

YOGA INTO CLASSROOM PRACTICES: NEED OF THE HOUR

Jasmeet Bedi

(Asstt. Prof.) BCM College of Edu, Ludhiana email:bedijasmeet.19@gmail.com

Abstract

We are living in the world of 21st century which is known as the world of 'Mental Stress' in these circumstances, knowledge amplifies day by day. There is a knowledge explosion in the world, hence each and every person tries to get this knowledge by new and most recent medias & they also use it. In this direction there is a qualitative growing up in the person for in receipt of knowledge & its use by appreciative. In the same way, we notice the qualitative addition in the educational organization, teachers and students, which are going to get knowledge. In these circumstances teachers and students feel a perplexity. Learner or student of today is not only physically unhealthy but also mentally or emotionally. So it becomes duty or responsibility of a teacher to incorporate such practices in his classroom so that stress, tension, anxiety, frustration etc. of their students reduces which ultimately affect upon their academic as well as socio-psychological performance. The present paper throws light on benefits of yoga into classroom, studies conducted on the same, challenges before a teacher.



Scholarly Research Journal's is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com

Introduction

Importance of yoga in today's life can be realized as UN declares June 21 as International Yoga Day at our Prime Minister Narendra Modi's suggestion. The resolution on International Day of Yoga was introduced by India's Ambassador to UN Asoke Mukerji on Thursday and had 175 nations joining as co-sponsors, the highest number ever for any General Assembly resolution. Teachers and administrators are recognizing that yoga, breath awareness and mindfulness activities are beneficial to their students' mental health and well-being and to the learning environment in general. In addition, yoga and mindfulness practices promote self-awareness and self-management skills, the basis of social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies as espoused by CASEL (Collaborative for social and emotional learning). As yoga offers a non-competitive alternative to sports that supports PE (physical education) and health standards, it's also becoming part of many physical and health education curricula and after school enrichment offerings. The many anecdotal benefits of yoga and mindfulness-based practices for children are well known, and carefully-controlled scientific research is growing every year. Based on increasing evidence supporting the efficacy of yoga for children, school-based yoga programs are being implemented across the United States. These programs are designed to address stress and anxiety, place emphasis on individual abilities

rather than competition, and provide a non-threatening and gentle method to increase physical fitness and enhance health, well-being and emotional resilience.

What is Yoga: Yoga is originated from Veda, oldest scripture of India (4000 B.C.) and systematically presented by Sage Patanjali in Yogasutra in around 150 B.C. Hiranyagarbha is the founder of yoga. Sage Patanjali an Indian sage is the compiler of Yoga Science. He wrote 'Yogasutra' containing 195 verses divided in four chapters. It is believed that he was an incarnation of Adishesha, a mythological God. Scholars such as S. N. Dasgupta, claims this is the same Patanjali who authored the Mahabhasya, a treatise on Sanskrit grammar.

The more technical linguistic sense of the term "yoga," describing a system of meditation or contemplation with the aim of the cessation of mental activity and the attaining of a "supreme state" arises with early Buddhism. In Hindu scripture, this sense of the term "yoga" first appears in the middle Upanishads, such as the Katha Upanishad. Shvetashvatara Upanishad mentions, "When earth, water, fire, air and akasa arise, when the five attributes of the elements, mentioned in the books on yoga, become manifest then the yogi's body becomes purified by the fire of yoga and he is free from illness, old age and death." (Verse 2.12) More importantly in the following verse it mentions, the "precursors of perfection in yoga", namely lightness and healthiness of the body, absence of desire, clear complexion, pleasantness of voice, sweet odour and slight excretions. In Chapter 2 of the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna explains to Arjuna about the essence of Yoga as practiced in daily lives. The word is associated with meditative practices in Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. Within Hindu philosophy, the word *yoga* is used to refer to one of the six orthodox (Astika) schools of Hindu philosophy. (In Sanskrit philosophical literature, "Astika" means "one who believes in the authority of the Vedas" or "one who believes in life after death".)

