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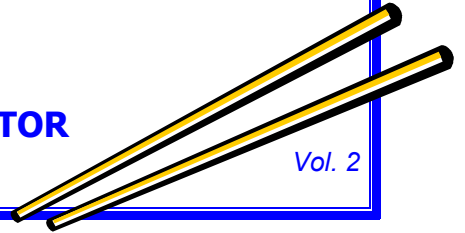
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EDUCARE NEWSLETTER

... ..FOOD FOR THE EDUCATOR

Vol. 2



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

.....EDUCARE

EduCare is based on the five human values that are universal and inter-dependent: Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-Violence and is concerned with eliciting these values that are already inherent in all of us. The fundamental principle of EduCare is that all teaching is based on love and that the teacher's example in living the values is the most critical component of values education.



QUICK TIPS FOR BRINGING EDUCARE INTO YOUR TEACHING

TIP 1: MOTIVATE AND INSPIRE STUDENTS

Motivation is all about creating an energy that gets the students excited about learning and wanting to learn. Motivation means to spark a desire to learn and get students hungry for more.

HOW?

- ❖ **Recognize and accept that each student is a unique individual.**

If the goal of your instruction is acceptance with the purity of your heart, then you will

provide a strong foundation of character in your students that will enable them to believe in themselves.

- ❖ **Create opportunities to tap into the students' innate interests.**

When they do something they are interested in, they will be excited about it. For example, if a student is especially good at writing, ask him/her to write a poem on the lesson taught. Get him/her to read it aloud to the class. Copy it onto poster size paper and stick it on the class notice board or a bulletin board for all to see.

❖ **Make the lesson interesting on the students' level**

Use examples that they relate to, not just what's in the textbook. Find ways to connect the lesson to daily life messages that will make them better, happier and more fulfilled people.

❖ **Interact with them to evaluate whether learning has taken place.**

Appoint two or three students daily to tell you one 'happy' thing that they learnt.

❖ **Be a happy teacher**

Your enthusiasm will rub off onto the students and that can start a process of self-motivation. If they get enthusiastic, they will want to learn.

The major key to motivation is the active involvement of students in their own learning. Students learn by doing, making, writing, designing, creating, and solving. (See Tip 9)

For more tips on how to motivate students, look out for our next issue in July 2007.

TIP 2: RAISE YOUR STUDENTS' SELF-CONFIDENCE/SELF-ESTEEM



Self-esteem improves or diminishes self-confidence. Take a few minutes at the end of every week to help your students to develop self-esteem and ultimately self-confidence.

Distribute colored strips of paper and ask students to write on them:

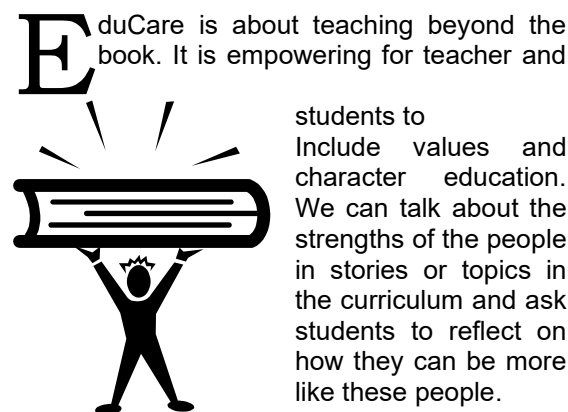
- ❖ A statement that describes themselves. *Let this statement begin with "I am....." Encourage students to think of a positive statement. If you have a student who seems lost, think of his/her class performance over the past week and suggest a statement.*
- ❖ A statement on how they coped in class that week. *This statement could begin with "I did.....". An example of this could be "I did better in my English test than I thought I would".*
- ❖ Three things that made them happy this week
- ❖ A compliment to their own selves today
- ❖ All the stuff they're good at

Collect these statements written on the strips of colored paper. Fold the strips into circles and make a chain. Use the chain to decorate the windows, the bulletin board, the door, or

even the teachers' desk! Make sure this is in full view of the students so that they can look and feel proud about themselves.

