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Educating Fourth Graders On The Benefits of Practicing Yoga

Anahi Castaneda Pablo

A Capstone project for the Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Family Studies

Educating Fourth Graders On The Benefits of Practicing Yoga

Introduction

Many elementary school age students have not yet developed sufficient strategies for stress management, and particularly may be unaware of the benefits of yoga. Because they do not have well-developed strategies, they are more vulnerable to negative effects of stress such as poor behavior problems or low school performance. Yoga may help these children better manage stress. Therefore, I created a three-day lesson for fourth graders at Virginia Rocca Barton Elementary School in Salinas, California.

Needs Statement

Many young students are being surrounded by electronic media and are growing up in a globalized world, which is causing them stress. Stress is being defined as when a person ‘has a weakness’, ‘reach a breaking point’, ‘break down’ and involve a rupture in the person’s competence to join in the world (Robson & Cook, 1995). The effect of stress in young children is being considered a phenomenon where it is progressively brought to public notice. Some stressors that are affecting children’s life are: schooling, bereavement and abuse, parental divorce, as well as trauma of those going through eating disorders (Robson & Cook, 1995). Everyone including children need some space and time in order for them to rethink their actions and reform.

When yoga is being practiced it is considered a form of meditation since our mind and body are being fully concentrated on the breathing techniques and yoga positions (Nivedha, 2019). Researchers have identified that practicing yoga at an early age has led the development of a relaxed, calm and confident adult (Nivedha, 2019).

A prerequisite for children to be psychologically ready for learning they must have a calm and present state of mind (Ebert, 2012). Yoga can provide a way to achieve this state of mind by helping reduce stress and to have a better capacity to focus and keep attention for learning. A report of a published paper mentioned that students who participated in yoga lessons enhanced their fatigue, anger control and decreased negative effects (Ebert, 2012). Yoga is a perfect example of mindful practices technique that allows students to handle perceived stress, reduce behavior problems and will increase academic achievements.

Stress Management

Higher stress levels can cause elementary students to have difficulties with high levels of self-esteem, low academic performance and behavioral issues during school time. (Nivedha, 2019). There are many elementary students who suffer from stress and they are not aware of how to cope with these stressors. According to (Sparks, 2017) many secondary students can respond more like adults, with sleep problems or irritability but when it comes to elementary students, children tend to shut down. In the same research, there was an example of a fourth grade student who started crying and wouldn't work on a test. Students feel overwhelmed and don't know how to deal with it (Sparks, 2017).

Stress can be a problem to anyone, so when a person starts to practice yoga it can benefit their mental, physical development and calm their mind. By practicing a yoga breathing technique, people can help reduce blood pressure and stress. (Nivedha, 2019). Substantially, various studies have found that yoga enhances the capacity to improve the ability of young children to handle psychosocial stressors. One of the studies was the examination of effects on yoga in comparison to a physical education class on physiological response where it included

blood pressure and heart rate to trace stressor tasks. Usually, the results of this study have demonstrated that yoga has become better for children to manage psychosocial stressors (Hagins, Haden, & Daly 2013). Precisely, children who have been in these controlled studies have indicated improvement with the practice of yoga on stress, anxiety, anger, depression and negative affect. (Hagins, Haden, & Daly 2013).

Low Academic Performance

Academic achievement is the ability or degree of competence in school duty, occasionally assets by standardized tests that are shown in grades depending on the pupils' performance (Kauts & Sharma, 2009). Several studies like the "A Randomized Controlled Trial on the Effects of Yoga on Stress Reactivity in 6th Grade Students" have found that having a low or balanced level of stress can interfere with task performance. Just like the study above and several more have acknowledged that even low or moderate stress levels can inhibit with task performance. Cognitive stress reactions result in the incompetence to concentrate (Kauts & Sharma, 2009).

Excessive stress alters overall academic performance negatively, is harmful to academic performance and may lead to dropping out. Having high levels of stress can influence the inability to focus attention (hypervigilance) and it can also reduce grade point average (GPA), interferes with the effective use of our skills, and thus, affects negatively on the performance (Kauts & Sharma, 2009). This shows that stress problems can lead students to have difficult times when they are at school trying to achieve their goals, and even not wanting to learn.

