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## Waldorf-Inspired Yoga in the Classroom

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LS 400 Capstone Project:  
Waldorf-Inspired Yoga in the Classroom  
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## Abstract

The research topic consists finding and implementing a Waldorf-inspired lesson in a public classroom that relates to students interest while bringing in an alternative learning style to traditional curriculum. The participants included 27 second-grade students in a public elementary school located on the central coast of California. The researcher created a lesson plan based on the students interests: art and movement, and incorporated aspects of Waldorf curriculum into a yoga lesson. The students participated in doing various yoga poses, then were able to draw their favorite, explain how it made their body feel and where they felt each pose affect their body. The ultimate goal of the lesson was to connect the students to their bodies through self-health, along with encouraging their interest for art by incorporating their own drawings. The project itself connects to the researcher's ultimate goal of becoming a Waldorf Elementary school teacher.

*Keywords:* yoga, Waldorf, self-health

## Literature Review

Education is supposed to allow children to develop the way they think in a productive manner, expanding their knowledge as they go along. With public education as the main force of teaching our children, are we succeeding in this? We may be expanding their knowledge as the years go by through a narrow curriculum, but are we including and influencing free thinking, empathy, imagination, and teamwork? Many sources will argue that our public education system is failing in including these aspects in the curriculum. As a result, public education is failing our students. Luckily, there is a way we can alter aspects of public education to include an alternative method that can facilitate learning for our children in a creative way that includes using imagination, promoting health, and encourages empathy and teamwork. Waldorf-inspired curriculums have been known to promote such aspects of learning that our current public education lacks.

### **Overview of Waldorf Education**

According to Kane (2011), Waldorf education all started the early 1900s with philosopher/scientist Rudolf Steiner. It's main curricular goals are aligned with that of Steiner's interpretation of the human; spiritually, physically, and the way humans think and process information. Steiner's theories and intention for Waldorf education largely involved the spirituality of the child, argues that humans are natural spiritual beings (Oberski, 2011). Waldorf includes the spirituality of the child, taught along with imagination and empathy, and excludes any relation to religion or higher being, and focuses on the human developing spiritually as a being itself. According to Oberski (2011), "...we must teach children from an early age to think about their own thinking, to develop their metacognitive abilities. This view would certainly find support in the thinking skills literature, where there is evidence that teaching metacognition

improves test scores” (p. 13). Since its origins, it has grown on a global scale and about 1000 schools around the world are Waldorf (Oberski, 2011). According to Woods (2012), the main goals of holistic schooling methods, including Waldorf, incorporates two main groups; environment, and teamwork. The environment aspect includes encouraging students to grow and develop socially, environmentally, and environmentally within the curriculum, and the team work aspect focuses more heavily on including group work in the curriculum for students to grow and develop socially, and work well as a part of a team (Woods, 2012).

### **Waldorf Around the Globe**

Waldorf ideology and curriculums are not only being implemented in the U.S., but also in schools around the world. According to Rios (2017), research done on children ages 5 to 10 in urban areas of Portugal, have had quite the schooling experience. These schools that were specifically studied included Waldorf methods in their curriculums. The lessons emphasizes importance of environment and maintaining and creating sustainable living conditions, and have had an impact on the way the children think and view the environment (Rios, 2017). The children in these schools seem to have a greater knowledge of the environment and a better understanding of why it is important to nurture and protect it, due to the inclusion of the waldorf inspired lessons in their learning.

Not only is Waldorf ideology being implemented in places like Europe, but also in the African continent. According to Shank (2016), there are schools in Kenya that are also using Waldorf-infused curriculums in their elementary schools. Imagination and storytelling are heavily included in their lesson plans, especially in the government lessons. When observing these schools implement these Waldorf inspired lessons, it was found that the students learned about and understood more about their own micro cultures and relate it to society and other

cultures on a more global scale. It was also observed that the way teachers were educating their students through these Waldorf lesson plans carefully took into consideration and extensively analyzed the students developmental progress and their academic skills and abilities specifically in language and literacy to ensure the lesson is developmentally appropriate and the children truly benefit and fully understand the lesson (Shank, 2016).

Waldorf themes in schools spread even further around the globe to the U.K., where traditional schools are including Waldorf in innovative ways like teaching empathy and imagination (Waite, 2014). As described above, Steiner's philosophy on Waldorf education includes an emphasis on imagination, and its relation to teaching empathy. In these United Kingdom schools that were observed, the students were very engaged in the lessons being taught to them. It was also found that overall, the students were more engaged and responsive to the alternative, Waldorf lessons being taught to them and ultimately benefited them in ways traditionally schooling had not (Waite, 2014).

### **Waldorf in the Classroom**

Waldorf education includes a living knowledge, in which it is both informing and educating in aspects including nature and the human as itself. This allows students to be educated in every subject through experiencing, encouraging imagination and spiritual growth throughout the learning process and as a result, mold the students mind, body, and personality (Kane, 2011). For example, Waldorf lessons for teaching the letters of the alphabet include using fairy tales and artistic projects. Kane (2011) states, "Fairy tales provide metaphors for the creative ideas that give scope and meaning to humanity. Through the fairytale, the child is provided an imaginative foundation for weaving a coherent sense of who he is and what the world is like" (p.125). Math is generally taught through recognizing patterns and relationships of numbers, and more

specifically the multiplication tables are most typically taught physically (walking in rhythm and/or counting out times tables rhythmically). Another aspect of Waldorf education not included in public education, is the teaching of the Renaissance. Also according to Kane (2011), “The history of curriculum in the Waldorf schools is designed to introduce children to historical periods that reflect in their consciousness, their *Zeitgeist*, the developmental stages of the children themselves” (p. 128). The Renaissance is considered as the time in which humans began to use freedom included in their thinking in a way that was not previously done and is when art/artists began to rise. Waldorf schools teach this and most history lessons through drama to educate them on the past in an engaging way, but also enlighten them on tradition, culture, and inspire them to investigate the world in their own way through free thinking (Kane, 2011).

Through the creative ways of Waldorf education, we can see that Steiner’s intentions of teaching through first understanding oneself physically and spiritually leads to a whole different way of thinking that inspires freedom of oneself from traditional, conditional ways of learning. Using the arts to teach most subjects in education as Waldorf not only engages students more thoughtfully in what they are taught but also allows them to learn to think for themselves freely through the creativity of their curriculum. By using different methods of the arts in each subject, it also allows the students to become more creative as they develop not only influencing their way of thinking but also inspires interest in various aspects of the arts which public schools tend to cut, or have very limited time and resources for within its curriculum. For example, according to Wright (2013), there is a lack of teaching different viewpoints, cultures, and societies in schools as a part of the geography curriculum. Current geography curriculum lacks what Waldorf curriculum could provide to benefits the students learning of geography that include basic knowledge and using social skills to understand different cultures and groups (Wright, 2013).

