



NIROGA™

Transforming Lives and Healing Communities

Qualitative Feedback on In-class TLS from Teachers at Berkeley High School
Spring 2011

My Green Academy Seniors and I have had the opportunity to learn and practice yoga every Tuesday and Thursday since February with Alexa Bach-McElroy from the Niroga Institute. I cannot emphasize enough what a valuable skill and weekly ritual this has been for our students. I smile deeply witnessing them sitting silently with their eyes closed breathing and listening intently to the meditation bell. I smile deeply when I watch them try again and again to master balance-challenging poses. As a 25 ½ year martial artist, I understand the value of yoga and it is evident to me that my seniors are beginning to see its power to help them find a centered, calm, peaceful place inside themselves. They are starting to understand how yoga helps reduce their stress, de-escalate their angry or violent feelings, and center their scattered & unfocused energy.

Yoga has been a precious life lesson for these young people, perhaps one of the most valuable & unforgettable experiences and tools that they will carry into adulthood. They voice their love for our weekly ritual and it is wondrous to see them so engaged in mind, body and spirit. I truly hope that Berkeley High School prioritizes yoga for its students through the Niroga Institute in the future.

Awesome that TLS has gotten to this level at BHS! I definitely have students who not only look forward but actually need and plan on the TLS time in class.

I was observing on Tuesday, our last day, how completely involved Tigris was in the yoga process. This from a student who earlier had said, "I hate yoga" and (excuse the language) "F-- yoga" as she stormed out of the room. She has struggled with self-control and is now sitting at her desk, not storming out of class, and generally so much more serene. She was *completely* focused and participating on Tuesday without *any* prompting from me.

Perry, who is a bear of a behavior problem in other classes, comes to English (every day) at peace and relaxed. On yoga days he is Totally and completely engrossed and FOCUSED. No other word for it. To get 10th graders to focus at all is Amazing.

I cannot remember how many teachers have come into my room, looked around, and commented on the peace in the space. Not accidental - completely connected to the practice of peace in the room and our heart centers as we practice TLS and learning. My final exam will begin with 5 minutes of focused silence.

Just want to share a journal entry I am grading this weekend - from David S who is struggling mightily with a very stressed out home life and keeping in school and off the marijuana. David has been so much more present and on task in class this semester. David writes of the 5-10 minutes of TLS we do at the beginning of my CPA classes, "Yoga is hella relaxing, it calms me down. I feel hella happy on the inside. Yoga is very beneficial when you're stressed out."