old man put his arm around me and guided me to a cave over yonder. As we sat, I asked the old man an important question. I asked if my cat and I would be together again. He said possibly yes.

Somewhere, somehow, and sometime I do believe that you and your cat will be together again.

7. Ally

My ally was my dad even though I have not seen him for a long time. He told stories about my childhood. I asked him if he ever remarried. He said, "no." I gave him a hug and said goodbye.

8. Ally

I floated and floated to my sparkling blue light. I was getting closer and closer to the light. It was getting bigger. I appeared by the shiny gold staircase with diamonds at each side. I could see the sun shining and the diamonds making beautiful colors like a prism. I was flying in an army helicopter over the trees and looking down. I could see nothing but pure silence. The beautiful lake was a like a shining crystal. While we landed, sixteen army troops, including, me jumped out. Some had bombs and some had Guns but everyone had a M16 with clips all over their bodies. We were in bushes, water, and trees but I was in a beautiful flowerbed with all colors. It was too colorful to hide in it and it felt so nice. I was trapped; my body wouldn't let me leave it until the war started. Big booms from bombs and fire everywhere began hitting the flowers. I ran far and far with my group firing guns everywhere. People were dying every second. I saw Cole in a bush snipe shooting a gunner, then, a man came up to him and was about to shoot him. I ran over there and grabbed him. The gun shot, I felt it in slow motion hit me under my heart. I fell. As I lay there, someone appeared there behind a tree like magic. It was Richard; he grabbed me over his shoulder. As he ran to save my life, I could see myself blacking out and Richard said over and over, "Be strong, be strong." He kept on repeating, "Be strong, be strong," so I did. I made it back to home base safely. The war was over. Richard went back out of our base for a drink, a sniper shot him. I shot the sniper but it was too late then I went to the water and he appeared like he's my ally. He grabbed my arm and took me to a cave and I said, "I didn't get a chance to say thank you for saving my life, "Thanks." Then he said, "You are welcome," and left. I looked at myself; I was fading away to the staircase. As I walked up the

staircase, I looked back and saw the flowers and trees that were burnt come back alive again. As I faded away from my special place, I was proud it was over, although I wish I lived in such a beautiful place.

9. Ally

As I looked into the darkness of my eyes, I came to notice a white light. I decided to slowly let the force pull my body towards the light. When I finally got there, I looked deep into the light and saw a beautiful white staircase. As I walked down the staircase, I got to the bottom of the stairs and started flying down a trail surrounded by nice green evergreens. As I flew down the trail, I could smell beautiful flowers; the new fresh trees and I could see a variety of animals. After I flew down the trail, the forest broke and I came to a beautiful green lake. I sat there for a while thinking of how happy I was to be sitting there all alone just listening to the animals and birds. After a while of just sitting there, I started to listen a little more. I could hear a fair sized stream meeting up with my lake. I decided to get up and go and look at the stream. As soon as I got there, I looked at my reflection in the water. After a little while of staring at myself in the water, I noticed another reflection. I looked up and it was my old friend Tyler Robbins. He then told me to follow him across a bridge up to a cave where he told me his life story. After he told me his story, he said that it was time to go. So I got up and floated passed the lake and through the forest. As I got up to the staircase, I climbed up and said goodbye.

10. Ally

There I was on my Harley Davidson. I was driving in space when I saw a hitchhiker. I picked her up. She was wearing a blue crushed velvet dress. (It was tight) We rode to the jungle. We had a picnic. I went fishing while she picked up fruit. There were bananas, grapes, cherries, watermelon, coconut and fish for lunch. We ate it all! Then we went swimming. We were having so much fun. Then we kissed and I closed my eyes while I kissed my woman. When I opened my eyes I was in the in the classroom.

APPENDIX C – “SANCTUARY”

Exercise

Everyone needs a safety zone . . . a place where you can temporarily retreat when you are overwhelmed, worried or stuck . . . a place where you can always feel positive and relaxed . . . This sanctuary is only a daydream away . . . To find your special retreat today, just settle back and exhale deeply a few times . . . Let your breath rush out with a big whoosh or a sigh . . . and when you begin to feel relaxed, close your eyes . . . Just let the music or your breathing lead you to your inner sanctuary. (Pause 15 seconds)

To create your special retreat, recall places from your past that gave you a sense of security and strength . . . perhaps you remember a vacation spot . . . or the home of relatives or friends . . . Envision a tranquil place that felt comfortable . . . and as you recall this place, become aware of all the details that gave you intense pleasure and serenity . . . (Pause 20 seconds)

Now, keep the most pleasant aspects in mind, revisit a childhood haven . . . This time recall a smaller, special space of your own . . . it may be a treehouse . . . a hideout . . . a playroom . . . or a private booth in the corner store.