## **Health Benefits**

According to Sobo (2015), there is a link between waldorf schooling and nurturing the health of its students on a much deeper level than public schooling does. Steiner, the philosopher who created Waldorf education, specifies and includes the health of children within the curriculum. Waldorf education categorizes the health of a child into three different classifications; head, lung, and limb, and then further classifies characteristics of the body into four different aspects; material/physical, life supporting, soul, and universal/spiritual (Sobo, 2015). These classifications of the the child's health and characteristics of their bodies work together to emphasis and help educate waldorf students on the importance of self health (Sobo, 2015).

## **Waldorf Methods vs. Public Schools**

According to Petrash (2010), the traditional way of schooling only enhances the use of the left side of the brain, and it's not adequately readying our students/children for future success in life. Petrash also notes that if public schooling focuses only on cognitive ability and skill enhancement, and argues it is only a matter of time before a computer can have the same capabilities more efficiently. Petrash goes on to state that helping students in art, empathy, storytelling, play, thinking, and finding meaning will better help set them up for success in the future, all qualities which are embodied in Waldorf curriculum (Petrash, 2010).

Another source, Souza (2012), gives a Waldorf teacher's perspective on students who come from public school; " Students come to me from public schools and they are filled with facts. At the most fundamental level, I discover they have a weak relationship to the world, because it does not come through their experience and their feeling life. Their imagination has not been given the time or the space to develop" (Souza, Pg. 52). In summary Waldorf teachers



include imagination and empathy in their curriculum because it helps their students develop more than just academic facts, they believe it connects their students to their life and world in a positive, healthy way in which they noted public schools do not offer in its standard curriculum (Souza, 2012).

### **Evaluation of Options**

After researching, I have discovered that Waldorf curriculum influences schools around the world in a variety of subjects including math, literature, health and art, and offers students aspects of education public schools do not. So, for my Capstone project, I will be implementing a Waldorf-inspired lesson plan into a 2nd grade public school classroom that focuses on either math or self health. The options of lesson plans to be implemented in a 2nd grade public school are as follows.

#### **Option One**

Option one includes a math lesson plan for 2nd graders that includes the Waldorf ideology of incorporating learning multiplication and skip counting through song and rhymes. The lesson would include a lesson of teaching the children songs and rhymes, that incorporate body movement (clapping, stomping, and jumping), while skip counting by 2's 4's, 6's, 8's, 10's, and 12's. The lesson would also include incorporating art into a worksheet on multiplication. The worksheet would be a times table for 2's, 4's, 6's, 8's, 10's and 12's, however it would be more of a drawing than a chart. The children would have a different sheet of paper for each different times table, each of which would be a flower (of different colors for each drawing/times table). The center of the flower, would start with the first number, either 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, or 12, and have two sets of petals. The first set would include the numbers 1 through 12, and the second set of petals (behind the first set numbered 1 through 12), would be the product of the

number in the center and the first set. For example, if 2 was in the center, the first petal in the first row would say 1, and in the second row of petals behind the 1 would be 2 (for  $2 \times 1 = 2$ ), then behind the 2 in the first row of petals, the second row would say 4 (for  $2 \times 2 = 4$ ), and so on and so forth until the first set of petals is numbered until 12 and the second set of petals would go until the product of each number in the center was multiplied up to 12 from the first set of petals. This lesson teaches children math by recognizing relationships between numbers and recognizing patterns and incorporates art and imagination into math in a creative Waldorf way which includes their ideology of incorporating imagination, music, rhythm, rhyme, and art into academic activities.

### **Option Two**

Option two consists of incorporating a lesson plan that includes movement and self health and awareness and consciousness of the body which is included often in Waldorf curriculums. The lesson would include a yoga session in the classroom where the children would first be shown various yoga moves that require the movement and use of many different muscles throughout the body. Then, after being shown the various yoga positions, each student would find a safe space in the classroom. Once in a safe space with plenty of room for themselves to move, the children will start by taking 3 deep breaths in a standing position. The teacher will lead in the front of the class, and the students will follow by doing the various yoga movements shown by the teacher. During each movement, the students will hold each pose for at least 15 seconds, while taking deep breaths. Afterwards, the teacher will discuss with the children which poses were their favorite, and how each pose made their body feel. The teacher will then conclude with a brief explanation on how yoga is beneficial for self health and good for their bodies.

### **Option 3**

Option three incorporates the recognition of patterns between numbers, and helps improve the students visual memory skills. This math lesson would start by the children each having a piece of blank, white paper. Then, they would receive a variety of colored pencils/crayons. At the front of the class on the board, the teacher would lead in first creating the background on their paper, which would consist of making a rainbow using each different colored pencil. After the children have successfully done this, the teacher would then use a black marker to create a pattern using numbers in a row. The pattern will consist of a variety of numbers that go up a certain number each time, for example if the teacher starts with 2, the next number would be 4, then 6, then 8, then 10, then 12 until one row was filled across the paper (leaving space for more patterns below). The teacher would then give the students 15 seconds to look at the pattern then cover it with a piece of paper. The students would then have to re create the pattern on their own paper with pencil. After each student was finished, the teacher would reveal the pattern she created and the students would compare it to their patterns and correct if necessary. The students will then be asked to make a connection between the numbers, that is, recognize the pattern (each number increased by multiples of 2). Each time the pattern would get bigger in regards to numbers, for example up to multiples of 12 (12, 24, 36, 48, 60, 72, etc.). This lesson would allow for students to improve their visual memory skills and recognition of patterns and relationships between numbers while incorporating art.

### **Project**

Through extensive research, the researcher has found that Waldorf schooling and ideals have shown to be successful in various schools around the globe including Portugal, Kenya, and the United Kingdom, all of which incorporating the main aspects of Waldorf curriculum and

ideology into their schools (Rios, 2017; Shank, 2016; Waite, 2014). According to Rios (2017), including Waldorf lessons about the environment (maintaining/creating sustainable living), gave students a better understanding of their environment, and the importance of it. Incorporating Waldorf inspired ideals of storytelling and imagination in a Kenya school taught students a better understanding of their very own micro cultures and connections to society and cultures on a global scale (Shank, 2016). Waldorf ideals included in U.K. schooling also including imagination and empathy seemed to engage the students more than traditional methods and it was found that the students were more responsive to the Waldorf inspired lessons (Waite, 2014). Furthermore, according to Petrash (2010), teaching through art, storytelling, play, thinking, finding meaning, and empathy (Waldorf ideals) better aids in setting up children for success in their futures more than public schooling as public school methods only enhance the left side of the brain. Another source, found that students from public schools tend to be full of facts, with a lack of knowledge of their world because their schooling has not nurtured their learning process through imagination and empathy as Waldorf does (Souza, 2012). Souza (2012), also states that through Waldorf lessons, students are much more connected to their own lives and the world, creating a positive, healthy connection within the student and the world around them.

