



A Compilation of Papers by  
Dr. Margaret Taplin,  
Institute of Sathya Sai Education of Hong  
Kong

Blocks A1 & A2, 10th Floor, Burlington House,  
92-94 Nathan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong.

*Phone: 2367 4240 Fax: 2724 8000*

*Email: [info@ssehv.org](mailto:info@ssehv.org)*

January, 2002

*“Educare is education which makes one a caring individual, because one becomes a caring individual when one realizes that one is not different from the other, that both are the same. My brother’s pain, my sister’s sorrow is my sorrow, my pain. When you become aware that there is no difference, you become a caring individual.”*

Sathya Sai Baba

## Table of Contents

Chapter 1.	Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2.	The SSEHV Model.....	3
Chapter 3.	Educare .....	8
Chapter 4.	The Human Values Approach to Classroom Discipline .....	11
Chapter 5.	Human Values Approach to Teaching – Its Impact on Teachers and Pupils...24	
Chapter 6.	Creating a 'Safe', Supportive Mathematics Classroom Environment .....	28
Chapter 7.	Peace in the Classroom.....	41
Chapter 8.	Silent Sitting and Creative Visualisation in the Classroom.....	45
Chapter 9.	Integrating Values Education into English Lessons .....	51
Chapter 10.	Enhancing Character Development, Reducing Teacher Stress: Some Reflections.....	59
Chapter 11.	Combating Bullying Through Strategies of Truth, Right Action, Peace, Love and Non-Violence.....	65
Chapter 12.	Teaching Values Through A Problem-Solving Approach.....	72
Chapter 13.	Conflict Resolution in the Classroom.....	89
Chapter 14.	What Can We Do To Raise Students' Self-Esteem? .....	95
Chapter 15.	Loving Pupils in Their Unlovable Moments .....	106
Chapter 16.	Teacher Self-Esteem: An Educare Approach to Caring for Teachers .....	133
Chapter 17.	Bringing out Human Excellence 3HV: The Harmony of Head, Heart and Hands .....	141
Chapter 18.	What is Spiritual Health and How Can Schools Achieve It?.....	146
Chapter 19.	Integrating Education in Human Values Into Mathematics Lessons.....	159
Chapter 20.	Water Education and Education in Human Values.....	168
Chapter 21.	Friendship Day: Integrating values education into the curriculum.....	178
Chapter 22.	Finding Inner Potential .....	187
Chapter 23.	A Rubric for Assessing Education in Human Values.....	197
Chapter 24.	Parent-teacher partnerships: a values-oriented approach.....	201
Chapter 25.	Knitting Love: A Service Project in a Primary School.....	206



## Chapter 1. Introduction

When the school introduces and trains each child of society into membership with such a little community [ie a microcosm of the world a child would inhabit as a citizen, not just as a worker], saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guarantee of a larger society which is worthy, lovely, and harmonious (pp.43-44).

Nevertheless, many teachers are expressing concern that, even though they acknowledge values education as being important, it is difficult to 'add on' anything more to their already jam-packed curricula. Therefore, it is necessary to explore ways in which it can be incorporated into existing curricula without needing to make too many changes or becoming just one more extra thing to do. There is undoubtedly growing pressure for all teachers at all levels to become teachers of values, through modelling, discussing and critiquing values-related issues (Noddings, 1991; 1995a; 1995b; 1995c; Jennings and Nelson, 1996; Lockwood, 1993). Education can no longer be concerned solely with academic achievement because even this is not possible if children do not know how to care for others and be cared for by others (Noddings, 1995c). In fact, while the survival of society is dependent upon people who are literate, numerate and able to cope with solving the problems of day-to-day life:

Our society does not need to make its children first in the world in mathematics and science. It needs to care for its children – to reduce violence, to respect honest work of every kind, to reward excellence at every level, to ensure a place for every child and emerging adult in the economic and social world, to produce people who can care competently for their own families and contribute effectively to their communities (Noddings, 1995a, p.365).

With breakdowns in traditional family structures, it is no longer the case that commonly-accepted values are passed from one generation to the next (Carr, 1997). Therefore the responsibility is falling more and more on schools to fulfil this role - and yet it continues to be difficult for them to do so, particularly with increasing pressures to achieve high test scores even in primary schools (Noddings, 1995a).

