

# Harmonious Learning: Yoga in the English Language Classroom

Our students learn in a world filled with complex physical, psychological, and emotional pressures (Howard and Johnson 2004; Kyriacou 2001, Pithers and Soden 1999; Wiley 2000). Some learners are coping with lives marred by war, poverty, and political or social unrest. Other learners have stable learning environments but are personally beset by anxiety, stress, and too much competition. Furthermore, technological tools, although highly useful in our personal and professional lives, can sometimes have negative effects. They can distract learners, eroding their powers of concentration and distancing them from their physical and intellectual selves. And it's not only learners who face these challenges. Teachers, too, struggle to balance their personal and professional lives and to cope with heavy teaching loads, overcrowded classrooms, and changing technologies and curricula.

## Harmonious language learning classrooms

This article looks at one way for teachers to make classrooms emotion-

ally, mentally, and physically healthy places to learn—places where tensions and stresses are lessened and where teachers and students are concentrating, yet relaxed. *Harmonious language learning classroom* is the term I coined to describe this kind of language learning environment. In order to create harmonious language learning classrooms, teachers must first reduce anxiety, stress, and negative competition amongst their learners. In addition, teachers need to accept their learners for what and who they are. Teachers who teach in harmonious learning classes respect their students' different language learning styles and emphasize a healthy intellectual and emotional attitude toward one's self and others. When I picture such a classroom, I see teachers who value and promote the physical health of all their students. Only through equal attention to and care of the intellect, the emotional life, and the physical body—none of which can be separated from the others—can this be accomplished.

One way to promote mentally, emotionally, and physically balanced

learners is through the use of yoga. I suggest that by utilizing simple yoga poses in English language lessons, teachers can teach various aspects of the English language in a fun and nonthreatening way. With this approach, learners use their bodies to learn, practice, and anchor the language being taught at the same time as they reduce anxiety and help care for mind, body, and spirit.

### What is yoga?

Yoga is a practice that has existed for thousands of years. The word *yoga* comes from Sanskrit. It means *union* or *bridge*, signifying that the practice of yoga brings together the practitioner's body, mind, and spirit. Yoga's exact history and origins are uncertain; however, it is known that yoga came from the East. Yoga consists of hundreds of physical postures, called *asanas*. These postures, which are held for various periods of time, combined with breathing techniques (*pranayama*) and meditation (*dyana*), bring about the goals of a sound body and a quiet, peaceful mind.

Hatha yoga, one of several branches of yoga, is the most widely practiced form of yoga in North America. Given that I am most familiar with Hatha yoga, it is the branch of yoga that I generally refer to in this article. Hatha yoga postures are divided into three types: static asanas, which promote concentration and power; dynamic asanas, which coordinate body movements; and breathing and relaxation asanas, which focus on resting and relaxing the body. When practiced over time, Hatha yoga brings many benefits. The spine becomes supple, and circulation increases in organs, glands, and tissues. The practitioner gains strength, flexibility, endurance, and balance. Also, concentration improves, and feelings of stress and anxiety are reduced.

### Yoga and the English language classroom

So where does English language teaching and learning intersect with yoga in the classroom? How can using yoga lead to a harmonious environment and effective language learning? I have been exploring these questions for years.

I became interested in the intersection between yoga and English language teaching while attending both a graduate program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Lan-

guages (TESOL) and a yoga teacher training program. Each of the programs required me to design a short internship; for one I was to practice teaching yoga, and for the other I was to teach English as a second language (ESL). Because of an interesting experience I had had in Italy two years earlier, I thought it would be interesting to combine the two assignments. While living in Italy, in the mornings I attended Italian language classes in which I studied grammar, vocabulary, and the four language skills. Two afternoons a week, I went to a health club and took an isometric stretch class that was conducted all in Italian. Learning by doing, and especially moving my body, anchored the Italian language that I was studying in the morning class in a new and exciting way for me. This particular experience dramatically enhanced my learning of Italian and left a very positive language learning impression. I decided to duplicate that experience with my internship project by linking the practice of yoga and the learning of English in the same class.