After spending two weeks in the classroom, it became clear to the researcher the students in this 2nd grade public classroom were very interested in two themes: movement and art. As stated in the Literature review, Waldorf education focuses on students being able to connect students with their spirituality and the natural world around them (Oberski, 2011). Also, according to Kane (2011), Waldorf education encourages self-spiritual growth and imagination in the students within the learning process, which ultimately helps shape the students body, mind, and personality. Furthermore, Sobo (2015) states that connecting characteristics of the

body to a child's health help to emphasize the importance of self-health. Keeping this research in mind, the researcher created a lesson plan that would connect the student's interests', which mainly consists of art and movement, with the Waldorf ideology stated above by sources from the Literature review. The researcher will now explain the details of the lesson plan design, implementation, and evaluation of the end result of the lesson plan.

## **Design**

Public schooling is the main institution for which the United States enforces education throughout the nation. With a variety of national and state standards, teachers within their districts are expected to uphold these standards by following what is usually a strict curriculum, and giving their students standardized tests that test their knowledge and skills as they through elementary school, middle school, and high school. Somewhere within the current system, there are faults which do not foster education and the learning process for our students. This results in some of them falling through the cracks, or ultimately failing. Luckily, there are alternative, more innovative ways of educating our children that encourage and include aspects that have not previously been made priorities or promoted in public schooling. One of these methods includes the theories and ideologies early philosopher, Steiner, who imposes unique approaches as to how schooling should be and what it should include. Using his innovative method of educating students through imagination, Steiner created the Waldorf curriculum. It is this curriculum that has been chosen to bring into a local public school for the capstone project, to see how it affects, changes, and/or benefits the learning process for children in public schools.

The school selected for the Capstone Project is located in a coastal city that serves the elementary age population of the students who reside within the city's community. It is a public elementary school for grades TK-5, and upholds Common Core State Standards. The school's

stated mission includes that one of their main goals is to educate the students and encourage a love for learning along with encouraging and facilitating development of characteristics that lead to being good citizens and above all, helps them lead happy, long lives. In order to successfully provide this for their students, the school also states that they will always provide necessary materials and methods, along with time for all of their students to ensure their academic growth as they develop.

All of their staffing, are expected to maintain a constructive, yet positive circumstance for their students and other staff. The staff is also prized in being able to maintain professionalism while respecting opposing opinions, and promoting collaboration. Most important, one of the highlighted aspects of this coastal school is a statement expressing that one must always treat others as you expect/wish to be treated. In regards to parents, the school makes a conscious effort to work side by side with parents. It is stated that they always welcome parents comments and concerns openly, and always maintain an honest and open form of two way communication with them. It is also noted that a cooperative and productive relationship with the students' parents ensures a beneficial education for all students, furthermore, one promoting an atmosphere of honesty and openness among adults and students. Combining all the components the school states to uphold above about their values, and education for their students, the school also makes a statement relating to the importance of the community. The school states that they strive to provide for the local and global community, as it benefits their students and school in a multitude of ways, including setting an example as role models to students to serve their community.

More specifically, within this coastal elementary school, the Capstone project took place in Mrs. Otter's (pseudonym given to protect identity of the teacher) second grade classroom. Mrs. Otter has been teaching at this coastal school for many years, and has even received awards

based on her excellent service to her students in the time she has worked for the coastal school district. Mrs. Otter has not always only taught second grade, but she has primarily stayed teaching first and second grade in her long time employment with this coastal school district. Although Mrs. Otter has worked for this district for many years, which is a public school that therefore follows the public school curriculum to meet national and state standards, she is familiar with alternative and innovative methods of teaching, including Waldorf, and was open to adapting such ideals in her classroom.

The schools ideals and main goal for educating children while teaching them to be good citizens that serve their community, value honesty, communication and teamwork/collaboration aligns very closely with the Capstone project, as Waldorf infused curriculums and lesson plans have similar ideals in their ideology. Although there are similarities in the schools values with Waldorf pedagogy, it is still mainstream enough to allow for more alternative lessons to be implemented in place of a typical, traditional public education curriculum. Also, the highly recommended teacher whose classroom was selected specifically to implement the project in, is familiar with Waldorf methods and welcomed them into her second grade classroom. It is for these reasons that this particular coastal region public elementary school was chosen for the capstone project, which consisted of implementing a Waldorf-inspired and themed lesson plan into a public second grade classroom.

The capstone project of implementing a Waldorf-inspired lesson in a public school was chosen in hopes to bring in more innovative methods of teaching different subjects required in public schools. The overall goal of the project was to implement a lesson based off of Waldorf ideals that bring in learning experiences and educate students in a way that encourage imagination, free thinking, and empathy. Also included in Waldorf methods, learning to work

well with peers and working closely in a team setting is highly valued and beneficial for social skills needed later in life. There are aspects of public education that are not working and lessons that are missing that lack the inclusion of teaching children how to grow and develop in a way that encourages children to think empathetically and freely. So, after the implementation of a waldorf inspired lesson into a second grade public education classroom, hopefully the children will have experienced learning in a way public education has never taught them before. If the end result is as described, the capstone project will have successfully aided in altering public education in a way that allows for children to learn in a more creative way. Furthermore, the successfulness of the project will in turn serve the community in an entirely new way by teaching the children of this coastal community in a more innovative way that can better set them up for success as they grow and develop and move forward into higher grade levels, and into adulthood.

The successfulness of the lesson plan implementation would just begin here, as it is used and proven to be beneficial in one public elementary school, it can then potentially be added to multiple public schools in all areas. Every public school has different issues (resources, lack thereof, strict curriculum that doesn't always work for all students) which makes state and national standards challenging to meet in a variety of different ways. The diverseness and variety of different lessons/curriculum ideas waldorf offers allows for it to work in different ways and lessons based on the school and its accessibility to resources, etc. Also, adding these lessons could help teachers to analyze and adapt lesson plans in their individual classrooms to see what works best for their students, fostering and developing their learning abilities in the best way possible. This would allow for a slow change in the way public education works, and would hopefully help aid in changing the ways that are currently failing our students in the public schooling system. Ultimately, it would change the way educators view teaching and change the



way students learn and view education in a way that always encourages positive learning in a unique setting while promoting creativity, togetherness, and self-health.

Incorporating the aspects included in this coastal public school's curriculum, goals, and values described above along with Waldorf ideals of promoting self-health, movement, and art within a lesson is the basis for the designed lesson that was implemented into Mrs. Otter's 2nd grade public classroom. The lesson incorporated these ideas through teaching various yoga poses related to various different beings (mainly plants and animals) within the world's vast and diverse environment, to encourage self-health and connection through different body movements, imagination, and concluded with reflection including artwork by the students. The researcher will now describe the implemented lesson in detail next.

