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Spring 2019

## Developing An Outdoor Mindful Activity-Based Curriculum For English Language Learners

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DEVELOPING AN OUTDOOR MINDFUL ACTIVITY-BASED CURRICULUM FOR  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER STUDENTS

By

Krista A. Kulas

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts  
in Education: Natural Science and Environmental Education

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

May 2019

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

Utilizing the outdoors as part of education can have an impact on young learners far beyond what we deem as traditional learning (Chawla, 2015). Although this is important for all students, my particular focus is on students who have the added challenge of learning English. The question I have posed is, *How can outdoor activities support the academic and emotional needs of elementary level English Language Learner students?* The basis for this kind of thinking is that many of our ELL students in elementary schools today have had to make long journeys to the United States before ending up in school. These children have gone through many traumatic events whether in their home country or in their new country (Rousseau, Measham, & Nadeau, 2013). By using the outdoors as a base for healing their emotional needs along with mindful activities they can have a direct transfer to improved cognitive function for more academic success in the classroom (Berman, Jonides, & Kaplan, 2008).

This capstone project focuses on combining the healing effects of being outdoors and in participating in mindful activities (Berman, Jonides, & Kaplan, 2008; Chawla, 2015). The need for this kind of program in schools has become apparent to me through working with students who are English Language Learners (ELL). I have seen many things like anxieties, uncontrolled anger issues, inability to focus or concentrate on finishing tasks, frustration in attempting school work, and many displays of acting out. Most classrooms have students take a break then students are expected to go back to what they are supposed to be doing. The problem with this kind of behavioral management is

that it does nothing to help repair the damage that a multitude of traumas has had on their brains. My project moves in the direction of helping the whole child repair cognitive function through nature and mindfulness (Bourrier, Berman, & Enns, 2018).

This curriculum project is designed for Kindergarten through third grade. My belief is if we can help students while they are young, they will be on a better track to excel later on in their school careers. Although these lessons are written for those grade levels, I believe these kinds of lessons could help any school age child. There are three categories for these outdoor mindful activities: outdoor meditation, outdoor yoga, and outdoor reading/writing. Each activity should be carried out for the entire school year because the repetition of both the exposure to the outdoors and the mindful activities helps create the restorative properties for the brain (Chawla, 2015; Choudhury & Moses, 2016).

Lessons are laid out in the format of how to get the groups started at the start of the school year, and then what you will need to do throughout the year to keep the activity going. A big part of the outdoor mindful activities is in helping students learn to reflect on the activity through journaling. The journals are not only a record of what students are thinking, but they are also used as an important way to touch base with students through writing back to them as the teacher. The teacher notes help model writing mechanics and give an extra chance to give positive feedback to the student.

The main goal is to use nature and mindfulness to build cognitive development for students who really need it. My belief is that we can address and help students with this kind of need at a greater level. Students gather in the outdoor learning space then

take part in meditation, yoga, or reading and writing in meaningful mindful ways. Every group will use journals throughout to help move them forward in writing and reflecting skills. Teachers, parents, and students will also take surveys to help document skills at the beginning and then along the way to evaluate if outdoor mindfulness is making a difference. The overall goal is to help these students feel the healing power of the outdoors and mindful activities to positively impact cognitive development which in turn will help them become successful in both their academic career and in lifelong skills.

## **OUTDOOR MEDITATION**

### **STAGE 1 – Desired Results**

#### **Goals**

1. Students enhance cognitive function through meditative practice.
2. Students gain ability to focus attention, ask relevant questions, participate in oral discussions, learn to recognize stressful situations with self regulation, and learn to reflect in journal writing.
3. MDE English Language Arts Benchmarks; 0.6.1.1, 0.8.1.1, 1.6.1.1, 1.8.1.1, 2.6.1.1, 2.8.1.1, 3.6.1.1, 3.6.10.10, 3.8.1.1
4. WIDA English Language Development Standard 1  
English language learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting Social and Instructional language.  
WIDA Language Development Standard 2  
English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Language Arts.

#### **Transfer**

Students will be able to use enhanced cognitive function by;

- Having a greater ability to focus attention.
- Gaining a sense of safety.
- Ability to identify and recognize feelings.
- Gaining ability to self-regulate emotional responses.
- Writing and drawing in journals.

Students will be able to transfer these skills by;

- Positively interacting with peers and school staff.
- Focusing on tasks at hand.
- Having a better ability to comprehend.
- Continuing advancement of skills both in and out of the classroom.
- Gaining self-confidence.

Students will understand that;

#### **Meaning**

- Meditation can help them with focus, attention, recognizing their feelings, and learn to self-regulate emotional responses.
- Through writing, grammatical and reflective skills will be practiced.
- Drawing is a creative outlet for expressing feelings.
- Through participating in discussions, students will practice oral fluency.

Students will keep considering;

- Why am I learning to meditate?
- What will learning to reflect do for me?
- What does it mean to journal about feelings, opinions, and things I have learned?

- Why is it important to ask questions I might have?
- What benefits can I gain from being outside?

### **Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill**

Students will know;

- Basic information and vocabulary about the restorative properties of meditation.
- How to write and/or draw, and why we write and/or draw reflections, opinions, perspectives, and create in journals.
- Why we meditate outdoors and the benefits of being outside.

Students will be skilled at;

- Practicing meditation.
- Expressing themselves through writing, drawing, and speaking.
- Listening skills in meditative observations, and group discussions.
- Using observation skills in and out of school settings.
- Appropriate expressions of feelings.

## **STAGE 2 – Evidence**

### **Evaluation Criteria**

- Criteria used to assess writing/drawing in journals will be based on whether students address guiding questions or thoughts about particular aspects of that lesson's practice through writing. This criterion will include student's progression of individual development skills in writing throughout the year. This can be observed within the journal. Kindergarten may start the year by only drawing but writing using sentence starters will gradually be added.
- Criteria for participation in meditative practice will include student's willingness to attempt and practice to the best of their ability in group discussions and sharing. This should show a steady progression through implementation of meditations throughout the course of the school year.
- Criteria to monitor possible changes in the classroom, in regard to behaviors, attention, and focus, and other factors will be through a survey from the homeroom teachers at three or four intervals through the year.
- Criteria to monitor possible positive changes at home will be through parent participation in surveys.

### **Performance Task**

- Students will be given a survey to gather information about what they are feeling about their school experience.
- Teachers will be given surveys three or four times during the school year to see if students are moving in the direction of becoming more successful in the classroom setting.



- Students will be using journals to not only practice writing skills but also to express learning, ideas, interpretations, and recording what they feel about what they are participating in through writing.
- Students will be orally sharing ideas and thoughts in pairs or groups.
- Formative observations of student participation and willingness to attempt what is being practiced, what is being discussed, and what is being shared will be noted.

### **STAGE 3 - Learning Plan**

#### **Lesson for Outdoor Meditation**

##### Summary for overall goals for meditation

- The main goal will be for students to gain personal ability to restore or enhance cognitive function.
- The key to transfer and the goals of meditation are in students gaining knowledge and participation through outdoor meditation practice.
- Transfer will also take place through writing or drawing about a variety of thoughts, feelings, and ideas students have throughout the course of the year.
- Transfer of skills will also be gauged through surveying the classroom teacher three or four times during the span of the school year, and through parent surveys. This transfer will look at application of skills in the classroom and at home setting.

##### Assessments

- Pre-assessment surveys will be given to both classroom teachers, parents, and students.
- Formative observation of progression of skills through journal writing and/or drawing.
- Formative observations of students oral and practice participation.