Consciously raising self-esteem must become an ongoing process. Use every opportunity to do it.

TIP 3: TEACHING ABOUT CHARACTER WHILE TEACHING CONTENT



EduCare is about teaching beyond the book. It is empowering for teacher and

students to include values and character education. We can talk about the strengths of the people in stories or topics in the curriculum and ask students to reflect on how they can be more like these people.

Characters like Abraham Lincoln in History or Pythagoras in Mathematics will help students see the strength of character of the individuals and the ways they lived their lives become an inspiration to the students. The humane side of the content makes the curriculum 'come alive' and students can relate to and identify with the individual being studied.

Teachers can use examples of strengths in their lessons to help students to see their own strengths.

In *Gardener's* words,

Teaching character through content allows for the student and teacher to identify strengths verbally/linguistic, logically/mathematical, bodily/kinesthetic, visual/spatial and interpersonal.

TIP 4: INSPIRATIONAL STORY TELLING

Nothing in modern media can compare to being face to face with a person and feeling that person's heart and soul being poured into the images and action of their stories.

Joseph Sobol

An inspirational story can do a lot to help us to understand ourselves, decide how to behave in certain situations, and find solutions to our problems.

Listening to stories can make us happy. This is because it releases endorphins in the brain

and that's why one always feels so good after listening to a good inspiring story.

Stories help our students to understand the challenges and success of life. The stories from the local culture help them to understand themselves. Stories from other cultures go beyond borders and expand the student's horizons. Stories expand their imaginations and their understanding of life. It is vitally important that we, as teachers, use story telling to support their development.

TIP 5: MUSIC AND SONGS IN THE CLASSROOM

Music has traditionally been used in many cultures as a way of promoting health and well-being – research has shown how the vibrations of different kinds of music have different effects on the human body, mind, emotions and spirit.

Music is a way of bringing people together in harmony. Musical intelligence is one of the multiple intelligences identified by *Gardner*. It is important to give all children the chance to develop their musical skills to their full potential.

Music and group singing form an important methodology for EduCare as this is a way of inculcating important human values into children's subconscious minds. Consequently it is important for teachers to select songs with meaningful lyrics that will uplift children or give them a framework for what to do in difficult times.

Music and song are such powerful tools that we should look for innovative ways to use them in the classroom.

Research has shown that children who learn to play musical instruments become finer people. They develop mental and muscular coordination, discipline, endurance, artistic, aesthetic and emotional qualities and have higher intellectual and emotional development.

(*Gillian Christie, Nature and Health, 5, 2*)

Some Quotes about Music

- ♪ Music is the food of the soul
- ♪ The vibrations coming from [song] make the heart vibrant. If you sing alone the vibrations return to you as reaction. But in community singing, what you have is not a reaction but a wave of vibrations. They enter into the atmosphere and purify the polluted air. The atmosphere today is polluted by bad thoughts and feelings.

When you sing the bad vibrations in the air are destroyed and the air gets purified.

- ♪ Let melody and harmony surge up from your hearts and let all delight in the Love that you express through that song.
- ♪ Derive strength and joy – singing in your heart.
- ♪ It [music and song] encourages man to dive into himself and genuinely be his real self.
- ♪ Sing with all your soul, sing aloud, and sing in chorus, so that the atmosphere polluted by the noise of greed, hatred and envy can be purified by the [uplifting] vibrations.
- ♪ The task of art and music is to take hold of the shining, the radiance, the manifestation, of that which as spirit weaves and lives throughout the world.
(*Rudolph Steiner*)
- ♪ Songs are sneaky things; they can slip across borders. And into hearts. They can set the conscience on fire and spur individuals to stand up for what is right.
[Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, *Spiritual RX*, New York: Hyperion, p.146.]
- ♪ Listen to the music of the whales, dolphins etc. and discuss how important it is that these voices should not be silenced.
[Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat, *Spiritual RX*, New York: Hyperion.]
- ♪ See deep enough and you see musically; the heart of nature being everywhere music if you can only reach it.
(*Thomas Carlyle*).
- ♪ Human bodies may be likened to musical instruments. Like many kinds of stringed instruments our bodies resonate to the sounds around us. Some of these sounds can induce feelings of wellbeing, others can create stress and disorder.
- ♪ (Malcolm Harrison, *Nature and Health, 5, 2*)

