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The Institute of Sathya Sai Education is a non-religious charitable organisation concerned with supporting teachers and parents

- ❖ *To bring out human excellence at all levels in character, academics, and "being"*
- ❖ *To bring out the all-round development of the child (the heart as well as the head and the hands)*
- ❖ *To help children to know who they are*
- ❖ *To help children to realise their full potential*
- ❖ *To develop attitudes of selfless service*

Through

EduCare

Creating a caring education environment, in which we as teachers elicit the good qualities inherent within our students.

12

QUICK TIPS FOR BRINGING EDUCARE INTO YOUR TEACHING



The Teacher's Toolbox

Vol. 7

TIP 1: VALUES LITERACY – "LEARNING TALK, TEACHER TALK"

HOW TO SUSTAIN LEARNING AND TEACHER TALK IN THE CLASSROOM

Firstly the adventure must begin with each one of us discovering our consciousness within. Discovering one's consciousness involves individuals to experience their own peace, love and good health through consciously practising word care. The process of word care includes selecting words that are meaningfully adding value to the context of the learning situation or the conversations we are engaged in. This is a dual process learning as it is our personal learning continuum as well as for the learners we interact with. For instance this week I was thinking carefully of the words I am going to use with a few students that are less attentive, sleepy and have a 'tired look'. As my co-teacher

and I entered the class, I scanned the class as we teachers always do and spotted the above mentioned features in a few students. We set the class with the task of the day. While they were working, I quietly went up to the first sleepy student and said "My dear X, is Master Chow visiting you again? Please ask him to visit you tonight perhaps after ten o'clock when you can enjoy being with him." Master Chow, in Chinese tradition, is the "God of Sleep" and people who cannot sleep usually invoke His grace. The response was humorous all round and the message clearly given to the student, who just cracked up as he found it so hilarious! X's response was "Good one Miss!". I had no need to venture to the other students as they also got the message in a soft, hilarious but firm meaning to pay attention and get on with the learning of the day.

TIP 2: EDUCARE AND GROUP ACTIVITIES

STRENGTH IN UNITY: A SILENT SITTING ACTIVITY TO DO BEFORE A GROUP ACTIVITY

With your eyes closed, picture yourself sitting in your place in the classroom. Imagine that you are making a big web, like a spider web. You do this by throwing a ball of golden thread to one of your classmates, who holds onto the end he/she has caught and throws the rest of the ball to another and so on. Watch as your classmates throw the thread from one to another, until every person is holding a piece of thread that joins them to the network. The thread is not very strong – it looks as if it could break easily, so you



need to do something to make the web stronger. Now imagine that each person is sending his or her own special strengths or skills along the thread so everyone is contributing something to the web. As this happens you see that the web gets stronger and stronger. It is strong because everyone is contributing.

TIP 3: EDUCARE PERSPECTIVE OF DISCIPLINE

THE CLASS MEETING

One successful way of achieving the goals of Educare (see the top of this newsletter) is the Class Meeting (described by Nelsen, 1996). According to Nelsen, the Class Meeting is not a strategy for enabling either teachers or students to “win” over the other, but rather to create an ambience of mutual respect for each other’s needs and mutually agreed ways of solving issues that are a “problem” to any class member. She describes it as an effective way of avoiding many of the

hassles that usually arise over discipline – although the main aim is not this, but giving children the chance to be respected and respectful.

Nelsen describes the following key features of the Class Meeting (pp.168-183):

- Hold the meeting once a week.
- The meeting is important and should not be “skipped” or interrupted.
- Establish some rules that develop mutual respect:
 - Only one person speaks at a time.
 - Everyone has an equal right to speak and to be listened to.
- Encourage everyone to say something that they admire about the other class members before the meeting starts.
- An issue that is seen as a problem by any class member is listed on the agenda, so it can be solved at the next meeting – after a cooling-off period.
- Each class member who wants to do so, including those involved in the issue, can contribute a possible solution to the issue.



- Everybody’s suggestions should be treated equally and there should not be any comments made by any of the other members as the suggestions are made.
- After all of the suggestions have been made, the key people involved in the issue are given the opportunity to decide which of the suggested solutions is realistic and reasonable to put into place.
- If any member of the class is not behaving in a way that is considered acceptable to other members, a consensus is reached about what will

be the logical consequence if that behaviour continues.

- For example, the agreement might be that if one class member consistently disrupts others while they are trying to work, then everyone will ignore that person.