Clearly, while time and curriculum constraints can make it difficult, if not impossible, to include education in human values as an additional topic in the curriculum, there are many opportunities to teach its principles through existing subjects and topics (Taplin, 1998). This has the added advantage that the schools do not have to abdicate in any way their responsibility to teach the academic skills but that they will be rethinking the ways in which they do this (Noddings, 1994). The purpose of this collection of papers is to suggest some ways in which teachers can incorporate values education into existing programmes.

A framework that enables this to be done effectively is the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) programme. This programme was founded in India by Sathya Sai Baba and now operates successfully in more than 160 countries, and is supported by national education department policies in several countries. It is a secular programme that is concerned with putting back character development and values into education and developing all domains of the student's personality: cognitive, physical, mental, emotional and particularly spiritual. It 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 SSEHV 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. Therefore, it is hoped that this collection of papers will give some insights about how teachers can become values role models in all aspects of their teaching and interactions with their pupils.



## Chapter 2. The SSEHV Model

In this section, a brief description will be given of the rationale for SSEHV.

Its goals are:

1. to bring out human excellence at all levels: character, academic, and "being";
2. the all-round development of the child (the heart as well as the head and the hands);
3. to help children to know who they are;
4. to help children to realise their full potential; and
5. to develop attitudes of selfless service.

The essence of the SSEHV model (Figure 1) has been described by Jumsai (1997).

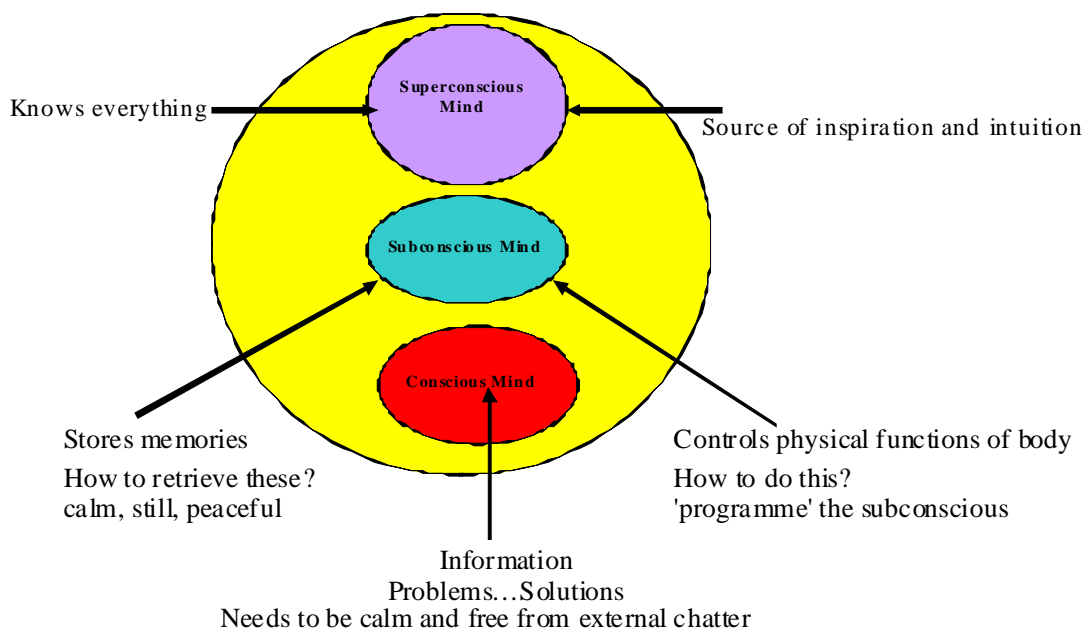


Figure 1: Dimensions of the human being (adapted from Jumsai, 1997)

This diagram represents the physical human body (large circle) and the three levels of the mind: the conscious, the subconscious and the superconscious. Through the five senses, the conscious mind receives and processes information from the environment in order to create awareness and understanding. The subconscious stores the memories of everything that we have experienced, and feeds these memories to the conscious mind to control the individual's thoughts and actions, and even to colour our perceptions of events that happen around us. The superconscious mind is the source of our wisdom, knowledge, conscience and higher consciousness. In a holistically balanced person, these three levels of the mind interact together to contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

Jumsai proposes that there are two important ingredients for this healthy interaction to occur. The first is to free the three levels of the mind from extraneous ‘chatter’, to enable enhanced concentration and memory. The second is to ensure that the information that is stored in the various levels of the mind is ‘clean’, positive and constructive, since its retrieval will have such a significant effect on the individual’s thoughts and actions, which in turn contribute to the presence or absence of holistic well being.

