**Cross-curricular Lesson Plan: How Animals Prepare for Winter**

**Rationale**:

Currently in my practicum classroom, they are working on how animals adapt to the different seasons in the unit of inquiry. In particular, how different animals adapt in the winter. The students researched about how certain animals such as bears or snakes goes into hibernation during the winter. They also learned that some animals migrate to warmer climates to avoid the coldness in winter. As well, they have been introduced to some other ways animals adapt to winter such as growing a thicker fur. I thought in order to make the learning more concrete for the students I should integrate yoga with the unit of inquiry. At this age group, they have a bit of a hard time grasping abstract ideas, so by getting the students to perform various poses that represent how animals behave in the winter it will serve to enhance their understanding of the concepts of migration, hibernation and adaptation by making it more concrete and visual. By introducing yoga in the lesson plan, I aim to improve and enrich their prior knowledge in migration, adaptation and hibernation of animals. The students will be able to make valuable connections between the two subjects. Helping students to make connections is a key component in making sure information taught can be retained. Furthermore, in the yoga lesson their knowledge about how animals prepare for winter can be demonstrated through the various yoga poses. This way, the students are able to apply their knowledge in a meaningful and fun way. At the same time, they are being exposed to a new form of exercise. Through yoga, they are able to strength their balance and flexibility while working under the context of their unit of inquiry. Likewise, practicing yoga will greatly benefit the student’s physical and emotional well-being. The outcomes for this lesson plan will be that the students will be able to identify what animals do to adapt to the coldness of the winter month. Additionally, the students will also be able to demonstrate yoga poses that represent how animals adapt to winter. The next step will be to research about how animals know spring is here and how they adjust their behaviours according to it. Yoga can once again be integrated into the unit of inquiry in terms of stretching poses to indicate the awakening of the animals.

**Lesson Plan**

**Grade level**: 1

**Subject**: Physical Education and Unit of Inquiry

**Prescribed Learning Outcomes**:

-B1 move through general space while maintaining control (e.g., walking in a circle in the same direction)

-B2 change level of body position while maintaining control (e.g., high, medium, low)

**Objectives**:

-Students will be able to demonstrate proper technique for all poses covered in the lesson.

-Students will be able to identity animal behaviours during the winter.

**Equipment Required**: Mats, music, speakers, and visual images of the Yoga poses practiced in the lesson

**Safety Precautions**:

-Ensure students have proper gym wear, foot wear. As well, remind students with long hair to tie it up.

-Ensure students are paying attention to instructor and following instructions

-Ensure students are not pushing themselves past their comfort point, stressing that yoga is not a competitive activity; just try to do their personal best, but no pose should hurt.

-Possible Hazards: Slippery floor, mats properly placed with no gaps in between.

**Modifications and Adaptations**:

-During each pose, remind students not to push their body too far- yoga should never hurt, instead you should feel a gentle stretch.

-Most poses have adaptations – cobra pose does not need to lift the upper body too high; modification of the superhuman to extend both feet and arm without moving; airplane pose can be done without lifting the leg too high.

**Lesson Body**:

Warm Up: (5 minutes)

1. Start by having the students form a semi-circle around the instructor. Ask them to stretch out their arms to make sure there is enough space around them.
2. Briefly introduce the history and origins of yoga. “Yoga originated in Indian more than 5,000 years ago.” Ask the students what they know about yoga.
3. Start off by teaching the students how to deep breathe. Explain to them that we take a deep breath with our stomach so it sticks out. Then when we exhale, the stomach will deflate like a balloon.
4. Have the students roll their shoulders backward and forward.
5. Next, shrug shoulders to loosen them up in an upward and downward motion, in a similar motion to when we say ‘I don’t know.’
6. Jumping jacks. Explain to the students that they are going to stretch their arms and legs out to make a big star shape when they jump up.
7. Cross jacks. Making criss-cross motions with both arms and legs simultaneously. Explain to the students they are making two X with their arms and legs.
8. Lift arms and reach for the sky while taking a deep breath and then bring them to touch your toes while exhaling; repeat this motion 8 times.

Activity: (20 minutes)

1. Before starting the yoga component of the lesson, ask the students what they are working on during their current unit of inquiry (how living things adapt to changing seasons). Then, engage them in a short discussion about what animals do to adapt to the coldness during winter.

2. Explain that today we will be practicing yoga poses of animals and their habits in the winter.

Pose 1: Polar Bear Pose

-Get students to place their knees and the palm of their hand onto the mat, making sure their hands are beneath their shoulders and keeping a little space between their knees. Remind them to keep their back flat like a table top. Ask the students to keep and head looking straight. Explain the pose is called polar bear pose.

-Ask the students to breathe in and out 5 times while the teacher counts out loud.

-Bringing the upper body back so their bum are on top of their feet while keeping their knees and legs on the mat still. Stretch out their arms long in front of them. The teacher explains that this is the when the bear goes into a deep sleeping, hibernation, in the winter. Let the students know this is called the child’s pose.

-Hold the pose for another 5 deep breaths.

Pose 2: Cobra Pose

-Transitioning from pose 1 to pose 2: Have the children lift their upper body up from child’s pose and slowly lie down on their tummy and rest their forehead on the mat.

