

Enhancing Learning Through Yoga Practice

Specific learning Objectives

At the end of the session Participants will be able to

1. Define and describe briefly what yoga practice means.
2. Experience and demonstrate at least 3 basic practices in Yoga
3. Describe the connection between theory of TA and Yoga.

Session Outline

Contracting - 5 minutes

Introduction to Yoga - 10 minutes

Parallels between Yoga and TA - 10 minutes

Basic Yoga Practices - 20 minutes

Interaction and clarification -10 minutes

Feedback - 5 minutes

Introduction to Yoga

Meaning - Yoga means Union in Sanskrit. *Yoga practice is defined as the method to achieve the UNION.*

What needs to be united? For this we need to understand the ancient understanding of existence/cosmos. That is the Yogic science.

How to achieve the union? Classically there are four methods of achieving yoga or union or four different types of Yoga. They are 1. Bhakthi Yoga, 2. Karmayoga, 3. Jnanayoga 4. Rajayoga. Typically the term yoga refers to the fourth method or Rajayoga.

Yogic Science – an ancient scientific method that has evolved from the ‘Samkhya’ the oldest school of Philosophy. Samkhya means ‘that which can be counted’. Evolutionary principles can be counted according to Samkhya.

The Samkhya philosophy teaches that Existence is Non dual. The manifest world is of duality and so the theory of evolution of the duality. All gross matter (including human body) is made of five elements namely earth, water, air, fire and ether (space). These have evolved from subtle elements like smell, taste, touch, form, and sound. These in turn have evolved from ‘Prakrithi’ the unconscious, unmanifest nature. Prakrithi is in a state of equilibrium of three universal qualities (Gunas) namely Sattva, Rajas and Tamas in unmanifest state. The equilibrium changes and manifestations happen when ‘Purusha’ the conscious meets Prakrithi. Doshas are life forces formed by combinations of the gross elements. Levels of Health in manifest life is a function of Doshas. This forms basis of therapeutics in this system of science.

The aim of yoga practice is to realize the existential non duality by attaining union of the conscious and the unconscious and thus the end of duality experience to one of Union.

Method to achieve Union.

Prof. Marina Rajan Joseph M.D.TSTA (Edu)

Presented at the “Promoting Equality and OKness: Healing Divisions in our World” 2019 Joint Transactional Analysis Conference- 1st August 2019-11am-12.30 - Raleigh, North Carolina, USA

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Since the duality experience is as a result of the imbalance of the Gunas and resultant activities of Chitta /Manas (mind) evolved from Prakrithi, to achieve union, manas must stop activity.

Patanjaly's definition of Yoga is "Yoga - Chitta vritti Nirodha."

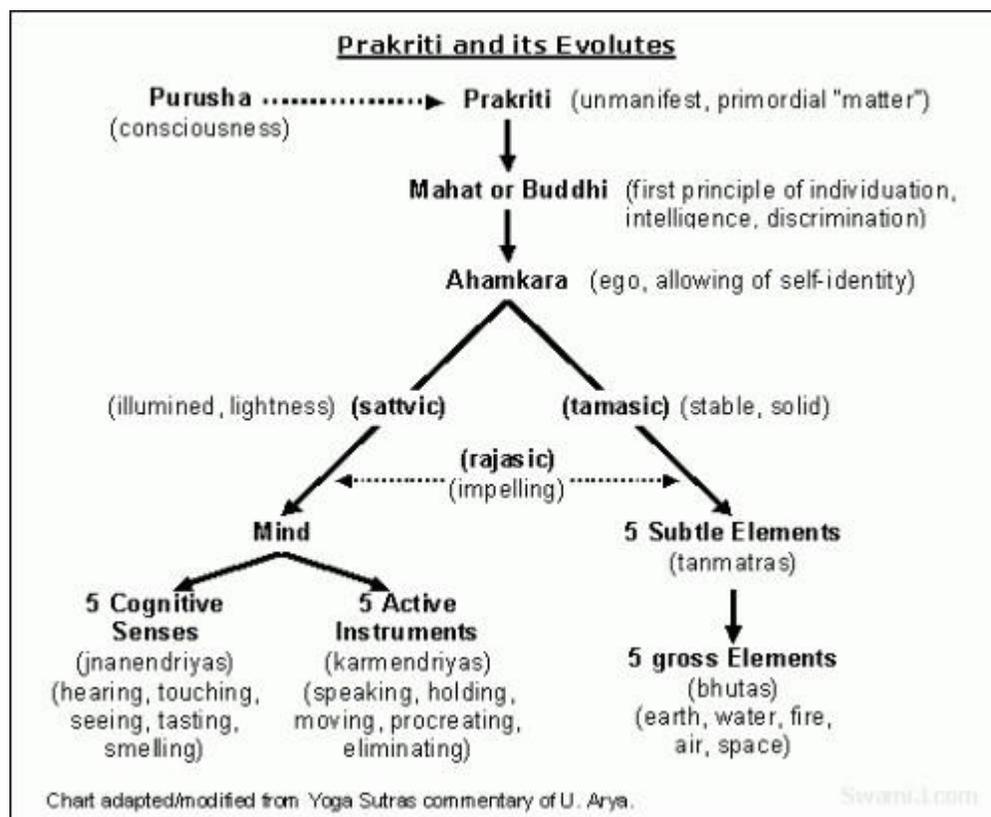
How can the Chitta / Manas stop activity or Chitta Vritti Nirodha be attained?