Suggested Starting Points

In a single assembly or over several, have an international music festival where students and teachers present musical items from different countries.

Use group singing with the whole school in assemblies.

Songs

The list of appropriate music and songs is endless so we have mentioned only a few examples here. Please refer to the Education in Human Values songs on your CD.

- 🎧 Give Peace a Chance (John Lennon)
- 🎧 The Greatest Love of All (Whitney Houston)
- 🎧 Peace Will Come (Melanie)
- 🎧 Peace Train (Cat Stevens)
- 🎧 All I Need is Love (The Beatles)
- 🎧 The Power of Love (Celine Dion)

TIP 6: PROMOTE COLLABORATION WITH GROUP ACTIVITIES

What to include in the "What Did I Do In the Group?" (Martin (1987):

- ❖ How effectively did I listen to my groupmates?
- ❖ Did I take a turn to speak and did I respect other group members' right to take their turns?
- ❖ Did I encourage others?
- ❖ Did we ask questions, explain ideas and check each other's understanding?

Martin recommends that students discuss these points as part of their own self-assessment as group members. This analysis of the group's use of interpersonal skills and overall function as a group is essential if the pupils are to be aware that they are developing the desired qualities



(Sutton, 1992).

TIP 7: COPING WITH THE PRESSURES AND STRESSES OF TEACHING

Take control of:



how you see your pupils	how you hear them	what you say
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Have a group brainstorming about examples of different ways to see, hear and speak to our pupils that make us and them more empowered.

How we see them:

A well-known American psychologist, Leo Buscaglia (1982), tells us that if we really think about it we will realise that every "downer" we experience is because somebody didn't meet our expectations. There is a beautiful story on the Internet (*Bits & Pieces - June 1995, Economics Press*) about a teacher called Mrs. Thompson who had very clear expectations of how she thought her students should be – clean, hardworking, etc. But there was one child, Teddy Stoddard, who didn't meet any of these expectations. He didn't play well with the other children, that his clothes were messy and that he constantly needed a bath. And Teddy could be unpleasant. It got to the point where Mrs. Thompson was really stressed by his behaviour and would actually take delight in marking his papers with a broad red pen, making bold X's and then putting a big "F" at the top of his papers. But at Christmas Teddy gave Mrs. Thompson a gift in a tatty paper bag. It was a necklace and half-used bottle of perfume that had belonged to his mother, who had died the previous year. This act touched Mrs. Thompson and she began to see Teddy in a very different light – and by looking at him differently she found he was much less stressful and frustrating to teach.

How we hear them:

In a grade 4 class I was teaching there was a girl who would frequently throw temper tantrums if things were not going her way. The first time it happened she was hurling abuse at me, telling me that she hated me. My first reaction was to feel hurt and angry. But then I started to hear what she was really saying underneath the abuse: "I am unsure about myself and I am unsure whether you like me. I need you to love me and to give me some validation." By "hearing" this different message I was able to look at the situation very differently and to feel much less stressed about it.

What we say to them:

Buscaglia suggests that 90% of what we say is talking at pupils and not with them. It is stressful for us to talk at them: "I am angry, you are bad, your work is careless, how many times do I have to ask you". Let's try to talk more *with* them instead.

This is what Sathya Sai Baba means when he talks about **3HV**, harmony of head, heart and hands – that the thoughts that form in our heads need to be run through the discriminatory filter of our hearts before we put them into action with our hands.