### **Implementation**

The lesson plan that was implemented took a total of two class sessions. The first day included an introduction to the yoga poses. The researcher began the lesson by speaking to the students at the front of the classroom while they sat at their desks and listened while the researcher explained that yoga is meant to relax your body and each different yoga pose helps a different part of your body by stretching and relaxing certain areas and muscles. The researcher then asked the students to leave their desks, and find a comfortable area in the classroom where they had at least an arms length apart from another student. Then, the researcher led with a deep breathing exercise, standing near the group of students. The breathing exercise was led by the researcher first explaining that taking a deep breath in would be referred to as "smelling the flowers," and releasing the breath would be described as "blowing bubbles," the students to smell the flowers. All standing in a safe, comfortable space, the researcher led five deep breaths by repeating "smell your flowers....blow your bubbles." After five deep breaths led this way, the

researcher then began showing each yoga pose on the white screen at the head of the class. One at a time, the students briefly attempted each pose with the researcher, with a total of three deep breaths, which took about 15-20 seconds for each pose. As they were doing each pose the researcher talked in a very soft tone, almost a whisper and told students to think about how each pose made their body and mind feel. After each pose, the researcher asked some of the students to share where they felt the pose really affect their body. The first day the yoga lesson was implemented took about 25 minutes total, as it was only meant to introduce the students to yoga.

The second day the lesson was implemented, the students started at their desks again as the researcher added a few things to the lesson to explain to the students. The researcher began by explaining the lesson would start with deep breathing again (five deep breaths standing), and that this time, the students would attempt to add a few more deep breaths while holding each pose, making the total hold time for each pose 25-30 seconds each. The researcher then explained that after, the students would reflect on their yoga experience by drawing their favorite pose they did that day, and answer the questions regarding how it made their body feel and where they felt it. After explaining the entirety of the lesson, the researcher asked the students to find a safe/comfortable space in the classroom, arms length apart from other classmates, and began five deep breaths (“smell the flowers...blow the bubbles”). Then, one at a time, the researcher put each yoga pose displayed on the whiteboard, where the students then attempted each pose for 5-10 seconds longer (some students held poses longer than others). In Photo #1 below, the students attempting Cobra pose.



Photo 1 (Brooke Street, 2019).

As stated before, some of the students were able to hold certain poses longer than others. Boat pose was a particularly hard pose for some of the students to hold, in Photo #2 below, some students are able to hold the pose with their legs up in the air in the correct position while others have their legs on the floor.



Photo #2 (Brooke Street, 2019).

After completing the yoga portion of the lesson the researcher asked the students to return to their desk and get out their colored pencils/crayons. Then, at the front of the class, the researcher showed the reflection paper that had a box, where she explained to the students this is where they would draw their favorite pose, and then read the questions below, which asked, “How did it make your body feel? Where did you feel it in your body?” The researcher then displayed the various poses the students participated in that day on the white screen so they could

pick their favorite, each depicted with the name of the pose labeled beneath them. The students were given no guidelines on how to depict their art, except for including the name of the pose and ensure that however they chose to draw it, it clearly showed the pose. For this section of the lesson, the student's interest in art really showed as each student took great artistic liberty and as shown in Photo #3 below some even used imagination in their drawings.

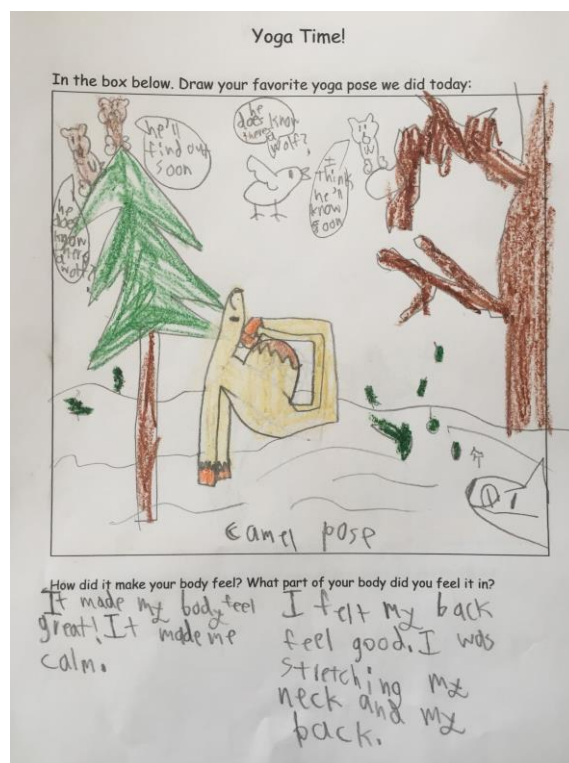


Photo #3 (Brooke Street, 2019).

After the researcher then handed out the reflection sheet to each student, the students then took about 15 minutes at their desks to draw their poses and answer the two questions that followed about how the each pose made their body feel and where they felt it. Some students took great detail in explaining how it made their body feel through their art work and in the questions, an example of a student who felt pain is shown below in Photo #4. The researcher then collected the reflection sheets, with the total lesson time coming out to approximately 45 minutes.

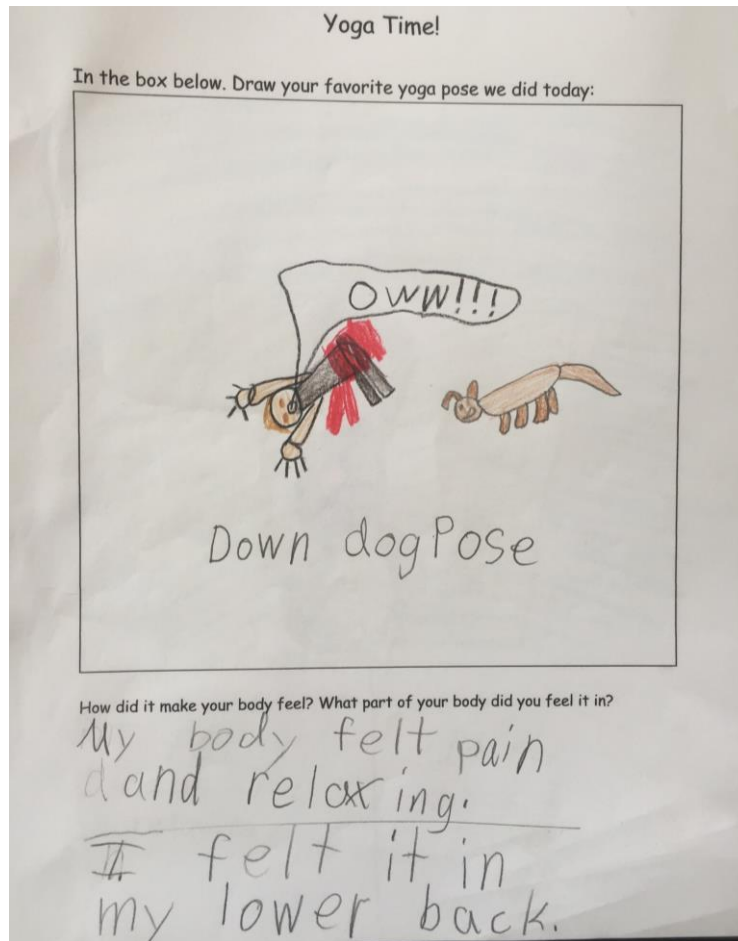


Photo #4 (Brooke Street, 2019).