Since gross body - gross elements – come to existence through the subtle elements which are the sensations operated by manas, to stop activities of the mind, first body must become still. Only a healthy body can learn to be still. When body is healthy and learns to be still, slowly mind will become still or stop activities. Then balance in the three Gunas is achieved which in turn brings clarity on the singularity in existence through Union of conscious and unconscious.

This can be understood through learning the theory of evolution and devolution in Ancient science.

Flow chart showing Theory of Evolution of Matter from Energy

According to Samkhya Philosophy



The Eight Limbs of Yoga Practice –

Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Prathyahara, Dharana, Dhayna and Samadhi.

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1. Yama and Niyama are dos and donts of Yoga practice or the ethical and moral codes of the science.
2. Asanas are about body awareness and skills to keep body fit and still.
3. Pranayama is about breath awareness and
4. Prathyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi are progressive steps of inward reflection and selfrealization.

Knowledge of the Gunas and Doshas and how they manifest in life, helps one to practice yoga in the most appropriate way to benefit most from the practice.

Educational TA and Yoga

Transactional Analysis is a theory of how the human mind develops and so how the pathologies of mind can be treated or prevented and capabilities of the mind be developed.

Educational Applications of TA are particularly aiming at preventing mental problems and developing human capability. Health of body and mind are understood to be connected.

Practice of Yoga exercises or ‘ASANA’ and Pranayama are aimed at developing healthy body and vitalizing the body.

Practice of Self learning or ‘Swadhyaya’ is one aspect of Niyama the second step in Yoga. Self-awareness in TA practice may be equated to this. The first two steps in Yoga – Yama and Niyama - may be considered similar to Contracting for Ethical TA practice. Here the Okay- Okay position of the Practitioner is of key importance to invite the client to okayness and contracting and ethical commitment. In Yoga ‘yama is about client’s relationship to outside world and Niyama about relationship to self.

Heightened self-Awareness in TA is known to open the mind to higher dimensions of existence like spiritual existence. Many psychosomatic health problems are seen to be resolved as a result or in other words physical wellbeing improves from mental awareness!

TA reaches the body through the mind! Yoga access the mind through Body.

In the yogic practice the fifth step ‘Prathyahara’ is to learn to still the body through withdrawal of outward sense organs. Once the body learns to be still Prathyahara is about introspection and eventually leads to Dhyana where mind becomes still. To achieve this consistent and committed practice is required.

In TA practice too consistency and commitment are important to achieve any benefit.

How can Yoga enhance leaning?

TA practice and Yoga Practice complement each other.

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- Basic practices in Yoga Asanas initially improve physical wellbeing and mental wellbeing follows.
- Asanas may be comparable to body therapy techniques. Pranayama works with breath. Both energises the body.
- Improved self-awareness enhances quality of learning as well as teaching and that is why TA developed huge education application component.

Relaxation practices and meditation practices of Yoga helps to develop equanimity and emotional balance. These are known to enhance learning ability.

A Table to compare similarities in TA and Yoga

TA	Yoga
Ethical principles of practice Okay- Okay stance Self Awareness	Yama & Niyama (dos and donts) To self and Outside world 'Swadhyaya'
Access body through mind	Access mind and higher dimensions through Body practice
Heightened Self Awareness leads to Spiritual Awareness	Body and Mind stilled to access higher levels of existence
Commitment and consistency of practice required	Commitment and consistency of practice absolute requirement
Committed practitioners becomes trainers	Committed practitioners becomes 'Guru'
Clients and trainees benefit from the expertise of trainers	Clients and trainees benefit from mastery of the Guru.

Neurophysiology of learning and factors facilitating learning

- Today we know the mechanics of learning process at the neural level.
- The understanding of body brain connections rather than separateness underscores how mental capabilities may be accessed through 'body work' (Asanas and pranayama fit here).
- 'Brain based learning' is a big movement in current educational scenario.
- Learning for the Joy of learning and activities or engagements for the joy of 'doing' rather than for material gains are paradigm shift in education today.

Integrating yoga practices appropriately can thus enhance learning process because the theories are complementing each other.

It is a rediscovery of ancient wisdom through modern methods.

A chart comparing the Terms used in Ancient science and Modern Science

Samkhya (Ancient Scienc)	Modern Science
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Purusha >	Consciousness
Prakriti >	Electromagnetic Ocean
Buddhi >	Intelligent intellect
Ahamkara >	Ego Individuality
Manas >	Sensory Perceptive Mind
Gnanendriyas >	Senses of Perception
Objects perceived are composed of:	Material world composed of:
Akasha	Electromagnetic energy
Vayu	Force of Repulsion
Tejas	? Heat /Fire
Apas	Condensation
Earth	Solidifying Gravity

Given references supports this conclusion with evidence

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2. Manasi Bera et al (2017) Role of yoga in psychological correlates of learning ability in school children, Yoga MIMAMSA Volume : 49 | Issue : 1 | Page : 13-16
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4. Amy Novotney (2009) Yoga as a practice tool, Monitor on Psychology Vol 40, No. 10) <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2009/11/yoga>
5. <https://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/classroom-resources/brain-based-learning-explained/>

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