✚ It is important that everyone keeps to the agreed consequence, and that nobody, including the teacher, gives in.

Nelsen points out it is particularly important that there are no *"I told you so's"* or *"It serves you right's"* when logical consequences are implemented, but rather that they are approached calmly, firmly but without any recriminations.

She also cautions that the effects might not be noticeable immediately and things might even get worse before they get better, because children often don't trust at first that adults are really willing to listen to them and take them seriously, so she advises persistence and determination. In addition, Nelsen describes that very often children will rally and carry out the decisions actively in the few days after the meeting – it is after a week or so that they start to slip, and this is when patience and determination are particularly necessary.

TIP 4: MOTIVATE AND INSPIRE STUDENTS

TIPS FOR MOTIVATING AND SUPPORTING STUDENTS

- ✚ Don't keep them guessing. Tell them!
 - Tell them clearly and explicitly what they have to do to receive an "A".
- ✚ Get to class early and develop a rapport with the early birds. You will soon find more and more students arriving early just to 'chat' with you.
 - talk with your students about what they are doing in school, what they hope to learn, and what they are really enjoying.
- ✚ Find ways to recognize student contributions and excellent work.

- Acknowledge them in class
- Make a personal remark to the student after school
- Send an email and cc to the rest of the class!

✚ Give students examples of ways in which class concepts relate to "real world" matters.

TIP 5: RAISING YOUR STUDENTS' SELF-CONFIDENCE/SELF-ESTEEM

PRAISE – KEY TO IMPROVED SELF ESTEEM

The more self-esteem the students have, the greater work you get out of them. In addition, they behave better and you have less classroom problems that disrupt the classroom-learning environment. The following suggestions can be used for any group that you are teaching:



1. **Give specific praise.** Specific praise works much better than generic praise. That way, the child knows which behavior or work skill to repeat in the future.
 - ✚ Don't just say I'm proud of you.
 - ✚ Try telling the child what it is that they have done to make you proud.
 - ✚ If he tried very hard to finish his maths assignment, tell him " Thank you for working so hard on that assignment."
2. **Post student's work.**
 - ✚ Try to find the best work sample for every student and post it in some area, such as a bulletin board where everyone can see it. Displaying a student's work will

increase their tendency to complete work and do it to their best ability.

3. **Surprise!** Put positive post-it notes around the classroom. Surprise your students by having positive post-it notes addressed to the students and place them on the door when they come in, on the pencil sharpener, on the bathroom door, or on their seats. Not only will it encourage the students, but it becomes somewhat of a game to find your own positive post-it note in the classroom.

Caution: Don't overdo the praise

Many parents and educators today overpraise children, believing this will foster a high self-esteem. Child psychologist Kenneth N. Condrell, Ph.D., explains: "Self-esteem doesn't come from saying 'You're wonderful' or 'You're number one'." In fact, frequent exhortations about a child's special-ness may backfire, creating a child who either becomes pathologically dependent on external validation or, conversely, hears so much meaningless praise that he just tunes it out.

One young man who was praised extravagantly for every tiny achievement says, "I started to believe that my parents didn't really expect much of me. If I took a black crayon and scribbled on a piece of paper they would call me a Picasso...it made me think that they didn't believe I could do any better.

TIP 6: TEACH ABOUT CHARACTER THROUGH LESSON CONTENT

VALUE MESSAGES RELATED TO SYMMETRY

Did you know that when we breathe it is usually not symmetrical? At any one time we are most likely to be breathing mainly through one nostril or the other. This can help to throw our physical, mental and emotional well being out of balance. If we want to re-balance ourselves it is very helpful to spend some time thinking about breathing symmetrically – that is

consciously breathing in and out of one nostril and then the other one, in turns. Even if we do it for only a few minutes it can help us to feel more balanced. (This can also be used for a silent sitting activity).

When talking about symmetry you can also use the opportunity to talk about the importance of keeping symmetry and balance in our own lives (work and play, happiness and sadness, giving and receiving, mental and emotional symmetry etc.)

Also, symmetry is about reflection/mirror images – discuss with children that when people irritate us it is usually because they are mirroring something we don't like about ourselves. What can we do to look more closely at ourselves in these circumstances, to see if there is something about our own behaviour that this person is mirroring that we may have to change?