##### Student success for Transfer depends on:

- Application of the learning and practice of meditation.
- Application of writing and/or drawing in journals to express reflections, thoughts, and feelings.
- Application in the classroom or in other situations.

##### Student success for Meaning depends on:

- Processing and reflecting on practice of meditation.
- Student concentration to practice present moment thinking.

##### Student success for Acquisition depends on:

- The ability to understand and know how to meditate.
- The ability to participate freely within the group and elsewhere.

- The ability to transfer internal thoughts through journal writing/drawing.

### Unit Planning Guide for Outdoor Meditation

<p><u>Grade Levels:</u> K-3</p> <p><u>Lesson Duration:</u> 15-30 minutes</p>	<p><u>Time Frame:</u> Starting within 2 weeks after the school year begins, lasting until the end of the school year. Recommended 3 to 5 days a week.</p>
<p><u>Content Standards:</u> MDE Language Arts 0.6.1.1, 0.8.1.1, 1.6.1.1, 1.8.1.1, 2.6.1.1, 2.8.1.1, 3.6.1.1, 3.6.10.10, 3.8.1.1 WIDA English Language Development Standards 1&amp;2</p>	<p><u>Interdisciplinary Connections:</u> Reading, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Health and Wellness</p>

#### Goals:

- To enhance student cognitive function through outdoor meditation.
- Students gain the ability to better focus attention.
- Students learn to ask relevant questions.
- Students participate in oral discussions.
- Students practice writing reflections in journals.
- Help students reduce anxiety.
- Learn to recognize stressful situations and how to self-regulate.

#### Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Journals, pencils/pens/colored pencils, CD with meditations, *Sitting Still Like A Frog* by Eline Snel, (or script with what you will guide students in), CD player or laptop with speaker, portable whiteboard, tape.
- Pre-chosen meditation area in the outdoors such as a grassy area under a tree, or the gather circle in an outdoor classroom. Alternate areas would be a room with a good view of natural surroundings, or a room with several plants and a mural of a natural area like a forest, and possibly a background audio of forest sounds.

#### Overview and Class Information:

- The lesson content is to help students enhance cognitive function, become more self-aware of feelings, work to self-regulate stress and anxiety, and become more focused through meditation practice.
- Students in this class are English Language Learners from Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Groups will be with same grade but may split into groups as needed.

Lesson Vocabulary:

- Vocabulary should be pre-taught, then revisited as necessary.
- Vocabulary and definitions in Appendix E.

Procedures for Lessons:

1. Before you start day one, distribute surveys to the homeroom teachers who have your students in their classes. The teacher survey is Appendix A. Ask teachers if they can return it to you within the span of that week. Also distribute parent surveys (Appendix F) for students to take home and return to the teachers.

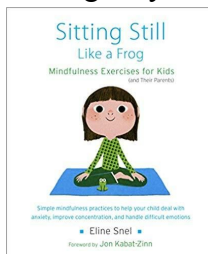
For the launch of day 1 for outdoor meditation, students will be taken in groups to an outside area (or inside naturalized area) and will discuss vocabulary (Appendix E) as it pertains to the benefits of the environment outside and to meditation. If you think students need to be reminded of how to act in a group whether indoors or outdoors, go over rules for behavior according to school directives. You will also need to have journals ready. If you want to make your own journals refer to Appendix I.

Demonstrations will be given for students who may not understand all the English words defining the actions. Then the students will have a quick practice of how to relax and breathe so students will understand what to do when they hear key words.

Students will be shown the journals they will be writing reflections in and discuss why we want to reflect on what we are practicing, learning, and feeling. To exit for the day, give them a short survey that works to assess feelings and attitudes about how they are in school found in Appendix B.

If you don't have enough time to do this all in one meeting, consider splitting it into two days, but do a quick review of what you accomplished on the first day before starting the second meeting.

- Please take note, if you cannot take your classes outside every day you meet with them, make a concerted effort to take them outside on the days that you can. The healing power of nature can do wonders for children who may not otherwise have access to outside.
2. On day 2 you will again take students to your nature area or alternate naturalized site, then students will begin by hearing the introduction on the CD



from *Sitting Still Like A Frog*.

The intro is very short, about half a minute. Next, have students sit up straight in a relaxed fashion, have

them close their eyes or focus their gaze on a single spot or thing, and practice being mindful in the moment for just a minute or two. Guide them by saying something like this:

- A. Now that your eyes are closed, notice your breathing. Make sure you are sitting with your back straight to help keep your attention. You breathe in, then out. Try taking in a very deep breath. Hold your breath in for a few seconds. (wait about 5 seconds) then exhale. Notice how this feels.
- B. Take another breath in, then out. Think about how you are breathing. Is it more of a fast breath or a slow breath?
- C. When you think about how you are breathing, do you feel your breath move your stomach up and then down?
- D. Now think about your head and neck. Are you relaxed while you breathe?
- E. Now think about your arms, are they relaxed? Think about your shoulders, are they relaxed? Go back to thinking about your breath.
- F. (Wait 15 seconds) We want to focus our attention on the present. What do you hear around you? (brief wait of maybe 10 seconds) If your thoughts are going to other ideas, maybe a problem you have had today, just let it float away and go back to thinking about your breath to be in the present. Sometimes your thoughts will start wandering and thinking about other things. That's ok. We work to let those thoughts drift away like a cloud and focus back on our breath.
- G. Let's breathe in and breathe out one more time and remember that each time we breathe we can let other thoughts drift away and go back to our breath. With each practice we get better at it. Now open your eyes or bring your gaze back to me.

To end this day, pass out journals and ask students to first write the date, and then write or draw about how today made them feel. Give students just a few minutes.

It is also important that each day you compliment students on what a fantastic job they are doing. Even if they look like they are not following along with the meditation, the outdoors or nature area is bestowing restorative effects to the students.

As with all new things, it may take some students longer than others to catch on but be encouraging of their efforts. If they cannot finish quickly, tell them they can always add to their journals next time. Collect journals at the end of each class.

3. On day 3 again take students to your designated nature spot. Having an alternate place to go to is always a good idea in case the weather is not conducive to conducting a lesson. There are companies that sell wall murals of natural settings that you can add to a room which would work great with adding a few plants to the room as well. If you have a room with large windows that look out over a nature area, the view is great because when students focus on

their breath, they may choose to focus their attention on one aspect of that nature. Some students may choose to do this outside as well. And while students journal or are waiting they can look out to the nature.

- On this third day use the first track in *Sitting Still Like A Frog* but only play half of the 9 minute track. Each day, before you begin, remind the students to sit with their back straight in a relaxed manner. Students will be working up to adding a few minutes each time as you have them become comfortable with the routine.
- At the end of the 4.5 minutes, before you start writing in journals today, have a few students share something they felt about the meditation today. If no one wants to share ask some guiding questions like; How did the words in the CD help you meditate today? What did it make you think about?
- Each day you can have them write about their feelings or observations for the day, or you can pick a sentence starter from the list on Appendix D. Again, praise your students and collect journals.

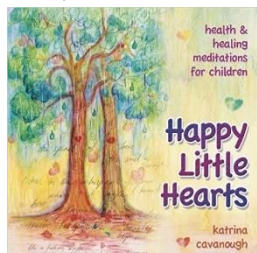
At the end of this session, take the time to write each student a short note in their journal when you have time. Use these messages to help your students gain grammatical help by rewording in the correct grammatical fashion as part of your message. Never directly correct their mechanics of writing. This needs to be a safe place for them to write from the heart.

