

SECTION II. FINAL PROJECT SUMMARY

1. THE GRANT EXPANDED OR MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THE QUALITY OF THE SERVICES THAT YOU PROVIDE AND/OR IN YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS? IF SO, IN WHAT WAY(S)? IF NOT, WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES OR OBSTACLES IMPEDED OR LIMITED YOUR WORK?

The Grable Foundation's award to Yoga In Schools (YIS) permitted both an expansion of services and an improvement in the service quality provided to East End schools. Grable support brought YIS to three of Pittsburgh's underserved elementary schools during the Fall of 2005: The Urban League Charter School of Pittsburgh, Helen S. Faison Academy and Pittsburgh Urban Christian School. The expansion and improvement of services include:

- YIS "Tools for Teachers": Yoga tools taught to all classroom teachers at each of the schools during an in-service day. Tools are for use in every classroom, every day, beyond pilot duration.
- Approximately 500 children, grades k-5, received YIS instruction;
- Employment of YIS teaching assistants, improving the instructor-student ratio for all children;
- Employment of an additional YIS instructor, balancing the teaching load;
- Moved YIS from one principal's & yoga instructor's wish list to a reality for three principals and 500 children.

2. WHAT IMPACT DID THE GRANT HAVE ON THE POPULATION YOU SERVE? YOUR STAFF? THE COMMUNITY?

The Grable Foundation's support of YIS during this period translated into our achieving four aims: (1) Providing teachers with classroom and self-help tools to manage emotional and physical stress experienced by teachers and students; (2) Positively affecting children's social and psychological development in terms of self esteem (confidence, efficacy) and body awareness as reported in open-ended questions in teacher surveys; (3) Positively affecting children's academic development in terms of concentration and classroom behavior reported by classroom teachers; and (4) increasing children's flexibility, balance and relaxation skills as indicated in early, mid-and end of pilot assessments conducted by YIS instructors.

Of those teachers responding to an on-line survey (n=22), 73% reported using yoga techniques in the classroom and for self-care most or all of the time. The most frequently used techniques included various breathing (59%) and body awareness exercises (41%). 72% of participating teachers indicated their interest in telling other educators about the program.



"I believe that this has been a remarkable experience for the students....their growth over time in the ability to use the skills practiced in Yoga will serve the students throughout their life times."

"This is one of the best programs I have seen brought into our most under-served schools. It is important for the program to last and grow over time. Children participating in such a program over a period of 3 or more years would learn habits that would last a lifetime. It is so important for such programs not to just start and stop, but to actually stay and last so they can become part of the fabric of our schools. I would also recommend that it be required that classroom teachers stay in the yoga room and

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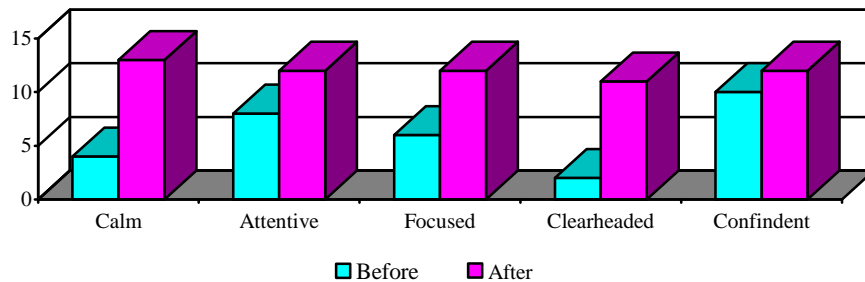
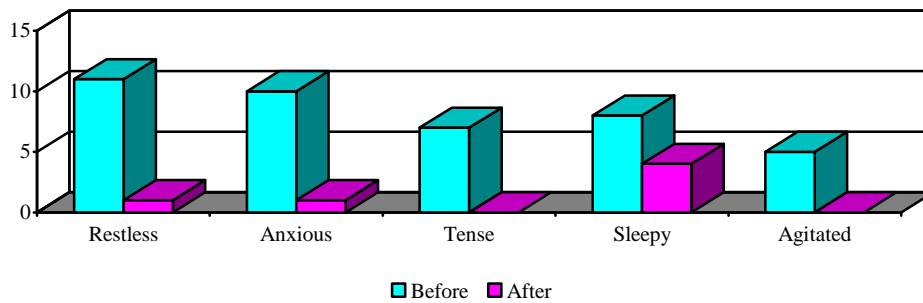
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participate in each full, yoga class. This is the only way to make sure that teachers are learning techniques to bring back to their classrooms. This is an important part of the sustainability of the program.”