## Evaluation

Designing and implementing a Waldorf-inspired lesson plan was difficult, as the Waldorf curriculum varies so differently from that of a public school, the researchers options were limited on a lesson implementation that would be effective and alternative. Because self-health/connection and movement is a big part of Waldorf curriculum, creating a yoga lesson plan was a way to incorporate Waldorf ideas without altering the public curriculum Mrs. Otter's class followed while including the students' main interest (art and movement). The students were very engaged in the yoga activity, and their excitement was clearly shown verbally and physically

when the researcher came back a second time to do yoga with the students. The project was a success, as every student participated both class sessions and mostly had positive feedback, as well as detailed depictions on their reflection sheets. A few students did not like the lesson and had some critical comments.

### **Reflection**

The information found in the literature review combined with the interests of the second-grade students, led the researcher to create and implement a lesson plan connecting some main ideas of Waldorf education into a public 2nd grade classroom. These ideals were related directly to promoting self-health through relaxation, and connection to oneself through one's environment. The students' interests: art and movement were also included producing a Waldorf-inspired yoga lesson including two yoga sessions, and a reflection worksheet centered around the student's feelings about yoga. The reflection section also allowed the students to showcase their creativity and imagination through their artwork of depicting specific poses. Despite a few limitations and challenges, overall, the project seemed to be a success. The researcher will give more detail about the lesson below.

### **Discussion**

Through the literature review, the researcher found that Waldorf education includes health, connecting with the environment and oneself as a very important aspect of its curriculum. After spending time in the classroom, the researcher also noted the students' serious interest for art and movement. Combining research from the literature review and the students' interests, the researcher created a yoga lesson, hoping to keep students engaged, and help them to learn in new, alternative ways relating to Waldorf curriculum. From the start of the lesson to the end the children showed that they were engaged and interested as there was full participation from each

student. Waldorf education emphasis on students building a relationship with the world, and in order to do this, Waldorf curriculum first teaches students to connect with themselves and be aware of their bodies and health. The yoga lesson implemented clearly showed this to be the end result for the students, as they showed excitement for the lesson each time and participated in each pose and noted in their reflections that they felt each pose affect different areas of their body.

The lesson also showed the implications of Waldorf curriculum through the reflection sheet as it allowed students to be creative and show what they learned through their artistic imagination, as many of them drew themselves as animals reflecting the name of each pose, and created backgrounds and habitats for the depicted pose. Most students enjoyed the lesson, and although there were no verbal or facial expressions of discontent for the lesson, some students noted in their reflection that a certain pose hurt them or did not feel good. However, even for those students the Waldorf implications of the lesson appeared as they described these feelings through their art, and depicted where they felt it and how it felt, showing their connection with their body.

Although the chosen lesson plan was successful, the researcher did run into a limitation regarding curriculum. Initially, the researcher had plans to adapt main (core) lesson curricula from Waldorf ideology related to math. The Waldorf curriculum, however, varies so differently from that of a public school, the researcher was turned down every lesson plan by the teacher except for yoga. The researcher thought of implementing a Waldorf multiplication lesson, however the public school teacher noted they do not learn multiplication in second-grade in the public school system. Secondly, the researcher thought of implementing a lesson involving skip counting, which correlated with the public second-grade curriculum. This required, however,



different materials then offered in a public school but typically seen in a Waldorf school. The researcher calculated the cost and could not afford to purchase all these materials for the students out of pocket. This ultimately led the researcher to go with the most cost effective lesson, still promoting the self-health/connection aspect of Waldorf through yoga and art.

### **Recommendations**

In order to improve upon the current Capstone project, in the future, it is recommended to further the research aspect of the project (the literature review) and ensure all the sources are critically related to a specific aspect of Waldorf education. Although the researcher had an adequate amount of resources for the Capstone requirement, they all covered different aspects of Waldorf education, and although they showed multiple evidence of Waldorf education working in different schools across the globe, it was not properly “funneled” into a narrow subject which resulted in the project. This made it difficult for the researcher to connect all the sources throughout the paper to the Capstone project.

Another recommendation, is to start the lesson well in advance. Although spending two weeks in the classroom prior to starting the project was an adequate amount of time along, the project might have had a better more productive result if the researcher started earlier and did the lesson over the span of a month instead of two class sessions. Waldorf curriculum and lesson plans usually span and show results over a long period of time and so the researcher might have produced more solid results with a longer time span of the pursuing the project.

### **Building on the Capstone**

The researcher has a profound interest in Waldorf education. Through the Capstone project, the researcher was able to expand her knowledge of Waldorf ideology and curriculum, and see how it works in classrooms across the globe through research and also implement

Waldorf ideals in a local public school herself. As a future teacher, the researcher wishes to pursue her future teaching career as a Waldorf educator, as she closely aligns her teaching values with that of Waldorf education, as learned through the research and implementation of the Capstone project. The researcher may do this by pursuing further educational training to become a certified Waldorf teacher, as required by many Waldorf schools and ensures the proper knowledge to teach such ideals in the classroom. If ever in a public school setting, the researcher still wishes to implement Waldorf ideals into a public curriculum as she did for her Capstone, however continuously finding new ways and curricular areas she can implement these ideals in a public classroom, while keeping intact with the public schools mission, values and goals. The researcher can pursue this by further research on implementing Waldorf ideals in the public classroom, and attending workshops with an emphasis on Waldorf lessons and curriculum.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the Capstone project required the researcher to conduct an excessive amount of researcher to properly implement the main purpose of the project in a classroom, and was a learning experience for the researcher. The Capstone project centers around incorporating Waldorf methods/lessons into a public school classroom. The researcher successfully did this by researching Waldorf ideology and the different aspects that create a Waldorf curriculum, along with research on schools that use this methodology throughout the world in traditional education settings. The researcher found that these schools using the ideology around the world are successful in teaching their students in new innovative and engaging ways. As a result the researcher attempted this in a local public school setting for herself as her Capstone project lesson implementation.

After conducting the extensive research, the researcher spent time in Mrs. Otter's public second-grade class, where she learned that the children were very interested in art and movement. Taking into consideration the school values, the teachers' values, and the students' interests, the researcher then developed a Waldorf-inspired curriculum based on these factors. With a few limitations and challenges, the researcher was able to successfully implement a yoga lesson plan incorporating art that the students found interesting and were fully engaged. The researcher was able to get the students to connect to themselves through self-health (yoga) and imagination (art). The researcher also learned a lot through this process, finding a deeper connection to Waldorf methodology and a greater commitment to spread its ideals in traditional educational settings.

