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## Decreasing stress and anxiety among students

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Capstone Project Notebook

Decreasing Stress and Anxiety Among Students

Jamela Shaban

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## **Back Story**

School was always a task that gave me more difficulty than most students. I have a learning disability called Neurofibromatosis. This disability hindered my learning capabilities, which in turn made me grasp concepts slower than most students. My disability made me a very fidgety and antsy student. My teachers didn't understand my disability, so they just pushed me to the back of the classroom as to not disrupt the other students. By being pushed aside, it led to much stress and anxiety in my learning career.

In Elementary school anxiety and stress was definitely something I did not need to add on to my plate. I already had a hard time just getting by in school, and this added pressure was definitely not needed. By constantly being told to sit down, be quiet, and stop disrupting the class, I felt as if my school career was plummeting down the drain. But in a matter of one year, all that changed.

It was not until I reached 5<sup>th</sup> grade when I had a teacher who fully understood my academic needs. Ms. Lane, my teacher, was a wonderful resource who would stay after school with me, and during teaching time made sure that I had everything I needed to stay anxiety free. I was no longer the fidgety child who could not focus, I was now calm enough to sit in my chair and focus on the teacher and her lesson. I never got placed in the back of the room again.

Since my 5<sup>th</sup> grade experience, I have learned how important it is for students to have something that will aid him or her along in their academic performance. I see anxiety and stress in students from the different classrooms I have worked in and know the effects it can have on their learning. Although many students do not have a learning

disability, they still carry excess stress and anxiety. Overcoming my anxiety in the classroom is the sole reason that I am a successful student today.

### **Nature of the Problem**

Many educators believe that since elementary students have anxiety, stress and excess energy in the classroom, their academics tend to suffer. Anxiety associated with academic endeavors has been a focus of investigation for several decades among experimental and educational psychologist and continues to attract the attention of educators and researchers. Whether students are taking tests or learning content material such as math or English, anxiety has been know to hinder a student's academic performance (Levine, 2008). One of the most prevalent types of anxiety is test anxiety. Many students suffer when taking test because they can be very nervous and carry a lot of stress. Some researchers say that when a student becomes anxious they get aroused, sweat more, and have a faster beating heart (Whitaker, Lowe, & Lee, 2007). This illuminates the problem because it can distract a student from their work as well as loose focus. When students go into a test situation like this or any other subject for that matter, they will most likely not perform as well as they would have going into the task in a more calm matter. Not only does anxiety encumber student's learning, it also prevents them from completing a specific academic task. When a student experiences failure as a threatening situation that prevents that person from proceeding forward, then anxiety becomes an obstacle that may avert that person from successfully approaching and mastering new material (Levine, 2008).

Some researchers link anxiety to attention in the classroom. According to Antonio

Castillo and Maria Gutierrez, excess levels of anxiety obstruct the performance of a task due to the fact that attention, concentration and efforts are not functioning fully (2009). This in turn can result to academic failure and cause students to not reach a higher level of education. Many children that suffer from anxiety may need accommodations or modifications to access their curriculums in schools (Bowen-Irish, 2007). Castillo and Gutierrez also believe that attention plays a huge role in academic success and if a student is not engaged in the activity then their success levels go down (2009). Students that suffer from attention disabilities may have reduced information processing along with affected learning and academic performance (2009). Some of these attention issues that students face may cause an inability to focus and concentrate on the task at hand. It may also cause a lack of motivation and the incapability to monitor two or more important elements at a time (2009). If a student cannot focus on a task, how can they be expected to succeed in school?

A study conducted by Torsten Norlander, Leif Moas and Trevor Archer, claimed that loud noise levels in the classroom caused stress and anxiety among the students as well (2005). Anxiety and stress are not only caused by the academic material, but can be created by noise levels among a classroom. Another study stated that if a child shows signs of anxiety in early education (kindergarten-first grade), they are more likely to show similar signs later on in their academic career (Duchense, Vitaro, Larose, Tremblay 2008).