“I definitely see an improvement on test scores when using the yoga right before the tests as well as making transitions right after recess.”

“Our school does not have gym and many of the students do not have physical exercise - yoga is a wonderful physical outlet for them.”

To capture classroom effects of YIS pilot programming, classroom teachers were asked to check adjectives describing their students just before and again just after the YIS period. Teachers responding had this to say about their students:



Grable’s support of YIS also meant an opportunity to coordinate the “insourcing” of dedicated individuals committed to building the YIS organization. Pre-term, mid-term and final-debriefing meetings were held and provided an opportunity to share experiences, resources and tips. Project support from Grable translated into a morale boost for YIS and its volunteers, generating numerous brainstorming sessions and exploratory conversations towards the “next steps” in securing sustainable funding for YIS in these same schools and expanding into other locations.

The cumulative impact of Grable’s support of YIS is perhaps best seen in YIS’ impact in the community. Throughout the pilot period, parents at each of the schools requested permission to come in and observe a class. YIS was invited and participated in “Literacy Nights” at two participating schools. YIS staff volunteered evening hours to lead students and their adult caregivers in selected activities linking yoga and literacy. These were well received events and opportunities for caregivers to share in the multiple ways of learning, knowing and being in the world that YIS promotes. YIS program implementation has been requested by other teachers and principals; with sufficient funding*, YIS will continue full-year instruction at the three schools participating in this pilot, adding one school but doubling student access during the 2006-2007 school year.

**See below for future funding initiatives.*

3. DURING THE COURSE OF THE PROJECT, WHAT TRANSPIRED THAT DIFFERED FROM WHAT YOU ANTICIPATED?

Throughout the pilot, YIS found strength in its reliability and instructor adaptability, presenting the program where and when scheduled, with necessary staff, equipment and creativity. YIS instructors found personal flexibility key in adapting to the nuances of each school, overcoming unexpected room changes, outbursts and scheduling conflicts. Prior to the start of the program, emphasis was placed on the yoga curriculum and implementation. In some classes, student capacities required YIS Instructors to spend additional time preparing students for yoga activities. Within a few weeks, however, these classes caught up with the others participating in the program. It is in these classes that the most significant progress was noted. Too, because YIS was planned as a discrete pilot, its place in the curriculum was not secure. This had a larger impact than anticipated, resulting in the above mentioned need for flexibility and creativity.

4. WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM YOUR PURSUIT OF THE OBJECTIVES THAT YOU ESTABLISHED?

We met our four objectives for this pilot: (1) Providing teachers with classroom and self-help tools to manage emotional and physical stress; (2) Positively affecting children's social and psychological development in terms of self esteem (confidence, efficacy) and body awareness; and (3) Positively affecting children's academic development in terms of concentration and classroom behavior and (4) Improving flexibility, balance and relaxation.