Learning how to stay concentrated is fundamental for academic learning. Thus, yoga breathing techniques increase focus and patience. While practicing yoga breathing techniques,

the body tends to focus on the breathing, which stimulates the central nervous system and mind allowing a calming effect (Nelson, 2009). According to Nelson (2009), several schools that have the option of practicing yoga have announced advanced test scores and fewer behavior problems. In conclusion, after knowing that when stress is being recognized or becomes excessive, students tend to show psychological and physical impairment. The importance of practicing yoga through techniques of meditation or breathing techniques can help students have a positive effect in the management of stress. how stress affects students experience

During a Yoga Education program, students' behavior was being followed through referrals and yoga participation. One of the results demonstrated that there was a negative correlation between participating in yoga and discipline deferrals (Smith-Vogtmann, 2009). Students who participated in yoga also had fewer behavioral problems at school. Given that stress management, low academic performance, and behavior problems are of concern about my topic, I have created a three-day interactive lesson on the benefits of yoga for fourth graders at Virginia Rocca Barton School, Salinas, California.

Theory

According to Bandura, Social Learning Theory (SLT) is defined as an idea of learning from interaction with other people in a social context (Malone, 2002). In other words, by observing, modeling or imitating the behaviors of others, people tend to develop similar behaviors. For young students, it is more interesting to learn through observation which implicates abstract modeling in order for students to learn and interpret what they have learned (Groenendijk, 2013). For example, Sternszus & Cruess (2016) note that according to Bandura in order to obtain a new behaviour or perspective through the role of modelling the learner must

observe what is being modelled, builds a intellectual representation of it, recreates what was modelled although observing their performance, eventually integrate the modelled behavior into their work.

The two elements of Social Learning Theory that apply to my approach is: Bandura's Observational Learning. Bandura's theory said that in order to implicate abstract modeling it is important to learn through interpretation, watching, and evaluating in order to learn. In the case of my project, participants would be learning through observing me perform five yoga poses. Since students will be able to observe me modelling the yoga poses, in order for me to evaluate their learning I will be asking participants to demonstrate at least two yoga poses covered in class.

Furthermore, Bandura's Observational Learning is the idea that something that is being modelled will integrate that modelled behavior into their task. During the lesson, participants will observe me modeling yoga breathing techniques and learning how to implement them. Students will be able to interpret what has been modelled and will integrate the breathing technique in a way of managing stress.

Consideration of Diversity

My project will be conducted at Virginia Rocca Barton Elementary School in Salinas, California. The ethnic composition of Virginia Rocca Barton Elementary School is not very diverse. According to the School Accountability Report Card (SARC; 2019), Virginia Rocca Barton Elementary School is .7% American Indian, .1% Asian, .1% Filipino, .4% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 5.9 White, 88.2% Hispanisc or Latino, .3% Two or more races.

Furthermore, 86.4% of the students are considered English Learners. I will be presenting the three lessons in English. As a result, it is possible that there will be participants who will not be able to understand the content and might not want to participate in the discussions or activities due to the lack of English proficiency. The project is targeted for just one fourth grade classroom at Virginia Rocca Barton Elementary School. The project will not apply for younger students because they are not in the fourth grade classroom and I will need to modify this project for those students. For older students the project could be applied, but I would have to change the structure of the yoga poses to more advanced. The project could be adapted for adults with some changes in the curriculum such as: an increase of vocabulary, add more difficult poses for a longer period of time and I will not need to talk about stress management as much. According to the School Accountability Report Card (SARC; 2019) there is 5.3% of students with disabilities. Since I will be asking students to practice yoga poses, if there were students who had mobility issues, I might have to modify the curriculum in order for all students to participate in the project.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of the project, participants will:

1. describe at least two benefits of practicing yoga.
2. demonstrate two yoga poses covered in class.
3. indicate at least one time at school when yoga breathing would be useful to practice.

Method

Day 1

Initially, I had planned to introduce myself and explain to the class the reason why I was there. Then, I was going to model a yoga pose called The Delfin and then asked the class to try to imitate it. Then, I had planned to present The Benefits of Practicing Yoga (See Appendix A) and give the students around three minutes to come up with their own thoughts of what the benefits might be. Then, I was planning on grouping the students in pairs in order for them to share their thoughts. Once students were able to join in conversation, they had four minutes to share with each other. In order to interact with students, I had planned to ask them to volunteer to share their thoughts on the benefits of practicing yoga. After several students had shared their thoughts, I was going to present a PowerPoint presentation explaining the definition of yoga, examples of yoga poses and benefits of practicing yoga. After I was done with the presentation, I had planned to show a YouTube video called Yoga Benefits by Lee Health (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQgJ0K9f2Zc>). Once the video was done, I was going to work with the participants on writing on a white board some benefits of yoga they identified either in the presentation or in the Youtube video. Lastly, in order to assess the students' understanding, I had planned to ask them to complete an individual questionnaire (See Appendix B) where they had to describe at least two benefits of practicing yoga.