TIP 8: STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

As teachers how can we understand the minds of students? To begin with, we (the teachers) must first have a thorough understanding of our own minds before trying to understand their minds. If the teacher's mind is good, the students will reflect it in their behaviour. Since we cannot see a student's mind, we have to understand it only by observing their behaviour. We should observe and analyze their behaviour with that of their parents, their friends and their classmates. Basing on this, we will be able to lead the student on to the right path.

Sometimes, parents give too much freedom to the children and children in turn misuse this freedom to interact with their friends with laxity in behaviour. At school the freedom is curtailed. The student must be taught to strike a balance between freedom and discipline. The teacher cannot interfere in the student's family affairs, for parents give freedom to their children out of their love. Nevertheless, the teachers must keep in touch with the student's activities at home.

But the sad plight is that the parents are 99% responsible for their children getting into bad ways, by providing them with excess money and freedom. The parents are misguided by thinking that their children would be hurt if their freedom is curtailed. On the other hand they feel dejected if the child gets perverted and runs into bad ways.

The child must be groomed well right from the beginning itself. Just as speed-breakers control the speed of vehicles on the road to ensure safety, so too restrictions must be enforced upon children's freedom for their safety. The child should be given freedom in areas related to right conduct and must be punished when it errs.

It is in order to ensure that unlimited freedom is not given to children that the institution called School has come into existence. It is here that teachers should strike a balance between freedom and restriction in student's life. The teacher must advise the student regularly that his conduct will be responsible for the name he earns for his parents and the school in which he studies.

The concept of kindness and respect for elders must also be stressed upon. The teachers must advise the students in the right

way. The teacher must advise the student that he is born as a human, and that he is neither a 'wild animal' to strike terror in the hearts of people nor is he a 'domestic animal' (docile person) to be afraid of others. He has no cause to fear nor should he cause fear in others. In this manner, the teacher must lead the students on the right path. Life is a long journey and must not be dismissed in a trivial manner. It must be spent in the most auspicious manner possible.

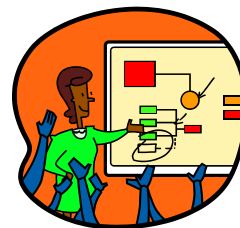
When you want to teach good principles to students, first you practise and then set an example. For example, if you smoke in the class, students will also emulate you and start smoking. If you try to correct them by saying, smoking is bad for health, the students will in turn ask you, "Sir, then why are you smoking?" The true characteristic of good education is good teaching. Good teaching brings about transformation in students.

TIP 9: DISCIPLINE

In an Educare approach to discipline we must continually ask ourselves:

- Does it go to the child's heart?
- Does it have practical application?
- Does it help the child transform?

Here is an example of what you can do to discipline in an EduCare way:



Misdemeanour:
Fighting

**Corrective
Consequence:**
Engage both parties in
a joint service project

Values: Selflessness,
Interdependence (Love), Co-operation,
Respect, Service to Others (Non-violence)

Key Vocabulary: *We are all the same on the inside so let's work together to help others.*

When we give service to others, we learn that we are really all the same – we learn to feel others' pain as our own and share their success as our own and there are no longer any differences between us.

Anecdote: This has been tried and tested amongst youth groups in New York, to help remove the negative feelings of gang warfare. So far, the results have been very positive.

Other similar initiatives include encouraging the children to develop a shared hobby e.g. chess or singing

TIP 10: INVEST IN YOURSELF - SOMETHING YOU CAN DO FOR YOURSELF AS A TEACHER

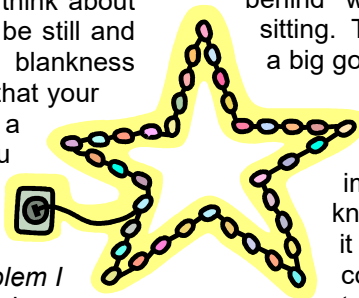
Take some time to nurture your colleagues. The teacher's story below describes her feelings after an exercise in a staff meeting where the teachers were asked to write something they appreciated about each of their colleagues. These comments were compiled and each teacher was given their own list of their colleagues' comments:

"In staff meeting, all the teachers had to write something good about each other. I loved that. I've still got mine – if my house was burning down, one of the things I would grab would be that paper. I had no idea that my colleagues thought those things about me."