TIP 7: A MOTIVATIONAL STORY FOR ALL TEACHERS

A LETTER FROM ABRAHAM LINCOLN TO HIS SON'S TEACHER



Lincoln

"He will have to learn, I know, that all men are not just, all men are not true. But teach him also that for every scoundrel there is a hero: that for every selfish politician, there is a dedicated leader.

Teach him that for every enemy there is a friend. It will take time, I know a long time, but teach, if you can, that a dollar earned is of more value than five found.

Teach him, to learn to lose and also to enjoy winning. Steer him away from envy, if you can, teach in the secret of quiet laughter.

Teach him, if you can the wonder of books but also given quiet time wonder the eternal mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the sun, and flowers on the green hillside.

In a school teach him, it is far more honorable to fail than to cheat...

Teach him to have faith in his own idea, even if anyone else tells him they are wrong.

Teach him to be gentle with gentle people and tough with tough.

Teach him to listen to all men but teach him also to filter all he hears on a screen of truth, and take only the good one that comes through.

Teach him, if you can, how to laugh when he is sad. Teach him there is no shame in tears.

Teach him to sell his brawn and brain to the highest bidder but never to put a prize tag on his heart and soul.

Teach him gently, but do not cuddle him, because only the test of fire makes the fine steel.

Teach him always to have sublime faith in himself because then he will always have some sublime faith in mankind.

This is a big order, but see what can you do. He is such a fine little fellow, my son!"

Dad

TIP 8: MUSIC AND SONGS IN THE CLASSROOM

INTRODUCE MUSIC INTO YOUR CLASSROOM EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT A MUSIC TEACHER



Music is a natural part of everyone. It creates an atmosphere of fun, interaction and excitement. That is why children are naturally drawn to it. If we nurture this ability, music will provide a lifetime of enjoyment and creativity for our students

To begin a group adventure into music, your students need to have a commonality with each other and you.

Start with the same song each time. It is usually a "hello" song but it could be anything as long as it is simple. Then the students know that your lesson is starting and that you are in control.

Next, you must assume that everyone identifies with music in some way. Children hear lullabies, learn songs and

melodies from television shows and computer games.

If you start by teaching something familiar, your class will respond. At lower grade levels, it could be "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" or "The Alphabet Song" (which happens to be the same melody and you can point that out). At higher levels, "Baby Bumblebee" is fun. You can use "The Wheels on The Bus" or "The Ants Go Marching." Silliness works!

Any song with repetition will be easier for you and the class.

Songs with too many words don't work unless you want to be the soloist.

Echo songs such as "Are You Sleeping" work well. You can even get creative and change the words. For example, if it is close to snack or lunchtime, you could sing "I am hungry!" and have the children suggest the foods that should be in the song.

There will be so much participation that the song may never end. Even the quietest child will suggest a food or maybe a "silly" food. Have fun with it!

Now that you have them singing, you are on your way to include other songs. You can teach the class your favorite song. Then ask the students to sing their special songs. You will be amazed and amused at the results. I have had students make up songs on the spot or sing very "interesting" rock songs that their siblings have taught them. No matter what, you must applaud and don't laugh!

TIP 9: HOW TO BE A GOOD EDUCARE TEACHER

WHAT TYPE OF TEACHER ARE YOU?

There are three kinds of teachers:

- ↪ Those who **complain**
- ↪ Those who **explain**
- ↪ Those who **inspire**

Tips to become an Inspiring Teacher:

- ↪ Respond to pupils, answers and questions with such words as "good, splendid and great"

- ↪ Encourage pupils to participate by using cues such as :ah-ha:, :m mm, etc.



- ↪ Use prompts and probes to help pupils arrive at appropriate answers
- ↪ Give simple directions such as “Try again”, “look again” which helps pupils to arrive at appropriate answers.
- ↪ Give credit for the correct part of an answer
- ↪ Link pupils’ responses to other pupils’ responses made earlier in the lesson.