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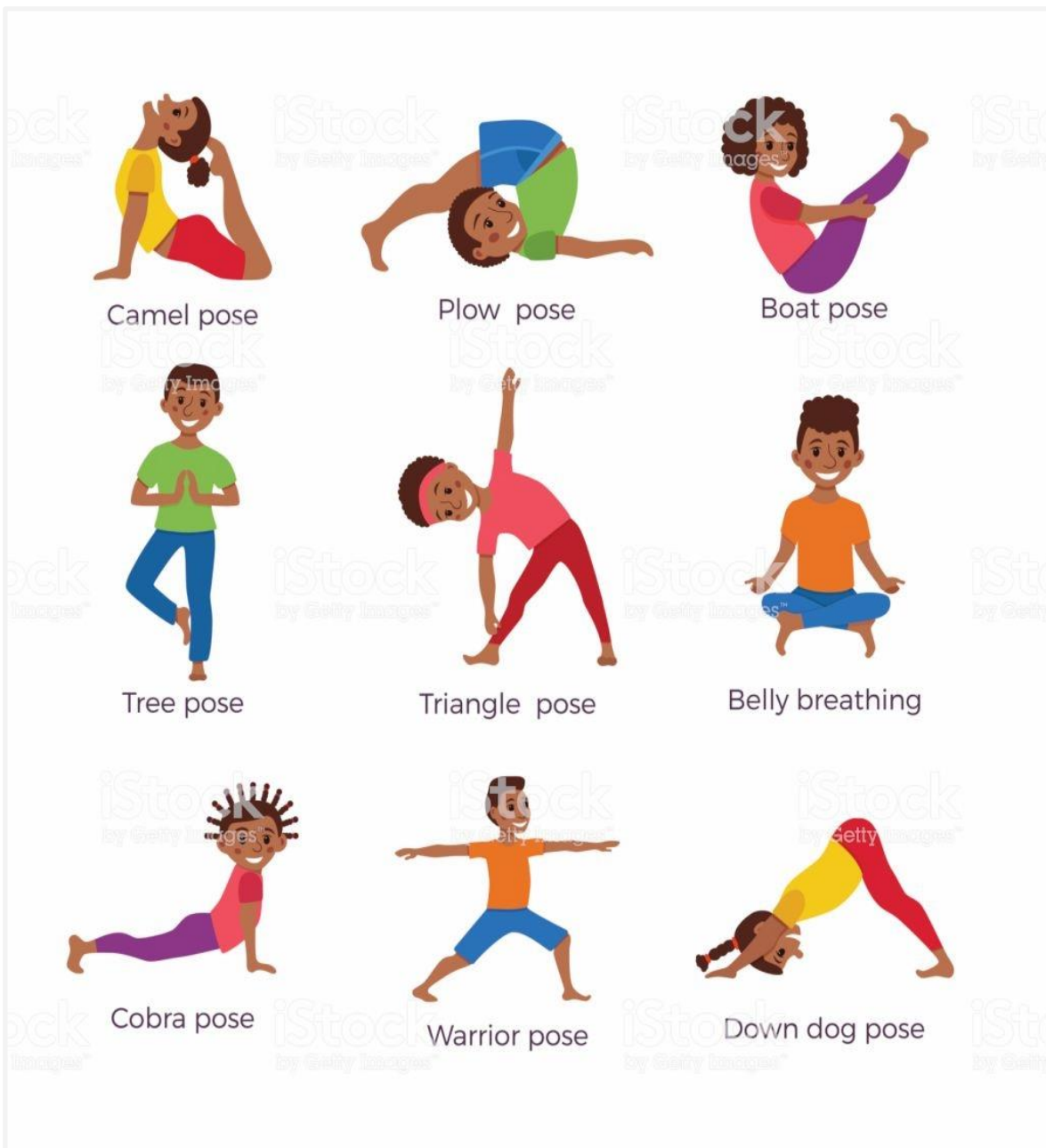
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## Appendices

<b>5-E Lesson Plan: Yoga Time!</b> 2nd	<b>Grade:</b>
<b>Learning Objective:</b> Students will connect to the natural world through different poses related a variety living things.	
<b>Materials:</b> Colored pencils/crayons (for reflection sheet)	
<b>Time:</b> 25-45 mins total	
<p><b>1. Engage:</b> The teacher will engage the students by applying their interests (movement and art) to a yoga lesson. The teacher will do this by showing the students animated images of various yoga poses that have pose names related to different aspects of the world’s diverse environment (animals and plants etc.). The teacher will also engage the students by allowing them to remove themselves from their desks, and find a safe/comfortable space in the classroom where they can comfortably move their bodies into various sitting and standing positions. Before doing each yoga pose, the teacher will start with a deep breathing exercise, to ease students into the yoga lesson by instructing them to “smell their flowers” (take a deep breath in), and “blow the bubbles” (releasing the deep breath out). After doing yoga, the students will then be able to incorporate their interest for art by drawing one of the poses.</p>	
<p><b>2. Explore:</b> The teacher will do five deep breaths (smell the flowers...blow the bubbles) with the students. Then, the teacher will display each yoga pose one by one on the whiteboard at the front of the classroom. Each time a yoga pose is displayed, the teacher will instruct students to take three deep breaths (smell the flowers...blow the bubbles) for each pose. After introducing the yoga poses in one class period, the teacher will do each pose with the students again on another class day, doing a total of five deep breaths for each pose.</p>	
<p><b>3. Explain:</b> During the first and second yoga session, the teacher will ask the students during each pose (in a soft relaxing/calming tone), to think about how each pose makes their body feel. After giving the students a couple deep breaths in each pose to reflect on this, the teacher will then ask the students where they feel each pose affecting their body. After completing each pose in the first session, the teacher will explain to the students that they feel each pose in certain areas of their bodies because each pose stretches different parts of their bodies. To conclude, the teacher will ask the students how the deep breaths made them feel, with the ultimate goal of helping connect to their bodies through conscious breaths.</p>	
<p><b>4. Extend:</b> During the second yoga session, students will be asked after each pose where they feel the pose in their body. The students will then be asked to verbally asses why they feel the pose affects the various areas of their bodies. The students will be asked this after every pose, with the ultimate goal of having the students recognize that each yoga pose stretches different areas of the body. Students will identify different areas of</p>	

their body, and become aware of how different yoga poses stretches each area differently. As a result, students will feel connected to their bodies and aware of what feels good ultimately promoting self-health within the body through yoga.