If you do not have time to write a short note to all groups on the same day, just rotate which class you will write a message. The short messages take a surprisingly short amount of time, and your students will eagerly look for messages you write to them. Your young students may need help reading them, but they will love them just the same.

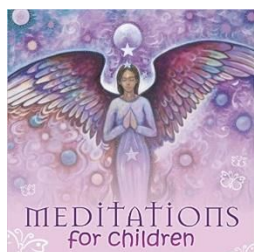
4. On day 4 start at the beginning of the first track again of *Sitting Still Like A Frog* and then play two additional minutes for about 7 minutes total. Each day you will settle into a routine of reminding students to sit with their back straight and in a relaxed way. While the CD is playing you will have opportunity to monitor students and encourage those having a hard time.
5. On day 5 you may be able to play the entire 9 minutes of track one. Think about how the students are doing with the meditation. If younger groups are still struggling with additional time, just stay at a shorter segment until you feel the students are ready to move forward.
6. Once you have your routine of meditation then journal writing and drawing, you can move on to new tracks of *Sitting Still Like A Frog*. It may take a few weeks or even a month for students to catch on and start participating fully. Don't worry about the "correctness" of meditation. If a student would rather lay on their back because it is more comfortable for them, be flexible. Sometimes younger groups may even want to use a small rock to lay on their stomach area

to feel it move up and down with their breath. (The rocks would be in a basket that you have preselected for such use).

7. If you don't feel like *Sitting Still Like A Frog* is the best meditation for you to use, explore other options including guiding students with just the sounds around them outside. If inside you can play forest sounds, or the sounds of water, and guide them in the focus of meditating to those sounds. I have also used;



by Katrina Cavanaugh



by Elizabeth Beyer and Toni Carmine Salerno

I found both good for young children for the main reason of switching it up every now and then. I am sure that there are many more to choose from, but this gives you at least a couple of ideas. Schools may even give you funds to purchase them for school use. If you have an account for DonorsChoose.org you may even have others willing to buy them for you.

Youtube has some videos as well, but make sure you preview everything you would consider using before you are with children.

8. As you move through the year of meditating with your students, have the classroom teachers and students again fill out the surveys Appendix' A, B or C at the midpoint of the year and then towards the end of the school year. (This could also be completed at the end of each quarter coinciding with grading quarters of the year.) Teachers may even have additional insightful information to give you.
9. You may also want to consider giving parents a survey at the same intervals as the teachers, especially at the beginning of the school year. A sample survey for parents is Appendix F. The survey is in English so if parents are unable to read in English the survey will need to be converted to the language for which they are proficient. A parent survey would be a good round out to opinions on the child's beginning state, then to see if positive impact of the mindful activities is being observed by parents.

Assessments:

Formative assessment will be used with this activity.

- Journal writing
- Observation of students in group oral discussions and their participation in Think-Pair-Share.
- Self assessments

Class information to consider:

- Groups of students may want to be mixed or geared towards high groups and then lower groups. Whatever works best for you for students involved.
- Some students may be needy, so consider physical location of proximity to the teacher and other distractions.
- Monitor frustration levels frequently to give extra help as needed.

Differentiation qualities of this activity:

- Each student is monitored at their current level. Students do not need to be on the same level to participate together as a group.
- Outcomes will be different with each student according to their level of proficiency. Students do not need to have the same outcomes.

Possible difficulties with activity:

- Some difficulties may arise due to inclement weather. Some environmental outdoor classrooms have shelters, which may be an option, otherwise having an alternate room lined up is important.
- Some students may need more sheltering instruction than others for activity lessons. Keeping that in mind and watching for that is key. Some students will need more help formulating ideas to write and/or draw. Sentence starters may be important and students willing to share may help others with ideas. One student copying an idea from another student can be very helpful moving towards their own ideas.

Ongoing teacher reflections:

- Is this activity meeting the needs of my students in its current form?
- What changes am I finding I need to make for this activity to help students be more successful?
- Is this learning experience a positive one for all students involved?

## **OUTDOOR YOGA**

### **Stage 1 - Desired Results**

#### **Goals**

1. Students enhance cognitive function through practicing yoga.
2. Students gain ability to focus attention, ask relevant questions, participate in oral discussions, learn to recognize stressful situations with self regulation, and learn to reflect in journal writing.
3. MDE English Language Arts Benchmarks; 0.6.1.1, 0.8.1.1, 1.6.1.1, 1.8.1.1, 2.6.1.1, 2.8.1.1, 3.6.1.1, 3.6.10.10, 3.8.1.1
4. WIDA English Language Development Standard 1  
English language learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting Social and Instructional language.  
WIDA Language Development Standard 2  
English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Language Arts.

#### **Transfer**

Students will be able to use enhanced cognitive function by;

- Having a greater ability to focus attention.
- Gaining a sense of safety.
- Improve ability to adapt.
- Ability to identify and recognize feelings.
- Gaining ability to self-regulate emotional responses.
- Writing and drawing in journals.

Students will be able to transfer these skills by;

- Positively interacting with peers and school staff.
- Focusing on tasks at hand.
- Having a better ability to comprehend.
- Continuing advancement of skills both in and out of the classroom.
- Gaining self-confidence.

#### **Meaning**

Students will understand that:

- Yoga can help them with focus, attention, recognizing their feelings, and learn to self-regulate emotional responses.
- Yoga can help improve fine and gross motor skills.
- Reading will improve language development, literacy skills, and confidence reading aloud.
- Through writing, grammatical and reflective skills will be practiced.
- Drawing is a creative outlet for expressing feelings.



- Through participating in discussions, students will practice oral fluency, cooperation, and listening skills.

Students will keep considering;

- Why am I learning to do yoga?
- What will learning to reflect do for me?
- What does it mean to journal about feelings, opinions, and things I have learned?
- Why is it important to ask questions I might have?
- What benefits can I gain from being outside?

### **Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill**

Students will know;

- Basic information and vocabulary about the restorative properties of yoga and nature.
- How to write and/or draw, and why we write and/or draw reflections, opinions, perspectives, and create in journals.
- Why we do yoga outdoors and the benefits of being outside.

Students will be skilled at;

- Practicing yoga.
- Expressing themselves through writing, drawing, and speaking.
- Listening skills in yoga poses, breathing, and group discussions.
- Using observation skills in and out of school settings.
- Appropriate expressions of feelings.

## **STAGE 2 – Evidence**

### **Evaluation Criteria**

- Criteria used to assess writing/drawing in journals will be based on whether students address guiding questions or thoughts about particular aspects of that lesson's practice through writing. This criterion will include student's progression of individual development skills in writing throughout the year. This can be observed within the journal. Kindergarten may start the year by only drawing but writing using sentence starters will gradually be added.
- Criteria for participation in yoga practice will include student's willingness to attempt and practice to the best of their ability in group practice, discussions, and sharing. This should show a steady progression through implementation of yoga throughout the course of the school year.
- Criteria to monitor possible positive changes in the classroom, in regard to behaviors, attention, and focus, and other factors will be through a survey from the homeroom teachers at three or four intervals through the year.
- Criteria to monitor possible positive changes at home will be through parent participation in surveys.

### **Performance Task**

- Students will be given a survey to gather information about what they are feeling about their school experience.
- Teachers will be given surveys three or four times during the school year to see if students are moving in the direction of becoming more successful in the classroom setting.
- Students will be gradually learning, with support, to read yoga cards to the group.
- Students will be using journals to not only practice writing skills but also to express learning, ideas, interpretations, and recording what they feel about what they are participating in through writing.
- Students will be orally sharing ideas and thoughts in pairs or groups.
- Formative observations of student participation and willingness to attempt what is being practiced, what is being discussed, and what is being shared will be noted.

