

ATB

Awareness Through the Body

ATB Class Plan Sample

Theme:

Breath and Sound

Objectives:

To become aware of the breath, to focus attention, to practise self-sensing and self-control, to free the voice, to free expression, to bring ease. (Remember that even if these are the specific objectives for this session, the goal of ATB is always at the foundation.)

Age:

8 to 10

Materials:

Yoga mats, cushions and bamboo sticks.

Outline:

1. Welcome/tertúlia
2. Scan normal breath
3. Excitement and calmness, focus on breath
4. Vowels running (A,O,U)
5. Breathometer, phases of breath



Class in detail:

1. Welcome/tertúlia

Welcome the children and give them the space to talk, about things they want to share about what is going on in their lives: home, school, sports... While the talk goes on, we observe how the children are today: level of energy, mood – general and individual. From our observations, we see if the group can start with the scan straightaway or if they need to run about for a while (or play a dynamic game) to release excess energy or to activate them so they will be ready to do a good scan.

2. Scan

We ask the children to close their eyes and align their bodies. Talking clearly and slowly, we say:

Bring your attention to your breath.

Where in your body do you feel the movement of the breath?

Place the left hand where you feel it most.

Notice how the breath comes in.

Notice how it goes out.

Is it long or short?

Which one is longer, the breath in or the breath out?

Follow five more breaths after which you can open your eyes and keep quiet till everybody is ready.

If the children are not tired from the concentration, we may ask them to share which phase of the breath was longer for them: the inhalation or the exhalation. They could either share one by one or by a show of hands.

3. Excitement and calmness

Ask the children to jump up and down energetically. After a while, call for a stop and ask them to quickly lie down with their eyes closed.

As soon as the children are settled, we ask:

Do you notice anything different in your breath?

Is it faster or slower than before?

Where in your body do you notice it more now?



Without doing anything, observe how the breath changes, calming down progressively on its own.

If it feels appropriate, after repeating this exercise three or four times, we can do it again, but this time we ask the children to see what they can do to help the breath to calm down.

4. Run with a vowel sound

The children make a row at one end of the room. We explain that they are going to run all together to the other end while making the sound of a vowel. They will try to let the sound come out fully, in a loud natural voice, without screaming.

After repeating this several times, one child at a time will run across the room back and forth while making, loud and clear, the sound of a vowel in a single breath. The running child stops when he needs to take a new in-breath. We use either the vowel sound **a** (as in **father**) or **u** (as in **two**). When we do this exercise, we keep encouraging each child to project his voice, taking care not to scream or use a false voice.

5. Breathometer

The children lie down and we place a bamboo stick (one of the ones we use when throwing sticks) longitudinally on top of their bodies, in a way that one end touches their nose, mouth or cheek and the other end extends out between the legs.

We ask them to guide their breath to their abdomen, which will make the stick move up and down. With the help of the stick the children will become aware of the rhythm of their breath and the different phases in it (inhalation, pause, exhalation, pause).

After breathing in this way for a while, we ask the children to take out the bamboo and notice the changes that took place in any of the planes of their being due to the class. Once they have acknowledged them, everybody expresses in few words what they had noticed in a few words.



Assessment:

Quick checklist to see if the objectives of the class were met

1. Sense the atmosphere at the end of the class looking for changes from the beginning of the class as a group and individually.

2. Were the children able to make sound freely?

3. Are the children more at ease?

4. Are they more naturally connected with their breath?

5. Do their bodies look softer and alert?

6. Are they more attentive?

7. Is there a change in the tone of their voices?



Creators ATB

Aloka Marti & Joan Sala
Transition School,
Auroville,
605101 TN - India
atb@auroville.org.in

www.awarenessthroughthebody.com