When the time came to carry out the two internships, I approached the Quaker Meeting House in my community because I knew that it was looking for activities for newcomers to the United States. These newcomers were all Latina mothers of small children attending the Quaker Meeting House's preschool program. I pitched my idea by offering to volunteer to teach these mothers a short course using yoga as a vehicle for learning English. The activity organizers were open to this novel idea and approved my plan.

I modeled these lessons on the Total Physical Response (TPR) approach to teaching a foreign or second language. Originally developed in the early 1970s by an American professor of psychology, James Asher, TPR is based on the theory that a learner's memory is enhanced and aided through association with physical movement. One of the tenets of this theory is that mother tongue language acquisition in very young children occurs when children respond physically to parents' commands. However, the use of TPR can be adapted to other learners, including older children and adults. The TPR approach to teaching language is primarily concerned (at least initially) with the receptive skill of listening and is linked to physical actions designed

to reinforce comprehension of specific key vocabulary and grammar (Cameron 2001; Peck 2001; Richards and Rodgers 2001). In later years, this approach was extended successfully to include TPR storytelling, a multi-skills approach to teaching English.

A typical classical TPR activity contains oral commands by the teacher, such as “Open the door,” “Stand up,” and “Turn around,” at the same time that he or she models the commands. Language learners then carry out the commands by physically performing the movements while listening to the teacher’s oral commands. With a certain amount of repetition, these basic commands can be assimilated quite easily by the learners. Accurately reproducing the commands themselves is more gradual. Over time the teacher no longer has to model the physical action or say the commands, and the learners can give them to others. An example of a familiar TPR-type lesson for many English teachers is the chant-like game of “Simon Says,” in which the teacher (a leader) calls out commands to learners to touch or point to different parts of the body.

When teaching at the Quaker Meeting House, I designed lessons that were guided by fundamental principles of TPR and organized according to a classical TPR lesson, with some modifications. Instead of common TPR commands such as “Go to the door, open the door, close the door,” I gave simple commands to practice yoga postures. For language, I focused on the key nouns (parts of the body), verbs, prepositions, adverbs, and adjectives found in the instructions for moving into and out of a posture. For example, in a simple version of the asana called *Palm Tree Pose*, the instructions consisted of three commands: (1) stand with your arms above your head; (2) put your palms together; and (3) balance on your toes. Verbs taught were *stand*, *put*, and *balance*. Nouns taught were *palm tree* (*palms*), *arms*, *head*, and *toes*. I also taught the preposition *above* and the adverb *together*. To facilitate student learning of all the postures, I did pre-teaching of simple one-word commands such as *observe*, *practice*, *repeat*, and *relax*. To teach the Palm Tree pose, the movements required for it, and the English language embedded in it, I first silently modeled the pose and asked the learners to only observe. After I modeled the posture, I modeled again, also giving the

instructions orally. I then asked the learners to make the same movements with me while I repeated the instructions orally. If time allowed, I repeated this phase two to three times. Next, I orally gave the instructions, and the learners listened and followed the instructions by moving into the pose.

The key vocabulary and each of the instructions, in sentence form, were written on a flip chart for learners to read. I pronounced and pointed to each word, and the learners repeated after me. Then I pointed to a phrase and modeled the movement. Finally I pointed to a word or phrase, and the learners (as a group or individually) pointed to the body part or made the movement required of the command. If serious challenges in pronunciation, listening, or reading comprehension occurred, I reviewed the word or phrase for the learners.

I taught or reviewed two or three poses in each lesson and made sure to recycle each pose in subsequent lessons. The main objective was to create a harmonious language environment where the young mothers learned to comprehend and speak some English in a non-threatening, relaxed atmosphere that was healthy for their emotional, mental, and physical health. As a supplement, I provided one-page handouts with simple illustrations of the poses, a list of the key vocabulary, and the instructions. Learners could take the handouts home for additional practice with the language or the poses, if they wanted.