Definitions

According to Yogasutra of Patanjali, "Yoga is restraint of the activities of the mind."

According to Bhagavad Gita, "Yoga Evenness (of mind) is Yoga. (2/48), Yoga is Skillfulness in action. (2/50)."

According to Upanishads, great Hindu literature, "There is the path of joy, and there is the path of pleasure, i.e. Yoga Karma".

According to National Standards for Physical Education (NASPE, 2004), "Yoga creates opportunities for children to explore movement with a variety of postures that can be fun and challenging enhances the physical and psychological health of the body."

Benefits of Yoga

“The purpose of yoga is to create strength, awareness and harmony in both the mind and body,” explains Natalie Nevins, a board-certified osteopathic family physician and certified Yoga instructor in Hollywood, California. “As an osteopathic physician, I focus a lot of my efforts on preventive medicine and practices, and in the body’s ability to heal itself,” says Dr. Nevins. “Yoga is a great tool for staying healthy because it is based on similar principles.” A discipline that strengthens, stretches, and aligns the body in asanas. After practicing the asanas with care and awareness, one can tone and condition the body (Toscano, 2008). Development of long lean muscles, better posture improves breathing, enhances digestion, better blood circulation, relaxes nervous system, and fortifies immune system (Finger, 2000).

Physical Benefits:

“The relaxation techniques incorporated in yoga can lessen chronic pain, such as lower back pain, arthritis, headaches and carpal tunnel syndrome,” explains Dr. Nevins. “Yoga can also lower blood pressure and reduce insomnia.” Increased flexibility, increased muscle strength and tone, improved respiration, energy and vitality, maintaining a balanced metabolism, weight reduction, cardio and circulatory health, improved athletic performance, protection from injury etc.

Emotional and Mental Benefits:

Reduce stress and pressure for children and adults, help them learn to relax, teach self-control, and instill a sense of peace in their daily lives. Wenig(2003).

Teach children and adult’s calmness and inward focus, which is a valuable skill in entire life, a great mental discipline for concentration, and observation skills (Finger, 2000).

Dr. Nevins, “Yoga can be very effective in developing coping skills and reaching a more positive outlook on life.” Meditation and breathing can help improve a person’s mental well-being, regular yoga practice creates mental clarity and calmness, increases body awareness, relieves chronic stress patterns; relaxes the mind, centers attention; and sharpens concentration.

Review of related studies

Our classroom based yoga and mindfulness program for schools empowers students and educators to create positive, peaceful, productive classrooms that support school goals by promoting movement, social and emotional skills, and learning readiness. Our accessible,

sustainable, evidence-informed programs are successfully implemented in schools worldwide.(yoga4classroom in sustainability Themed school)

Jensen and Kenny(2004) The effects of yoga on the attention and behavior of boys with Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).They observed boys diagnosed with ADHD by specialist pediatricians and stabilized on medication were randomly assigned to a 20-session yoga group (n = 11) or a control group (cooperative activities; n = 8). Significant improvement from pre-test to post-test were found for the yoga, but not for the control group on five subscales of a parent rating scale, along with some other positive effects. Although these data do not provide strong support for the use of yoga for ADHD, partly because the study was under-powered, they do suggest that yoga may have merit as a complementary treatment for boys with ADHD already stabilized on medication, particularly for its evening effect when medication effects are absent.

Reynolds and Nicolson, (2006), Janowiak(1993) Observed validity of academic correlations, students will be completing academic tasks in direct conjunction with the act of doing yoga. The study will be conducted in an afternoon class, as that is when students appear to be the least focused and most in need of relaxation techniques. This class has also expressed a wide range of stressors at home and in school during past conversations in class, and therefore would provide the researcher with the opportunity to see if significant progress is possible in a short period of time.