Take sufficient time to recreate all the sensations . . . smells . . . noises . . . shapes . . . colors . . . and textures that allow you to relive those special memories. (Pause 20 seconds)

Having re-experienced your feelings in these real places, you are ready to create your ideal sanctuary . . . Remember, once you create your sanctuary you have total control over it . . . Nothing will happen here without your permission . . . You are free to tear up old floors . . . open the place to the weather and the wind . . . make things grow in whatever way you chose. The only limitations are your own self-imposed boundaries. Take some time now to create a sanctuary for yourself. (Pause 15 seconds)

Now, explore your creation . . . Look around and become aware of your surroundings . . . Notice the quality of the light . . . its brightness or subdued character . . . Feel the light bathe over you and into you . . . washing every aspect of yourself. (Pause 10 seconds)

What does your sanctuary look like? Touch the floor and feel its texture and temperature . . . do the same for the walls and the other objects . . . Feel free to change anything that does not feel comfortable . . .

You may become aware of certain objects or images that represent the safety . . . security . . . And tranquility . . . beauty . . . and peace . . . that you cherish in this place of refuge and relaxation . . . familiar, comfortable aspects of yourself that you wish to have in this sanctuary.

Focus your attention upon any of these special components of your sanctuary . . . Explore it using all your senses . . . touch . . . smell . . . sight . . . and sound . . . totally immerse

yourself in it . . . and allow yourself to enjoy the sensations and memories that it may evoke . . . (Pause 15 seconds)

When you are done . . . find a comfortable place to sit that will enable you to absorb all of your sanctuary . . . and feel its comfort . . . protection . . . and beauty . . . Become even more aware of the entire setting . . . a place that will grow and change from time to time as you re-enter it.

Every time you return . . . you will leave behind all your worries . . . stresses . . . concerns . . . and judgements . . . Here you may relax and take time to indulge. This is your special place . . . a place where you may get back in touch with the best part of yourself . . . any time you choose. (Pause 20 seconds)

Now, knowing that you may return at any time . . . you are ready to leave your sanctuary and return to your present surroundings . . . Remember to hold onto these pleasurable feelings and bring them back with you.

Now, staying relaxed and content . . . slowly tune back into your breathing, you are now ready to awaken and open your eyes bringing back the peace and power of your sanctuary.
(Pause 10 seconds)

And now, awaken.

1. Sanctuary

I saw myself floating in time, when suddenly I saw pictures of me in a big white hall. It was white and it had pictures of me on the walls. The pictures were of all the things that I had done in my life. There were pictures of me when I was having fun at the zoo and at Calaway Park. There were also pictures of me fishing with my dad. Now, there were also bad pictures of me as well. There was one picture of me when I was six years old. It was right after I had stole a chocolate bar from a store and the police had taken me home and my dad whooped my ass. My parents knew from that point on that I wasn't going to make it in life.

2. Sanctuary

The funniest place I have ever been was with my dad. Him and I went hunting together. That is what I think is fun, just the feeling of adrenaline and the feeling of stocking a huge animal. I mean it has always been my dream of being invisible and not being seen by someone or some kind of animal. And that is what my sanctuary is.

3. Sanctuary

There was a golden cage door opening in front of me. Two angels picked me up and forced me to go into the brightest white room I had ever seen. It felt like heaven. There was the best skate ramps I ever saw. It was so peaceful, it was heaven. The ground was clouds. It felt so comfortable. The angels dropped me onto an amazing skateboard. I was doing tricks that I had never seen anyone do before. It felt great to flow. As I skated along, there was a grayish blackish round door on the ground like a manhole. The force

it had was great. It made me fly off my skateboard and made me go inside of it. It was a dark tunnel with sparkles. I saw a light at the end of the tunnel. I ran over there. There was a fire and an old person. I went up closer and discovered that it was my grandma. She said, "I love you" and I cried. She said, "Don't cry" and I said, "I miss you". Then she grabbed my chest and touched my heart and said, "I'm in there always". I felt good as I sat on a beautiful pink pillow and talked to her. She said a lot of stuff, but it is our little secret. Then she said, "Good-bye" and took me to my special place and I started skating. As I hit the last jump, I saw the golden door open up which took me back to the class. Now I know that she is with me always in my heart. I won't be as sad anymore.

