



Liliana Landolfi

REWIND

Visualisation in English Language Learning

16

Intersezioni/ Intersections
Collana di anglistica

Liliana Landolfi, *REWIND*
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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

APV	Audio-Planned Visualisation
B-move	Backtracking Move
C-move	Cyclical Move
DR-mechanism	Detachment-Reconciliation Mechanism
DS	Desired State
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
F-move	Forwarding Move
FCA	Family Constellation Approach
fMRI	Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging
GV	Guided Visualisation
LL	Language Learning
M-oV	Mastery-Oriented Visualisation
MaG	Marginal Guidance
MiI	Minimal Intervention
MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imaging
MRR	Maximal Rapid Resolution
NLP	Neuro-Linguistic Programming
OGV	Other-Guided Visualisation
P.Æ.C.E.	Preferences, Æxpectations, Certainties, Emotions
PET	Positron Emission Tomography
PS	Present State
PUK	Pre-existing Universe of Knowledge
SIV	Self-Induced Visualisation
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SM	SPIRIT-MIND
TL	Target Language

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REWIND

Visualisation in English Language Learning

Preface

It is an honor to introduce the book *REWIND. Visualisation in English Language Education* by Dr. Liliana Landolfi. She combines her deep knowledge of language, applied linguistics, philosophy of linguistics, systemic thinking and NLP into a leading edge book focusing on the world of learning. I know Liliana to be an amazing learner herself and a person who is committed to creating an environment that addresses many issues related to the acquisition of knowledge, including the systemic thinking skills needed in the world today. I feel blessed that she has found NLP such a valuable tool in creating an amazing document about how we learn and the kind of inner landscape which best supports healthy learning and a healthy life.

I would also like to congratulate Liliana on this wonderful offering as it can change the way we think about learning and the skills we need to uptake knowledge through experience. This book deals with present day issues of learning and connects to the idea of lifelong learning. It further addresses the lengthening of the lifespan and ease with which we learn and retain what we learn. It addresses many important levels of learning. When reading it there were many interesting ideas that came to mind. One was a quote by Dee Hock, the first CEO of Visa International. She said that, “It is easy to get new ideas in but it is difficult to get old ideas out”. I have spent the last 40 plus years teaching adults from the age of 16 and beyond. Regardless of the content being passed on, at the end of the day most of the challenges that a learner faces relate to obstacles encountered in the inner world, or issues related to the external environment for learning.

The Learning process is what this book is about, and learning language is the content. When studying anything there are many aspects to consider. Perhaps the most important is the state of the learner. Is it a state that supports the learning process or not? Is the student present and open to learning or frustrated and



Orlando Seppip, *Chess* – Pixabay.com

Introduction

REWIND. Visualisation in English Language Education is a volume dedicated to easing and detangling mental conditions for personal learning, individual's growth and internal wellness. It examines data that are rooted in two of the major contexts that educators, trainers and counsellors have to cope with once in contexts of transformative acquisition of content data and functional behaviours: formal learning contexts and wellness-oriented settings. It might seem that there is no or little connections between the two areas of research, nevertheless investigations in the fields of applied linguistics, educational psychology, neuro-linguistic programming, psycholinguistics, energy psychology, counselling, and more, indicate that connections between the two fields are deeper than it may be initially expected. Indeed, as it will be shown in the pages to come, they present rather consistent intersections that, once identified and understood, may disentangle inhibitive behaviours and favour individuals' normal development and growth whether in educational or social contexts.

Only a superficial and deceptive look may overpass considering what the ancient Latin population defined "*mens sana in corpore*

sano” to indicate that an individual’s well-being, in its widest connotation, needs to consider both the mental and the physical conditions as a unique entity. The equilibrium between mind and body can and does generate internal homeostasis which, in turn, affects all the other areas such as: identity, behaviour, attitude, assertiveness, autonomy, creativity, self-esteem, self-awareness, and more, creating sets of beliefs, mental schemas and self-made gateways towards success in life and goal achievement. If, however, the equilibrium fails to be visible, whether on the surface or at the perceptive deeper level, blocks, entanglements, detours and/or other types of entrapping behaviours are generated and separate experiencers from the achievement of the target goal, whichever it may be (e.g., learning a foreign language, getting a promotion at work, living unstressed).