Gillen and Gillen (2007)claimed that incorporating yoga into a school setting would increase students' academic performance, self-esteem, emotional balance, reduce fears, and decrease oppositional behaviors and attention concerns. Yoga includes poses, breathing, relaxation, and positive thoughts. Several studies conducted with elementary students use these techniques. The following studies show the possible overall health benefits of incorporating this form of exercise into a school day.

Galantino et al.(2008) found that there was evidence for the benefit of yoga in the pediatric population in physical rehabilitation, but a recent meta-analysis concluded that the data on the clinical applications of yoga among the children are uncertain. Authors state that while most studies were suggestive of benefits, results were based on low quality trials.

Venkataramana et al. (2008) began the study with a hypothesis if high school students practiced yoga their level of academic stress would decrease. After reviewing the results, they have concluded that the findings of the study reiterate that yoga can be used as a tool and

technique to eliminate stress. In essence, yoga may provide the tools to expand conscious awareness and to eliminate stress. This study focused on student stress and not student engagement; therefore, it is still unclear if yoga would also increase student engagement.

Kauts and Sharma(2009) Effect of yoga on academic performance in relation to stress. The results show that the students, who practiced yoga performed better in academics. The study further shows that low-stress students performed better than high-stress students, meaning thereby that stress affects the students' performance.

Morgan (2011) argued that in order to create a learning classroom, teachers must first reduce stress, anxiety, and negative competition within students. In an attempt to decrease these factors, researchers have incorporated yoga into classroom settings. The purpose of this review of literature is to describe the effects of yoga in classrooms. In what follows, I first analyze and review research on yoga programs for elementary students, middle grades, and high school classrooms. Last, I conclude with a summary of strengths and limitations to the research.

Gajjar (2012)Effect of yoga exercises on achievement, memory and reasoning ability and found

that yoga exercises improves the Achievement of the students, memory and reasoning ability. Serwacki,Cook-Cottone(2012) Yoga in the schools: a systematic review of the literature. They found school-based yoga programs appeared to be beneficial for autism, intellectual disability, learning disability, and emotional disturbance, as well as typically developing youths. The control cohort; however there were no significant changes in short-term self-regulation.

Noogle et al. (2012) study focused on the psychosocial well-being of students and asserted that their predictions are partially supported by the results. Negative affect, total mood disturbance, and Tension-Anxiety were all positively impacted by the intervention. Yet, no changes were observed in positive affect, perceived stress, positive psychological traits, resilience, or anger expression. Limitations in this study include program consistency. The sample size used was very small. This study seems to indicate that yoga may play a preventative role in adolescent mental health in the area of tension, anxiety, mood disturbances, and affect. This study did not research student engagement, or use elementary-aged students; therefore, it is unclear as to whether yoga may increase student engagement during literacy lessons.

Damia (2013) Effects of incorporation yoga into a classroom on student engagement during literacy lessons. The purpose of this review of literature was to describe yoga and its possible effects on the engagement of students during literacy lessons. The literature reviewed included studies utilizing students in elementary, middle, and high school. The methods used included yoga poses, breathing, relaxation, and positive thoughts. Results and conclusions from the studies indicated that although many of the studies yielded positive results in students, the overall question of whether yoga will increase student engagement is still undetermined.

Berlin (2015) The effect of yoga in the classroom. This study evaluated the effects of doing yoga in a regular education seventh grade classroom, during normal instruction hours, on stress levels and academic achievement. This month long study consisted of a total of two weeks of yoga instruction. The three methods of data acquisition were pre and post student stress tests, student yoga surveys, and student assessments. The results indicate that yoga in the classroom was a positive addition to the classroom schedule. Students showed a decrease in stress levels, performed better on reading comprehension tests and quick writes, and perceived a benefit to doing yoga. These results suggest that yoga is a positive addition to the secondary classroom and can be an effective way to help students cope with stress and focus on schoolwork.

