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Innovative Methods of teaching Yoga at the Primary Stage

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Abstract

Students, at the primary stage of education, may not be aware of common yoga terminology. Therefore, there is a need to teach yoga terms to them in simple and practical manner. This paper has been designed around the concept of the 'ABC of the Yoga Chart'. The efficacy of the chart was tested on 58 students of Classes I-III, aged between five and eight years, at a primary school in Kurukshetra, Haryana. The pre- and post-tests were conducted using paired t-test. The data obtained were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) technique and the results were found to be significant at $p < 0.001$. The study will be useful for policy makers and educationists, and help carry out further research in the area, especially, at the primary stage.

INTRODUCTION

Students at the primary stage need to be familiarised with various common yoga terms and concepts so that they may develop into healthy human beings. But most researches focus on practical intervention and ignore theoretical knowledge (Mendelson, et al., 2010; Sethi, et al., 2013; Bothe, et al., 2014; and Frank, et al., 2014). Therefore, it is imperative to

understand both the theoretical and practical aspects of yoga. The study focuses on educating students at the primary stage about basic yoga terminology and postures.

This paper gives a glimpse of the 'ABC of the Yoga Chart', designed and developed for primary stage students, studying in Classes I-III. It highlights that yoga terms may be simplified so that they are easily comprehensible to the students in the age group of

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five to eight years, and hence, easy to recall. The chart introduces basic yoga terminology through attractive illustrations, using each letter of the English alphabet.

These yoga terms, along with their meanings and illustrations, need to be included in the curriculum at the primary stage of education. Although yoga is taught in schools, the focus is only on teaching *asanas*. Not much importance is paid to the meaning and importance of each *asana*. It is, therefore, important to develop a simple module by which a young learner may learn and understand the basic terms used in yoga.

A module was developed to test the efficacy of the chart on students at the primary stage.

METHODOLOGY

A sample of 60 students of Classes I–III (20 students from each class) was selected randomly from a primary school in Kurukshetra district of Haryana. Initially, a pre-test was conducted. In the pre-test, the students were asked to look at the pictures printed on the yoga chart. They were, then, asked to fill in the blanks with 26 common yoga terms.

The marks scored by each student were treated as pre-test data.

The students were taught different postures and exercises with the help of the yoga chart for half-an-hour. They were asked to practise the Lotus posture (*padmasana*), chant 'Om', Quiet breathing, *Hasya* Yoga (laughing exercise), *Trataka* (gazing) and Prayer for the half-an-hour daily for the next five days, after which a post-test was conducted. In the post-test, Class I students were asked to match the pictures with the corresponding yoga terms (Figure 2), whereas, the students of Classes II and III were asked to fill in the blanks with yoga terms and match the pictures corresponding with those terms (Figure 3). The marks obtained were treated as post-test data for 58 students as two students were absent on the day the post-test was conducted.

The data, thus, obtained were analysed, using the SPSS version 25.

DESIGN

The chart depicts common yoga terms (based on the 26 letters of the English alphabet), along with corresponding illustrations (Figure 1).

A	ASANA		Stable and Blissful Yogic Posture	Web Reference I	H	HASYA YOGA		Laughing Internally	Web Reference VIII
B	BODY		1. Gross 2. Subtle 3. Causal	II	I	JEESHWER PRARIDHANA		Surrender to Almighty	IX
C	CHAKRA		Seven Power Points in the Body	III	J	JALA NETI		The Process of Cleansing Nasal Passage	X
D	DHYANA		Deeper stage of Concentration	IV	K	KAPAL BHATI		A type of Cleansing Process	XI
E	EAGLE POSE		Pose like Eagle (Garurasana)	V	L	LOTUS POSE		Pose Like Lotus (Padamasana)	XII
F	FIVE SENSES		Eyes, Ears, Nostrils, Skin & Tongue	VI	M	MANTRA		Sacred Chanting	XIII
G	GYAN MUDRA		Pose in which Knowledge is increased	VII	N	NAULI		A type of Cleansing Process	XIV
O	OM		The holy word to address God	Web Reference XV	U	UPNISHADS		Receiving wisdom by sitting near to guru/ by sacred texts	Web Reference XXI
P	PATANJALI		An author sage of Yoga philosophy	XVI	V	VEDAS		Oldest sacred Texts	XXII
Q	QUIET BREATHING		Breathing in a quiet way	XVII	W	WHEEL POSE		Pose Like wheel (Chakrasana)	XXIII
R	RISHI		A sage, who discovers internal Truths	XVIII	X	X-RAY VISION		The third eye vision	XXIV
S	SWADHYAYAE		Self-Study or study of scriptures	XIX	Y	YAMAS		Duties of a Yoga aspirant	XXV
T	TRATAKA		A Cleansing as well as Meditation technique	XX	Z	ZAZEN		Meditative Practice	XXVI

Figure 1: Yoga terms as depicted in the 'ABC of the Yoga Chart'

ASANA					HASYA YOGA				
BODY					IEESHWER PRANIDHANA				
CHAKRA					JALA NETI				
DHYANA					KAPAL BHATI				
EAGLE POSE					LOTUS POSE				
FIVE SENSES					MANTRA				
GYAN MUDRA					NAULI				
OM					VEDAS				
PATANJALI					WHEEL POSE				
QUIET BREATHING					X-RAY VISION				
RISHI					YAMAS				
SWADHYAYE					ZAZEN				
TRATAKA									
UPNISHADS									

Figure 2: A sample of the test for Class I

A_A_A					H_S_A YOGA				
BO_Y					IEESHW_R PRA_IDHANA				
C_A_RA					JA_A N_TI				
D_Y_NA					KA_AL BH_TI				
E_G_E P_SE					LO_US P_SE				
FI_E S_N_ES					MA_T_A				
GYA_ MU_RA					NA_LI				
O_					V_D_S				
PA_AN_AU					WH_EL P_SE				
QUI_T BREA_HING					X-R_Y VISIO_				
RI_HI					Y_M_S				
S_AD_YAE					ZA_EN				
T_A_KA									
U_NIS_ADS									

Figure 3: A sample of the test for the students of Classes II and III

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RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and paired sample 't-test' results are given in Table 1 and 2.

The calculated absolute value of paired 't' statistic was found to be 10.55 when compared with the table value of 3.29 at df 57, which was significant at $p < 0.001$ level of significance. As the calculated value of 't' was greater than the table value, so it may be argued that the media developed in the present study is significant and may be used as a teaching aid for students at the primary stage.

DISCUSSION AND LIMITATIONS

The study and the statistical 't-test' show the efficacy of the yoga chart in making the students understand the ABC of yoga. Some of the limitations, generally, pointed out in the study

are methodological limitations, including lack of randomisation, small samples, limited detail regarding the intervention and statistical ambiguities that curtail the ability to provide definite conclusions or recommendations (Serwacki and Cottone, 2012). However, these could be overcome by adopting an innovative means of teaching yoga.

CONCLUSION

Thus, it may be concluded that the yoga chart is innovative and capable of arresting the attention of young learners. The chart may also help enhance the learning and usage of basic yoga terminology in schools, *balwadis* and *anganwadis*. Even the *National Curriculum Framework (NCF)-2005* lays impetus on the importance of yoga and physical fitness in the school curriculum.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

	N	Mean	SD	Standard error
Pre-test	58	26.7931	11.94837	1.56890
Post-test	58	42.9224	6.21035	1.81546

Table 2: Paired sample 't-test'

Mean	SD	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (two tailed)
-16.12931	11.63840	-19.18947	-13.06915	-10.554	57	<0.001

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