### **STAGE 3 - Learning Plan**

#### **Lesson for Outdoor Yoga**

##### Summary for overall goals for yoga

- The main goal will be for students to gain personal ability to restore or enhance cognitive function.
- The key to transfer and the goals of yoga are in students gaining knowledge and participation through yoga practice.
- Transfer will also take place through writing or drawing about a variety of thoughts, feelings, and ideas students have throughout the course of the year.
- Transfer will also be gauged through surveying the classroom teacher three or four times a year, and through parent surveys. This transfer will look at application of skills within the classroom and at home setting.

##### Assessments

- Pre-assessment surveys will be given to both classroom teachers, parents, and students.
- Formative observation of progression of skills through journal writing and/or drawing.
- Formative observations of students oral and practice participation.

##### Student success for Transfer depends on:

- Application of the learning and practice of yoga.
- Application of writing and/or drawing in journals to express reflections, thoughts, and feelings.

- Application in the classroom or in other situations.

Student success for Meaning depends on:

- Processing and reflecting on practice of yoga.
- Student comprehension and application with the practice of yoga.

Student success for Acquisition depends on:

- The ability to understand and know how practice yoga.
- The ability to participate freely within the group and elsewhere.
- The ability to transfer internal thoughts through journal writing/drawing.

### **Unit Planning Guide for Outdoor Yoga**

<p><u>Grade Levels:</u> K-3</p> <p><u>Lesson Duration:</u> 15-30 minutes</p>	<p><u>Time Frame:</u> Starting within 2 weeks after the school year begins, lasting until the end of the school year. Recommended 3 to 5 days a week.</p>
<p><u>Content Standards:</u> MDE Language Arts 0.6.1.1, 0.8.1.1, 1.6.1.1, 1.8.1.1, 2.6.1.1, 2.8.1.1, 3.6.1.1, 3.6.10.10, 3.8.1.1 WIDA English Language Development Standards 1&amp;2</p>	<p><u>Interdisciplinary Connections:</u> Reading, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Health and Wellness</p>

Goals:

- To enhance student cognitive function through outdoor yoga practice.
- Students gain the ability to better focus attention.
- Students learn to ask relevant questions.
- Students participate in oral discussions.
- Students practice writing reflections in journals.
- Help students reduce anxiety.
- Learn to recognize stressful situations and how to self-regulate.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Journals, pencils/pens/colored pencils, yoga cards - *Yoga For Children; Yoga Cards* by Lisa Flynn, portable whiteboard, tape, yoga mats, basket for mats, whiteboard marker, 1 journal bin for each group.
- Pre-chosen yoga area in the outdoors such as a grassy area under a tree, or the gather circle in an outdoor classroom. Alternate areas would be a room with a good view of natural surroundings, or a room with several plants and a mural of a natural area like a forest, and possibly a background audio of forest sounds.

Overview and Class Information:

- The lesson content is to help students enhance cognitive function, become more self-aware of feelings, work to self-regulate stress and anxiety, and become more focused through yoga practice.
- Students in this class are English Language Learners from Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Groups will be with same grade but may split into groups as needed.

Lesson Vocabulary:

- Vocabulary should be pre-taught, then revisited as necessary.
- Vocabulary and definitions in Appendix F.

## Additional vocabulary for yoga:

- Pose - a certain way to configure your body into
- Balance - holding a pose in a steady position without falling
- Core Strength - middle muscle becoming stronger

## Procedure for Lessons:

1. Before beginning groups, distribute the teacher survey in Appendix A. Ask teachers if they can return it to you within the span of that week. Also, distribute parent surveys (Appendix D) to teachers for students to take home and return to the teachers. You will also need to have journals ready. If you want to make your own journals refer to Appendix I.

For the launch of day 1 for outdoor yoga, students will be taken in groups to an outside area (or inside naturalized area) and will discuss vocabulary (Appendix F plus additional vocabulary) as it pertains to the benefits of the environment outside and to yoga. If you think students need to be reminded of how to act in a group whether indoors or outdoors, go over rules for behavior according to school directives.

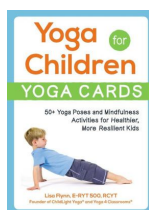
Demonstrations will be given for students who may not understand all the English words defining the yoga actions. Then the students will have a quick practice of how to relax and breathe so students will understand what to do when they hear keywords.

Students will be shown the journals they will be writing reflections in and discuss why we want to reflect on what we are practicing, learning, and feeling. To exit for the day, give students a short survey that works to assess feelings and attitudes about how they are feeling about school currently with Appendix B or C.

If you don't have enough time to do this all in one meeting, consider splitting it into two days, but do a quick review of what you accomplished on the first day before starting the second meeting.

\* Please take note, if you cannot take your classes outside every day you meet with them, make a concerted effort to take them outside on the days that you can. The healing power of nature can do wonders for children who may not otherwise have access to outside.

2. On day 2 you will again take students to your nature area or alternate naturalized site, then students will begin by laying out and sitting on their yoga mat. They will also be told that at the end of class, after we collect journals, each student will be responsible for rolling up and placing the mat back in the basket.



Students will be introduced to *Yoga For Children; Yoga Cards* by Lisa Flynn. These are yoga cards that also include activities about being in the present, rest and relax, and breathing. My lessons use the breathing cards (green border) and the yoga poses cards (orange border).

Have students find a spot in the area of where the class will be. With Kindergarten and 1st grade you may want to lay out the mats for the beginning classes so students get the idea of where the mats should be placed. Have students just sit on their mat to begin. This is a sample of what you might say as you begin yoga class:

- “Is everyone sitting on your mat? Now close your eyes... notice your breathing. Make sure you are sitting with your back straight to help keep your focus. You breathe in, then out. Let’s take in a very deep breath. (Breathe in deeply) Hold your breath in for a few seconds.” (wait about 5 seconds)“ then exhale. Notice how this feels. How are you feeling? Are you relaxed?”

“We will now practice the Candle Breath” (green border card)” Clasp your hands in front of you like this” (model everything) “then put up your pointer fingers together.(Students can also see picture on the card) Your fingers can be relaxed. Pretend your fingers are a candle and on top is the flame. Let’s breathe in again slow and deep... then slowly blow out the candle.”(Practice a few more times.)

- “Now we will begin our first yoga pose of the day. We will start with a simple pose. I will pull the first yoga card out of the stack, then I will have you take turns picking cards to help us practice poses. Remember, yoga is working on thinking about right now and helping us focus. We are practicing to help make our focus and balance better each time. Remember to also think about your breathing too.”
- “This is the Easy Pose (orange border). Let’s all sit with our legs criss crossed (model each part). Rest your hands on your knees or you can

rest your hands in your lap. Sit up nice and straight, take in a deep breath and lift your shoulders up higher. Now breathe out and softly say “Ahh” and bring your shoulders back down. Let’s try that a couple of more times.” (Repeat a few more times.)

- “For our next pose, I will have one of you pick a card. We will take turns. If you don’t get a turn today because we run out of time, you will get a turn next time.” (Have children take turns picking cards, if students are old enough to read, help them read the instructions on the back of the card to the class while modeling for the other students. Then you can use tape or magnets to attach the cards to the portable whiteboard so they are visual reminders for when they write in the journals. You can also ask students for suggestions for what they think the pose could be if it were named something from the outdoors like a tree, or a rock.)