The SSEHV model is a simple but effective means of ensuring that these two essential ingredients occur. It promotes five universal, secular human values: Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence (Figure 2), with the ultimate goal of developing the 'whole' student, not only the cognitive and physical aspects.

Figure 2: Five universal values and sub-values

<b>Truth:</b>	accuracy, curiosity, discrimination, honesty, human understanding, integrity, self-reflection, sincerity
<b>Right Action:</b>	courage, dependability, determination, efficiency, endurance, healthy living, independence, initiative, perseverance
<b>Peace:</b>	calmness, concentration, contentment, equanimity, optimism, self-acceptance, self-discipline, self-esteem
<b>Love:</b>	compassion, consideration, forgiveness, humaneness, interdependence, selflessness, tolerance.
<b>Non-violence:</b>	benevolence, co-operation, concern for ecological balance, respect for diversity, respect for life, respect for property.

The first value 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 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 compassion, consideration, forgiveness, humaneness, interdependence, selflessness, and tolerance. 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 values are all inter-related and inter-dependent. Love is in fact considered to be the *basis of character* and encompasses all of the other values: *love in thought is truth, love in feeling is peace, love in understanding is non-violence, and love in action is right action* (Jumsai, 1997, p.103).

### Addressing contemporary problems in schools

Some examples of ways in which the SSEHV framework can be applied to teachers’ classroom behaviour include:

#### Truth

It is important for teachers to be in control of the way in which they react to situations. If a



teacher reacts with immediate anger then this can often encourage children to hide the *truth* to avoid this anger. Being more *truthful* in dealing with pupils - or colleagues - does not mean that one has to be blunt or to hurt somebody else's feelings by telling them something unkind. But it does mean telling them in a thoughtful way. For example, when correcting children a teacher could say, "I don't like the way you answered that question. I like it better when you give me a sensible answer and I know that you have put thought into it," or, "I don't really like the way you have done this piece of work. I prefer it when you do it more slowly and make fewer mistakes". This means that the teacher is making it very clear to the pupil why he/she is not happy and giving the pupil some clear guidelines for the expected behaviour.

## **Right Action**

One way that teachers can encourage right action is by taking advantage of every incidental opportunity to talk to the children about behaviours that are acceptable and those that are not, for example. why it is unacceptable to throw wrapping papers on the ground for others to pick up). Constantly reinforcing good behaviour is another way to encourage right action. The teacher can make certain that the classroom environment is clean and tidy, and encourage the pupils to take responsibility for contributing to this.

Another way that teachers can model right action is by being careful about what is said in front of children. If it is necessary to talk about another person at all, it is better to try to focus on the positive things rather than criticising or gossiping. A further example is letting them see the teacher making lists and prioritising tasks so they will improve their own time management.

Becoming angry if a pupil cannot understand something or makes a mistake can lead to fear of failure. While it is, of course, important to encourage accuracy and patiently ask them to correct careless errors, it is more helpful to show the child how to recover from the mistake and try again, rather than becoming angry.

## **Peace**

Teachers can contribute significantly to a quality classroom environment and hence model appropriate values to pupils by finding ways to be able to feel a constant state of peace themselves, as they will be less likely to feel angry, disappointed, let down, or bothered by teaching-related stresses. In a situation where the pupil is in a state of turmoil, then just by simply maintaining his/her own centre of balance the teacher is creating a feeling of peace that will have an effect on the other person as well. Responding to pupils with gentleness will provide a model that will help them in the development of their own inner peace. Speaking to them in an appropriate tone will help them to recognise the importance of remaining in a constant state of peace.

