

The Dream Experience



Give your students the opportunity
to unlock their potential



Introduction

Dreaming is a universal phenomenon and most people have an inherent fascination about what dreams mean and what they have to say about our concerns and preoccupations. We all have enormous unrealised potential and with that the ability to make a difference in the world around us. Students can be made aware of this potential by engaging in dream studies.

Dream Awareness has educational, creative, psychological and social value and is particularly relevant and useful for those studying at AS Level and above. However, sessions can be tailored to younger students or students of lower ability.

Q. Why would I want a Dream Experience session in my school or college?

Answer

Nutrition and exercise get a great deal of attention in academic curricula and yet sleep, whose effect on the health and safety of the body and mind is at least as important, is often overlooked.

Sleep and dreams are universal human experiences. We can expect to spend one-third of our lives asleep, and about a quarter of that time engaged in the nightly experiences we call dreams. Since everyone sleeps and everyone dreams, all students have a very personal stake in the class material. In fact, at some point in life, everyone will likely struggle with at least one sleep/dream issue: insomnia, jet lag, nightmares, sleep deprivation, shift work, sleepwalking or sleep talking.

Young people are very interested in sleep and dreams and this may be the best reason for addressing these topics. They are mysterious and puzzling, spurring great curiosity among students, especially adolescents, who are often fascinated by their own inner experiences. Because of this, class activities on sleep and dreams can aid understanding in many diverse subject areas, for instance; science, health, language, arts, social studies, fine arts, and of course psychology.

Now there is the opportunity to address that curiosity and stimulate a lifelong interest in the fascinating world of sleep and dreams.

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Here are Samples of some of the Activities

- Recording dreams in a Dream Journal
- Making collages by picking out images from magazines, leading to a discussion of images and symbolism
- Exploration of Metaphor
- Dream theatre - re-enacting dreams
- Exploration of active imagination and waking dreams, including dialogue between dream characters
- Free writing consisting of memories, family stories, personal histories and the associations that can be made with these things and our dreams
- Literary use of dreams in novels and films
- Creative writing using dreams as source material
- Painting a dream scene
- Making a *Book of a Dream*
- Science Projects on Dreams
- The use of different techniques of Dream Analysis
- Facilitated group work

There will not be time to engage students in all of the above activities so those chosen will depend on the size of class, the length of the session and the age and ability of the students.

Specific activities will be recommended but these will be fully discussed with the tutor in advance of the session.

The sessions will ensure an emotionally safe environment for any student wishing to share their dreams.

The Value of Dreams



Educational value

By considering dreams as metaphors and imaginal expressions of their feelings and concerns, students can move from concrete to more abstract, symbolic ways of thinking. This will not only give them a greater understanding of Art and Literature but, in addition, will aid them in many different subject areas. The application of metaphor and analogy will enhance the power of their memory and will also improve communication skills, particularly in scientific disciplines where abstract concepts need to be conveyed clearly and concisely.



Psychological value

By considering dream figures as aspects of themselves and the dream story as an expression of their inner thoughts, the students will begin to know themselves much better. By looking at our dreams we can discover our strengths and our weaknesses, we can find the missing parts of ourselves and also find the rejected parts, the inner enemies and the seeds of prejudice. This discovery can point the way to psychological development. Increased self-awareness fosters self-empowerment, self-esteem and a feeling of self-responsibility. In addition, dreams can provide ideas for future goals and self-development.



Creative value

Dreams contain enormous creative potential and have been used as a unique resource by writers and artists for generations. Enid Blyton, Samuel Coleridge, Salvador Dali all used their dreams to create their own individual works. Students will acquire a sense of their own dream characters and their individual creativity. Examining their own imagination in this way will provide a bridge to literature and the world of art. The benefits to be gained in creative pursuits are obvious but creative solutions are often needed to solve scientific problems, especially in industry and Higher Education. Many scientific breakthroughs have been the result of people recognising, in their dreams, the answer they were seeking.



Social value

The nature of dreams is such that even the dreams of others have something to say to us and can have relevance in our own lives. The recognition that, as human beings, we share the same emotions, have similar fears and experience similar dreams will inevitably lead us to a greater understanding and tolerance of others. Group work provides an ideal vehicle for listening to, and understanding, many different viewpoints and life situations. The outcome of this is that a feeling of empathy is fostered and the student is less likely to project their inner conflicts onto the outside world and, therefore, will be less likely to engage in destructive behaviour.

The sessions will be run by Jo Harthan, PhD.

In 1993, Joan gained a 1st class Honours degree in Biology with Chemistry and in 1997 was awarded a PhD in Chemistry. She has taught in secondary and higher education for fifteen years and has run Dream Workgroups in Lancashire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire. In addition she has facilitated dream workgroups for students studying for a Diploma in Counselling.

Jo is a member of the International Association for the Study of Dreams (IASD) and abides by their ethics statement. The IASD is a non-profit, multidisciplinary organisation dedicated to the pure and applied investigation of dreams and dreaming. Its purposes are to promote an awareness and appreciation of dreams both in professional and public arenas; to encourage research into the nature, function and significance of dreaming; to advance the application of the study of dreams; and to provide a forum for the eclectic and interdisciplinary exchange of ideas and information.

She has been keeping a Dream Journal for over twenty years and is the author of two books on dream analysis. She has presented her work at conferences in Europe and America and has had articles published in the IASD magazine *Dreamtime*. A full list of publications can be found on her website.

For more information, or to book a session at your school or College, please contact:

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