

**PROJECT SMART PARTICIPANT TEAM REPORTS FOR FALL & SPRING SEMESTERS**  
**YOGA TEAM WITH IHE BARBARA BEYERBACH**  
**EDU 525 CREATING COLLABORATIVE SPACES FOR LEARNING**

**Participant's Name:** Alicia Mitchelson at Oswego HS, Oswego MS, CITI BOCES

- 1) **ACTION:** Describe specifically how the creating collaborative spaces for learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

Creating collaborative spaces for learning is incorporated into my project by working with teachers through yoga and attending project smart meetings at the Oswego High School once a month. I lead a large group of teachers at our meeting in breathing, and a guided relaxation. Yoga is held for 60 minutes after school. I collaborate with all school staff. (Counselors, teachers of different subject areas, librarians. Etc.) My goal is to empower teachers to spread and promote body-mind awareness with their students, and in their lives. The yoga practice weaves in postures, breathing, mindfulness, and meditation benefiting the overall health of all who practice. A goal I would like to work on to incorporate more of the theme into the schools is: adding a yoga and mindfulness class afterschool that collaborates with students who are interested/volunteer.

- 2) **RATIONALE:** Fully state your rationale for the project. Why is this work important?

I believe doing yoga and breathing exercises with teachers/staff after school is important because a lot of pressure is put on teachers daily whether it is caused by: faculty, students, testing, or parents. Teachers benefit with yoga and mindfulness in the schools. It helps maintain peace, and to not take home any stress.

- 3) **Evaluation:** What data will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

I will collect data through the teachers by interviews, evaluation forms, and direct communication each practice that we are together. Also, I journal each session of what we work on as a whole. Whether it be a certain theme, or a pose that is requested. For the teachers who are using yoga & mindfulness in the classroom I will share the hardships and benefits at the end of the year in a written document.

- 4) **Resources:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

No extra resources needed at this time. I use extra mats provided by Robyn Proud at CITI BOCES. Most teachers and staff bring their own. Funding has been allocated on the smart grant to provide all resources.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA ON TEACHER LEARNING:**

This year's Yoga in the schools was another success. One teacher explained, "Yoga helps me listen to my body and pay attention to the things that really matter. For me that is health, happiness and contentment."

I was able to reach out to new teachers. A good majority of the teachers/staff were beginners to yoga. The location and time was important and beneficial for those who are on the go right after work with their children, families, etc. A teacher wrote: "The location and time were so accommodating to me as a busy mom and professional. I would have not participated most likely if it were elsewhere."

I also participated in the monthly Project Smart meetings held at the Oswego High School. I offered body scans and guided mediations for those who wished to participate.

Teachers just like students have stress. Everybody experiences stress in their lives. I believe having the opportunity to hold yoga classes twice a week in the Oswego High School had many benefits. The benefits include: Stress reduction, anxiety relief, peace of mind, grounding, better focus, being present, overall fitness,

increased flexibility, relief from chronic pain, and many others. A lot of teachers began incorporating yoga and mindfulness into their everyday life. One teacher explained: "I have started to work on breathing on my own, especially doing some light meditation before bed. I try to focus on reducing stress and not worrying about the things I cannot change."

I was able to bring teachers together afterschool all for a common purpose. To breathe and unwind. A safe, noncompetitive place open to all faculty and staff. Creating a community and bond within our class. Teachers and staff looked forward to taking the time for themselves each week. One teacher explained: "I love how no matter my skill level, I always feel like I belong in class despite being awesomely challenging! I never feel judged- always welcomed."

#### **ANALYSIS OF DATE ON STUDENT LEARNING:**

I had the wonderful opportunity this spring to collaborate with Citi Boces New Visions Allied Health. A challenging program for seniors interested in pursuing a career in healthcare. Classes are held on the SUNY Oswego campus giving students the first opportunity to experience as college students.

I asked students before class what their definition of yoga was. A lot of answers were stretching, relaxation, less stress, and breathing. A new experience for students. The first time we met was more talking and less poses. I introduced the students to yoga benefits, origin of yoga, and some background about myself. Students were eager to learn more!

The teacher Emily Kirch allowed a whole month to be dedicated to mindfulness. Lots of giggles the first class as we moved into Cat-Cow, tree pose, triangle, and warrior poses. They were loving it. I had no idea what to expect. Every student participated. I ended with a relaxation that the students ended up craving more. I was invited back!

I made sure to extend the relaxation next time. A lot of students fell asleep as the sounds of crashing waves played through the speakers in the distance. I led a guided beach mediation. We were connected. All with our breath. It was beautiful. The second session I dedicated to grounding poses referring to an overall state of well-being. The chance for students to slow down from their busy, stressful schedules. Some of the grounding poses were: Mountain pose, down-dog, Seated Cat-cow, Childs pose, Warrior 2, and warrior 3. I left each session with so much gratitude. The students taught me so much as I was teaching them. I hope to be able to offer my teaching again to high school students in the future.

Ms. Kirch explained to me that she had never seen her students so focused and relaxed after the first session.

Yoga in the schools is beneficial for both students, and teachers. Improving concentration, academic performances, self-confidence, body posture, compassion, self-care and many more.

**Participant's Name:**

**Elizabeth Russell at Sheridan Preparatory Academy**

**ACTION:** Describe specifically how the Creating Collaborative Spaces for Learning themes are incorporated into your project to cultivate and support student learning.

To cultivate and support student learning, I will work this year on developing and delivering resources and practices to facilitate student-led yoga and mindfulness practices in the classroom. Resources will include cards or sheet that the students can use to lead their peers in practices. My hope is that facilitating student-led practices will not only foster leadership in individuals but increase collaboration and community among students through peer led practice.

**RATIONALE:** Fully state your **rationale** for the project. Why is this work important?

This work is important in continuing to foster and support mindfulness practices in the classroom. I think it is especially important for both students and teachers to learn and have confidence to practice mindfulness and mindful movement or yoga on their own (without a dedicated yoga teacher in the room) in order to make the practices part of regular everyday classroom routine.

**RESPONSIBILITIES/TIMELINE:** Identify a series of **action steps** you will take to complete your project. Next to each step, identify person(s) **responsible** for carrying out that task. For each step also identify your **timeline** (during what month(s) you plan to complete each step).

I will visit Sheridan in the fall and again in the spring to deliver training and student-led practice resources. This will be completed by me in December and May.

**EVALUATION:** What **data** will you collect that shows the impact of your project on teacher and student learning? How will you document student learning? Teacher learning?

Teacher feedback will be collected to assess the impact of this work.

**RESOURCES:** What resources will you need for this project? What costs, if any, will be incurred? What are possible sources of funding for needed resources?

None