REWIND observes in detail both the world of education, in particular university settings of acquisition of English as a foreign language (EFL) and the world of physical/mental entrapment, with specific attention to wellness-oriented environments. Data for these two fields of enquiry derive from two different settings: an academic environment and a health-gearred environment. In both cases, different sets of real data have been collected in different years and settings: they constitute the corpus of observation for the findings that will be presented and discussed in the pages to come. The choice of these two settings was intentional since it aimed to validate the efficacy of visualisations as a tool for unlocking mental schemas and personal beliefs that invalidate performances in social contexts. The possibility of offering qualitative measurable data for both settings was also appealing.

The literature on visualisation, as we shall soon see, is varied and rich. *REWIND* will substantiate previous analyses through the presentation of authentic, voluntary and anonymous written documents that have been collected through different modalities (self-narratives, a questionnaire and personal interviews) and in two diverse contexts (a pedagogical setting and a wellness-oriented setting). In the case of the educational context, personal narratives (self-narratives) are going to be the object of investigation. Narratives have been gathered before and after a guided visualisation that has been activated for five years in a row at the University of Naples “L’Orientale” (UNIOR) with two scopes in mind: on the one hand, guided visualisations were used

to test their validity in the activation of transformative mindsets in students' sets of beliefs related to second language acquisition (SLA); on the other, they were used as a way to discover working procedures that could be of help in establishing individual-based learning changes so as to activate pedagogical ameliorations and positive outcomes.

For the analyses related to the wellness-oriented setting, different types of data have been used: a questionnaire and individual interviews. The questionnaire was administered both in English and in Italian on an international audience during a wellness-oriented event that took place in Milan. The analyses of the collected data will permit to look at visualisations through the eyes and perceptions of skilled, or more less so, visualisers who had already experienced visualising events in prior contexts where the presence of a guiding subject was (other-induced visualisation) or was not contemplated (self-guided and audio-planned visualisations). Visualisations had been carried out in settings self-indicated by questionnaire participants and in response to the three different modalities under observation.

In both the pedagogical and the wellness-oriented settings, the gathered data were anonymous and the subjects (voluntary students and laymen), who will be addressed also as *visualisers*, after a proper visualisation treatment manifested the occurrence of tangible and measurable changes in a number of areas such as: declared attitude, motivational factors, self-induced emotion, decision taking, purposeful transformative behaviours, as well as word selection, word sequencing, thinking structure, and several other aspects that will gradually be dealt with in the various chapters that structure the volume.

REWIND is articulated in six chapters. Chapter 1 offers some information about the two frameworks that have been adopted in the study: the Neuro-Linguistic Programming approach (NLP) and the Family Constellation Approach (FCA). NLP is a discipline that was born forty years ago in Santa Cruz thanks to the brilliant intuitions of its founders John Grinder and Richard Bandler (1976). Since their seminal work, NLP has continued to develop and irradiate findings and solutions in a number of fields that span from transformative behavioural acquisition and self-generative changes to psychological and physiological health recovery, attitudinal transformations, success in education, and much more



2908475, Door – Pixabay.com

Two Frameworks

1. Identifying the Frameworks
 - 1.1 Neuro-Linguistic Programming
 - 1.1.1 First Generation NLP
 - 1.1.2 Second Generation NLP
 - 1.1.3 Third Generation NLP
 - 1.2 Main NLP Principles
 - 1.3 From Cognitive Neuroscience to Education
 - 1.4 The Family Constellation Approach
 - 1.5 Types of Constellations
 - 1.5.1 Guided Constellations
 - 1.5.2 Spiritual Constellations
 - 1.5.3 Mediumistic Constellation
 - 1.6 Convergences between the Frameworks