**TIP 10: INVEST IN YOURSELF –
COPING WITH THE STRESSES OF
TEACHING**

**A TEACHER’S STORY: PUTTING
MORE RESPONSIBILITY ONTO
STUDENTS**

I was becoming exhausted because I had to spend every lunch break distributing the students’ lunch that was brought from the canteen and supervising them eating it. I told my colleagues that I wanted to experiment with leaving the students under the supervision of their peers so I could take a break. They scoffed at me, and said that unless I am there to distribute the food to the children, the greedy ones would take it all and there would not be enough to go around all of them. I made a promise to them, and to myself, that if this should happen I would personally pay for extra food to feed those who had missed out. I talked to the class about the importance of sharing and helping each other, and told them that I trusted them, then I left the classroom in

the charge of the four monitors. The monitors asked the students to line up in an orderly way and insisted that they serve themselves with only a small amount of food. In fact, the monitors themselves waited until last to be served, in case there was not enough for everyone. Only after all of the children in the class had been served were they allowed to line up again for second helpings. This way, with each child gradually taking small portions, there was plenty for everyone to have first and second helpings. The children were well fed in an orderly way, and I had a chance for a short break to re-charge myself before going back for the afternoon’s classes!

TIP 11: SILENT THINKING

**SILENT THINKING / SILENT
REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS**

The purpose of silent thinking and silent reflection by teachers is not merely to gain some physical and mental benefits; the journey begins with the physical relaxation and then leads to conscious awareness. One enjoys and gains physical and mental benefits at the initial stages. The main focus of silent thinking is for an inner, spiritual journey with the supreme goal of consciousness awakening. The process first involves the mind healing the body, and then itself, which leads to an increase of intelligence and awareness, developing higher thinking and higher learning through establishing and following your heart principles. *Jumsai* believes that consciousness awakening of higher thinking and higher learning involves the nurturing and living by following heart principles in all aspects of one’s life and interaction.

The first consciousness principle is **Truth**, which encompasses values such as accuracy, curiosity, discrimination, honesty, human understanding, integrity, self-reflection, and sincerity. The second is **Right action**, which refers to heart values such as courage, dependability, determination, efficiency, endurance,

healthy living, independence, initiative, and perseverance. The third is **Peace**, which includes calmness, concentration, contentment, equanimity, optimism, self-acceptance, self-discipline, self-esteem, and balance of nature and technology. The fourth value is **Love**, which incorporates forgiveness, compassion, consideration, tolerance, selflessness, humanity and interdependence. The fifth value is **Non-violence**. This is the ultimate aim and refers to values such as benevolence, co-operation, concern for ecological balance, respect for diversity, respect for life, respect for property, and unity. These principles are awakened through silent thinking/reflection, become part of one's core being as conscious awareness dawns.

If with all these measures you still have not been able to control your anger, then stand in front of a mirror and examine your face

After seeing your appearance you will surely feel so much disgust that at once you will be able to control your anger.



So there is a number of ways in which you will be able to deal with anger. One other thing you can do whenever anger comes is to inquire into the cause of

this anger.

- o Is it justified?

TIP 12: HERE'S ANOTHER HINT ON EDUCARE

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Quite a few people worry about wondering what is the best way to control anger when it comes on and tries to overwhelm them.

The easiest way to control anger is this: The moment you become aware that anger is rising within you

- o just laugh very loudly
- o go to the bathroom and have a cool bath.
- o take a glass of cool water
- o relax in a cool place.
- o leave the place where you are and go somewhere else.

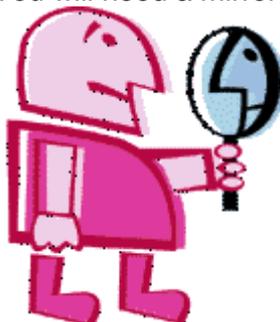
Remember that if someone is going to be harmed in the process of your anger, you will be committing a sin, and that cannot possibly be good for you.

To undertake all these methods will be quite difficult for an ordinary person, but it is enough to remember not to let your tongue go into action immediately after you get angry, and spill out a torrent of angry words.

Take some time to think things over. In a number of ways, anger weakens a person. If you make some effort to control anger when it arises, these efforts will act to strengthen your body and purify your mind.

5 MINUTE FILLER ACTIVITY

You will need a mirror for this end of class filler activity.



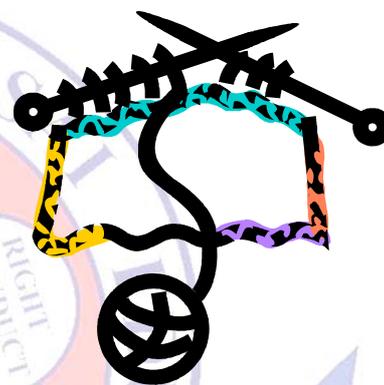
Bring a mirror with you. As the lesson ends, pretend that you need to tidy up so you take out your mirror and look into it, fixing your hair, etc. Then pose a question to the students who at this point must be wondering what you're up to. Ask them, 'Do you like yourself?' Pass the mirror around to a few students and ask them to tell you what they like most about themselves. When the student tells you what he/she likes about himself, it is a tremendous uplift to his/her own self-esteem as the focus is on their positive qualities.