During the same period when I was teaching English through yoga, I began teaching another group of adults in a beginning level language class. The latter took place in a traditional ESL classroom, one with a set curriculum and textbook. In the traditional class students seemed more anxious, shy, and hesitant to speak than their counterparts in the English through yoga lessons. Many struggled to read passages from the textbook or to pronounce vocabulary words. And although I utilized TPR in the lessons, the actions were ones normally associated with that approach; they were not as authentic to the class activities as the postures were to the English through yoga lessons.

On reflection, it was clear that the class in which I taught English through yoga was more fun and relaxing than the traditional class, not only for the students but also for me, the teacher. Although English language

was both taught and learned, it was not necessarily the focus. What the students and I were concentrating on were the poses, the movements, and the understanding of those movements. Moments of silence were not only appreciated but also an essential part of the lesson. The learners and I both had time to quiet our minds and to contemplate what we were doing, not just after the lesson, but during the lesson as well. These unique aspects of the lesson, missing from the traditional classroom, were beneficial to all and led, I suggest, to more effective teaching and learning.

### **Integrating yoga into the English language lesson**

How, when, and for what reasons do teachers appropriately integrate yoga into the language classroom? Teaching English through the practice of yoga can be done for as briefly as a few seconds, a few minutes, or as long as the entire class time. This decision is up to you, the teacher, or the type of program in which you teach. If your curriculum doesn't allow time for yoga-type activities, or if you are curious and want to experiment but aren't yet ready to commit to teaching physical postures, the following mini-activity may be useful. It needs neither time nor space, it enhances learning, and it provides a starting point for creating a harmonious language learning environment.

The mini-activity is this: Simply ring a bell or gong and ask for a moment of silence from your learners. Ringing the bell or gong can be done as class begins simply as a means for you and the learners to collect your thoughts and to leave your worries outside the classroom door; it can also bring focus to the language lesson. Or you can ring the bell in the middle of a lesson when learners need to refocus. You can also try it at the end of the lesson for learners to gather their thoughts and consolidate their learning.

Another way of integrating a small dose of yoga into the English lesson is to teach one or two simple poses at the beginning of a lesson as a warm-up. These activities serve to focus or relax learners as they prepare for more rigorous language tasks. Mini-lessons like this can also be carried out mid-lesson to reenergize or calm learners or to wind down or bring closure to a lesson.

If specific language found in a yoga activity is related to the curriculum or chapter in your textbook, or if yoga interests your learners, then teaching with yoga can be done for longer periods of class time. For instance, if vocabulary words about the body or verbs of motion are being explicitly taught or practiced, then yoga activities could potentially take up a complete lesson. It's also possible that yoga could be integrated throughout an entire unit. (See Appendix 1 for yoga-type activities and suggestions on ways to build language activities around them.)

You may question whether you can sensibly teach yoga if you have large classes. Ideally, teachers would have small groups of students and large, airy rooms with plenty of space to stretch out. Unfortunately, this is not the reality of most classrooms. Here are a few tips for teachers who have large classes and not much room to move but would like to create a harmonious language learning classroom. When you confront such challenges, teach introductory standing and sitting poses (seated in a chair, not on the floor). And you can teach poses that utilize only the shoulders, neck, arms, legs, hands, fingers, or simply the face. Although advanced practitioners of yoga often look like human pretzels when holding a pose, you and your learners can receive the same benefits of strength, flexibility, endurance, balance, concentration, and reduction of stress and anxiety by practicing only fundamental yoga poses. And visualization and guided imagery activities require no room at all, except that of the mind. With careful thought and planning, you can create a harmonious language learning atmosphere in any classroom. (See Appendix 2 for resources that you can modify for appropriate use in your own teaching context, whether it is the ideal environment for yoga or not.)

English teachers are aware that their learners need a change of pace during a lesson so that they don't get bored and begin to tune out. Keeping learners engaged in their language learning requires a range of activities that are enjoyable, imaginative, and fun. This is particularly true of young learners, who enjoy a frequent change of activities. And tasks that involve learners physically and get them up and moving are all the more appreciated (Cameron 2001; Shin 2006).