4. Sanctuary

As I went through the light, I was blinded for quite awhile. I saw a castle so I walked to the door. There was a sign that said, "Come in the castle". The castle was covered in diamonds and rubies. It was cool in the castle. I didn't care. I kept on walking. Suddenly the castle began to rise. As the castle lifted, I sat in the middle of the castle and just thought awhile. When it stopped moving, I shot up and ran outside. Outside there was a garden maze, I ran through and saw the middle. As soon as I stopped, I ran back. The castle lifted once again. I sat down in the middle again and counted down. When it stopped, I ran outside and saw the same light again. I woke up then.

5. Sanctuary

My sanctuary had trees, ferns and bushes. It was in a forest-like place with a small, fast moving stream and fluffy moss everywhere with birds squawking and frogs croaking. It was beautiful.

6. Sanctuary

The place that I was at was a cool place. You could go on rides, you could go swimming; you could do a lot of things. The name of this place is Disneyland. I have always wanted to go to Disneyland. I've been asking my mom to take me there ever since I was just a little boy and she kept saying no. Disneyland is the best place in the world. One of these days I'm going to Disneyland. I went there in guided imagery. I had lots of fun. I went on the roller coaster and a whole lot of other rides. When I left I was so happy. I could be happy for the rest of my life. Someday I will go back to Disneyland.

7. Sanctuary

I saw a bright light and it was a dark purple going into a light pink. It got lighter and lighter and then a gravitational force surrounded me. I got so tired and sleepy. I awoke and I knew immediately I was in heaven, it was so peaceful. I saw people rejoicing and being reunited with the deceased. Angels were singing so peacefully, I felt the ground and it felt like space not hot or cold. Suddenly I went back. The light pink fading into a dark purple and I awoke in my chair.

8. Sanctuary

In my special place I was so happy. I felt so relaxed. I saw a lot of pine trees and heard the birds singing. The wind was blowing softly through the trees. I walked to a trail that led to a stream. I went off the path and ventured around. I smelt the flowers. I was finally somewhere where no one bugged me or teased me. I touched the ground and it felt so warm. There was a tree with butterflies on it. The butterflies were yellow, white and pink. They almost looked like flowers. Then I saw the sun. The sun was orange and yellow. The sun was setting. Then I went back to the trail. The trail led somewhere different. It led to a stream with a small waterfall. I sat on the rock and listened to the sound of the small sparkling stream and then I saw a raccoon come for a drink. He looked so happy. Then I saw a flower patch. There was a family of raccoons in it. The flowers smelled so sweet. Then I had to go. I felt that I was waking up. Then I left.

9. Sanctuary

I was in a palace, my palace. It was winter and dark and shadowy and foggy. I noticed I could control all of these things. I was dressed in black, silk Arabian style clothing. A bluish black cloak surrounded me. I walked around and into a chamber. It was black and gold. The chamber had animals in it. They were not in cages or on chains. A small flying dragon-type lizard landed on my shoulder and I didn't bother to send it away. I liked it there. I then went into another chamber. In this chamber there were birds of all sorts. The winged lizard flew around playfully and then came back to my shoulder. We went on. In the next chamber was a forest with more animals. In the middle of it was a lake. Beside it I noticed a girl. She was dressed like me but her cloak had no hood and I

could see her face. It was like she was carved from glass. She had blonde hair and green eyes. She wore a medallion around her neck, which had a picture of a hawk on it. I noticed I had one too, and it had a dragon on it. She said her name was Samantha, Sam for short. I told her my name and for a little while we played and goofed around and walked through the chambers. My pet dragon flew around and then I had to go. She said that if I ever needed someone to talk to, to come back. I said that I would. Then I walked back to the classroom.