When dealing with an angry child it can be helpful to use a "time-out" place where the child can "cool down" to a state where it is more feasible to reason with her. When the child has settled down, the teacher is able to discuss the reason for the conflict and the consequences of being angry. Help pupils to create inner peace within themselves by introducing them to the value of silent sitting - that is, sitting for a few minutes in a state of complete outer and inner silence

Make pupils aware of the physical damage to their own health that can be caused by excessive anger and by suppressing it - teach them strategies for releasing it effectively but

without harming others. Encourage them to see that conflict, if properly managed, can be a constructive way to learn and grow. When using groupwork, ask controversial questions that will lead to disagreement and teach them how to use this conflict constructively. If pupils have been in conflict with each other, set them a joint task on which they are required to work co-operatively together. When necessary to punish pupils, use punishments that require pupils to reflect on the causes and the consequences of their conflicts or anger and to suggest more positive alternatives.

## **Love**

Bullough and Baughman (1993) have presented an interesting discussion of the role of 'love' in enhancing the classroom environment, as exemplified by the following comment from an experienced teacher (p.90):

A lot of my success comes from learning how to deal with the students and to treat them the way they need to be treated, positively. I call it loving them along, because that is what works for me. I want to have a loving environment in my classroom where my students can blossom. A second principle is that a classroom should be a warm, fuzzy place like a family, where students feel loved and cared for, but more than a family - a caring community where students feel connected and responsible for one another...

In fact, it has been suggested that this can be one of most important factors in enabling teachers to cope effectively with adolescent pupils (Gordon, 1997). One of the most valuable things a teacher can do to model this value is to interact with colleagues and pupils from heart to heart rather than from head to head. Teachers who consciously practice acting and reacting to their pupils and their colleagues with compassion and acceptance find that their interactions are more positive because they are able to respond to the situations around them with a different attitude and they are able to be more accepting of others' faults and weaknesses. They also find that this is less taxing and less stressful, because they are able to let go of distressing situations more easily and will not be in as much danger of damage to their own physical and mental well-being.

## **Non-violence**

"Non-violence" is much more than simply not reacting with violence to certain situations, and even much more than putting into practice strategies for using love and inner peace to deal with conflicts. Modelling non-violence can incorporate values such as making sure that actions and words do not harm another person, showing genuine pleasure when somebody else does well in some venture, and showing concern for the conservation of the environment. One of the most helpful strategies that can be used to develop the value of non-violence is to learn to give time and effort to others willingly and without any expectation of physical or emotional reward. If teachers are able to give this selfless service from the heart and not from any sense of duty or expectation of reward then they are likely to experience fulfilment. If they are able to develop this in their pupils, then they will be doing a great service for them as well.

## **Teaching approaches for drawing out inherent values**

There are several teaching approaches that are particularly useful in drawing out the values inherent within children. These will be mentioned just briefly here, as they will be discussed

in more detail in later papers. The first of these, considered to be a fundamental component of SSEHV, is *silent sitting*. This refers to encouraging pupils to sit quietly and allow their minds to relax for a few minutes, particularly at the beginning of a lesson, to make them feel more focused and peaceful. Often this time is used for them to listen to soft, relaxing music. One particularly effective form of silent sitting that is a unique feature of SSEHV, is to invite pupils to visualise the effects of a pure, cleansing light, burning out their negative thoughts and actions and leaving only room for the positive. The light is symbolic of purity, warmth and growth (Jumsai, 1997). This technique is beneficial in silencing the mind's extraneous 'chatter' to improve concentration and problem solving, and enabling the child to go deeply within his/her own consciousness to tap into the values that are latent there. This technique will be discussed further in the paper *Silent Sitting and Creative Visualisation in the Classroom*.

The use of *quotation*, *positive affirmation* and *prayer* is also considered to be an important component of the SSEHV programme because of evidence that children's thinking can be influenced by regular exposure to positive statements. The teacher can select quotations that are relevant for the child's age, interests and culture. Quotations can be written on the blackboard every day and used as a basis for discussion and other language activities, or simply be left for the children to read for themselves. Teachers are encouraged to utilise opportunities to tell *stories and anecdotes* about famous people, heroes and ordinary people who have demonstrated the kinds of values with which we are concerned. By regular exposure to stories of such people, the pupils will come to value the good qualities described and to use them as a framework to draw on when the need arises. *Music and song* are valuable ways of promoting inner peace and emphasising positive values. These days, with concerns that young people are exposed to many negative values, this needs to be counter-balanced by the use of music and songs that promote positive feelings and celebrate healthy values. *Group activities* are important. Apart from the fact that current research about teaching suggests that pupils can come to better understanding if they have the chance to work together in pairs or small groups (Schoenfeld, 1985a, NCTM, 1989, Von Glaserfeld, 1991), this methodology allows for the development of unity, co-operation, mutual regard and creative conflict resolution that are essential if people are going to be able to live together in peace and harmony.