Practicing yoga postures can be beneficial in different ways and at different times of the day. For example, early in the morning when learners are still sleepy, practicing dynamic postures that enliven and stimulate their bodies and minds is fitting. Breathing and relaxation poses that relax the body and mind can calm learners after an active recess, physical education class, a busy lunch time, or energetic class activity. On the other hand, static postures that are concerned with concentrating oneself are good to practice at the end of the day when language learners are tired or need to release pent-up energies. All postures, whether they are dynamic, relaxed, or static, come with a complementary number of vocabulary words that can be taught, practiced, reviewed, and assessed.

Another reason to use yoga in the English language classroom is that it can act as a counterbalance to the multiple forms of technology that confront 21st-century language learners, young and old alike. Nowadays it is not uncommon to see young people, and adults, spending hours on social networking sites, talking or texting on mobile phones, or playing computer games. In my observation, spending too much time hooked in to technology and multi-tasking can cause learners to become easily distracted and have difficulty concentrating in class. Teaching simple yoga poses and visualization activities provides a break from technology and helps learners become aware of the present moment, their physical surroundings, and the task at hand—English language learning.

Depending on the amount, quality, and kinds of language learning experiences our learners have had in the past, they may be self-conscious, easily intimidated, or worried about performing in front of others in another language. This can be especially true of older learners, first-time language learners, or learners in beginning level classes, when the necessity to move outside their comfort zone is frequent. One way to address this discomfort in learners is to design lessons in which language learning happens unconsciously—in other words, while learners are doing other things. Unconscious or incidental learning helps improve learners' competence, changes their attitudes, and shows development in their interpersonal skills, self-confidence, and

self-awareness (Kerka 2000). Teachers will win neither learners' affection nor their respect if they insist on explicitly teaching grammar structures and rules when more naturally occurring incidental learning opportunities could teach learners the same things. If teachers design activities and tasks in which grammar and vocabulary are naturally embedded, as they are in teaching and practicing yoga postures in class, those teachers will facilitate language learning, reduce learners' anxieties, and earn their gratitude.

### **Introducing yoga in the English language classrooms: FAQs**

In exploring the subject of yoga in English language teaching, I have come across frequently asked questions about its appropriateness and correct implementation in the language classroom. Both the questions and responses may be helpful in initial preparations for using yoga in your classroom.

#### **1. Isn't yoga a religion?**

Although spiritual dimensions can and do exist within the yoga tradition and each of its main branches, it is important to point out that yoga is not a religion. Nothing in this article promotes any particular religious or spiritual path. All the branches of yoga can be practiced by people of any belief system and also by those who do not hold any religious convictions.

#### **2. What language do I teach when I integrate yoga into my lessons?**

Yoga postures and visualizations are rich in language. Besides the obvious verbs of action and vocabulary of the parts of the body that have already been mentioned, you can teach many other language elements. Adverbs, repetition of key words, words showing chronological order, vocabulary connoting direction, and many imperatives, all of which are naturally found in teaching and practicing a pose, can be taught. A myriad of lessons can be designed around key vocabulary found in any yoga pose and utilized for teaching, practicing, reviewing, or assessing language. Yoga postures and visualization exercises, especially in intermediate to advanced language classes, encourage spoken and written language activities about how the body feels and its connection to the mind and emotions.



Another language aspect of yoga which can be pedagogically exploited, and at the same time enjoyable and appealing to learners, is the names of postures. When holding yoga asanas, the person in the posture often mentally calls up images of different animals, elements of nature, or simple objects or shapes; just a sampling of names of postures includes Cat, Downward Dog, Cobra, Fish, Eagle, Tree, Mountain, Chair, Table, and Triangle. This somewhat playful aspect of yoga can make it an especially fun activity to do with children. Names of yoga poses also serve for any age group as an anchor for remembering the name of the posture itself and the vocabulary associated with the pose. At the end of this article an introductory but fundamental yoga pose (Mountain Pose) serves as an extended example.