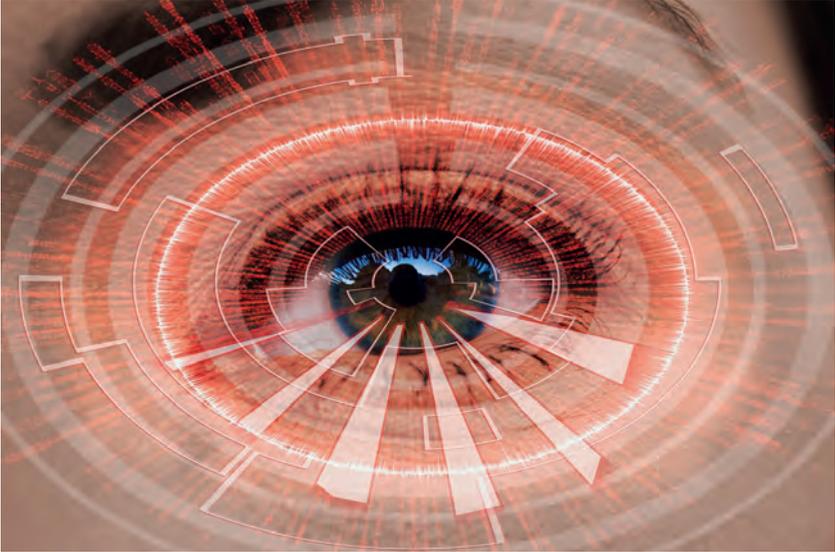
1. Identifying the Frameworks

Two frameworks are going to be adopted in the present volume: the Neuro-Linguistic Programming framework and the Family Constellations framework. This will permit a proper evaluation and comparison of the data that pertain to two diverse fields. Both frameworks look at behaviours and their possible manifestations within myriad fields of applications. The scope here, however, is intentionally reduced so as to focus essentially on two specific areas: the pedagogical field of second language acquisition, particularly oriented toward the acquisition of English as a foreign language (EFL) at university level, and the wellness-oriented field. All participants from the two settings have been exposed or treated with guided visualisations, although through different modalities, in diverse conditions. They have contributed to the construction of a corpus of data with distinct characteristics, as we shall see in chapters to come. All the data under observation are authentic and anonymous: they will be gradually presented together with the various analyses, discussions, intersections and conclusions. For the sake of clarity, however, the major aspects of the two distinct frameworks are synthesised in this chapter.

1.1 Neuro-Linguistic Programming

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP), founded in 1976 in Santa Cruz, California, by John Grinder, a linguist, and Richard Bandler, a gestalt mathematician, aims at highlighting individuals' personal qualities via the elimination of the mental blocks impinging on successful results in every field of life. At the beginning of their investigation, in searching for excellence in interactions and goal achievements, they observed the behaviour, both verbal and non-verbal, of Fritz Perls, the inventor of Gestalt Therapy, Virginia Satir, a famous family therapist, and Milton Erickson, one of the most famous hypnotherapists in the world. Their observations of these champions of excellence in their own fields allowed them to formalise their own modelling techniques and gave birth to the first generation of NLP.

As a name, NLP refers, automatically and correctly, to three different, but equally important, spheres of investigation:



Lili Shi, Eye – Pixabay.com

Focus on Visualisation

2. Opening the Scenario
 - 2.1 Establishing the Roots
 - 2.2 Defining Visualisation
 - 2.3 Historical perspective
 - 2.4 Types of Visualisation (V-types)
 - 2.4.1 Assumptions behind V-types
 - 2.4.2 Other-guided Visualisation
 - 2.4.3 Self-induced Visualisation
 - 2.4.4 Audio-planned Visualisation
 - 2.5 Observed Considerations on V-types and Applications
 - 2.6 A Working Model for Visualisation
 - 2.7 Detachment and Reconciliation Moves

2. Opening the Scenario

Before presenting the data collected and analysed for the present volume (see chapters to come), we will deal with the concept of visualisation so as to identify its use and value both in education and wellness-oriented contexts. Studies in the field of visualisation, as we shall see, have addressed its impact in everyday life actions: it is considered as a tool to project, construct or reconstruct reality and cope with it efficaciously regardless the field of activation.

2.1 *Establishing the Roots*

Visualisation, as the term implies, is a process by which the mind's gift of imagery (Epstein 1989, Markham 1993, Robertson 2002, Webster 2005) is used to focus the energies of life in such a way that a particular *form* (be it a scene, an interaction, a character, a symbol, a word, a sound, a grammar rule, a syntactic structure, an intuition, a creative solution, or anything else) emerges in the visualiser's mind, and often makes itself manifest in the embedding physical reality and overt context through the appearance of different emotions, such as tears, smiles, shivers, facial and/or body manifestations, as well as written descriptions, sketchy drawings, and so on, of what the experiencer has perceived/visualised.

Literally, the word has a Latin origin. It is formed by three constituents: the root "*visualis*" or "*visus*", past participle of "*videre*", that is "*related to vision*", "*coming from or pertaining to the eye or sight*", followed by the infix "*-ise-*" that stands for "*becomes or is caused to be*", and completed via the suffix "*-tion*" that activates the *motus* and leads to, or is behind, a "*performance*" or an "*action*". Each of the three lexical constituents is governed by an internal force and is of special interest here.