Keep picking cards until about 5 minutes left in the class time. In those last 5 minutes have students write in their journals. Pass out journals and pencils.

- “ Let’s put the date at the top of the page in our journals. (You can write date on whiteboard for students to copy.) Today let’s write a sentence or two on how yoga made you feel, then you can draw a picture of yourself doing yoga today if you want to. If there is time you may use some of the colored pencils to color in your picture after you draw it.”
- Have a student collect journals, then have students roll up yoga mats and place them into the yoga mat basket.

3. Day 3 and beyond will be conducted very similarly. Each day students will begin by practicing a short breathing exercise then move into the yoga poses. Students will get better and better at the poses and at reading them.

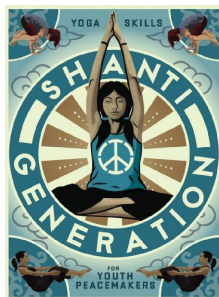
- After a week of yoga have a group discussion on how the students are feeling about the yoga and breathing. They can also think-pair-share before sharing with the group. After they share as a group, they can write their feelings in the journals. Once a week or more, have students have a short discussion about how things are going with yoga, or how you will work to answer a sentence starter you pick out for the day.
- Sentence starters are very good to help students get started on what to write, they also help model writing for students. Journal writing doesn’t have to be for a long time, just a few quick thoughts for about 5 minutes a day. Then you can write notes to your students modeling grammatical errors in your messages. Never directly correct student work as this is to be very low stress writing. Students will gain skills as the year progresses with a regular schedule for daily writing, along with modeling both in sentence starters and with your notes to students.

4. As the year progresses send out the teacher and parent surveys again either at mid-year and end year, or with grading quarters to help you gather information.(Appendix A & F) Students will fill out their surveys to match the time frame of either three or four times a year. (Appendix B or C) Feedback from teachers and parents may help guide lessons.
5. Having students follow a routine will also give them a sense of safety and continuity. You will get to know your students very well which will also add to their sense of security.
6. If you have to do yoga indoors, make sure you have a large view out windows which is a natural view. If no nature based view is available bring in some large plants and some posters or a large wall mural of a natural setting. Murals Your Way has some beautiful landscapes to choose from.  
<https://www.muralsyourway.com/p/manihi-french-polynesia-mural/>



This is a sample, and other teachers may want to utilize a room with a nature mural as well. There are other companies who supply these as well.

7. There are also other suppliers that offer a variety of yoga for children type materials. If you have to be indoors with botanicals and you have access to a smartboard, you may want to try something like



*Shanti Generation: Yoga for Youth Peacemakers* by Abby Wills and Michael Kuehnert (directors). This is a DVD that I have used with students and they enjoyed it very much. It is important to keep in mind that many students may need a lot of modeling to understand what to do.

Assessments:

Formative assessment will be used with this activity.

- Journal writing
- Observation of students in group oral discussions and their participation in Think-Pair-Share.
- Self assessment surveys

Class information to consider:

- Groups of students may want to be mixed or geared towards high groups and then lower groups. Whatever works best for students involved.
- Some students may be needy, so consider physical location of proximity to the teacher and other distractions.
- Monitor frustration levels frequently to give extra help as needed.

Differentiation qualities of this activity:

- Each student is monitored at their current level. Students do not need to be on the same level to participate together as a group. They can try and interpret yoga poses as needed.
- Outcomes will be different with each student according to their level of proficiency. Students do not need to have the same outcomes.

Possible difficulties with activity:

- Some difficulties may arise due to inclement weather. Some environmental outdoor classrooms have shelters, which may be an option, otherwise having an alternate location for class lined up is important.
- Some students may need more sheltering instruction than others for yoga lessons. Keeping that in mind and watching for that is key.
- Some students will need more help formulating ideas to write and/or draw. Sentence starters may be important and students willing to share may help others with ideas. One student copying an idea from another student can be very helpful moving towards their own ideas.

Ongoing teacher reflections:

- Is this activity meeting the needs of my students in its current form?
- What changes am I finding I need to make for this activity to help students be more successful?
- Is this learning experience a positive one for all students involved?



## **READING AND WRITING OUTDOORS**

### **STAGE 1 - Desired Results**

#### **Goals**

5. Students enhance cognitive function through reading and writing outdoors.
6. Students gain ability to focus attention, ask relevant questions, participate in oral discussions, learn to recognize stressful situations with self regulation, and learn to reflect in journal writing.
7. MDE English Language Arts Benchmarks; 0.6.1.1, 0.8.1.1, 1.6.1.1, 1.8.1.1, 2.6.1.1, 2.8.1.1, 3.6.1.1, 3.6.10.10, 3.8.1.1
8. WIDA English Language Development Standard 1  
English language learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting Social and Instructional language.  
WIDA Language Development Standard 2  
English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Language Arts.

#### **Transfer**

Students will be able to use enhanced cognitive function by;

- Having a greater ability to focus attention.
- Gaining a sense of safety.
- Improve ability to adapt.
- Ability to identify and recognize feelings.
- Gaining ability to self-regulate emotional responses.
- Writing and drawing in journals.

Students will be able to transfer these skills by;

- Positively interacting with peers and school staff.
- Focusing on tasks at hand.
- Having a better ability to comprehend.
- Continuing advancement of skills both in and out of the classroom.
- Gaining self-confidence.

#### **Meaning**

Students will understand that;

- Reading and writing can help them with focus, attention, recognizing their feelings, and learn to self-regulate emotional responses.
- Reading will improve language development, literacy skills, and confidence in reading aloud.
- Through writing, grammatical and reflective skills will be practiced.
- Drawing is a creative outlet for expressing feelings.
- Through participating in discussions, students will practice oral fluency, cooperation, and listening skills.

Students will keep considering;

- Why am I practicing reading and writing?
- What will learning to reflect do for me?
- What does it mean to journal about feelings, opinions, and things I have learned?
- Why is it important to ask questions I might have?
- What benefits can I gain from being outside?

### **Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill**

Students will know;

- Basic information and vocabulary about the restorative properties nature.
- How to write and/or draw, and why we write and/or draw reflections, opinions, perspectives, and create in journals.
- Why we will read and write outdoors.

Students will be skilled at;

- Practicing listening to reading outdoors.
- Expressing themselves through writing, drawing, and speaking.
- Listening skills in reading content, considering material, and in group discussions.
- Using observation skills in and out of school settings.
- Appropriate expressions of feelings.

## **STAGE 2 – Evidence**

### **Evaluation Criteria**

- Criteria used to assess writing/drawing in journals will be based on whether students address guiding questions or thoughts about particular aspects of that lesson's practice through writing. This criterion will include student's progression of individual development skills in writing throughout the year. This can be observed within the journal. Kindergarten may start the year by only drawing but writing using sentence starters will gradually be added.
- Criteria for participation in reading and writing will include student's willingness to attempt writing assignments to the best of their ability, participation in group discussions, and group sharing. This should show a steady progression throughout the course of the school year in their journals, and in teacher observations.
- Criteria to monitor possible positive changes in the classroom, in regard to behaviors, attention, and focus, and other factors will be through a survey from the homeroom teachers at three or four intervals through the year.
- Criteria to monitor possible positive changes at home will be through parent participation in surveys.

