**Why teach themed classes?**

* Theory to underpin practical skills, so students grow in knowledge as well as skills
* Ways of exploring our approach to our practice
* For interest & inspiration
* Can you think of any other reasons?

**To include theory & philosophy we must:**

* Research & contemplate upon the subject & apply it to our own practice/life first
* Be genuinely enthused by the subject so our teaching will be authentic
* Ensure material is pitched at the correct level for our group
* Ideally make it as relevant as possible to our students
* Include memorable information
* Never preach, offering yoga concepts for consideration
* Never spend too long simply talking and not over do a theme – keep it light and accessible

**How can we include theory & philosophy into our classes?**

* Personal anecdotes
* Reading short passages
* Reading poems
* Bite sized pieces of information
* Choice of language used
* Images and metaphors when teaching
* Short discussions
* Answering questions raised
* Handouts
* Any others?

**Are there times when we can interweave theory & philosophy into a class?**

* At the start of class when initially resting/centering
* During the initial part of the practice
* Bite sized pieces during the class when practicing or resting
* As a final thought at the end of or after relaxation
* Can you think of other times in the class when we can introduce different elements of theory & philosophy?

**Which class practices can we use to highlight theory & philosophy?**

We can use all practices,e.g. centering, asana, basic breathing, meditation etc.

**Mind Maps:** It is possible to use a mind map to help us create a themed class plan where in the first instance we can jot down our ideas of how we can convey the essence of our concept. The mind map below is an example of this:

Make a mind map below for the concept of balance:

BALANCE

**Potential ideas for themes**

**General**

Balance

Beginner’s Mind

Breath

Courage & Vulnerability

Effort & Surrender

Foundation

Giving & Receiving

Intention

Less is more

Listening

Play

Right effort

Spaciousness

Stillness

Strength & Softness

**Yogic Concepts**

Agni

Bandhas

Brmhana & langhana

Buddhi

Chakras

Doshas

Drishti

Ida & pingala nadis

Koshas: 5 sheaths

Lotus: beauty from the mud

Maha Bhutas: 5 elements

Mudras

Niyamas

Prana

Samskara

Sun & Moon

Tri-gunas

Vayus: 5 winds

Yamas

**Quotations from Yoga texts as a central theme:**

PYS 1.2 ‘Yogas chittavritti nirodhah’ yoga is the stillness of the fluctuations of the mind

PYS 1.12 ‘Abhyasa vairagyabhyam tannirodhah’ happiness is obtained through a strong practice and releasing the fruits of your practice.

PYS 2.33 ’Vitarka badhane pratipaksa bhavanam’ change a negative thought into a positive one

PYS 2.46 ‘Sthira sukham asanam’ your asana or seat should be both steady and comfortable

**Anatomy & Physiology**

Awareness of feet, knees, hips,

Back, neck, eyes etc.

Core Strength

External rotation of shoulders

Flexibility & Strength

Isometric Stretching

Optimal digestion

Stress & Relaxation

**Bhavanas ~ as we practice we can focus upon:**

Awareness of space surrounding body

Background silence

Breath moving the body

Inhalation and/or exhalation

Lines of energy within the body

Mantra

Practicing self-referral

Radiating the life force

Self-acceptance

Synchronising breath & movement

Whole body feeling

Can you think of any others?

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