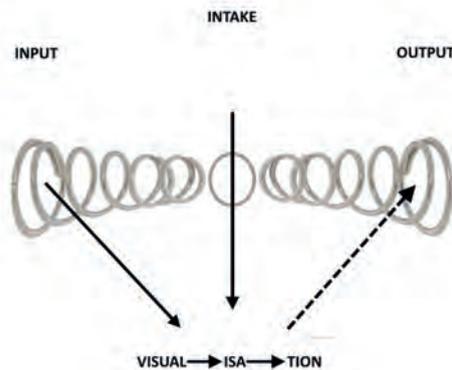
In particular, the act of seeing (INPUT) means that something becomes visible in the here and now context. It ignites mental scenarios (INTAKE), which responds to any individual's Pre-existing Universe of Knowledge (PUK).

In turn they activate performances and/or behaviours (OUTPUT) that concretise in different internal or external manifestations. They may be:

- MENTAL/SPIRITUAL (one thinks in response or reaction to what is visualised),
- PHYSICAL/FACTUAL (one acts in response or reaction to what is visualised),
- VOCAL/WRITTEN (one replies linguistically, whether verbally or in writing, in response or reaction to what is visualised).

Any combination of the three manifestations is also possible. The process is visually depicted in Figure 2.1. The variability of output manifestations is caught by the discontinuous line that departing from the activating factor ('-ise') and one's own PUK generates possible actions ('-tion').

Figure 2.1. Behind the Term Visualisation



The fact that what is visualised might have already been visible in a visualiser's embedding reality is irrelevant, what matters is what is seen and perceived during the visualisation. *TITTY*, one of the subjects who completed the questionnaire [see Appendix One] on visualisation detailed in Chapter 4, states that through a visualisation one can “[...] *reach one's own soul and heal [change] it bypassing the mind*”. *TITTY* is the original pseudonym that this research contributor self-selected. Other pseudonyms will gradually appear throughout this volume. They were all self-selected, unless differently indicated, and will be reported using the same format: small caps and italics. Questionnaire results will be fully addressed in Chapter 4. For the time being, it is

3. Visualisation in Education

The various sections in Chapter 2 have dealt with visualisation from diverse perspectives. They have described its historical development, highlighted nuances of different types of visualisation and offered a theoretical model in order to favour the observation of its manifestations in contexts of application.

In this chapter, the focus will become more specific and will address visualisation within one of the two frameworks of analyses chosen for the present volume: the foreign language learning context. In particular, it will consider aspects of visualisation use and factual application at the academic level, i.e., within a formal language learning context. The intent is to investigate and highlight the impact of visualisation on Italian students of English as a foreign language.

Despite the fact that the context and the data are well delineated, findings (see sections 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6) may certainly be envisioned to go far beyond the context of the present investigation and be applicable to, as well as replicable in, different contexts of foreign/second language learning.

3.1 The Italian-English P.Æ.C.E. Corpus¹

The data that will be used to investigate the impact of visualisation in a pedagogical setting derive from the Italian-English *P.Æ.C.E. Corpus*, which is the final result of a longitudinal research that lasted from 2005/06 to 2009/10 (five years). The corpus was created thanks to the convergence of felicitous events: a number of grants that were gradually received from the University of Naples “L’Orientale” (UNIOR) and the graceful availability of a large quantity of students of English at the same university.

The quantity of words the corpus contains is slightly larger than 100,000. They are scattered over nearly 1000 texts, with a fair distribution between English and Italian (the two languages

¹ Some of the sections in this chapter have already been partially presented in Landolfi (2012a and 2012b). I am very grateful to Liguori Editore for granting me this possibility. Nevertheless, this most recent version offers amplifications of given concepts.