10. Sanctuary

This story has no time capsule, no places that are special. It's just an adventure I will never forget. It is an adventure that happened in my mind. I found myself in a lake with docks around me. I went on the docks and looked at my reflection in the water. I looked like Turok, I thought that this was cool. I walked up the docks; walls were blowing up. I still walked on the docks. I found arrows talon and a bow and arrow. I saw a barrel; I shot it with an arrow. It blew up with the wall. There was a ladder on the wall. I climbed it then I saw a tunnel. I went through it and then I ended up in a room. I walked around and I found a way out. When I left the room, I felt strange like someone was watching me. I found a pistol in a corner, looked up, but no one was there. I went in the dark hallway and I saw lepers. They took a slash at me so I shot the one five times. Then I shot the other one in the head. It was dead; I looked around and found a hole in the wall. I went through the hole and saw a child locked up in a cave and right beside the cave was a key for the cage. Raptors jumped out and I shot them with my tech bow. I rescued the child and she said, "Thank you Turok" and she was gone. I found a portal

and went through it. I ended up in a jungle with a shotgun in front of me, I took it. I found a key to escape from this area. I needed to find five more and then I would be free. I heard something. It came from the background. I looked around, it was another child but I couldn't find the key. I looked around; the key was in a palm tree. I got it, all of a sudden, a gunner popped out. It shot me and I died, but I came back for one more life. I found the gunner; I killed him with my talon. I rescued a child; it disappeared into thin air. I got all the keys, I rescued all the children, and for once I felt like a hero. But what do I know, it all happened in guided imagery, not like it happened in real life. What an adventure!

APPENDIX D – “SUPERPOWERS”

Exercise

Sit back and relax now, as you prepare for a surge of magical power . . . Imagine that you are gazing at a lighted candle, set before you on a table . . .

Allow your gaze to focus on the flame . . . burning steady and bright . . . and as you watch the shape and motion of the flame, allow your mind to dwell on the flame as the symbol of eternal life and rebirth . . .

Think of the Phoenix . . . a bird consumed in flame only to rise again from its ashes . . .

Still focussing on the flame . . . if thought or images stray into your mind, just allow them to pass through and move on . . . as you continue to focus on the flame and your steady breathing. (Pause 10 seconds)

As you become more and more relaxed, allow your mind to drift back into childhood, when you were so much smaller . . . Recall how adults seemed capable of things you couldn't do . . . they seemed larger then and had access to places you were not allowed to go . . .

While brooding on this inequality . . . you walk the streets of your childhood neighborhood . . . Suddenly you come to a side street that you have not seen before . . .

and spot a darkened curio shop. When you peek inside the window, a kindly-looking old man with small round glasses and white hair looks up and beckons to you . . . He smiles, and as you step into the shop you hear him say . . . “Come in, come in, I’ve been waiting for you!”

You barely have time to glimpse the beautiful old books . . . the musty cloaks . . . the bottles of colored liquid . . . and many other wonders that line the aisles . . . as he takes you by the hand to the back of the shop . . . “I have just the item that you need!” he says excitedly . . .

As you watch curiously, he opens a small drawer and pulls out a golden ring . . . it catches the light and sparkles . . . He holds it up and says . . . “This ring belonged to Merlin, who never used it. It gives the wearer whatever magical power he or she desires . . .” “As you put on the ring, you must say out loud the power you wish to possess . . . and you shall have it . . .” “But it only works as long as you wear the ring . . . the minute you take it off, your power is gone, never to return.”

You begin to think of your helplessness, and the things you could do if you had superpowers . . . Perhaps you recall the heroines and heroes in your comic books . . . and remember how you longed to possess their powers of X-ray vision . . . amazing speed . . . astounding strength . . . invisibility . . . certainty . . . and more . . .

Or perhaps you have longed for magical powers because you keep running into a problem or situation that some magical capability would help you resolve with ease . . . But which powers do you want the most? . . . The old man in the curio shop waits patiently . . . You must chose. (Pause 5 seconds) Once you have made your choice, you smile and he hands you the ring.

You name your chosen superpower out loud and slip on the ring . . . In an instant you find yourself empowered with that special something else that you have desired. The curio owner waves good-bye as you step out of the shop . . . eager to test your new capability . . . Standing on the sidewalk a moment, you think about what you are going to do first . . . You want to exercise your new power in some way that will benefit you and perhaps other people as well . . . What will it be? You ponder and then decide . . . (Pause 10 seconds)

Now you are doing it . . . using your superpower just as you want to. Notice how it feels to exercise your power in this way . . . and notice the effects of your action.