Anxiety can be caused by numerous attributes, but one thing is clear, anxiety does hinder a students' academic growth. Research has been conducted consistently throughout the years and there has always been a similar pattern. Throughout my research

I have found that through anxiety students become aroused and tend to sweat more causing their academics to suffer. Significant levels of anxiety and stress shown in a student are a likely cause that students fall behind in their academics which causes a number of problems for that student. Research shows that through accommodations and change much the stress and anxiety can be released. This research foreshadows my project because it sheds light on the types of activities that will be most beneficial to help students that suffer from stress and anxiety. Having done research, I am more educated on the topic and will be able to better suite the community partner I am working with.

### **Other Interventions**

Stress and anxiety are topics that have been researched over and over among educators and psychologists. For many years they have been implementing techniques that may reduce the levels of stress and anxiety in the classroom. From yoga to simple stress releasing exercises there are several ways to help a student cope with stress and anxiety.

In one article by Tere Bowen –Irish (2007) an occupational therapist, thinks that performing yoga with students will help reduce stress levels in the classroom. She not only focuses on yoga but works on educating the whole child. Throughout her program, Yogakids, she believes that it can provide an opportunity for the child to have noncompetitive, social, physical outlet for energy and stress reduction (2007). Bowen-Irish has been doing yoga in different classrooms for over 20 years and can almost always see an improvement with the students she works with. She mentions that the students look forward to yoga time and the majority of them feel relaxed after the session.

The biggest improvement that she noted was the fact that the students had much better focus in the classroom and seemed to get their work done more efficiently (2007). All in all yoga is a great technique to help reduce stress and anxiety among classroom students.

Along with yoga one researcher found that working in a group to reduce anxiety was very beneficial. In a study by Nichole Miller, it used active control anxiety reduction; which is a series of stretches, and breathing exercises that students do for 8 minutes in groups. The groups allowed for the class to share as well as were easier to manage. Miller also noted that when students work in small groups, they are less overwhelmed and less distracted, enabling them to focus on the task at hand. Once they have completed these exercises, then the students are asked to imagine and identify an activity that they find interesting, sharing their thoughts with their group members (Miller, 2007). Throughout her study, she split the boys and girls up and observed them over a 2-month period. She found that doing the active control activity right before a subject that induces high stress benefited the students immensely (Miller, 2007).

Another study conducted by Richard Driscoll falls along the same lines as the one above. He believes that performing an anxiety desensitization method will reduce stress and anxiety deeply. The different methods he uses are strenuous muscle stretch and tensing of the muscle, deep breathing, and constructive suggestion sequences which will work on imagining positive imagines to replace the negative cognitions and promote confidence (2006). He also found out that by children doing simple physical activity they were able to reduce their stress levels (2006). In a similar study students would carry out a relaxation program that occurred two times a day for around five to ten minutes. These relaxations included stretching exercises as well as relaxation techniques (Norlander,

2004). Norlander believed that if students performed these tasks in the morning and after lunch it would help them to control their stress levels throughout the day (2004). Having a preconceived notion that this would work, he tested his theories to see if what he believed was true. He found that performing these tasks in the morning helped the students to get ready for the day of work and tended to settle their morning jitters (2004). He also noted that after lunch the activities helped the students to be successful for the rest of the day. These three studies are very similar and have been proven to work with reducing stress and anxiety.

That last type of stress and anxiety intervention method I took a look at was how to manage anxieties in the classroom. This study found that if students performed simple tasks that have a lot to do with imagining, then their anxiety would be subdued. One technique that Akande and her fellow researchers gained from another researcher was to have the students pretend they were holding a lemon in their hand. The students were then asked to squeeze the lemon as hard as they could tensing up all the muscle in their arm. Once the students had squeezed out all the juice, they were to relax their arm muscle (Cattell, 1999). This activity allowed for students to become in tune with their bodies and gave the chance for all the muscles to relax. This in turn would help students' anxiety levels to go down (Akande, 1999). This article brings up many interesting interventions that teachers can use in their classrooms to help reduce stress and anxiety levels. One of the great things about their activities, is they do not require any equipment. All one needs is a student's mind and the willingness to try a new technique (Akande, 1999).