Day 2

For this day, I had planned to start by doing a brief presentation (See Appendix A) on the benefits of practicing yoga, showing the examples of the yoga poses from the previous day for five minutes in order to refresh the students minds. Then, I was going to hand out four hard cardboard sheets around the class where it had pictures of students practicing different yoga poses in order for them to have an idea of how it looks to practice a yoga pose. After everyone

had the chance to see the cardboard sheets, I had planned to guide the students through five yoga poses for twenty minutes (i.e. the shark, the boat, dolphin, rainbow, tree) with the help of a PowerPoint demonstration (See Appendix C). All through the yoga poses, I was going to walk around the class to make sure no one was having difficulties or needed corrections on the student's poses. Once the yoga activity was done, I had planned to ask students to demonstrate to me their two favorite yoga poses as an assessment for students' understanding on the five yoga poses covered in class and then they had to write down the names of the yoga poses they demonstrated (See Appendix D) .

Day 3

For this day, I was planning to start by asking students if they knew the purpose of practicing yoga breathing techniques. As I was receiving the responses I was going to open a presentation on Yoga Breathing Techniques (See Appendix E). During the presentation, I was going to introduce the purpose of yoga breathing. I also had planned to give examples when to practice or incorporate a yoga breathing technique on a daily basis, my focus was speciality at school. As I was presenting I was going to ask students if they had any questions about the two main topics of the presentation. Once that was complete, I was planning to practice breathing techniques with the students for five minutes with the help of a YouTube video called: Five Minute Mindful Breathing (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-SFdhVwrVA>). In conclusion, in order to assess students' understanding of indicating when to practice a yoga breathing technique, I had planned to ask participants to complete a questionnaire (See Appendix F) where they had to write when to practice a yoga breathing technique on a daily basis.

Results

Not completed due to Covid-19.

Discussion

Not completed due to Covid-19.

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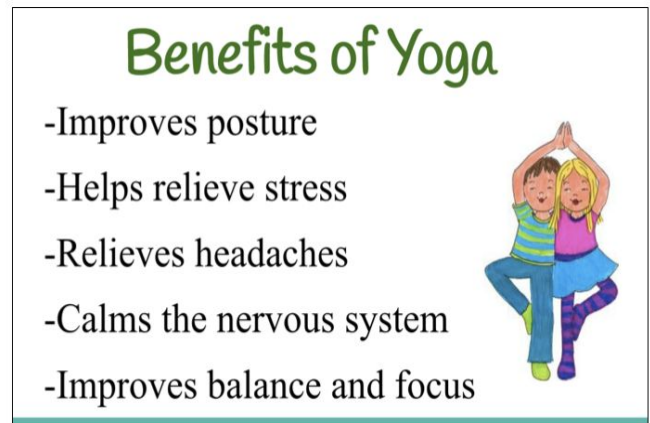
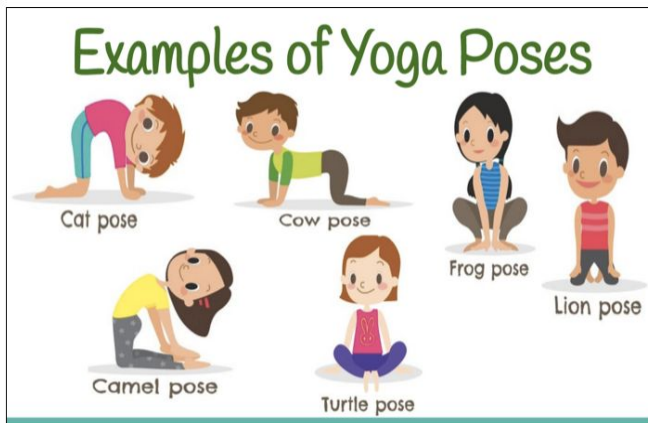
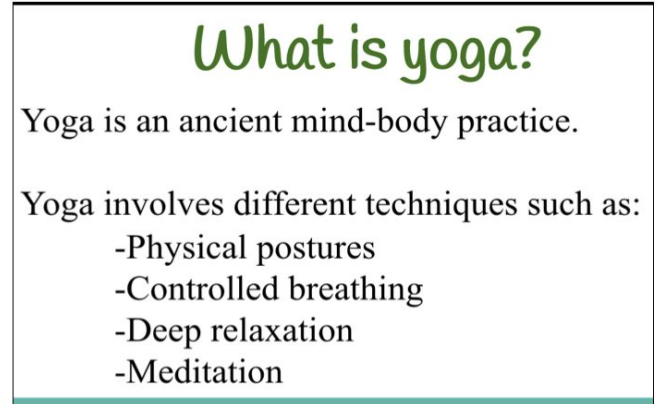
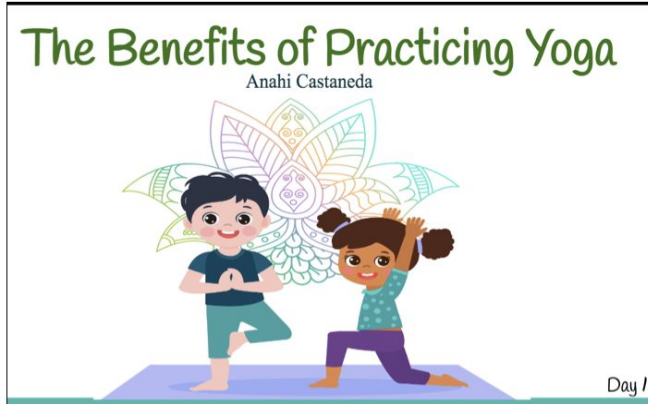
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Appendix A