Once you have completed this first deed, two or three others occur to you . . . Allow yourself to perform each one in turn . . . paying particular attention to your feelings as you do them. (Pause 20 seconds)

Now that you have had a chance to exert your magical powers in several ways . . . allow yourself to pause and take stock of the situation . . . What would it mean to live the rest of

your life with this power? . . . Do you feel that it poses any new obligations? . . . How will your new status affect your relations with family and friends? (Pause 10 seconds)

You have to decide whether you wish to keep this potent capability for the rest of your life . . . If you do, what use do you expect to make of it in the future? . . . If not, Why not? (Pause 10 seconds)

Now that you have exercised your superpower in a number of situations, it's time to rest and reflect upon the activities of this day . . . You sit down, or lie down . . . and think about all you have accomplished. As you relax . . . you feel your mind going deeper and deeper into a restful state.

When you are fully rested, you will return to a state of full consciousness . . . ready to incorporate the insights from this healing vision . . . into the challenges of your current life situations. (Pause 10 seconds)

Allow yourself to return to full consciousness . . . relaxed and energized.

1. Superpowers

I saw a beautiful flame. It was red and yellow. Then I was walking around when I saw a shop. I went into the shop and saw an old man. He said that he was expecting me. Then he showed me to the back. He gave me a ring and said that it was magical and powerful. He said that I could have it and with it I could have a magical power. I wished that I

could stop people from fighting. I stopped a lot of people and then went back to the shop. The old man asked me if I was enjoying my power? I said yes. Then the old man said do you want to live with this power for the rest of your life or not. I chose not because I would miss my mother too much. So I gave him the ring back and I said your welcome! I said good-bye and left and came back to the classroom.

2. Superpowers

If I had a superpower, I would blow up schools and have lots of money so that I could have everything in the world. I would also have my own skateboard company, so that I could have my own graphic. That would be so cool! I would have a place where all the bums could go so that they would not be on the streets. I would also own a skateboard park so that I could skateboard whenever I felt like it. I would also build a big mall. I would also have a great big skate shop in my skate park. I would also have a huge downtown that would be covered with marble. I would also have a grind rail.

3. Superpowers

If I had superpower I would make the world a better place to live. First, I would beat the living #!\$%^*^*# out of my dad. I would try to keep my cat alive which is the only thing in the world that truly never hurt me. I would make my cats life so happy, but he just had to get a tumor and die. Life can be so cruel. I would get rid of all my problems. Also, I would have a better memory for my math. I would also be invincible for when someone hits me I would not feel anything. And for people who make fun of me, I can

zap a zipper on their mouth. If I really had a lot of strength, I would like to beat up the person who makes fun of me when he says that I'm gay every single day. Also, I would help people so that they would not have to go through what I have gone through in my life. I also wish I had the power to get rid of my thoughts. I would love to get rid of my problems but I can't.

4. Superpowers

If I had just one superpower, I would cure my dad from beating me up!

5. Superpowers

My dream started in dream place, a wonderful place with everything. It was the place that I want to move to, Kalonia B.C. I was walking around an amazing street where I lived. Down a big brown rocky hill there was a black path that goes to an ugly old road. As I walked down the hill I saw a very old building. It was so old that I had to look inside of it. When I got to the place, I realized that it was an antique shop. It was closed so I didn't bother. So I started walking back when a funny looking guy came up to me. I turned around and he waved to me so I followed him. He said that he had something for me. It was a golden ring with eight rubies on it. Four of them were blue and four of them were red. He told me to take it and wish for something. So I said, "Why?" He said, "You'll thank me later". So I ran home. As I ran I wished for something. I stopped and wished for something amazing. It was to be tall. Not too tall, but tall. I sat there and felt tingly. I started to grow. It felt so great so I wished one more time. It was to see and say good-bye to my grandma. I never got the chance to before she died, but now I did.

She appeared to be so happy. She said nothing. So silent like water. Then I said, “I miss you” and I also said, “good-bye”. Then she said, “I’m good but no bye”. Then she faded away. I picked up what she meant and realized that there will never be a good-bye because she is there. As I thought I don’t need the ring. I should be happy with who I am. I threw the ring away and went home. I started to appear in the classroom. I was awake. I still wished to be tall and living in B.C. some day I know that my family and me will live there and be happy.