### **Performance Task**

- Students will be given a survey to gather information about what they are feeling about their school experience.
- Teachers will be given surveys three or four times during the school year to see if students are moving in the direction of becoming more successful in the classroom setting.
- Students will be listening to books that include grade level learning, participate in reading, if appropriate, and asking appropriate questions.
- Students will be using journals to not only practice writing skills but also to express learning, ideas, interpretations, and recording what they feel about what they are participating in through writing.
- Students will be orally sharing ideas and thoughts in pairs or groups.
- Formative observations of student participation and willingness to attempt what is being practiced, what is being discussed, and what is being shared will be noted.

### **STAGE 3 - Learning Plan**

#### **Lesson for Reading and Writing Outdoors**

##### Summary for overall goals for Outdoor Reading and Writing

- The main goal will be for students to gain personal ability to restore or enhance cognitive function.
- The key to transfer and the goals for outdoor reading and writing are in students gaining knowledge and participation through participation.
- Transfer will also take place through writing or drawing about a variety of thoughts, feelings, and ideas students have throughout the course of the year.
- Transfer will also be gauged through surveying the classroom teacher three or four times a year, as well as parent surveys. This transfer will look at application of skills within the classroom and at home setting.

##### Assessments

- Pre-assessment surveys will be given to both classroom teachers, parents, and students.
- Formative observation of progression of skills through journal writing and/or drawing.
- Formative observations of students oral participation.

##### Student success for Transfer depends on:

- Application of the learning and participation.
- Application of writing and/or drawing in journals to express reflections, thoughts, and feelings.
- Application in the classroom, at home, or in other situations.

Student success for Meaning depends on:

- Processing connections and reflecting on ideas.
- Student comprehension of ideas and ability to express those ideas.

Student success for Acquisition depends on:

- The ability to understand and apply information.
- The ability to participate freely within the group and elsewhere.
- The ability to transfer internal thoughts through journal writing/drawing.

**Unit Planning Guide for Outdoor Reading and Writing**

<p><u>Grade Levels:</u> K-3</p> <p><u>Lesson Duration:</u> 15-30 minutes</p>	<p><u>Time Frame:</u> Starting within 2 weeks after the school year begins, lasting until the end of the school year. Recommended 2 to 3 days a week.</p>
<p><u>Content Standards:</u> MDE Language Arts 0.6.1.1, 0.8.1.1, 1.6.1.1, 1.8.1.1, 2.6.1.1, 2.8.1.1, 3.6.1.1, 3.6.10.10, 3.8.1.1 WIDA English Language Development Standards 1&amp;2</p>	<p><u>Interdisciplinary Connections:</u> Reading, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Health and Wellness</p>

Goals:

- To enhance student cognitive function through outdoor learning.
- Students gain the ability to better focus attention.
- Students learn to ask relevant questions.
- Students participate in oral discussions.
- Students practice writing a variety of ideas in journals.
- Help students reduce anxiety.
- Student participation in less stressful situations helps transfer to classroom learning.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Journals, pencils/pens/colored pencils, glue sticks, portable whiteboard, whiteboard marker and eraser, 1 journal bin for each group, variety of books to read outside, preprinted and cut sentence starters, glue sticks.
- Pre-chosen reading area in the outdoors such as a grassy area under a tree, or the gather circle in an outdoor classroom. Alternate areas would be a room with a good view of natural surroundings outside, or a room with several plants and a mural of a natural area like a forest, or even some outdoor landscape posters.

Overview and Class Information:

- The lesson content is to help students enhance cognitive function, become more self-aware of feelings, work to self-regulate stress and anxiety, and become more focused through yoga practice.
- Students in this class are English Language Learners from Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Groups will be with same grade but may split into groups as needed.

Lesson Vocabulary:

- Vocabulary and definitions in Appendix F.  
Vocabulary should be pre-taught, then revisited as necessary.
- Pre-picked vocabulary from each story. Pre-teach at the beginning then point out during the reading as needed.

Procedure for Lessons:

- Connect with school staff or the principal to figure out where you will be able to conduct your outdoor lessons.
- Start your outdoor reading lessons within the first two weeks of school if possible. Give the classroom teachers the survey (Appendix A) and ask if they can return it within the week on the students they have, and also give them the parent survey (Appendix D) to send home with students. The surveys will be given out again at mid and end of year, or with grading quarters. You will also need to have journals ready. If you want to make your own journals refer to Appendix I.
- The first part of these lessons will be to pick out the books you will use with your students outdoors. I have included some books I have used with K-3 students in Appendix H. This would be a good time to connect with the classroom teacher as they may have some advice on books as well. I like to look at standards and gauge my book choice from them.
- After the book is chosen, these are the things I prepare before reading the stories. I use many of the strategies from the book *120 Content Strategies for English Language Learners* by Jodi Reiss. Even though these strategies were written for ELL students, I think they are best practices with any students. Here are a few of my favorites.
  1. Strategy 21 Preview the Material. Read through the book so that you are familiar with it and as a result it will be easier to think about critical ideas from the story that you need to explain which will help build background before you read (Reiss, 2012, p. 64).
  2. Strategy 28 Limit your use of contractions. When you read through the story if you encounter contractions change them to reflect the two words it represents. Also think about this with explanations (Reiss, 2012, p. 72).
  3. Strategy 65 Pair-define-explain. Pick out any vocabulary you will need

to teach before beginning the book and use high frequency synonyms or familiar explanations used multiple times to help students in a natural way. Add those in as you read to refresh their memory as well (Reiss, 2012, p. 113)

4. Strategy 44 Plan questions in advance. Write higher order guiding questions ahead of time. Questions may include predictive, inferential, reflective, hypothetical, evaluative, and elaborative which help students with critical-thinking skills. I like to jot these on sticky notes and post on the pages where I will ask them (Reiss, 2012, p. 89).
5. Strategy 33 Use visuals. Look around the outside area and see how you can connect the story or even part of the story to your environment and bring the students up close and personal to help build background (Reiss, 2012, p. 76).
6. Strategy 9 Use think-alouds and modeling. Make up a sentence starter or pick one of the sentence starters from Appendix G so you are ready for journal time. Either write out the sentence on the portable whiteboard or print it on paper and hang it on the board. Use tape or magnets to attach to the board. If you may want to have sentences laminated so they last longer (Reiss, 2012, p. 50).
7. Strategy 55 Combine questioning strategies for best results. During your questioning allow for adequate wait time, use follow up questions as they apply, give verbal praise for answers or even attempted answers, and involve every student every day (Reiss, 2012, p. 96).
8. Strategy 45 Promote active listening. We want all students to tune in and be actively listening and thinking. To do this we can bring in several students at a time by asking follow up questions like asking students to say things another way, adding to what was just said, say the same thing in other words, or ask if they agree or disagree with ideas given (Reiss, 2012, p. 90).
9. Strategy 35 Be dramatic. Help students remember what you read to them by making your stories memorable with being dramatic for your students, having them role-play when possible. act things out, or doing readers theater. If students see you acting things out, they may be more inclined to try it as well (Reiss, 2012, p. 78).
10. Strategies 49,50,& 51 Allow enough wait time, give credit for trying, and offer face savers. These all go together. We always want to give wait time for our students to think. I give credit by saying things like “You are on the right track. Can anyone add to that? or That is a good thought, who else has a thought?” Then just being positive with any response right or wrong, just spin it in the right direction (Reiss, 2012, pp. 93-94).

#### **Plan For The First Day of Outside Reading & Writing**

- Once you have assembled your group, take them to the designated outdoor space. On the first meeting talk about outside expectations then the vocabulary

on Appendix F. Explain the benefits of the outdoors.