TIP 11: VISUALISATIONS FOR PROBLEM SOLVING

Visualisation 1

First read the problem. Then put it aside. Close your eyes and just listen to the inner silence of your mind for a few moments. Focus your concentration on the back of your closed eyelids at the point where your eyebrows meet. Don't try to think about anything – just allow your mind to be still and empty, and concentrate on the blankness behind your eyes. When you feel that your mind is completely still, think for a moment about the problem you need to solve. You can either repeat the whole question in your mind, or you can simply say, "*I need to find the solution to the problem I am about to tackle.*" Once you have asked this question, return your attention to focusing on the silent, blank emptiness of your mind behind your closed eyelids for a few



more minutes. Then visualise your subconscious mind working like a computer. First it sorts the knowledge you already have to solve the problem. Then it sorts out what else you need to know. Next it puts this knowledge together in a logical way. Finally it sends the output into your conscious mind so it can work on the problem. Take 3 slow, deep breaths, then open your eyes and start to work on the problem.

Visualisation 2

Take 3 deep, slow breaths. Each time you breathe out, let go of any frustration or anxiety. Each time you breathe in, breathe in inspiration. You can decide what this might look like – might be a light that lights up your mind like a bulb, might be a colour, or might be a shape. Just keep drawing it in each time you breathe. Now imagine that your mind has gone completely blank – as if there has been a power cut and it has been plunged into darkness. Sit there for a few moments in the total blackness. If any thoughts or images come into your head, just let them go and return to thinking about the darkness.

Now imagine that you are going down a long, dark tunnel, right into the deepest part of your mind. This tunnel leads you to your inner mathematician, deep inside your brain. This is the place where you have all the answers and all the techniques you need to solve the problem. All you need to do is unlock the door behind which the inner mathematician is sitting. The door is golden, and in the lock is a big golden key. Slowly turn the key, open the door, and all the knowledge you need can be seen right there.

As you return along the tunnel, imagine that you are dragging the knowledge along behind you, bringing it closer and closer to the front of your conscious mind, where you can put it to good use.

Now open your eyes – don't worry if the inspiration isn't there immediately, as it will come.

DOES EDUCARE WORK?

This semester I teach Grade 3 mathematics. I have taught my two classes since they were in Grade 1. When these two classes were formed the gender balance was not very even. One class had predominantly girls and the discipline was quite good. The other had predominantly boys and the discipline was bad. Since I have been participating in the values education research I use silent sitting as much as possible to influence the students' sentiments. When I first started the students all thought it was very amusing. Once in a while they would secretly open their eyes to look. Afterwards when they started to take it more seriously, they really started to experience the effects.

In the class with mostly boys, they will now do silent sitting well. Few students speak out of turn now. In the girls' class, where the discipline was originally good, I have noticed that since using silent sitting more are raising their hands to speak. Their work quality has also improved. There has been some transformation in the students' thoughts and behaviour. The love, non-violence, right conduct etc. have started to seep through the class.

In the mathematics class I use group co-operation and discussion as much as possible and this displays the students' team spirit and the spirit of benevolence and mutual help. In teaching the content I try as far as possible to change the question content to reflect values like environmental protection, offering compassion, doing good and so on – while the students are studying new knowledge they can also be paying attention to ecological equilibrium, cherishing their schoolmates, forgiving etc. The right conduct, non-violence and truth values are seeping in.

In practising the processes of values education, I think the influence on the students' thoughts and behaviours has been the biggest.

A teacher who had participated in a year-long project to integrate Educare into her teaching

We welcome comments, suggestions, and contributions. Email to: info@ssehv.org