### **3. Do I have to be a practitioner of yoga myself to use it in my lessons?**

No, you do not have to be a practitioner of yoga to experiment with it in your English language lessons. But if you are not a practitioner, then a word of caution is in order. Safety, health, and comfort always come first, for you and your learners. Guided imagery, uncomplicated breathing techniques, and the most basic, beginning-level sitting, standing, and lying-down poses are safe to use in your English language lessons. Before you begin, however, know your learners and any health-related problems that could be dangerous to them or prevent them from participating in the physical movements you have decided to teach and practice. This word of warning goes for teachers of all age groups. However, practicing easy yoga poses is probably less dangerous to one's body than activities in a physical education class or on the playground. If you teach adult learners, it would be wise to carry out a quick survey to find out if any have health issues before you integrate yoga poses into your lessons.

### **4. What if my students don't want to participate?**

All members of your class should have the option to participate, or not participate, in activities related to yoga. You may have learners in your class who resist on religious and philosophical grounds. Others, in their adolescent years, may be embarrassed to try

the postures, especially when yoga is first introduced. Perhaps they will feel foolish and think they look silly or clumsy. Allowing these learners to skip the activity, to only observe, or to join in when they feel comfortable is probably the best approach. However, a few students refusing to participate should not put off your plans for teaching English through yoga. If any of your learners have physical limitations or health issues that prevent them from fully participating, but they want to join in, pose variations and modifications are readily available in the literature and are easy to apply.

### **5. What are some good sources for learning about yoga and using it in language lessons?**

Hundreds (if not thousands) of DVDs, videos, websites, books, articles, and activity cards offer the classroom teacher ideas, activities, drawings, music, and background on yoga and its practice. Appendix 2 provides a sampling of resources that contain much of what you need to get started in teaching simple yoga activities in your English language classroom. I selected the websites based on the variety and quality of their free content, their navigability, and general user-friendliness. Poses are simply illustrated, and the language, if not already stated in uncomplicated terms, can easily be adapted to the needs of most English language classrooms. The resources that are cited have practical ideas, many illustrations, and interesting ways to approach the implementation and teaching of yoga in the language classroom. Combined, they give you a place to start.

### **Conclusion**

In the twenty years since I first taught English through yoga to the young mothers at the Quaker Meeting House, my interest in the topic of yoga and English language teaching has become stronger. With the increased popularity of yoga in the Western world, the number of yoga centers, retreats, and classes, and the number of books and magazines about yoga have grown tremendously. Finding information on yoga, both in hard copy and digitally, has become extremely easy. I have also noticed that using elements of yoga in educational settings in all subject matter, including the language classroom, has gained

momentum and become more acceptable. In the last few years, I have presented on the topic of English language learning through yoga at local, national, and international TESOL conferences. English language teaching professionals of all ages, nationalities, and teaching levels have welcomed this topic and willingly participated. My audiences' warm reception, their curiosity, and their readiness to relate their own experiences with using yoga-like activities in English language teaching prompted me to write this article to share my ideas with a larger number of English language teachers. I believe that integrating yoga poses and visualization techniques into English language classrooms will increase opportunities for language learning and decrease many of the challenges faced by today's teachers and learners alike. By combining the information provided in this article with your own imagination and the belief that your English language learners deserve to learn in environments that are emotionally, mentally, and physically healthy places, you could take the first step towards creating a harmonious language learning environment in your own classroom.

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## Appendix 1

## Sample Yoga Activities for the English Language Classroom

*Harmonious Learning: Yoga in the English Language Classroom • Lisa Morgan*

### Palm Tree Balance

#### Language lesson ideas

Palm Tree Balance is a simple yoga pose that can be used in beginning level classes. Instructions consist of only three commands (see below).

