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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

TIP 1: VALUES LITERACY – “LEARNING TALK, TEACHER TALK”

HOW TO SUSTAIN LEARNING AND TEACHER TALK IN THE CLASSROOM

It is important for teachers to use words that will help pupils to feel their own peace, love and good health. For instance this week I was thinking carefully of the words I could use with a few students that are less attentive, sleepy and have a 'tired look'. As the other students 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" who is supposed to people who cannot sleep. The response was humorous all round and the message clearly given to the student, who just cracked up as he found it so hilarious!

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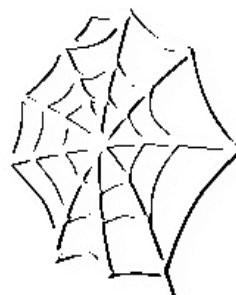
X's response was "Good one Miss!". I had no need to venture to the other students as they also got the message in a soft, hilarious but firm meaning to pay attention and get on with the learning of the day.

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 you expect them to do and not to do.
- ↪ 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. **Display students' work.**
 - ↪ Try to find the best work sample for every student and display it in some area, such as a bulletin board where everyone can see it. Displaying students' 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

"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!"



Lincoln

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

- Use quiet background music while children work, to help them to concentrate and feel peaceful.
- Encourage children to sing together in assembly or at the start or finish of a lesson. Discuss with them: How does this uplift us, and what benefits does it have? Try inviting your colleagues to sing together in staff meeting and talk about these questions.
- Find and use songs that can provide support and upliftment in different situations (eg “I have confidence” from “The Sound of Music” can be sung by somebody who is feeling nervous.)

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

Silent thinking and silent reflection are not only for use by children. Teachers can also gain some physical and mental benefits. Invite a support group of colleagues to make a commitment to doing silent thinking at the beginning of the school day, either together or separately, or even as a whole staff in staff meeting, and discuss your experiences. Here are some examples that you might like to try.

- What kind of teacher would you really like to be? What do you want your students to remember you for? What kind of day would you like to have with your class? (Think about the words that come into your mind.) Choose one of the words that stands out as being really important for you, and sit quietly for 1-2 minutes, silently repeating it in your mind, eg "loving" or "inspirational").
- Close your eyes, and take 3 slow, deep breaths. On each outward breath feel yourself relaxing more and more. Take your attention to the classroom/s you will be working in today. If there is more than one, mentally go to each in turn. Imagine that you are painting the whole classroom with

something that symbolizes peace. It might be a peaceful scene from nature, or it might simply be a peaceful colour such as pink. Quickly but thoroughly mentally paint each room in the way that you think is best.

Next, take your attention to the pupils. Imagine your pupils sitting in the classroom/s. Focus your attention for a moment on their faces – in a split second, allow yourself to see each one as a separate and beautiful individual. Now take your attention to focus on the feeling of pure unconditional love – that is the feeling of giving without expectation to receive. You might symbolize this by a colour, by a flower, or simply by allowing yourself to feel the sensation. Or you might have another method of your own. Allow this symbol to build up, stronger and stronger, then allow it to burst so that it showers the whole room and every individual in it. See everyone surrounded by this sense of unconditional well-being, and see yourself as being the source of it throughout the whole day.

When you are ready, bring your awareness back to where you are now, open your eyes and go on in confidence that you have created the right energy patterns for a successful day for yourself and all of your pupils.

TIP 12: HERE'S ANOTHER HINT ON EDUCARE

ANGER MANAGEMENT

Quite a few people worry and wonder about how to control anger. The easiest way to control anger is this: The moment you become aware that anger is rising within you:

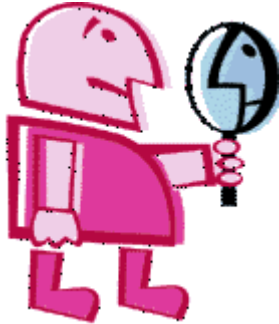
- just laugh very loudly
- go to the bathroom and have a cool bath.
- take a glass of cool water
- relax in a cool place.
- leave the place where you are and go somewhere else.

If you try all of these and 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 shocked that at once your anger will go.

The important thing to remember is that if you allow yourself to go on feeling angry, it will damage your own physical, mental and emotional health. Is it worth doing this to yourself?

5 MINUTE FILLER ACTIVITY

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



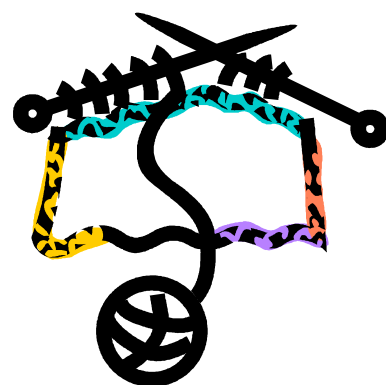
Bring a mirror with you. As the lesson ends, pretend that you need to tidy up so you take out your mirror and look into it, fixing your hair, etc. Then pose a question to the students who at this point must be wondering what you're up to. Ask them, 'Do you like yourself?' Pass the mirror around to a 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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