Powerpoint on The Benefits of Practicing Yoga





Appendix B

Individual questionnaire for Learning outcome 1

Date: _____

Questionnaire

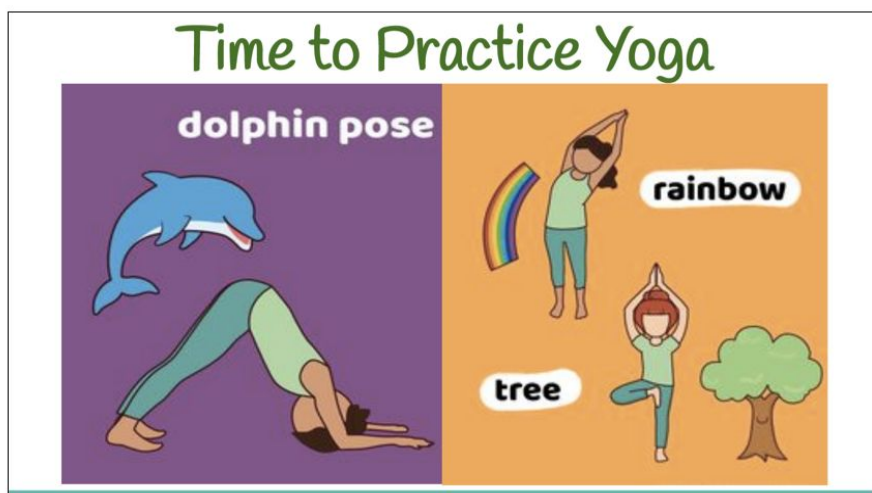
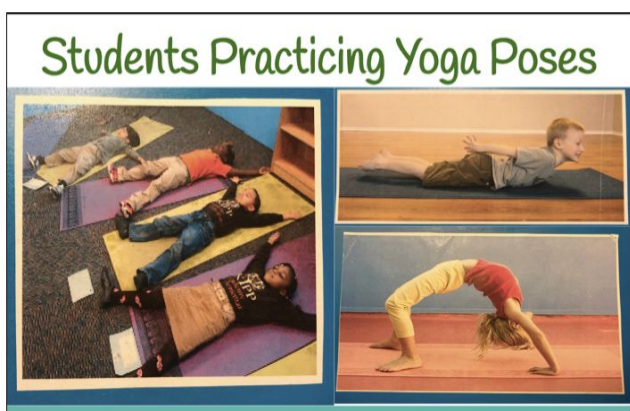
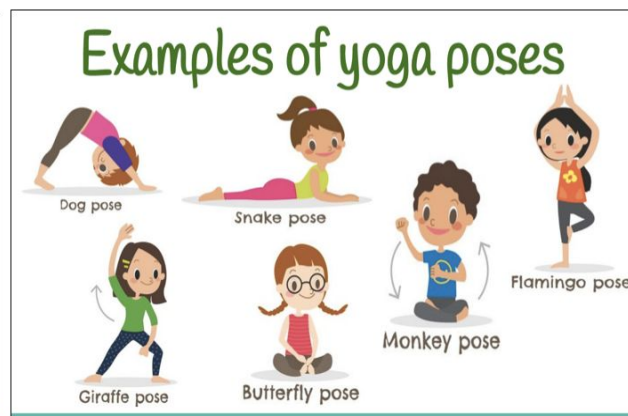
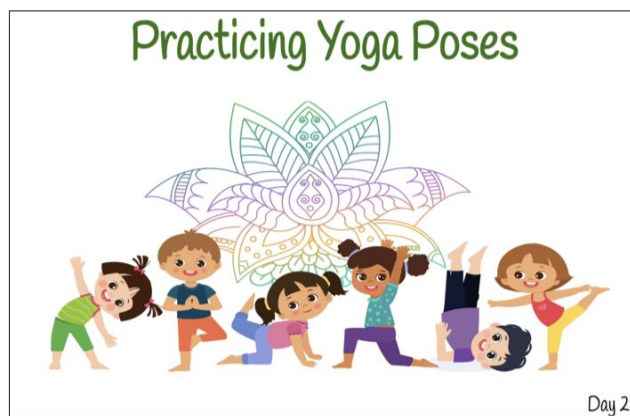
Day 1