A common thread I noticed among these articles was that each one involved some sort of physical relaxation method. Whether it was yoga or deep breathing, each activity

allowed for the students to calm down giving their anxiety and stress levels a chance to calm down as well. Many of the studies and methods also required students to use positive imagining to help reduce the negative impacts that stress and anxiety induce in students. I also noticed that most of the methods were associated with a certain time of day. By having the activities conducted at those times, it allowed for the stress and anxiety to be reduced significantly. Each and every one of the activities can be used in any classroom setting and are great way to reduce stress.

### **Community Partner**

Since my project focuses on high stress and anxiety in the classroom and the effects it has on a student's education, I saw it fit to work with teachers. My community partner is going to be Ms. Figenshaw a third grade teacher at McKinnon Elementary School in Salinas. Ms. Figenshaw is going to help me along in my project and aid me to reach my ending goal because my project will help her to handle stress in the classroom among her students, resulting classroom success. Due to the fact that stress and anxiety are so prevalent in the classroom a common problem among many teachers is not having the proper knowledge to help their students deal with the stress and anxiety that bombards their learning. Although some teachers are trying to help students cope with stress and anxiety, they might not be using successful techniques. Through an interview I had my community partner I found out some very interesting information on how she goes about dealing with stress and anxiety in her classroom.

As I had the chance to sit down with my community partner and I was very pleased to notice that she does want to help her students deal with stress and anxiety in

the classroom. Ms. Figenshaw told me that stress is an issue that she notices in her classroom. She specifically told me that her students tend to become more anxious and stressed out when they have a test or forgotten to do their homework. A simple technique she uses if a student of hers forgets their homework is to have them stay in at recess and complete it. She told me that this method does not work because students become upset and angry that they have to miss their recess causing the rest of their learning to be affected. Ms. Figenshaw mentioned to me that the stress and anxiety her students face causes their work to suffer throughout the day. Ms. Figenshaw has agreed to work with me on my capstone project because she wants to find techniques that will work for her students. She is very pleased to find out that I am going to educate her on how to reduce stress and anxiety in the classroom because she will be able to take what I show her and apply it to other classes she teaches. She knows that with each classroom she is faced with, there will be students that encounter stress and anxiety. Ms. Figenshaw states, “If a teacher can handle stress and anxiety in the classroom, then her students will be successful in their learning.”

Once I had a better understanding of Ms. Figenshaw’s views on my project, I had a clearer understanding of how the two of us were going to tackle this project. She thought it would be best for me to come into her classroom and observe her students at different times of the day. She mentioned to me that her students acted different in the morning then they did in the afternoon. I thought this would be beneficial to me so that I could get a clear view of her students and how they operate in the classroom. I am also going to keep Ms. Figenshaw updated on my progress and let her know what I have decided to do in order to relieve stress and anxiety in the classroom.

All the effort that Ms. Figenshaw and I are going to make will be of great benefit to both of us. Once I come up with techniques geared towards helping students release stress and anxiety, I will be able to help students in other classrooms that I teach in. I will be able to carry on these techniques throughout my teaching career. This goes the same for Ms. Figenshaw. This project will benefit many of the students that we come across.

### **Significance of the Project**

Since the main focus for my project is to educate teachers on different exercises that will help reduce stress and anxiety in the classroom, it will make a huge difference beyond my specific goals. If I can educate Ms. Figenshaw, then she will be able to take those techniques on to other classes she teaches. This will in turn greatly benefit a broader spectrum of students. I believe that the benefits will make students more motivated about their schoolwork and allow them to have more focus in the classroom due to reduced stress levels. Having reduce stress and anxiety levels in the classroom, will allow for students to carry that feeling on through their homework at home. The more students the teacher and I can benefit the more effective my project will be. By benefiting the students, they will be more focused in the classroom and ready to learn. This will give Ms. Figenshaw more lead way in how she goes about teaching.

Many teachers look at stress and anxiety among students and have no idea how to go about reducing it. My project will give teachers new ways to reduce stress among students that are unique. Along with other techniques that teachers and researchers have tried, mine will give students a chance to reduce stress and anxiety they are feeling as well as give the teacher methods she can carry on to other classes she teaches. This will

in turn create higher focus in the classroom and the opportunity to get work done in a timely matter.