**Key vocabulary:** verbs: *stand, put, balance*; nouns: *arms, head, (palm tree) palms, toes*; adverb: *together*; preposition: *above*. I recommend teaching a maximum of five to eight new words in a lesson. Palm Tree Balance teaches nine words, ten if you also include the name of the pose. If you decide to make it a game (see variations), the language of numbers and counting can also be part of the lesson. Skills: speaking and listening

#### Benefits of the pose

Stretches bones and muscles; improves concentration and balance, both physical and mental

#### Instructions

- Stand with your arms above your head.
- Put your palms together.
- Balance on your toes.

#### Variations

More complex instructions are available for this pose. Above is a basic version for beginning English language learners. Used as a light competitive game, practicing Palm Tree Balance is appealing, especially to young learners. For example, ask who can balance for the longest time while the teacher or one or more students count. This pose can also be done as a cooperative game where points are awarded for how many students are left standing after a certain period of time, again with someone counting. Another variation is to have the learners sing a song while in the pose or have them count backwards. Although people often think that practicing yoga is a serious affair, it can be done with fun and laughter, too.



## Sample Yoga Activities for the English Language Classroom *(continued)*

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### Stomach Breathing

#### Language lesson ideas

Stomach breathing can be taught to beginning or intermediate level language learners and can be used in an advanced class if the objective is to relax learners before a quiz or test. The pose can be done either sitting or standing, and it is convenient to use with large classes.

**Key vocabulary:** verbs: *stand, rest, breathe, make, grow*; nouns: *hands, stomach*; adjectives: *big, small*; prepositions: *in, out*. Different adjectives for *big* and *small* can be taught by substituting these words for the variations discussed below. If you want to teach a small number of words, you can focus your vocabulary solely on the phrases *breathe in* and *breathe out* and *inhale* and *exhale*. For intermediate classes, discuss the difference between the words *breath* and *breathe*.

#### Benefits of the pose

Breathing in and out from our stomach promotes full-lung-capacity breathing, which gets more oxygen into the blood and helps to reenergize fatigued learners or lessen anxiety for those who are feeling tense. Stomach breathing also allows learners to focus on their breath and breathing, something we would all be wise to check on from time to time each day.

#### Instructions

- Stand.
- Rest your hands on your stomach.
- Breathe in and out.
- Make your stomach grow big when you breathe in.
- Make your stomach grow small when you breathe out.

#### Variations

Instead of using the words *breathe in* and *breathe out*, instruct your learners to do the same thing but use the words *big/small* and *inhale/exhale*.

Note: Instructions and variations for Stomach Breathing and Palm Tree Balance are based on the article “Poised for Learning” by Carla Wilson. (See Appendix 2 for reference.)

## Sample Yoga Activities for the English Language Classroom *(continued)*

*Harmonious Learning: Yoga in the English Language Classroom • Lisa Morgan*

### Mountain Pose

#### Language lesson ideas

The target audience is learners at intermediate or high-intermediate levels. Vocabulary would focus on less-frequently taught words such as *fan*, *lengthen*, *skull*, *rigidly*, *torso*. Other vocabulary could be reviewed.

#### Benefits of the pose

Mountain Pose is one of the most fundamental poses in the practice of Hatha Yoga. Many teachers start class with this pose to bring a feeling of balance and concentration to their students. Mountain Pose looks easy, but much thought and consideration goes into this (or any) yoga posture. The posture conjures up an image of a mountain—a strong, resilient part of our natural world, which is the sensation that a practitioner feels when holding this pose.

#### Instructions

- Stand with your feet together.
- Put your hands at your sides.
- Look forward.
- Raise your toes.
- Fan the toes up and open.
- Place the toes back on the floor.
- Feel all parts of your feet in contact with the floor.
- Raise your chest up and out.
- Relax your shoulders.
- Raise your head up.
- Lengthen the neck by lifting the base of your skull.
- Push your feet into the floor.
- Hold the pose, but not rigidly.
- Inhale.
- Imagine the breath rising through your legs, then your torso, and into your head.
- Hold for five breaths.
- Relax.
- Repeat.