Ferreira-Vorkapic et al.(2015); Serwacki and Cook-Cottone(2012) Effect of school-based yoga and mindfulness practices on student health, behavior, and academic performance. Research on school-based yoga and mindfulness suggests that these programs may have a number of positive effects on student health, behavior, and performance. The following list outlines some of the benefits of school-based yoga and meditation practices that address the whole child, thus maximizing the development of academic, social and emotional competence in addition to benefits for teachers and classroom climate.

Sankhla, Tikhe Sham, Subramanyam, Kalpesh Zala, Parameshwar, Ranjan and Agarwal(2015) Yoga for academic performance: A brain wave coherence analysis. They studied immediate effect of Nadi Shuddhi Pranayama (NSP), Bhramari Pranayama (BP), Om Meditation (OM), Pranic Energization Technique (PET), and Mind Sound Resonance Technique (MSRT) on brain wave coherence (BWC) in university students. The immediate effect NSP, BP, OM, PET, and MSRT on BWC compared with controls shows that these yogic practices are

related with increased orderliness of brain functioning, which is essential for good academic performance.

Analysis of review of related literature:

By analyzing the reviews I reached at the conclusion that majority of the researches favours incorporating yoga into classroom practices. Studies conducted by Reynolds and Nicolson, (2006), Gillen and Gillen (2007), Kauts and Sharma(2009), Gajjar(2012), Khalsa et al.(2012), Berlin(2015), Aggarwal et.al.(2015) etc. their result reveals that yoga has significant effect on academic performance, student progress, reasoning ability, memory, reading comprehension, reduces stress, tension, anxiety, increases academic, social and emotional competence, reduces health related problems, helps in higher self-esteem, self-regulation, emotional imbalance of children. Study conducted by Serwacki and Cook-Cottone(2012) shows school-based yoga programs appeared to be beneficial for autism, intellectual disability, learning disability, and emotionally disturbed children.

But as far as question of student engagement is concerned answer is still unclear and undetermined. These are supported by the evidence of researches conducted by Venkataramana et al. (2008), Noogle et al. (2012), Jensen and Kenny(2004) do not support use of yoga for ADHD. Galantino et al.(2008) from this study it is clear besides most of the studies suggests yoga but their results based on low quality trials and small size of sample.

Challenges before a teacher

According to Dolan (2007) it has several challenges in its curriculum development, teaching methods, and student-teacher relationship, sequencing a class (teacher and materials) mood, postures, music as the need of class.

Social beliefs as drawbacks

Yoga is not considered as a basic part of social life. As unnecessary things as oriental stuff. Gunner (2005) yoga asana as stages of fear and danger in practicing phases, nerves get struck, and the teachers need to explore the underlying feelings.

1. The inability to do, or hold, an asana (yoga pose).
2. Accept that everyone has things they struggle with and there will always be someone that “does it better”.
3. Don't take it so seriously - It's only yoga!
4. Finding you don't have enough time in the day to also practice yoga for yourself:
5. Managing illness, injury and scheduled days off:

Suggestions: Based on inputs by Dinesh Kashikar, senior yoga teacher of “Art of Living”.

1. Respect the limits of your own
2. Use the Yogic smile meter
3. Take deep long breaths
4. Respect and honor your yoga practices
5. Get the Yogic attitude
6. Meditate.
7. Do Yoga on the Yoga Mat and Live Yoga off the Yoga Mat

Conclusion:

From the above said discussion and on the basis of researches conducted in this field I conclude children who practice yoga, conscious breathing, and mindfulness/meditation activities are better able to regulate their emotions, manage stress and calm themselves. Studies also suggest that centered, calm and focused children learn more easily, have better social skills and, in general, are happier kids. Studies utilizing yoga in school settings have been shown to benefit children and adolescents. A yoga program might help children recover their self-esteem and confidence, restore their mental health, promote positive attitudes, improve concentration, and reduce stress and anxiety. The ability to cope with stress and anxiety and to maintain physical and mental health is priceless in any spheres of an individual's life, including education. Students must be healthy in order to learn, and academic accomplishment has been shown to be related to health status. Consequently, there is an urgent need to develop and investigate cost-effective and evidence-based wellness programs that can be delivered in school settings.

