

Self-Transforming to an Anxious-Free Mind: Practicing Yoga Techniques in Auditing in Higher Education Context

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Purpose: When engaging with literature on the mental wellness of students the common message in the discourse is that students are stressed and anxious. However, they are receptive to learning environments that encourage a calm and relaxed state of mind. The purpose of my study was to find out how I could use yoga techniques that would promote mental wellness.

Aim: To investigate whether yoga can provide students an opportunity to self-transform to an anxious-free mind and to promote quality learning. The study is experimental and a first of a kind initiative in Auditing at a South African higher education institution.

Research design: Action research was the design of choice. It was complemented by an auto-ethnographic approach. Questionnaires were used to generate both quantitative and qualitative data: The Perceived Stress Scale Survey (PSSS) and self-designed questionnaires related to students' experience of yoga techniques employed in class. In addition, the qualitative data were enriched by means of photo evidence.

Findings and implications: The notion that yoga is a helpful tool to self-transform one's mind from anxious to calm is supported by the results of the questionnaires. The photographs show visually how students reacted to practicing the yoga techniques in class. The question each educator in higher education should engage with, is: How are we responsive to the wellness of self and students?

Keywords: Action research, auto-ethnography, constructivism, meaning-making, mental wellness, mind-set, self-transform, yoga.