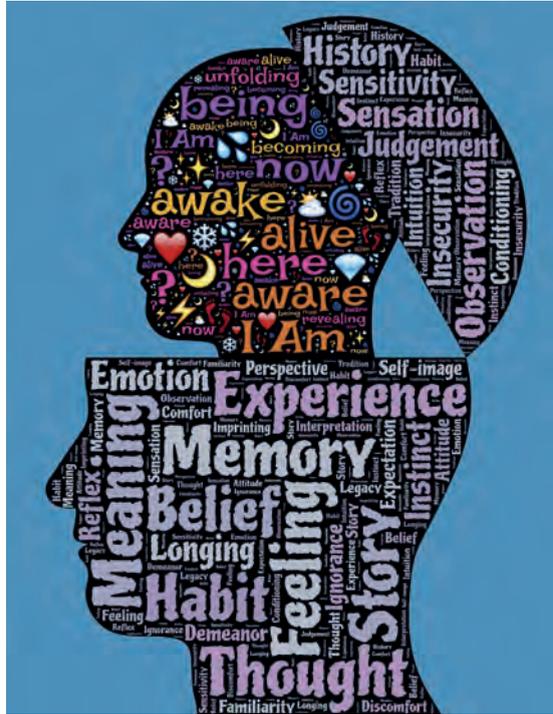
participants were allowed to use). Texts are clustered into five sets of data which have been collected during the five-year-long research according to a fixed and easy-to-be-performed protocol (soon to be detailed) which was applied throughout the study. When compared to other known corpora, *P.Æ.C.E.* may result as being small but corpus narratives “are culturally rich and go far beyond the merely linguistic into the self-expressed affective factors of attitude, [...] identity and awareness, but coupled with linguistic form” (Selinker 2012b: xiii).

The intent behind data gathering was to understand clearly and from students’ direct voices, aspects of the L2 acquisitional path students manifest once they attend their first EFL course at university after school training, a period that varies from 8 to 13 years. A beta test run in 2005 uncovered that many Italian freshmen approach university with inadequate competence in EFL (below B1 using the Common European Framework of Reference [2000]), uncertain motivations, self-defeating attitudes, and high expectations. The situation needed to be unblocked and the adoption of guided visualisations to transform students’ mindsets seemed the most appropriate and applicable given the urgency for mindset transformation that the Beta test results had brought to light.

3.1.1 The Acronym *P.Æ.C.E.*

As a way to explain the acronym *P.Æ.C.E.*, let us consider one example taken from the corpus. All corpus extracts are presented in the modality that follows: pre-Vs (left text) and post-Vs (right text) written by the same participant are juxtaposed so to permit an immediate comparison between the pre-V state and the post-V state (see below) and have an immediate snapshot of participants’ modifications after the guided visualisation (GV).

In *1_10_25_EN_(118)*, the pre-V presents this student’s self-depicted representation of his/her own present reality and personal desiderata about future life. Having in mind the acronym *P.Æ.C.E.*, we discover that his/her **P**references (“*I would like be*”, “*I know*”) are unveiled as well as **Æ**xpectations, dreams/hopes (“*From this course I expect*”, “*I hope*”, etc.), and **C**ertainties (“*I know*”, “*I can do it*”), all impregnated with **E**motions (“*My fears are*”, “*be wrong*”).



John Hain, *Awakening* – Pixabay.com

Visualisation, Practices and Applications

6. Major Considerations
 - 6.1 Creating the Right Conditions for Visualisation
 - 6.2 Relaxation and Breathing Techniques
 - 6.3 Efficacy of Imagery Work in Pedagogical Settings
 - 6.4 Applications of Visualisation in Wellness-oriented Setting
 - 6.5 Conclusive Remarks

6. Major Considerations

In order to complete the discussion started in Chapters 3 and 4, where the two frameworks under observation have been analysed and argued, this chapter will focus on the practices that best support the use of visualisation for the benefit of visualisers, be they students or laymen.

First, however, it is interesting to consider that while the use of visualisation in wellness-oriented settings has always been accepted and practiced, it has not been the case for the pedagogical environment. Nearly fifteen years ago, Majoy, who strongly believed in the use of visualisation in education, predicted that they would “become one of the most powerful, effective, and necessary tools for teachers in the years to come. Harnessing inner space will revolutionise teaching and learning. [...] We [teachers] must use it as an essential and basic teaching skill” (1993:64).

Despite all the positive effects that have become clear since then, visualisations are not yet widely practiced in pedagogical contexts. Contrarily to what happens in the field of wellness, in pedagogical settings the techniques to activate imagery work in formal learning environments are not even taught during on-going in-service teacher-training courses. When sporadic attempts to implement visualisation more traditionally organised courses are factually articulated, they are considered unusual practices and looked at in a rather sceptical way by people in the field of education. In some cases, the educators who use them are considered “weird” or, worse, labelled as “fake psychiatrists” (Hall, Hall and Leech 1993).

The situation is clearly discouraging, given the positive results that guided visualisations activate in a short time, but changes in this arena are occurring, and the *P.Æ.C.E. Corpus* runs in that direction. Indeed, it is also with this intent that the corpus has been made available for qualitative and quantitative investigations. These considerations clearly slow the spread of visualisation and sabotage its implementation in educational contexts.