References

- Berlin (2015). *The effect of yoga in the classroom*. www.iayt.org/?page=yogager.
- Damia, E. Toyras (2013). *Effects of incorporation yoga into a classroom on student engagement during literacy lessons*. M.Ed. dissertation, Northern Michigan University.
- Dollan, M. (2007). *The complete yoga: The lineage of integral education*. California: Hunter House, International Forum of Teaching and Studies.
- Ferreira-Vorkapic (2015); Serwacki & Cook Cottone (2012). *Effect of school-based yoga and mindfulness practices on student health, behavior, and academic performance*. www.hindawi.com/journals/ecam/2015/345835.
- Gajjar, N. (2012). *Effect of yoga exercises on achievement, memory and reasoning ability*. *International Journal for Research in Education (IJRE)*, 1(1), 35, 36, 47 December: 2012 ISSN: 2320-091X
- Galantino (2008). *Clinical applications of yoga in pediatric population*. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/NCBI/Literature/PubMedCentral (PMC)

- Gillen and Gillen (2007). *Effects of incorporation of yoga into a school settings* https://www.nmu.edu/education/.../DrupalEducation/.../Toyras_Damia_...by DE Toyras - .2013
- Gunner, R. (April, 2005). *Introduction to yoga: A beginner's guide to health, fitness and relaxation* *idol teachings*. New York, NY: Three River Press.
- Jensen, P., & Kenny, D. (2004). *The effects of yoga on the attention and behavior of boys with Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)*. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, 7, 205–216.
- Kauts, Amit & Neelam Sharma (2009). *Effect of yoga on academic performance in relation to stress*. *International Journal of Yoga*. 2009 Jan-Jun; 2(1), 39–43.
- Morgan (2011). *Effect of yoga practice in classroom management* *scholar.dominican.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1178&context...by G. Willits* - 2015.
- Reynolds and Nicolson, (2006) & Janowiak, (1993). *Yoga stress and academic performance* www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us/portola/pdf/inquiryproject.pdf.
- Sankhla, Hanish, Tikhe Sham, Ganpat Subramanyam, Pailoor Kalpesh Zala, Parameshwar Some, Manish Ranjan, Manish Agarwal (2015). *Yoga for academic performance: A brain wave coherence analysis*. Department of Yoga and Management, S-VYASA University, Bangalore, Karnataka, India.
- Sarah, B. (2015). *The effect of yoga in the classroom*. University of California, San Diego Education Studies.
- Serwacki, M.L., Cook-Cottone, C. (2012). *Yoga in the schools: A systematic review of the literature*. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23070680.
- Toscano, L. (April, 2008). *Yoga in physical education Strategies*, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Venkataramana (2008). *Effect of yoga on high school students achievements*. hildlightyoga.typepad.com/.../supporting-peer-reviewed-research.
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4546979/>
www.slideshare.net/vishalyogi/yoga-presentation-2508357
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4600929/>
<http://www.yoga4classrooms.com/>
<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/haryana-education-minister-ram-bilas-sharmas-solution-for-better-results-is-yoga/#sthash.p4ug355q.dpuf>, 8 May 2015.
<http://www.artofliving.org/in-en/yoga/yoga-for-beginners/8-tips-improve-your-yoga-practice>
<http://www.osteopathic.org/osteopathic-health/about-your-health/health-conditions-library/general-health/Pages/yoga.aspx>
<http://www.artofliving.org/in-en/yoga/yoga-benefits>
<https://www.ekhartyoga.com/blog/dealing-with-challenges-in-your-yoga-practice>
<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/modi-un-declares-june-21-as-international-yoga-day/1/406442.html> 11 Dec 2014
<http://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-4200/10-Challenges-You-May-Face-as-a-Yoga-Teacher.html> by Karen Fabian March 8, 2012 11:00
- Retrieved April 4, 2008, from <http://www.indendent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/452974.htm>/ Finger, A. (2000).