While it is appropriate to utilise the SSEHV model in teaching directly about values education, and many teachers are using it successfully in this way, it is also very easy to adapt the principles to existing classroom practices, thus empowering every teacher, irrespective of their subject specialisation, to be a teacher of human values. There are two ways in which the SSEHV model can help to achieve this. The first is by integrating the values and the teaching methodologies into existing curricula. This can be done by the careful selection of appropriate examples and recognition of opportunities to promote values education without needing to make any changes to the syllabus.

The second way in which the SSEHV model can be incorporated into existing classroom practices is by addressing contemporary problems that exist in schools, such as discipline problems, pupils refusing to work, bullying, and lack of respect for authority. The SSEHV programme empowers teachers to examine themselves and to think about how they might be able to reflect the major human values in their own behaviour, particularly their interactions with students and colleagues and, in so doing, enhance their own mental health and well-being, their resilience to cope with the stresses of teaching, and to improve the ways in which their pupils respond to them. Some examples of each of these approaches will be described in the following papers.



### Chapter 3. Educare

Educare is the philosophy of education that underpins SSEHV. It is concerned with reaching deeply into the child's higher levels of consciousness and bringing out the values and divinity that are inherent there.

The following statement outlines the essence of Educare:

*“Educare is not the learning from books by rote, to be vomited in the examination halls. But it is the learning from life, which is absorbed into living and transforming. This gives a new meaning to dull mathematics and geography, a new vitality to language, cosmic understanding to science and an enhanced beauty to music and art. It is not to be stuffed from without into the ears of innocent children. Rather it comes from within. It is the release of the inherent intuition and divinity, which is within every individual. ... Educare is also the art of ensuring a perfect constant balance of the five elements within, by managing the mind and the inputs from the five senses, so that the surge of the Divine energy from within flows uninterrupted. In other words, a harmony between thought, word and deed has to be achieved in such a manner that the physical world is perceived as an extension of the spiritual world.... Educare is when we have sensitized ourselves, when we sensitize our children to begin to respond and become caring people.”*

Sathya Sai Baba

In Educare the pupils:

- are encouraged to appreciate the five basic human values of Truth, Right Action, Peace, Love and Non-violence as essential to the development of character,
- learn the cultures, customs and religions of other people along with their own, in order to appreciate the brotherhood of man,
- acquire decision-making skills, which helps to facilitate development of moral learning,
- develop a sense of responsibility for the consequences of their actions and act with regard for the rights, life and dignity of all persons,
- develop self-discipline and self-confidence necessary to promote the fulfilment of their potential – by enhancing their moral, physical, social and academic achievements,
- develop value skills needed for personal, family, community, national and world harmony,
- develop a caring attitude towards all forms of life and to value the need for preservation, conservation and general care of the environment.

To bring out these qualities, teachers are constantly examining all of their activities and interactions with their pupils, by reflecting on the questions:

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

*“Does Educare entail a new curriculum or a new course content? Once again the answer is ‘No’. The answer lies in our implementing this technology in our lives. Am I able to control my desires? Am I conscious of the inputs of the five senses in my mind? Am I able to turn my mind inside? Am I able to experience the power of love within? These are the questions that all of us have to ask. Because we are not communicating knowledge, we are not communicating words, what we are really communicating is experience.”*

Sathya Sai Baba

The children are taught two important ingredients for life. One is that whatever thoughts come into their heads they think about and examine in their hearts before they act. This is referred to as 3HV, the harmony of head, heart and hands. The other is concentration and inner stillness. The main ingredient is love and through love they are helped to become self-reliant, self-confident, self-sacrificing and hence eventually self-realised.