Throughout my college career I have noticed the stress and anxiety that elementary students face. I am hoping that throughout my efforts I can make an impact on elementary students that are faced with high stress and anxiety. If Ms. Figenshaw can take what I have given her on the topic and carry it through to her students, then I have succeeded in my goal.

My course work I have completed throughout my time here at California State University, Monterey Bay will enhance my project and help me to reach my goal. Many of the classes of I have taken here have broadened my mind to view teaching from a different aspect. This in turn will allow me take my project and conduct it from a different perspective. My project is going to be unique and one that will give teachers new ways to approach learning.

### **Assessment For Your Project**

Assessing the efforts is a very important part to ones capstone project. Since I decided to work closely with a teacher and students in a third grade classroom, my assessment methods are fairly straightforward. Before I begin implementing my project methods, I am going to observe the classroom throughout several days. I will visit the classroom each day for about a week. This will allow me to see when the students are most stressed and what subjects cause the students to become anxious and stressed out. I will record these findings by taking notes and getting input from my community partner.

Once I have observed the class, I will take my observations and then rework and create activities that the teacher can do with her students to help relieve the stress and anxiety in the classroom. After careful thought and consideration as to what activities I am going to compile together, I will go back and revisit the classroom.

Through talking with the teacher, we have both come up with a method as to how the I will educate her as well as the students. The teacher thought it would be good for me to perform the tasks with the students while she observes me. That way she can see how to go about presenting these activities with her students. The teacher has also asked me to come in after school and explain the activities I have chosen so that she can do them with her students when I am not there. This will allow for the teacher to observe her students and see if the activities had a positive effect. By working closely with the teacher I am reaching my goal for my project.

Once the teacher feels comfortable enough to perform these activities on her own, I will take a step back and observe the classroom again. I will note the changes in the students (if there are any) and see how I can improve my project methods. I will be the main observer to see if my project goals are met, but I understand that my observations alone will not be enough. I will also be asking the teacher through a formal interview for her input and the changes that she notices among her students. Since I am educating the teacher for my project, I will want to make sure that my methods work for her as well as for the students. Towards the end of project, I will ask the teacher what she liked and disliked about my project and any suggestions she can give me. I want to make sure that my efforts are well spent and the teacher along with her class can benefit.

**Details, Deliverables and Progress Timeline**

After much consideration I have honed down what I am going to do for my project. Since my capstone focuses on stress and anxiety in the classroom and the negative effects it can have on the learner, my project methods are geared to tackle this problem. Through discussions with my community partner Ms. Figenshaw, together we came up with a method that would work for both of us. I am pleased with my project decision, knowing that my efforts will be well spent.

For my project, I am planning on creating several different activities that Ms. Figenshaw can do with her students. These activities will be geared towards relieving students of stress and anxiety. I am planning on having the activities range from 5 minutes to 20 minutes. This allows for Ms. Figenshaw to conduct the activities even when her time is short. The types of activities I am planning on creating are: yoga poses, breathing exercises, simple stretching techniques and other interactive activities. All of these activities will reduce stress and anxiety among the students and give the teacher new ways to approach learning.

For the presentation of my project I am planning on compiling the activities in an organized booklet titled "Take 5". The activities will include pictures and each one can be taught in five minutes or less. One of the main aspects I want Ms. Figenshaw to gain from my booklet is the fact that she can pick it up and do an activity to reduce stress and anxiety with her students in the amount of time she has. Since teachers are busy during the day with lessons they must complete, I wanted to create a booklet that teachers will want to incorporate into their daily routine.

Along with the booklet, my community partner has asked me to create a video of different yoga poses. Since Ms. Figenshaw has never done yoga before, she thought her students would benefit more from watching me perform a yoga pose and then having them mimic what I am doing. The video will feature me teaching around 10 different yoga poses, starting easy and then progressing to harder poses. This video will be a different approach to teaching stress relieving techniques but in turn will greatly benefit the students.