-While they are lying on their stomach let them know that the next pose is called the Cobra. Ask them what snakes do in the winter?

-Place their arms at the side and elbows tucked in.

-Spread their fingers and press their palms into the floor.

-Slowly push the upper body off the floor while straightening the arms, keeping the hips, legs and feet on the mat.

-Tilt their chin upward and try to lift chest toward the ceiling. Look side to side while hissing like a snake.

-Hold the pose and take five deep breaths.

-Remind the students that yoga shouldn’t hurt. They do not have to lift their body very high if they are uncomfortable.

-Ask them to slowly lower their down to the mat while keep breathing in and out.

-Lie back onto their stomach with forehead pressing into the mat, pretending to be a snake during hibernation in the winter. Reminding them to exhale and inhale as if they are in a deep sleep.

Pose 3: Superhuman Pose

-Students will be on their tummy from the previous pose with their arms by their side. Ask them to remain on their tummy but bring their legs shoulder-width apart

-Instruct students to breathe out while raising their head up from the mat to look forward.

-Extend their arms forward and slowly lift their chest slightly above the mat.

-Next, ask the students to use their inner thighs to left their legs up towards the ceiling slightly. Emphasize that their weight should rest on their lower rib, belly and front pelvis.

-Remind them to hold the pose while remember to breathe. Explain that we are a fish in the river. During the winter, sometimes fish have to swim really fast to adapt to the cold temperature.

-Have the students extend their opposite arm and opposite leg towards the ceiling slightly, then switch to the other arm and leg in a swimming like motion. Repeat this motion for 5 counts while breathing in and out.

-On the exhale, bring the body back to the mat to rest.

 Pose 4: Rabbit Pose

-Ask children if they know what rabbits do during the winter? Then tell them the next pose is called the rabbit pose.

-Instruct the students to go into child’s pose where their legs are on the mat and their bum resting on their legs. Arms extended forward on the mat.

-Instruct the students to curl their back towards the ceiling a little, bringing their arms behind them and lay it alongside their calves.

-Slowly lower the head until it touches the mat.

-Let the students imagine they are rabbits in the winter. Tell them to exhale and inhale while pretending to be a rabbit hiding in the snow.

Pose 5: Butterfly Pose

-Have the students rise from rabbit pose into a sitting position.

-Bring the soles of their feet together and use their arms to gently bring their ankle as close to their body as they can without feeling pain.

-Clasp their hand around their ankle and open knees out to both sides.

-Ask the children to take a big breathe and sit up straight, imagine their head is going to touch the ceiling.

-To be a butterfly, the teacher will ask the students to move their knees up and down like the wings of a butterfly.

-Teacher tells students that some animals move to warmer places during the winter. This is called migration.

-Teacher ask students how they think butterflies prepare for winter. Explain to them that some butterflies, such as the Monarch butterflies migrate to Mexico for the winter and spend the summer in Canada.

Pose 6: Airplane pose

-Have the students stand up on both feet. Tell them that they are going to become a goose. Geese migrate to warmer climates during the winter.

-Instruct the students to adjust their formation into a V shape, representing the formation the geese fly in.

-Then, instruct the students to extend arms out to either side and find their balance. Tell them if they are having trouble balancing, try to pick a single spot on the floor to concentrate on.

-When they find balance, ask them to exhale and slowly lean forward and lift one leg straight behind.

-Hold this pose while breathing in and out for 8 counts.

-Slowly return the extended leg to the ground and bring the arms back to the sides.

-Repeat the same movement with the opposite leg.

Skill Application: (10 minutes)

-Prior to the class, teacher will place pictures of each of the six poses practiced around the gym. The 2 poses for hibernation are grouped together, the 2 poses for adaptation at another station and the last 2 poses for migration at the last station.

-As a class, teacher will lead the students through each station. The teacher will have the students demonstrate the poses at the station. They students can choose either of the two poses or do both. Then, the teacher will ask the students what animals they are based on the pose and how that particular animal behaves during the winter.

Cool Down: (5 minutes)

-Have the students sit down in a semi-circle around the teacher.

-Instruct the students to go into child’s pose as practiced previously. Stretching out their back and their arms and hold for one slow breath.

-Then slowly walk both hands over to the right, hold for another breath, and walk hands back to the centre.

-Slowly walk hands over to the left and holding it for another breath, and walk hands back to the centre.

-Instruct students to lay on their back, legs spread slightly apart and arms lay at their sides. During this time, review the poses covered in class and ask students to reflect on the pose they felt strongest in, and the pose they found the most challenging. Mention that there is a yoga club at the school for anyone who wants to join. Also, there are various yoga studios locally (Oxygen Yoga & Fitness, YogaButtons, and various community centres) that offer yoga classes for children.

**Resource**:

Category: Winter Animals. (2013, December 5). Retrieved November 18, 2014, from http://www.elovinyoga.com/kids-yoga-blog-and-lesson-plans/category/winter animals

Humphrey, M., & Frost, M. (2008). *The kids' yoga book of feelings*. Tarrytown, N.Y.: Marshall Cavendish Children.