Not all the outcomes of SSEHV can be measured easily because the transformations that come about in children are often very subtle and quite often don't emerge until they have left school and entered into adult life. Even as adults, like the rest of us, they will probably still make mistakes. But the big gift given to children by Sathya Sai education is that they can pick themselves up from their mistakes and move on.

*“The character of the children must be made strong and pure. Give them all the confidence they need to become good, honest and self-reliant children. It is not enough if they learn something by which they can make a living. The manner of living is more important than the standard of living. The children must also have reverence for religion, their culture, their educational attainments and their country. They must learn well their mother tongue, so they can appreciate well the great poetical works and epics written by the seers of their land. This will give them valuable guidance in the stormy days ahead.”*

Sathya Sai Baba

## References

Behounek, K., Rosenbaum, L., Brown, L. & Burcalow, J. (1988). 'Our class has twenty-five teachers'. *Arithmetic Teacher* (December), pp.10-13.

Bullough, R. & Baughman, K. (1993). Continuity and change in teacher development: First year teacher after five years. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 44 (2), 86-95.

Burrows, L. (1988). *Sathya Sai Education in Human Values*. Bangkok: Sathya Sai Foundation of Thailand



- Carbone, P. (1991). 'Perspectives on values education'. *Clearing House*, 64, 5, 290-292.
- Carr, D. (1997). 'Educational values and values education: some recent work'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 18, 1, 133-142.
- Dewey, J. (1956). *The School and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gordon, R. (1997). How novice teachers can succeed with adolescents. *Educational Leadership*, 54 (7), 56-58.
- Jennings, Bruce; Nelson, James Lindemann (1996). 'Values on campus'. *Liberal Education*, 82, 1, 26-31.
- Jumsai Na Ayudhya, A. (1997). *The Five Human Values and Human Excellence*. Bangkok: International Institute of Sathya Sai Education
- Lockwood, A. (1993). 'A letter to character educators'. *Educational Leadership*, 51,3,72-75.
- Noddings, N. (1991). 'Values by deliberation or default'. *Clearing House*, 64, 5, 320-322.
- Noddings, N. (1994). 'The role of educators in combatting violence'. *Religious Education*, 89, 4, 568-571.
- Noddings, N. (1995a). 'Teaching themes of caring'. *Education Digest*, 61, 3, 24-28.
- Noddings, N. (1995b). 'A morally defensible mission for schools in the 21st century'. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76, 5,365-368.
- Noddings, N. (1995c). 'Teaching themes of care'. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76, 9, 675-679.

## Chapter 4. The Human Values Approach to Classroom Discipline

Margaret Taplin and Anita Devi (U.K.)

Anthony is in his first year of secondary school. Recently during an Art lesson he repeatedly called out and interrupted the teacher, Ms. White. Finally, in desperation, Ms. White (probably foolishly!) said, “Anthony, what IS the problem? Do you like my lesson or not?” Anthony, who believes in honesty but is not necessarily well-endowed with tact, replied, “I think it is boring”. After the class, Anthony was called to the discipline master, and told that he was expected to write a letter of apology to Ms. White. The letter was duly written. Anthony’s mother, herself a teacher educator, read it – and to her it was clear that Anthony had merely gone through the motions of apologising, the letter was very perfunctory and, after talking further with him, she found that he had a strong sense that some sort of injustice had been done to him and that he wasn’t really sorry anyway because he thought he had told the truth.

In this case, it was quite clear that the punishment was not going to have any beneficial effects on Anthony because he felt that what he had said was justified and therefore he merely went through the motions of writing the letter of apology without having reflected on his misdemeanour and probably without any intention of changing his ways as a result of it.

Anthony’s mother spoke with him at length about the incident that had occurred in his Art class. They discussed the reasons why he had been interrupting in class (because he felt that he had something important to say), why he replied that the lesson was boring (because he wanted to speak the truth and hadn’t really thought about the consequences that his blunt words could be hurtful), and why his letter was not a true reflection of his feelings when he really did not feel sorry about the situation. After a great deal of discussion and negotiation, Anthony wrote another letter. In this one he apologised not for his actions but for not having thought enough about the consequences of what he said and the fact that he had hurt Ms. White’s feelings. He talked about the aspects of her classes that he appreciated, and explained frankly his reasons for having interrupted in the first place. He also outlined some alternative ways in which he could have behaved that would have enabled him to express his feelings truthfully but not hurtfully.