In pursuing these objectives we learned numerous things that will shape our future efforts:

- Principals, teachers and parents are enthusiastic about the program, seeking YIS participation in events outside of the YIS period. To this end, we will work on developing support materials for teachers that link YIS exercises with classroom opportunities while promoting external YIS resources for teacher self-care:
 - Provide teachers with a written list of expectations:
 - Getting children to class on time;
 - The need for teachers to participate in the YIS period with their class;
 - Managing the personal needs of students ahead of the YIS period;
 - Provide teachers with electronic support by way of e-mails offering tips and ideas to support regular use of YIS techniques in the classroom;
 - Attend regular (monthly) teachers' meetings:
 - Facilitate efficient and effective communication of both YIS efforts and institutional events
 - Increase YIS professional visibility and contributions to education curriculum; integrates YIS into the school's culture.
- Positively promoting children's self esteem and body awareness can be done in an inclusive setting. YIS Assistants are invaluable in helping children whose bodies may not 'quite fit' the standard for team sports or skill-based activities fully and successfully complete YIS exercises. The extra set of hands makes a difference in achieving 100% participation and benefit!
- Teacher awareness of academic development was a soft measure in this pilot. In a sustained YIS program, our ideal assessment would be student self-reports of concentration and self efficacy matched with actual academic performance before and after YIS periods.
- YIS Instructors found that while all children improved observed flexibility, balance and relaxation over the 16 week period, activities needed to be adapted for classes infrequently exposed to YIS-style activity. For example, during the early weeks, dichotomous measures of children's capacity to mirror or mimic would more accurately capture student abilities than a ranked scale.
- Additional time for YIS training and team building to facilitate intimate knowledge of curriculum prior to contact with teachers and students.

5. BASED UPON CURRENT CONDITIONS, ARE THERE THINGS THAT YOU WOULD DO DIFFERENTLY IN UTILIZING THE GRANT AWARD? IF SO, WHAT?

Reflecting upon the overall experience in YIS' utilization of Grable's Award, there is a high degree of satisfaction with the projected and actual use of the allocated award. A stronger emphasis on coordinated reading-related activities with third grade classes will be a priority in future programming. Ideally this will be reinforced and tracked within yoga classes all year by YIS staff and practiced as part of Yoga Tools used with children by classroom teachers.

6. WHAT WERE THE PRIMARY LESSONS THAT YOU AND YOUR STAFF LEARNED FROM THIS GRANT PROJECT? HOW MIGHT THEY IMPACT YOUR FUTURE THINKING, PERFORMANCE, OR SERVICES?

The primary lessons learned by YIS from this pilot endeavor is the need to invest in the adults tied to YIS programming as carefully as investing in YIS curriculum mastery and classroom techniques. Teachers, school administrators and YIS staff are key to the successful integration of YIS. By keeping YIS programming manageable and leveraging YIS staff talent and skills for optimal contributions, the communication, support and troubleshooting imperatives YIS can be met and schools not be burdened unnecessarily. Frequent, regularly scheduled YIS staff meetings would build support networks, sharpen skills, trouble-shoot, and pool resources. Perceived tacit outcomes would a) bring us closer as a team, b) provide support, supervision and accountability, and c) refine the quality of the program and its delivery. Meeting these goals would result in a product easily replicated in other schools.

7. IF THE GRANT PROJECT IS PART OF A LARGER CAMPAIGN, PLEASE PROVIDE A STATUS REPORT ON THE CAMPAIGN?

This award is serving as a springboard of financial and institutional support. Alternative funding from the education and health sectors are being explored, with some inquiries of interest and site visits requested. To date, however, no secure funding for the 2006-2007 has been achieved.

8. IF THE PROJECT INVOLVED COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZAITONS, PLEASE COMMENT ON ITS EFFECT ON THE PROJECT.

Our collaboration was primarily with each of the three East End schools identified earlier. Considerable internal cooperation and collaboration among YIS staff, school administrators and staff were essential to the success of this pilot. School principal and teacher support of YIS programming were essential simply to "fit" YIS into a crowded school day.

East End non-profits, individuals and business supply companies provided the following additional support: **Hosanna House** (Wilkinsburg, PA): in-kind service donation of digital recording the YIS program for possible use in promoting YIS to schools and other funding groups; an **anonymous** East End resident donated yoga mats and eye pillows used at Pittsburgh Urban Christian School; **The Road to Wellness, Inc:** donation of eye pillows used at Helen S. Faison Academy; **The Urban League Charter School of Pittsburgh** purchased their own mats and eye pillows for the program.