- 5. Evaluation:** After completing the two yoga sessions as a class, the students will be asked to return to their desks, and they will be instructed to pull out their colored pencils/crayons. The teacher will then give each student a reflection sheet, which will consist of written instructions that tell the students to draw their favorite yoga pose they did during the yoga sessions, followed by a space to draw, and then followed by two questions that ask how the chosen pose made their body feel, and where they felt it. While the students draw their favorite pose and answer the reflection questions, the teacher will visually display each of the yoga positions done that day with corresponding pose names to help the students properly name and draw their chosen pose. The students will have 15-20 minutes to complete the reflection sheet (drawing and answering the questions). The students will have artistic freedom to depict the pose however they like, as long as the proper pose name is included and the position of the pose is clearly depicted.



Camel pose

Plow pose

Boat pose

Tree pose

Triangle pose

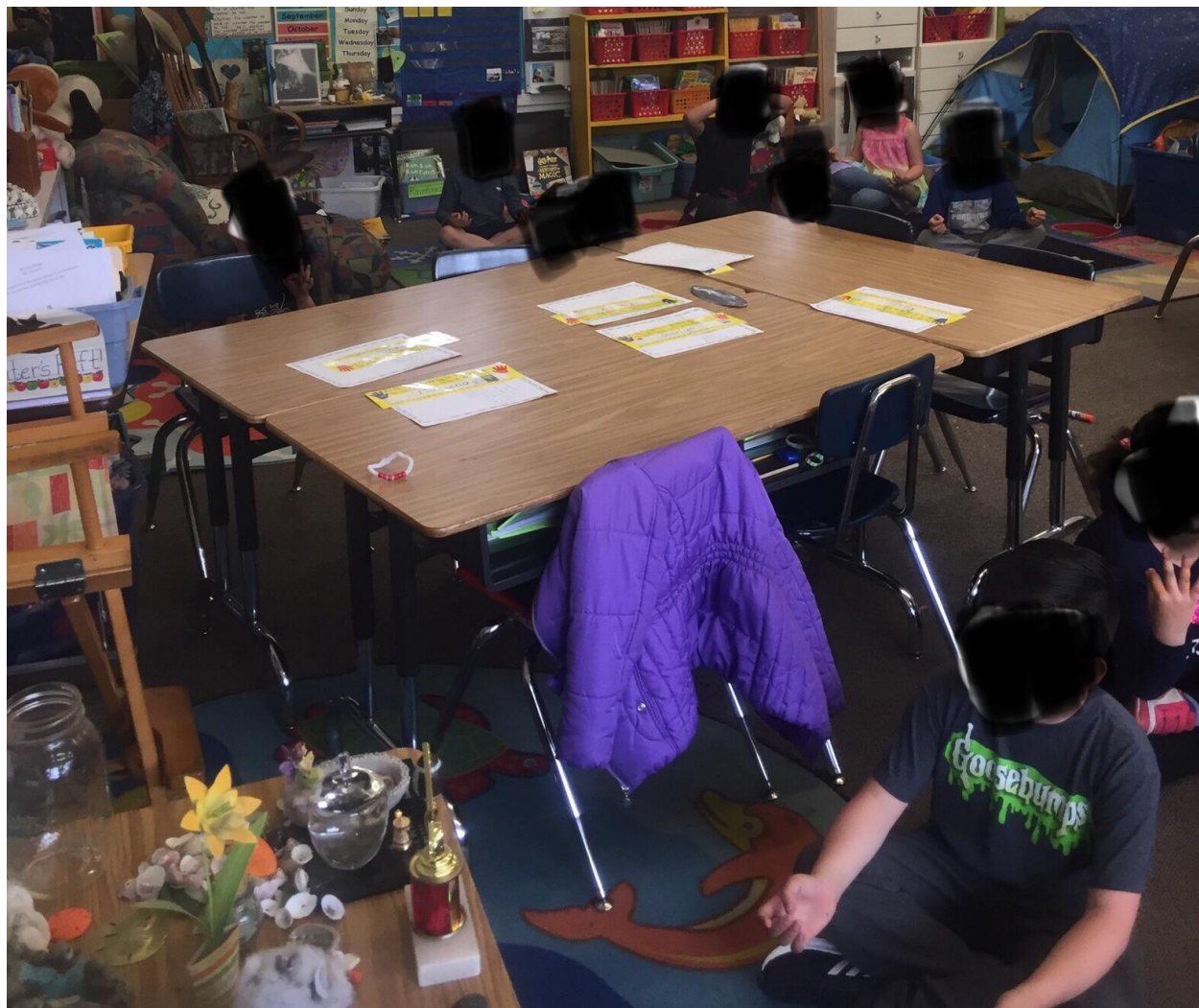
Belly breathing

Cobra pose

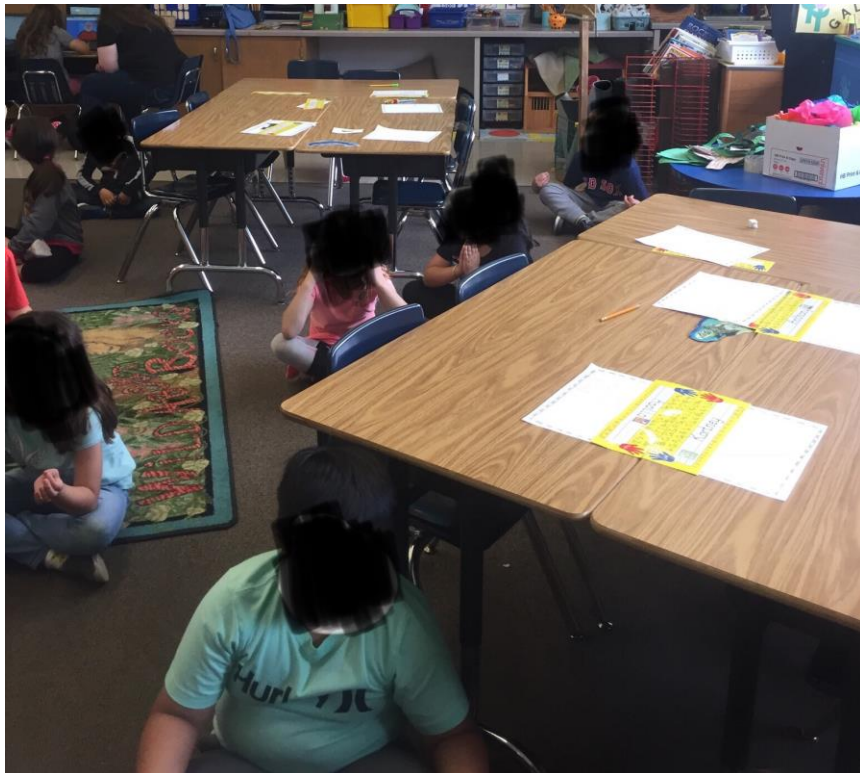
Warrior pose

Down dog pose



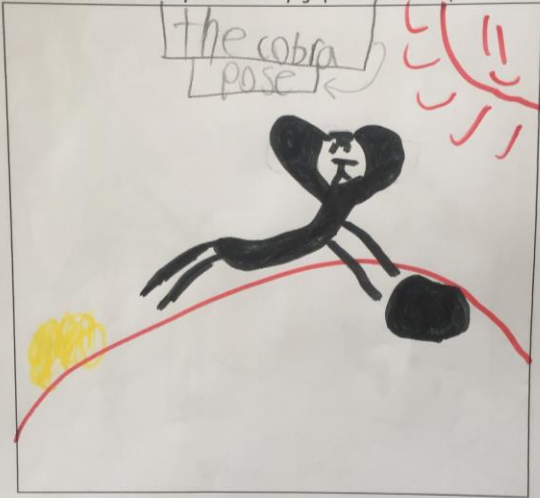






### Yoga Time!

In the box below. Draw your favorite yoga pose we did today:

