

Meditation calms over-stimulated primary classes

Great results achieved with some ancient techniques

Kerrie Parry and Susan Rudd taught in the UK for several years before returning to Australia four years ago, where they met at the Sacred Heart Primary School in Mona Vale NSW. At the school, they discovered a shared belief in the value of teaching meditation techniques to children and the benefits it can bring to the classroom.

While in the UK, Kerrie Parry had taught in a primary school where many of the students were the children of refugee families. Unsurprisingly, given their often-traumatic life experiences and difficult home environments, high levels of stress, anxiety, difficulty concentrating and behaviour problems were common.

Looking for a way to help these children to settle, she “found a little book about guided visualisation” and tried it out. She soon discovered that not only were they calmer, but that they actually looked forward to their quiet periods.

Meanwhile, Susan Rudd had been teaching yoga and meditation and using meditation techniques effectively in her school. “Calm still minds create calm still children,” she says.

Back in Australia and settling in at their new school, both say that they soon realised that the children, from comfortably off families, were exhibiting the same stressed behaviours as the refugee children in the UK. Stress, they agreed was caused by over-stimulation... too much TV, too many computer games, too many mobile phones, too much of everything, really.

Having identified the problem, they set about introducing meditation as a regular part of the school week, going on to formalise the process and develop structured sessions, with scripts to follow and carefully chosen music tracks. Breathing and guided visualisation are used in regular ‘mindfulness calm times’.

Sacred Heart’s principal has been “more than supportive” to the extent that mindfulness sessions are now used a few times each week in kindergarten through Year 6 classes. Their eventual goal, Parry and Rudd say, is to introduce daily meditation.

Is this yet another education fad to be imposed on reluctant children? Definitely not, both stress, pointing to the popularity of the school’s lunchtime voluntary sessions to which as many as 40 children turn up. “They’re lining



up outside the door waiting for me to arrive,” Kerrie Parry says.

Building on their experience at Sacred Heart Primary, Parry and Rudd have developed the Rainbow Crystal Connection books and CDs.

The Calm Classrooms Resource Books (infants, middle primary, senior primary) are designed to fit into any teaching program. The books include stage specific:

- ◆ How to guides – Leading meditation sessions and Leading imagination walks
- ◆ How to use books effectively in the classroom
- ◆ Rainbow Breathing, Rainbow Stretching and Rainbow Movement – for the classroom
- ◆ Curriculum links contents page, including meditations for classroom management and all seven KLAs

- ◆ Transcripts with notes and outcome linking ideas, creative lesson follow up ideas
- ◆ Photocopyable, stage appropriate reflection activities for each meditation
- ◆ Mindfulness activities for children
- ◆ Rainbow affirmations list categories; self esteem, positive learning behaviours, physical wellbeing, emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing.

The Calm Classrooms CD set (infants, middle primary, senior primary) contains three guided visualisation CDs and one CD containing backing music so that teachers who are new to meditation can deliver effective sessions.

Relying on teacher networking and word of mouth to date, their meditation techniques have been taken up by 10 primary schools. With books and CDs for secondary schools in development and a new website launched, they hope that meditation will move into the mainstream

www.rainbowcrystalconnection.com