You can add a little silliness for humour. Look in the mirror and chant, “Mirror, mirror in my hand, who’s the best in this land?” Reply to your own question, ‘I think I am’ and then pass the mirror around chanting the same phrase and getting the students to respond, ‘I think I am!’

DOES EDUCARE WORK?

KNITTING LOVE: A SERVICE PROJECT IN A PRIMARY SCHOOL

One of the most important fundamental components of education in human values is to encourage children to engage in selfless service, not for the sake of reward but for giving the service to others for its own sake. The benefits of this are not only to the recipient of the service but also to the child who is giving it, since it develops attitudes of altruism and compassion. This component was very much in the mind of Assistant Principal Maureen Street when she was working with teachers to develop a social skills and values education framework for her primary school in Tasmania. She felt that she had other components of character development covered by the programme that was developing, but that the service component was something missing. In an attempt to introduce an attitude of service into the school, Maureen came up with a simple idea – to teach the children to knit, so they could knit squares to make rugs for the elderly in their community. She advertised in the school’s newsletter for scrap wool and discarded knitting needles. Soon the equipment had been collected and the next step was to call for volunteer knitters. Maureen informed the children that she would be conducting two lunch-time sessions per week, to knit squares to make rugs for disadvantaged people, and the volunteers began to arrive. Approximately twenty students turned up on the first day and over a period of a month the total number of students involved increased to thirty-nine. Some children came to just one session but then continued to knit at home. It was not necessarily the children Maureen would have expected who came. It was an interesting mixture of grades and ages and included boys who Maureen would have described as being “at-risk” in terms of both their in and out-of-class behaviour and their learning weaknesses. Maureen was fascinated by the way in which these boys settled to the task and the concentration they gave to learning the new skill. At first the results were full of holes and dropped stitches but gradually their skills improved.



It was then that the “miracle” started to happen. Others in the school who didn’t come to the lunchtime sessions – children, teachers, parents, grandparents and friends – also started to knit. Almost every day when Maureen came into her office, there would be completed squares sitting on her desk, and many times she did not know who had put them there. Suddenly, incredibly, members of the wider school community were working together to support this project.

But the miracle did not stop there – because Maureen began to notice changes in the behaviour of the knitters, especially those “at-risk” boys, who would sit silently and concentrate on the task for the whole lunch-hour. She cherishes the mental image of one such boy, who had difficulties in the playground including bullying younger children, sitting patiently beside a younger boy (also with special social needs), showing endless patience as he taught him how to knit. “If I had been asked to name the child most likely to be doing this,” laughed Maureen, “I would never in a million years have named this boy.”

So why is it that this project brought about such positive results? In attempting to answer this question, let us take a look at some of the components of Education in Human Values that were mirrored in this project.

- **Love:** The project was offered by a teacher who felt genuine love for the pupils, and it was a chance for even those students who were “at-risk” with learning and behaviourally to start again with a clean slate, on equal footing with others. It was a chance for older children to help younger ones, and a way to bring family members together to share a common project.
- **Service:** The Assistant Principal, teachers, children, parents, and grandparents were all working together at the same level - all doing bits of each other’s knitting and all working to a common goal.
- **Creativity:** The project created an opportunity for children – and in many cases their parents – to learn a creative skill
- **Concentration:** In focusing on the rhythm of the knitting even children who had difficulty concentrating in class were able to concentrate on this task
- **Teachers modeling the values:** The teachers and parents who became involved in doing the knitting alongside the children were showing through their own behaviour the compassion, sense of service and unity that they believe to be important, rather than just telling the children what they “should” and “should not” do.

FURTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM THE ISSE (HONG KONG)

Taplin, M. (1998). *Education in Human Values through Mathematics: Mathematics through Education in Human Values*. Hong Kong: Institute of Sathya Sai Education of Hong Kong. ISBN 962-8430-01-3

Taplin, M. & Devi, A. (2004). *To Teach, Not to Punish: A Practical Human Values Approach to Discipline*. Hong Kong: Institute of Sathya Sai Education.

Educare posters and support materials

*We welcome comments, suggestions, and contributions.
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