

EDUCATION

Strike a pose, calm the class

Yoga in schools can help hone students' focus and wellbeing, writes **Kristie Kellahan**.

Troy Osman is passionate about yoga. So much so, the former primary-school teacher and qualified yoga teacher is on a mission to introduce it to children throughout Australia.

"I spent three years as a primary-school teacher in indigenous communities in the Kimberley," Osman says.

"The students were often distracted, lacked focus and disliked the classroom environment."

Seeking ways to better manage classroom behaviour, Osman introduced the children to basic yoga techniques.

"I would start the day off with breathing and relaxation exercises to calm the kids down and get them focused for the day," he says.

Osman moved to Sydney in 2009. Working in the inner city, he says he saw how busy children were before and after school.

"With music lessons, sports and dance lessons, language lessons and tutoring for tests, they often had limited time for exercise or 'chillaxing'," he says.

"Knowing the benefits of yoga from both my personal experience

and from my teaching experience in the Kimberley, I started passing on some strategies to the students."

As the young people in his classroom told him how calm their bodies felt and how their worries would disappear after yoga, Osman began to see an opportunity.

"As a teacher, I saw how much time was wasted getting to and from sports venues," he says.

"I also saw that many sports offered didn't suit non-sporty children and often you had classroom teachers running sports programs without training."

Osman decided to start his own business, Mr Yoga, with a mission "to calm the Australian classrooms". "Yoga is non-competitive, non-violent and a great alternative to traditional sports."

Osman says yoga is a low-cost activity that can be done indoors or outdoors. It fosters self-awareness, emotional resiliency and mental and physical wellbeing in children as well as teachers.

Mr Yoga's programs have been designed and tailored to meet the outcomes and objectives in the Australian school curriculum.



Balance ... Troy Osman takes a yoga class with year 6 students at Rozelle Public School. Photo: Jon Reid

All yoga poses are named after Australian animals and landmarks.

Peter Vagne is the (relieving) assistant principal and classroom teacher at Rozelle Public School. Having witnessed the benefits of yoga for his students, he supports its widespread introduction to schools.

"The benefits that you see with the students is the immediate calming effect that it has on the children and the increase in confidence that the students develop as they master their stances through the term," Vagne says.

Yoga classes for students at Rozelle Public have been offered for three years. "We will probably be looking back in 10 years' time, wondering why all schools didn't incorporate yoga," Vagne says. mryoga.sydney.com.

INDUSTRY JOB FOCUS

ESL teachers

► Number employed in year to May 2012 **7000**

► Growth in past 10 years **106.9%**

Average weekly wage (full time)

\$1247

Average weekly wage (full time all occupations)

\$1144

► Full time **51.7%**

► Average weekly hours full time **41.3**

Unemployment Average