Deliverables:

- My observation notes before the activities were performed
- My observation notes after the activities were performed
- Interviews with Ms. Figenshaw
- A yoga video featuring myself
- A booklet titled “Take 5” compiled of the different stress and anxiety relieving activities
- Ms. Figenshaw’s notes of the observations of her students.

Time Line:

- Over the next week I am going to visit Ms. Figenshaw’s third grade classroom. I am planning on going each day next week during different times.
- Once I have observed the class, I am going to create my booklet and yoga video.
- I will then meet with Ms. Figenshaw after school and go over the contents of my booklet and video.

- I will then visit the classroom again for about a week, and implement my activities with the students (this will give the teacher time to observe me as well as the students).
- After I have worked with the students I will give Ms. Figenshaw about 2 weeks to perform the activities on her own. I will check in with her about 2-3 times making sure any questions she has are answered.
- Then I will revisit the classroom and note the observations and the changes (if there are any) from the first time I have observed the class.
- After all of this is complete I will set up a meeting with Ms. Figenshaw so we can discuss the positives and negatives of the activities. I will at this time collect the notes she has made.

It is very crucial that I stick with this timeline because I want to make sure I have enough time to complete everything. Since my project involves working closely with my community partner, it is important that we are on the same schedule. I think that what I am going to be doing will take a lot of time and effort, but effort I am willing to put in. This timeline is very crucial to my capstone project in helping me reach my goals.

### **Deliverables/Appendix**

For my project I had several deliverables. Since two of them, my yoga video and my activity booklet could not be integrated in my project notebook, I have included them separately. For my other deliverables I am able to include them here and would like to share them with the reader.

For my first deliverable I have interviewed Ms. Figenshaw prior to conducting my project and after my project has been completed. Both of these interviews have helped me to create a project that is worthwhile and most beneficial to my community partner.

Interview #1: Before my project was conducted

**1.) How do you feel about me working with your 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class?**

I am very pleased that you have chosen me as your community partner and I am very excited to see where your project will go.

**2.) Since my project focuses on high stress and anxiety, do you feel that it will benefit your class? If so please explain.**

I do feel that your project will greatly benefit my class. I have been a teacher for along time and always notice students in my classroom that have stress and anxiety. I am very willing to learn new techniques to go about addressing the topic and would love ways to help reduce it. I feel that stress and anxiety does somewhat hinder a students performance and I would love try and tackle the issue.

**3.) Do you have any suggestions on how I can enhance my project?**

I feel that you are off to a great start on your project. The only suggestion I would make would be to conduct your project at different times during the day because the students act differently in the morning than in the afternoon.

**4.) Do you feel that educating the teacher rather than the students is a beneficial way to go about my project?**

I do. Since I do not know to much about this issue, I feel that educating me will allow me to help out my students. It will also allow me to carry on these techniques to other classes I teach.

**5.) Since I am going to use yoga as one of my methods to reduce stress and anxiety in the classroom, what would be the best way for me give you that information?**

Well first of all I know absolutely nothing about yoga, so it has to be something that is very easy for me to follow along. What if you made a yoga DVD that I could show the class. Maybe make the DVD easy to follow and have a variety of poses on it.

**6.) Are you willing to help me assess the productivity of my project as well as see if it made a difference among the students in the classroom?**

I would be happy to help you observe the changes that your project has made. The times when you are not here, and I do the yoga with the students, I will be able to let you know how that goes and if I see any changes.

After I interviewed my community partner, I went back the next week and observed the classroom. I wanted to get a sense of how the students worked as well as the set up of her classroom. I also wanted to note the style of teaching that Ms. Figenshaw does with her students and what time of day she teaches the subjects. These observations helped me to design my project appropriately.