- Have students get settled by asking them to close their eyes and take a few deep breaths. Have them listen to the sounds outside. This should only be a few minutes long to help them focus and get ready for listening. Discuss one natural sound you heard if you have time.
- Introduce the journals and tell them that they will be writing in them and reflecting on some things we did or read about. Next have students fill out the survey (Appendix B or C) for the initial time. This will be the endpoint for the first day. This day is to get the students familiar with where they will be reading, and also review school rules of how to conduct themselves outside.

### **Plan for 2nd Day and Beyond**

- Take group outside and get situated in the area. Do a few minutes of breathing and listening.
- Take out the book you would like to use. Ask students if they have a guess as to what the story is about? Take a few guesses, and have a short discussion as to why they think that.
- Introduce the story vocabulary words you have pre-picked, explaining each one. After each explanation, ask if there are questions about that vocabulary word. Some may not understand explanations right away. Also see if you can connect the word to something they already know from a background experience.
- Start reading the story, asking guiding questions at a few places in the story. If students have an important question and you can answer fairly quickly, do that as you read as it will help with their learning. If the explanation requires a lengthy amount of time, tell students you will discuss at the end of the story.
- After reading, briefly sum up the story and discuss any questions. Then tie some part of the story to the landscape around you. Point out wildlife, plants, seeds, rocks, and natural things that surround them. Ask what they already know about these things to see if you can tie examples into student backgrounds as well.
- Next, read your sentence starter for journal writing with the students. Discuss some possible ways to finish the sentence starter writing. These discussions can start with Think-Pair-Share, then sharing with the group. You may want to assign partners ahead of time. You don't have to discuss sentence starters every day but some days it will be more helpful, and it will definitely help the younger students. Discussing sentence starters for many weeks before expecting them to be self sufficient is a good idea.
- Pass out journals and have students write down the sentence starter then write their added thoughts. They can also draw pictures. Kindergarteners may want to start the year with only drawing. You may also want to have sentence starters printed on small papers for Kindergarten (for later in the year) and first grade students to glue into their journals first, then they will be able to finish the sentence a little easier. You can wean them of the sentence starter paper props later in the year.

- Collect the journals and supplies, and return to the building.
- This will continue throughout the year. If you choose a book that you will not be able to finish in one gathering, be prepared to finish the next gathering. Those opportunities lend themselves very well to sentence starters such as; What I think will happen next in this story is....
- You may want to have special days once or twice a month when you have students sit and observe what is around them, then journal what they experienced. They can also journal how they feel. These journal entries can be shared with a partner and then with the group to explore commonalities and differences. You can also have older students read their partners observations and then in turn write a positive note to their partner about what they just read. These interactions are very good for building group relationships.
- Write notes in the student journals once a week or every other week to build an important one to one relationship with your students. They will look for your notes and even if they need help reading the note, they really learn a lot from them. In the notes, you will help them with the mechanics of writing by restating part of their writing in your reply to them. Never correct grammar or mechanics directly as you want journals to be very low key and non stressful. You want them to be very free in their writing.
- You will develop a nice routine with this activity. Also, keep in mind you will need to have your outdoor view place inside school or botanical room lined up as weather will surely inhibit you at some point. You can also have students be prepared to go outside by letting them know what appropriate clothing they will need.
- One last addition to this routine would be to have groups interact with a readers theater twice a year. The first one could be in December and the second one in May. Both months can be difficult for students to focus and having them practice a readers theater peaks interest. There are many places in the internet to obtain readers theater scripts for free, or you can type up a story yourself making sure there are enough parts for all children.

Assessments:

Formative assessment will be used with this activity.

- Journal writing
- Observation of students in group oral discussions and their participation in Think-Pair-Share.
- Self assessment surveys

Class information to consider:

- Groups of students may want to be mixed or geared towards high groups and then lower groups. Whatever works best for students involved.
- Some students may be needy, so consider physical location of them in proximity to you and other distractions.



- Monitor frustration levels frequently to give extra help as needed.

Differentiation qualities of this activity:

- Each student is monitored at their current level. Students do not need to be on the same level to participate together as a group or think-pair-share. They can try in writing and discussions with help as needed.
- Outcomes will be different with each student according to their level of proficiency. Students do not need to have the same outcomes.

Possible difficulties with activity:

- Some difficulties may arise due to inclement weather. Some environmental outdoor classrooms have shelters, which may be an option, otherwise having an alternate location lined up for class is important.
- Some students may need more sheltered instruction than others for lessons.
- Some students will need more help formulating ideas to write and/or draw. Sentence starters may be important and students willing to share may help others with ideas. One student copying an idea from another student can be very helpful moving forward with their own ideas.

**APPENDIX A**  
Teacher survey

Circle the time of year (circle one): Beginning      Middle      Ending

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Teachers,

Please rate how you feel this student performs in your class at this time.

Thank you!!

How much of the time do you think this student engages in the following:

(Please put a mark (X) on the line to indicate your observation level at this time)

- |  | Not at all | Sometimes | Most of the time |
|--|------------|-----------|------------------|
| 1. Gives attention during instructions |            |           |                  |
| 2. Works on an individual task         |            |           | _____            |
| 3. Appropriately works with others     |            |           | _____            |
| 4. Has ability to read to self         |            |           | _____            |
| 5. Completes in class work             |            |           | _____            |
| 6. Asks appropriate questions          |            |           | _____            |
| 7. Expresses feelings appropriately    |            |           | _____            |
| 8. Follows directions                  |            |           | _____            |
| 9. Asks for help when needed           |            |           | _____            |

Please write any additional notes here that may be helpful:

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**APPENDIX B**  
2nd & 3rd Grade Survey

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This is my \_\_\_\_\_ survey for the school year.  
beginning      middle      ending

- Please circle one face that shows how you feel about these questions.  
(Teachers read to students as they follow along)

1. How do you feel about school?   
2. How do you feel about your classmates?   
3. How do you feel about your teacher?   
4. How do you feel about reading?   
5. How do you feel about asking questions in class?   
6. How do you feel about talking in class?   
7. How do you feel about listening to your teacher?   
8. How do you feel about doing your school work?   
9. Do you think good things happen at school?   

































**APPENDIX C**  
Kindergarten and 1st grade Survey

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

This is survey number **1 2 3** for the school year. (Help students circle one number)

- All of the questions will be read to students.

Circle how you feel:

1. How do you feel about  school ?   
2. How do you feel about classmates  ?   
3. How do you feel about your teacher  ?   
4. How do you feel about reading  ?   
5. How do you feel about asking questions  in class?   
6. How do you feel about talking  in class?   
7. How do you feel about listening  to your teacher?   
8. How do you feel about doing your school work  ?   

**APPENDIX D**  
**Parent survey**

Thank you for taking this survey. This survey will help gather more complete information about your child and their learning.

Time of year : \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

- Please circle the phrase which best describes how you think your child is at this time.

1. Has ability to pay attention to instructions;    Not at all    Sometimes    Most of the time

2. Has ability to work on task;    Not at all    Sometimes    Most of the time

3. Appropriately works with others;    Not at all    Sometimes    Most of the time

4. Can read to themselves;    Not at all    Sometimes    Most of the time

5. Completes schoolwork;    Not at all    Sometimes    Most of the time

6. Asks questions;    Not at all    Sometimes    Most of the time

7. Expresses appropriate feelings;    Not at all    Sometimes    Most of the time

8. Can follow directions;    Not at all    Sometimes    Most of the time

9. Asks for help;    Not at all    Sometimes    Most of the time

- Please write anything else you would like me to know about your child.