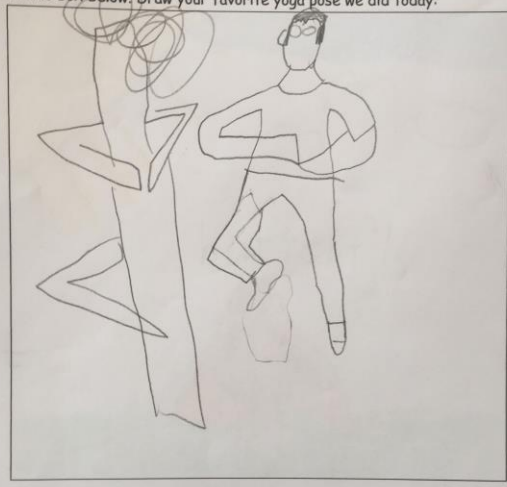


How did it make your body feel? What part of your body did you feel it in?

my body felt calm!  
it felt it on my chest!

### Yoga Time!

In the box below. Draw your favorite yoga pose we did today:

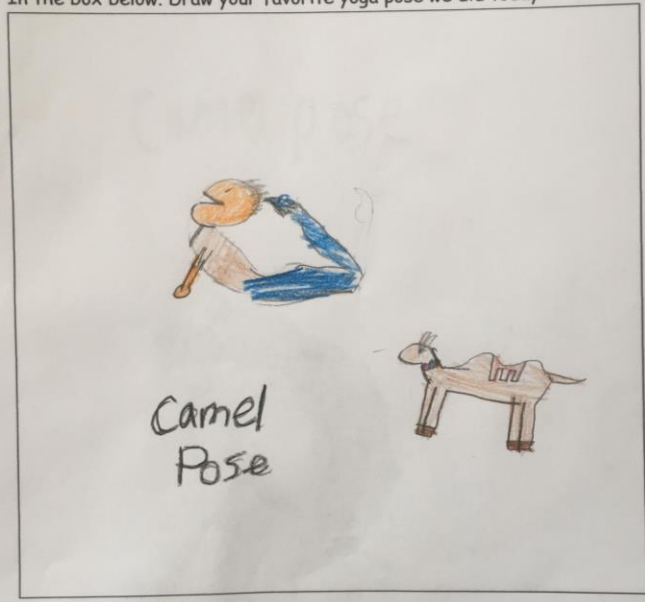


How did it make your body feel? What part of your body did you feel it in?

I felt relaxed, I felt  
and a little pressure, and on my  
and on my neck, and my back.  
strong on my arms,

Yoga Time!

In the box below. Draw your favorite yoga pose we did today:



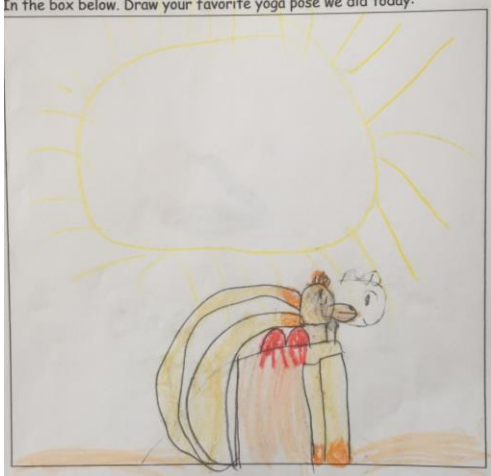
Camel Pose

How did it make your body feel? What part of your body did you feel it in?

my legs, felt stretched. It felt like it was in my legs.

Yoga Time!

In the box below. Draw your favorite yoga pose we did today:



How did it make your body feel? What part of your body did you feel it in?

- 1) I felt good,
- 2) It felt good on my back.

## Yoga Time!

In the box below. Draw your favorite yoga pose we did today:

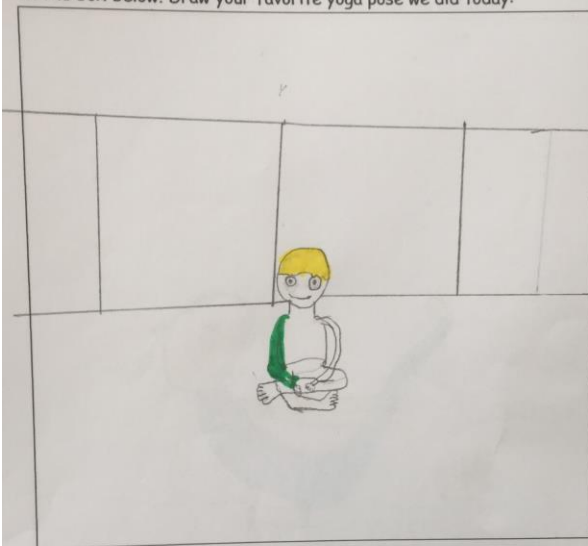


How did it make your body feel? What part of your body did you feel it in?

It made me feel relaxing.  
When I did the Tree  
Pose my arms and legs  
were calm.

## Yoga Time!

In the box below. Draw your favorite yoga pose we did today:



How did it make your body feel? What part of your body did you feel it in?

to be honest I didn't like any of them. They  
all hurt my body and now I have a headache!  
The only one that didn't hurt was belly breathing

### Yoga Time!

In the box below. Draw your favorite yoga pose we did today:



How did it make your body feel? What part of your body did you feel it in?

I felt a stretch. I also felt pain in the next yoga pose. I really liked the camel pose.

Yoga Time!

In the box below. Draw your favorite yoga pose we did today:



Boat pose

How did it make your body feel? What part of your body did you feel it in?

1. I feel calm 2. My legs feel tingly

Yoga Time!

In the box below. Draw your favorite yoga pose we did today:



How did it make your body feel? What part of your body did you feel it in?

① It made my body feel relaxed  
② It also made my body feel calm!



### Yoga Time!

In the box below. Draw your favorite yoga pose we did today:



How did it make your body feel? What part of your body did you feel it in?

when I did it kind of hurt.

## Yoga Time!

In the box below. Draw your favorite yoga pose we did today:



How did it make your body feel? What part of your body did you feel it in?

I felt like  
calm and  
relaxed,

In my  
back I  
felt a  
snap.