**Observation notes:**

- Desks are set up in rows with every other desk a girl and boy
- Four students are separated from the rows because they have a hard time focusing when someone sits next to them
- There are seventeen students in the classroom
- Ms. Figenshaw sits at her desk when the students are doing individual work
- Here is how her schedule looks:
  - Silent sustained reading for about fifteen minutes in the morning
  - Then math for about thirty-five to forty minutes
  - Spelling packets before recess
  - Recess for fifteen minutes
  - After recess math timed sheets (each student is on different level)
  - Then students do their reading lesson (they listen to a tape of the story and then answer questions)
  - Once that is done there is usually fifteen minutes where the students have time to work on any unfinished work and correct work
  - Lunch
  - After lunch the students do a language arts lesson

- They have a third recess consisting of ten minutes
- Then a history lesson
- There is normally about ten minutes at the end of the day for students to work on anything they have not finished
  - The students have science lab, computer lab and P.E. once a week.
- The classroom has a DVD player and a television
- The four students that sit apart from the class have a harder time focusing and get easily distracted.
- The students love math and get very excited during the math lesson
- Their least favorite subject seems to be reading
- One student Cynthia cannot have any materials at her desk and needs extra help completing the assignments

After I observed the classroom and the students, I was able to create my yoga video and activities booklet. Once my video and booklet was complete I took them to Ms. Figenshaw so she could look them over. I visited her classroom two days a week for about a month. During that month I observed the students and noted the changes. Once the four weeks were over, I sat down with Ms. Figenshaw and asked her some more questions.

Interview #2: After my project was conducted

**1.) Did you like my project deliverables? If so what did you like about them?**

I thought that you put a lot of effort into the project and your yoga video and activity booklet brought a lot of great things to the table. I really enjoyed the yoga video because the poses were easy to follow and the students had a great time participating in it.

**2.) What would you have liked to see more of?**

I wish you had more time to come to the classroom. It would have been nice for you to come three to four days a week and work on yoga with the students. I know I have

the DVD but I really feel that by you coming in, the students got a great introduction to yoga.

**3.) What could I have done differently?**

I really felt that your project was excellent and I think you did a wonderful job. I would like it if you could send me an extra copy of the DVD and booklet so I can put it in the office for other teachers would like to use it

**4.) After the four weeks, what were the main changes you saw among the students in terms of stress and anxiety?**

There were several differences I noticed among the students. The main difference I saw was by performing yoga before we did our math timed sheets, the students seemed to be much more relaxed and it even went as far as to help a few students move up in levels. I will definitely consider doing yoga before our timed math sheets. I also noticed that the four students who have to sit by themselves due to distractions, were much calmer and more focused after the yoga exercises. All in all I was fairly pleased with class after we did yoga or an activity from the booklet.

**5.) Do you think you will carry these techniques to classroom you teach in?**

Yes I will. I will incorporate yoga in all of the classrooms I teach in. I will also use the booklet activities in my future classrooms.

After I have collected all my data I am now ready to asses my project. With all my hard work I will able to tell if my project made a difference among the classroom. Having noted the changes, will help me to better my project in the future.

**Results Summary**

The results section of a capstone project lets the reader know how effective or ineffective the project was. It also gives the person who conducted the project a sense of his/her efforts. For my capstone project, the results mean a great deal because my focus was to release stress and anxiety among elementary school students. The results section

of my capstone project allows me to note my efforts and see if there were any changes. The two main assessment tools for my capstone project were my observations and those from my community partner Ms. Figenshaw and two interviews with her. These assessment tools were a great way to measure the benefits my project had.

For my capstone project I created a yoga video and an activity booklet consisting of a variety of exercises to help reduce stress and anxiety among the students. After much consideration and many meetings with my community partner, I can honestly say that my yoga video and activity booklet were successful in helping students to reduce stress and anxiety.

After the students watched the yoga video and performed the poses for several weeks the teacher and I could see a change among them. The biggest change that was noticeable was after the students did the yoga for about five to ten minutes, they were much more relaxed. The students also had better focus when it came time to getting back to work. We could tell that some of the students seemed much less stressed. I noticed that the yoga poses were a great way to release some of that physical energy along with calming the students down and preparing them for the lesson ahead. Ms. Figenshaw and I both found the yoga to be most successful if the students did it after a lesson was completed and before starting a new one. This allowed for the students to have a little break before starting their next activity.

With the four students who have to sit separately due to distraction had a harder time grasping the yoga concept the first time. For the first time the four students treated yoga like it was free time and became easily distracted. Once Ms. Figenshaw had talked with them and explained that yoga is to be taken seriously and that they needed to focus,

those students became very excited when it was time for yoga. After about three yoga sessions, they really began to grasp the concept and for one of the girls, it made a very noticeable difference. After the yoga session, she was able to complete an entire worksheet on her own. Ms. Figenshaw was very impressed and told me that it was a huge improvement because this girl normally needs some extra help on her assignments.