## Sample Yoga Activities for the English Language Classroom *(continued)*

*Harmonious Learning: Yoga in the English Language Classroom • Lisa Morgan*

### Awareness of Mind and Body

#### Language lesson ideas

This visualization is best suited for adults, or possibly teens, at the intermediate or advanced level of English language learning. In this lesson, learners develop the skills of listening, speaking, and writing. Vocabulary for parts of the body can be reviewed either before or after the visualization to heighten comprehension. Visualization instructions should be read by the teacher slowly, deliberately, and in a low but clear tone, and with frequent pauses. This gives the participants time to understand how their bodies feel and to clear their bodies of tension. It also allows time for learners to comprehend the language in a relaxed, stress-free manner. After the visualization, learners work independently at a free-writing activity that identifies which parts of the body felt tense and which parts of the body felt relaxed during the visualization. Learners are then asked to share this information with a partner or members of a small group.

#### Benefits of the pose

This is a quiet, calming visualization. It promotes concentration and awareness of breath, and it helps learners understand how tense or relaxed their bodies are at the beginning or end of a lesson. This works well if you want to minimize interference from the outside world or if you are trying to set the tone for learners to concentrate on your upcoming lesson. It could also be used prior to a quiz or language exam that you know your learners are especially anxious about taking.

#### Instructions

- Get ready to relax your body and your mind.
- Gently, close your eyes. Get into a comfortable position, and begin to turn your attention inward.
- Notice how you are feeling right now—mentally, emotionally, and physically. Without trying to change anything, simply take note of how your body feels, and notice how you are feeling.
- Mentally scan your body now, looking for areas of tension. Ask yourself: Where is my body most tense? Notice now where your body is most relaxed. Ask yourself: Where is my body most relaxed? See the areas of tension getting smaller. Now see the areas of relaxation slowly getting larger.
- Now turn your awareness to your breathing. Simply notice your breathing, without making any effort to change your breathing in any way. Imagine breathing *in* relaxation—and breathing *out* tension. Feel yourself becoming more relaxed with each breath.
- Focus in on areas of tension in your body. Imagine directing your breath to these areas. Feel the breath *in* drawing in relaxation... and the breath *out* gently pushing out tension. Feel your body and mind becoming relaxed... calm... and peaceful.
- Now, we'll sit in stillness for a minute or so. Continue to deepen your feelings of relaxation.
- [SILENCE for one minute]
- Slowly move your fingers, your toes, your hands, and legs. Now slowly open your eyes. Feel relaxed and refreshed.

#### Variations

After the relaxation exercise, ask learners to answer the following questions (either orally or in writing): How were you feeling mentally, emotionally, and physically? Where in your body were you tense? Where in your body were you relaxed? Were you able to minimize the tense parts of your body and maximize the relaxed parts of your body during the relaxation? What normally makes you tense? What normally makes you relaxed? In your daily life, what do you do to relax your tension? Discuss responses to the questions as a class, or have students discuss responses in small groups or pairs.

## Appendix 2 Suggested Resources

*Harmonious Learning: Yoga in the English Language Classroom* • Lisa Morgan

For drawings and pictures of yoga poses, go to [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), click on “Images,” and type “yoga poses” on the search bar to find hundreds of different images and dozens for the same pose. For short clips demonstrating yoga poses, a good source is [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). There you’ll find yoga for kids, beginner yoga, and even office/chair yoga that is useful for classroom environments.

Other resources are useful for teachers who would like to create a harmonious language learning classroom. For example, many free audio meditations can be found at [www.fragrantheart.com](http://www.fragrantheart.com). Relaxation and visualization scripts and podcasts for all ages are available free at [www.innerhealthstudio.com](http://www.innerhealthstudio.com).

### Websites

#### Yoga Journal

[www.Yogajournal.com](http://www.Yogajournal.com): Free podcasts and an index of poses

#### The Yoga Site

[www.Yogasite.com/postures](http://www.Yogasite.com/postures): Downloadable simple stick figures and directions for poses

### DVD

*Chair yoga: A seated practice*. Directed by Matthew Richmond. MommyYoga Productions, 2008.

### Books and Articles

Buckley, A. 2006. *The kids’ yoga deck: 50 poses and games*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books.

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