All the same, the data in the corpus fully support the validity of visualisation, indicate that it is welcomed by the learners and functional to activate the change from ineffective PSs to working DSs (see Chapter 3). They favour those inner introspective investigations that clarify objectives and goals. These findings are in

line with prior analyses (Hall, Hall and Leech 1993, Hornby, Hall and Hall 2003) carried out in schools, where educators reported that the classroom atmosphere after a GV was more relaxed, communication and awareness improved, and memorisation of the imagery was vivid. It became visible in drawings that were of help in understanding abstract concepts.

6.1 Creating the Right Conditions for Visualisation

It seems therefore necessary to specify in some detail the steps to follow in carrying out a visualisation so as to be of support to those readers, educators, trainers, learners, and even counsellors who might want to experiment with GVs in their lives or work settings. For best results, GVs require a number of simple conditions to be respected and acts to be performed despite the setting of use; violating them compromises the results and generally leads to inefficient, partial, or poor outcomes. The conditions pertain to four variables: FACILITATOR, VISUALISER, CONTENT, and CONTEXT.

Table 6.1 contains relevant information for each of the variables and linked conditions. Some indications that favour successful visualisation are also presented for each of them. The indications have been tested out in years of practice and with different types of audiences (learners, tutors, laymen) and will be of benefit to whoever wants to experiment with the use of visualisation. They apply to all contexts, but they have temporarily been calibrated so as to fit both the educational contexts, given that in the field of wellness-oriented applications, specifications and modalities to adopt are generally given during training seminars (Hall et al. 2006). Slight modifications might be needed when using them in other contexts (e.g., projecting DSs that have scopes diverse from language acquisition, such as decision taking, choice selection, identification of relevance, actions/behaviours to dis/continue, etc.).

Table 6.1 has to be considered as a work-in-progress container where to gather and list functional features for successful visualisation. It is intentionally not fully exhaustive so as to give experimenters the possibility of calibrating indications in accordance with their groups of visualisers.

Table 6.1. Variables, Conditions, and Indications for Successful Visualisation

Variable	Conditions	Indications
FACILITATOR or GUIDE	CAPACITY TO REMAIN DETACHED FROM VISUALISERS	<p>The guide must attempt at remaining totally unobtrusive but present and vigilant throughout the GV. Cues are given by visualisers during GVs. They act as nonverbal signals to communicate physical reactions to what is visualised and thus inform the guide about the possibility of continuing or the need to interrupt.</p>
	INFORMATION GIVEN TO VISUALISERS BEFORE THE FACTUAL GV	<p>It is ethically (see also below) correct to specify that during a visualisation, it would be more functional to keep one’s eyes closed in order to favour mental visions and avoid being distracted by external factors. This point is particularly essential when the target is a group rather than an individual.</p> <p>GVs function equally well with semi-closed eyes particularly with an adult audience, but less well when visualisers are younger and inexperienced, although, after the initial puzzlement for the novelty, there is an innate tendency to close the eyes even if not expressly suggested by the facilitator/guide.</p>
	INTEGRATION OF THE FIVE SENSES	<p>Taste, smell, touch, hearing, and sight all need to be awakened mentally and visually. Alerting the visualiser’s five senses means that the entire body (physical sphere) contributes to the event that is taking place.</p> <p>Although they are projected into a virtual, mental universe, visualisers need to stay rooted in the embedding reality and remain present to the events. The images in the GV may be unbound by space and time, but, all the same, they have the strength and the power to evoke new sensations and create actual new memories. Every single time a new DS-oriented perception is activated, a step toward its achievement is accomplished and the DS becomes more reachable with all the positive effects that gains in self-regulation, motivation, self-esteem, and self-trust entail.</p>

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Appendix

QUESTIONNAIRE ON VISUALISATION IN ENGLISH

NICKNAME: _____

NATIONALITY: _____

GENDER: F M

AGE: 20-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 BEYOND

1. ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH VISUALISATIONS?

Yes No partially

2. HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED A VISUALISATION?

No Yes, sometimes Yes, often Yes, very often

3. HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISUALIZE?

Daily Weekly Monthly Yearly

4. WHERE HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED A VISUALISATION?

During seminars In my dreams During meditations

Other _____

5. WHAT TYPE OF CONTENT DO YOU VISUALIZE?

Places Events People interacting Words

All of these

6. HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED A VISUALISATION?

I guided myself (1)

Someone I trust guided me (2)

A recorded voice guided me (3)

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