One of the biggest problems that we both found with the yoga was the fact that some of the poses were too complicated and the students could not perform them. This caused a problem because when we tried them out, the students began to laugh and had a hard time settling down and focusing on those harder poses. Ms. Figenshaw and I agreed that those poses should not be done until the class has been doing the yoga for a while. We came to realize that in due time with practice those poses could be mastered.

Along with the yoga video I had also created an activity booklet that consisted of five-minute activities to help the students release stress and anxiety. Ms. Figenshaw conducted these activities once I had gone over each one with her. She then did the activities with the students for a week and noted the changes. I then went back into the classroom and watched her do some of them and also noted any changes I saw. We both came to find that two of the activities were most helpful.

The first one was Relaxation From Toes to Head. This activity worked very well because it allowed for the students to relax their entire body. It gave them an understanding of how it feels to have a relaxed body. The relaxed body created more focus and less fidgeting in the classroom along with releasing some of the stress and anxiety that the students were facing. The other activity that worked well was the Happy Paintbrush. This activity allowed for the students to imagine what was on their mind and

paint it in the air. For many students this activity was very relaxing and really got their minds to release some of that stress and anxiety that was kept inside. All in all the activity booklet gave the teacher some new ways to address the issue of stress and anxiety among school children.

Once we conducted the activities with the students, I sat down and had an interview with my Ms. Figenshaw. The main question I asked her was what she liked and disliked about my project and if there were any suggestions that she had so I could better my project for the future. Ms. Figenshaw told me that she enjoyed my project very much and was glad that I chose to work with her. She mentioned that the yoga video was the most helpful and thought that I put a lot of time and effort into it. She was pleased that I created a video giving a tutorial on how to do the poses because she had never done yoga before. She told me that she is going to incorporate yoga into her daily classroom routine.

As for the booklet, she liked it and had a few suggestions for me. She explained that some of the activities were very useful and she would use them again, but others would not work so well with her teaching style. She suggested if I were to create or expand my booklet for the future to create activities that suited that particular teachers teaching style and one that were fairly easy to do with the class. The last suggestion she had for me was she had wished we had begun the project sooner and that we had had more time to conduct the project so that the results would be greater and we would have a better understanding of how successful the project was. Over all though, Ms. Figenshaw enjoyed my project and felt that I put a great deal of effort into it and it was effective.

Not only did I value Ms. Figenshaws' opinion but I also wanted to see how the class liked it. After talking to several students, I was pleased to know that they enjoyed

the activities very much. One girl in the class told me that she was going to go home and teach her sisters the yoga poses we learned. This made me happy that she is going to take what she learned from my capstone project and apply it to others aspects of her life. I am grateful to know that Ms. Figenshaws' third grade class enjoyed my capstone project as much as the teacher and I did.

Throughout my capstone project I have learned so many things that I never expected to learn. Before my project I had no idea how much stress and anxiety children held, and that I could create some great stress and anxiety releasing exercises that I will be able to carry on to classrooms that I teach in. This is a very valuable lesson for myself and for my future classrooms. One shocking finding that I found was not many teachers know how to address the topic of stress and anxiety among students. Ms. Figenshaw has been a teacher for many years and this is one of the first times that she really has tackled the issue and wishes that she had sooner. I have also learned how to create a DVD, and now I am an expert at it. I even have my mom wanting me to create a DVD for her of things she has filmed. I am pleased to say that this project has broadened my mind as well as Ms. Figenshaws' and enhanced my teaching abilities giving me tools to create a successful classroom!

I'm not quite sure how to end this project so I'm going to keep it short and simple. I had a wonderful time creating this project and was pleased to find out that my efforts were well worth my time. I am glad to say that my capstone helped one classroom in reducing stress and anxiety and I hope that my project will carry on throughout other classroom and help more students in the future. It all starts with one classroom but it does not have to stop there.

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