Describe two benefits of practicing yoga.

1. _____
2. _____

Appendix C

Powerpoint on Practicing Yoga Poses



Appendix D

Individual questionnaire for Learning outcome 2

Date: _____

Questionnaire






Day 2

Write the names of the two yoga poses you demonstrated in class.

1. _____
2. _____

Appendix E

Powerpoint on Yoga Breathing Techniques

<h3>Yoga Breathing Techniques</h3>  <p>Day 3</p>	<h3>Purpose of Yoga Breathing</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One of the main purposes of yoga breathing is to lower stress.• Adds extra oxygen, opens and soothes different parts of our being.• Helps to calm the brain.
<p>When to practice breathing techniques at school.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Before taking a quiz or test.2. When you feel angry.3. When you feel nervous.4. Before going inside class.5. Before presenting on public. 	<h3>Let's practice breathing techniques</h3>    <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-SFdhVierVA</p>

Appendix F

Individual questionnaire for Learning outcome 3

Date: _____

Questionnaire





Day 3

Indicate at least one time at school when yoga breathing would be useful to practice.

1. _____
2. _____

Appendix G

Capstone Presentation


<p>Educating Children on the Benefits of Practicing Yoga</p> <p>Anahi Castaneda</p> 	<p>Need</p>  <p>Many young children have not yet developed sufficient strategies for stress management.</p> <p>Students may be unaware of the benefits of yoga.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Negative effects of stress• Poor behavior problems• Low school performance.
<p>Theory</p>  <p><i>Albert Bandura</i></p> <p>Social Learning Theory</p> <p>In order to obtain a new behaviour or perspective through the role of modelling the learner must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Observe what is being modelled2. Builds an intellectual representation of it3. Recreates what was modelled4. Integrate the modelled behavior into theirs	<p>Participants</p>  <p>Class of fourth grade students Virginia Rocca Barton Elementary School Salinas, CA</p>

Method

Day 1: Yoga Benefits

- Presentation
 - The Benefits of Practicing Yoga
- Show YouTube Video
 - Yoga Benefits By Lee Health
- Activity
 - Write 2 benefits on a questionnaire


The benefits of
YOGA



Method

Day 2: Practice Yoga Poses


- Yoga Benefits Review
- Practice 5 different yoga poses
- Activity
 - Demonstrate 2 yoga poses



Method

Day 3: Breathing Techniques

- Presentation
 - Purpose and Incorporation
 - How and when to practice
- Activity
 - Practice Breathing Techniques
 - Complete a questionnaire



Questionnaire

Date: _____

Questionnaire

Day 1
Describe two benefits of practicing yoga.

1. _____

2. _____

Day 2
Write the names of the two yoga poses you demonstrated in class.

1. _____

2. _____

Day 3
Indicate at least one time at school when yoga breathing would be useful to practice.

1. _____

2. _____

Learning Outcomes

At the end of project, participants will be able to:

- Describe at least two benefits of practicing yoga
- Demonstrate two yoga poses covered in class
- Indicate at least one time at school when yoga breathing would be useful to practice

Results

Not completed due to COVID-19.

Discussion

Not completed due to COVID-19.



Any Questions?