6. Superpowers

As I was walking down the street that I grew up on, I decided to explore. As I walked around, I noticed a dark little antique shop. So I started walking towards it. When I got close, I noticed a short little old man directing me to the store. So as I got in it I stared at all the beautiful antiques. After a little while of looking around, the man showed me a golden ring that he wanted to give to me. The man handed me a ring and said that with this ring I could have any power that I wanted. So I took the ring and thought about what special power I wanted. The man said that any time I was ready I just had to say. So I looked at the man and said the power that I would like is to be able to go back in time with any item that I may choose. So as I walked home I decided to test my power. So I reached into my pocket and pulled out a key pad. As I looked at it I pushed the time 1963, Vietnam. Then all of a sudden there were trees all around me and I was holding a M60 machine gun. So knowing that my powers worked I again pulled out the key pad and bushed back. As I ran home I thought of how it would effect my family.

7. Superpowers

If I could have one power, I would probably pick to be able to fly so I could go places quickly. This way I could go to Newfoundland and see my girlfriend that I have not seen for a long time. I could also visit my dad who I have not seen for the longest time. When I finish my visiting with those two special people, then I believe I would be able to give my power back. But, I must be able to see each of them for at least a day. It would be good enough for me and then I could give the superpower up.

8. Superpowers

My superpowers were the strength and durability of the crow. This means that I could get shot, but I would not die. I also had the speed of Flash and the flying powers of Superman. When I got the powers I stopped a bank robbery and a car jacking. After a while I decided not to keep my superpowers, but they were fun while they lasted. I thought that everyone thought that I was a freak. When I ended I saw streetlights overhead.

9. Superpowers

I saw the prettiest lights in the whole world and I saw myself sitting in my backyard. My dad was having a BBQ party and I wanted to have fun. So I told my mom that I was going for a walk and she reached into her pocket and gave me a loonie to go get what I wanted at the store. I got on my bike and went to the store but the store was gone. Instead there was an antique store where the store used to be. I walked in and saw a very small man who told me about how this store came to be. Then he told me the most

awesome thing. He said that he had a ring for me that gave you whatever power you wanted. I could not believe what the old man was telling me. I put on the ring and wished for the powers of Superman. The first power that I wished for was x-ray vision. When I got it I was so happy I gave the old guy a hug. I quickly went outside and found a hot girl and undressed her with my eyes. Then I ran home with my amazing speed. On the way a girl was almost hit by a drunk driver. With my strength and speed I saved her from death. She said to me that she did not know how to repay me (Light bulb . . . wink, wink!!!!!!!) After she repaid me we went together for a year. After that year we got married and had 92 children and lived happily ever after.

10. Superpowers

I was immortal. I was a vampire of today. Unlike any other vampire, light did not bother me. I was like Blade except I was a phantom. My body was made to hunt. I could run, react and just plain move faster than any human does. I could see farther and I could fly. I could fire blue flames from my fingertips and nail you to the wall with a simple hand gesture. I could disappear and reappear like a ghost; my name was Phantom. I was one of ten of my kind. We were the strongest of all vampires and were trained from birth to fight and if necessary to kill. We all looked fifteen but some of us were older and younger. At the moment we all wore the same thing; chest armor and leg and upper arm protectors and black pants with leg armor, knee high boots with steel toes and over chest armor we wore black trench coats and special sunglasses. We all wore swords. We were armed with the latest in weapon technology and we had just been briefed on our mission and were preparing to leave.

The doors opened and we flew out like bats flying out of hell. We searched for our objective; a group of hell raising vampires. When we found the base we hovered inches from the ground and watched the doors. All of a sudden they opened and out came some guards, guns blazing. I grabbed my MXM-32 with grenade launcher and laser targeting. You could call us crazy and that is what we looked like. I shot a guard and threw another into a tree and another into his partner, but all they saw was the flash of bullets and fangs. By the time it was over all that was left was a gory mess of bodies. We entered the building and pounced on three guards. One took a slug in the chest while the other took a slug in the upper stomach. The last guard was slaughtered with five different kinds of bullets. Then we walked the stairs and I was hit by a sonic wave. I hit the floor and the vampires behind me ran upward and bullets flew. The vampire took five in the chest and one in the shoulder and a crossbow arrow in the heart. It was not too pretty but life is that way. We kept going and ran into the second group. This time there were five vampires and a mage (the next thing to a wizard). In this world mages are wizards and they are nasty. I shot to kill the mage but he deflected the bullets. Then I shot in different directions to confuse him. With luck, two hit him. We were cut off by the other vampires. One kicked me in the chest and I went sprawling over taking my attacker with me. Putting my gun away I activated my wrist bow and sent three darts into my opponent's chest. He screams and blew up in a cloud of dust. The other four were already taken care of. When it was all over we went back to base unharmed.