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**APPENDIX E**

## Sentence starters for journal writing

- When I use these sentence starters I write or print them on long paper in large font to post up on the portable whiteboard when I need them. Sentence starters are great for all grade levels as it helps students practice reading, writing, spelling, focus, and cognition. Even my young students can copy sentence starters and add to them with words and pictures.
1. Today I felt...
  2. Today I thought about...
  3. Things that make me feel anxious are...
  4. My favorite part of this activity today was...
  5. Some ways I honor myself are...
  6. Something that brings me joy is...
  7. Today I had a ...
  8. My focus today is...
  9. Something I noticed today is...
  10. A problem I am having is...
  11. Something I need help with is...
  12. What I love about this activity is...
  13. When I need help with something I...
  14. This activity helps my body feel...
  15. When I focus on my breath I feel...
  16. This activity is helping me...
  17. This activity is helping me in my classroom with...
  18. Things I heard during this activity are...
  19. I want to get better at this activity because...
  20. This activity helps my brain feel...
  21. Something I would like to tell you is...
  22. The things I am doing really well are...
  23. I can feel proud that I am...
  24. When I feel I am struggling I...
  25. My dream is to...
  26. It can be very hard for me to...
  27. When I work hard in school I feel...
  28. Something I love about myself is...
  29. Something I really want to share is...
  30. Writing in my journal helps me...

## APPENDIX F

### Vocabulary

This list is intended to be a possible list of vocabulary words. You may want to add more when you need to and revisit definitions where appropriate as needed, or you may even have your own explanations for vocabulary words. These explanations are in my own words for young students based on definitions from *The Merriam Webster Dictionary* (1995).

- Anxiety - to have concerns or unhappy thoughts about something.
- Breathe - to have air go into the lungs, then out of the lungs.
- Cognitive fatigue - a kind of brain tiredness that makes it harder to do things
- Cognitive function - to become aware of and understand
- Focus - concentration or thinking about one thing at a time
- Mindfulness - thinking about what is right now, in the present moment
- Observation - to look at and notice or think about very carefully
- Present - to have yourself think about only what is right now (talk about past and future to put into context)
- Posture - to sit with your back straight and relax other parts of the body
- Relax - letting your muscles be loose, not tight
- Restorative - giving yourself new positive strength in health and well-being
- Stress - thoughts or unhappy feelings that can make you do or say things that are unwanted or make choices you know you shouldn't make

**APPENDIX G**

## Sentence Starters for Reading Journaling

- When I use these sentence starters I write or print them on long paper in large font to post up on the portable whiteboard when I need them. Sentence starters are great for all grade levels as it helps students practice reading, writing, spelling, focus, and cognition. Even my young students can copy sentence starters and add to them with words and pictures.
1. I know where this story takes place because...
  2. I wonder what....
  3. I can compare myself to part of this story by.....
  4. If I were part of this story I would be....
  5. Another question I have about this story is....
  6. I loved the way....
  7. This story made me feel.....because.....
  8. I wonder why.....
  9. Something I learned in this story is.....
  10. A part of this story made me think about....
  11. My favorite part of the story was....
  12. The worst part of the story was....
  13. I think the author is a good writer because...
  14. I think the most important part of this story is...
  15. This story makes me think about...
  16. This story reminds me of....
  17. The biggest idea in the story was...
  18. I think the author wants me to think about....
  19. I think the next part of this story will be....
  20. Something I noticed right away was.....
  21. If I was in this story I would be.....
  22. Something I would change in this story is....



## APPENDIX H

## Book list for some books I have used

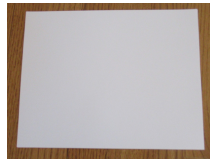
- Abuela* by Arthur Dorros, Illustrated by Elisa Kleven
- Animal Architects: Amazing Animals Who Build Their Homes* by Julio Antonio Blasco and Antonio Blasco
- Animal Senses: How Animals See, Hear, Taste, Smell, and Feel* by Pamela Hickman and Pat Stephens
- Be Nice to Spiders* by Margaret Bloy Graham
- A Carp for Kimiko* by Virginia Kroll, Illustrated by Katherine Roundtree
- The Caterpillar and the Polliwog* by Jack Kent
- Blueberries for Sal* by Robert McCloskey
- Everybody Needs A Rock* by Byrd Baylor, Illustrated by Peter Parnall
- Fine Feathered Friends: All About Birds* by Tish Rabe, Illustrated by Aristides Ruiz
- Have You Seen My Duckling?* by Nancy Tafuri
- Manatee Winter* by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld, Illustrated by Steven James Petruccio
- Many Biomes, One Earth* by Sneed B. Collard III, Illustrated by James M. Needham
- Miss Lady Bird's Wildflowers: How A First Lady Changed America* by Kathi Appelt, Illustrated by Joy Fisher Hein
- My Favorite Tree: Terrific Trees of North America* by Diane Iverson
- Mud City: A Flamingo Story* by Brenda Z. Guiberson
- No Roses For Harry!* by Gene Zion, Illustrations by Margaret Bloy Graham
- One Tiny Turtle* by Nicola Davies, Illustrated by Jane Chapman
- Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen
- Pileated Woodpeckers: Insect-Hunting Birds* by Laura Hamilton Waxman
- Seed School: Growing Up Amazing* by Joan Holub, Illustrated by Sakshi Mangal
- Song of the Swallows* by Leo Politi
- Shingebiss: An Ojibwe Legend Retold* by Nancy Van Laan, Woodcuts by Betsy Bowen
- The Story of the Jumping Mouse Retold* by John Steptoe
- Studying Soil* by Sally M. Walker
- Summer Birds: The Butterflies of Maria Merian* by Margarita Engle, Illustrations by Julie Paschkis
- The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle
- The Vegetable Alphabet Book* by Jerry Pallotta
- Wangari's Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa* by Jeanette Winter
- What Makes a Bird A Bird?* by May Garelick, Illustrations by Leonard Weisgard
- Where Once There Was A Wood* by Denise Fleming
- Why Frogs Are Wet* by Judy Hawes
- The Year at Maple Hill Farm* by Alice and Martin Provensen

## APPENDIX I

## How to make the homemade journal



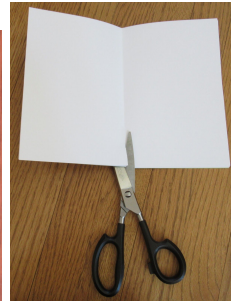
1. Assemble cover and pages.



2. Line up both cover and pages.



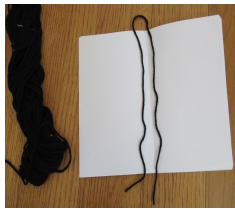
3. Fold in half.



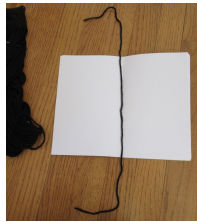
4. Open, & cut 1" slit on fold at bottom.



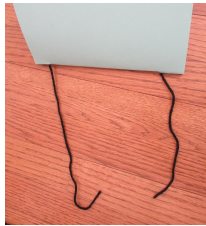
5. Cut 1" slit on fold at top.



6. Cut a piece of yarn a little longer than twice the size of the fold.



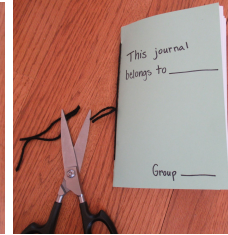
7. Lay yarn on inside fold and close journal.



8. Pull yarn through slits on cover sides.



9. Tie in a knot tightly and snip the long ends off.



10. Label the front of the journal

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