

Happy Places

READING INTERVENTION

Age 11–14



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Learning Aims:

- To focus the mind and create a mindful space for students.
- To reduce test anxiety and create visual coping strategies.

CONTEXT

We have students in our reading intervention classes, as well as English Language Learners (ELL), who struggle with test anxiety. I put together what I called a “Happy Places” lesson of places and things in the ClassVR Portal that they could visualize during the test that might help calm some of their anxiety and provide them with coping strategies.

PRACTICAL SESSION



Happy Place Playlist – Find me in the Community Library



The objective was for students to visit a variety of locations; from the top of a snow-covered mountain, where it’s quiet and peaceful, to a sandy beach where they could hear the ocean waves, and many things in between. I organized it by choosing my favorite calming locations and what I thought the students would also find calming and enjoyable.

At the end of the lesson, they had to pick one and discuss or write about it so they would remember it for testing the following week. This process was part of the strategy in encouraging students to visualise a calming place to detach themselves from the immediate feelings of test anxiety. I chose images and videos from the ClassVR library.

IMPACT ON LEARNING

Students never would have been able to have this experience without ClassVR headsets and photos/videos preloaded. Describing something in words or even in a 2D image or video is nothing compared to the actual Virtual Reality experience. Students feel like they’re actually there and this cannot be created with anything else I’ve used in education thus far. Students were talking about this lesson for weeks. Teachers across the campus came to view and join in and we had students tell us after testing how much the lesson helped with their anxiety when they got stuck. They didn’t panic like usual, but imagined their “happy place” and were able to continue on with the test. That’s all the proof I needed to show how important and vital this lesson was and what an impact ClassVR has on our students, campus, teachers and myself in the library.