### Beliefs about discipline

People have different beliefs about how they discipline. This what one teacher, Shirley, had to say:

I always let the kids at school know who is the boss from the very first day. All I have to do is shout at them and they listen. I believe that works fine most of the time.

I do notice that it is never clear whether they understand me or not because they don’t seem that eager to put their hands up and ask questions. Maybe I threaten them too much, but I believe children should be seen and not heard. My own kids at home never do what I ask them to do, no matter how much I groan and complain. Maybe I need to do more about the way I talk to them, but I just don’t know what I need to change or how to do it. I’ve been doing it this way for so long. (*Talking with Kids*, Mulvaney, 1998).

Often we give pupils punishments such as the one Ms. White gave Anthony or others that are similar – leave the room to think about what they have done, write lines that state, “I must not .....", or spend time in detention. As in the case of Anthony, how effectively does this kind of punishment really have the desired effect of making any long-term contribution to the pupil’s character development, when it is not truly addressing the real issues underlying the misdemeanour?

As Alderman (2001) has suggested, it is important that disciplinary measures encourage the pupils to focus on the desired behaviours rather than the problem behaviours. He suggests that discipline is more effective if it selectively targets specific behaviours rather than trying to be too general. Ms. White was trying to correct Anthony’s behaviour of interrupting in class – but in doing so inadvertently uncovered another behavioural problem, and then gave a punishment that did not really encourage Anthony to reflect on either of the desired behaviours. In going through this exercise with his mother, Anthony was able to turn his punishment from a not-very-effective token effort, to an honest but constructive reflection on the incident. Anthony was lucky that his mother created an opportunity to reflect on the desired changes in his behaviour, the consequences and effects of his actions on others, and hence to enhance Anthony’s character development.

Expectations and beliefs play a key role in helping children use discipline as a means to grow. A secondary teacher once shared the following practice and its related outcome:

When a child entered my class with a red report card, I would always fill it in at the beginning of the lesson and hand it back to the child immediately. Typically it would encompass the following statement:

“XXX was an exemplary student in my class today and participated well in all aspects of the lesson.”

At first students found this very strange, because the lesson had just begun. How did I know they would behave well? I didn’t of course. However, the expectation had been stated and true to the letter, nine times out of ten, students fulfilled my expectations.

What this teacher and Anthony’s mother had in common was that both were concerned with more than the short-term effects of punishing for misdemeanours, but rather with using the incidents as ways to develop the pupils’ character. In this article we would like to propose some other such strategies that can be used in various situations. We are referring to it as the “human values” approach to discipline because it is concerned with helping pupils to develop understanding of their own values systems.

For the Sathya Sai EHV approach to be effective the teacher needs to bear in mind the following:

- **The role of understanding – giving children the benefit of the doubt:**

*The teacher should not try to rule through the easier means of fear, for that is full of dangerous consequences to the pupils. Try the path of love.*

*Sathya Sai Baba (25.11.1959)*



*Teachers and students must develop constructive companionship. The teacher must share the sorrows and joys of the pupils as keenly as if they were his own.*

*Sathya Sai Baba (30.08.1981)*

*The right teacher is one who is an embodiment of love and teaches the student to love all, to cultivate right relationships and to develop human qualities.*

*Sathya Sai Baba (22.11.1987)*

- **The need to choose vocabulary wisely, so as to use every opportunity uplift the child in self-confidence:**

*Words can confer strength; they can drain it off. Words can gain friends; they can turn them into enemies. They can elevate or lower the individual. One must learn the habit of making one's words sweet, soft and pleasant. A person is judged by his words. Words inflict damage in other ways too. Whenever we talk despairingly or defamingly or sarcastically or hatefully to others, they get recorded on the tape, which is our mind.*

*Sathya Sai Baba (31.08.1981)*

*Keep a strict watch over what you say. If the foot slips you may suffer a fall and sustain a temporary injury. But a slip of the tongue may cause lasting harm.*

*Sathya Sai Baba (19.01.1989)*

- **To be consistent and role model the expectations placed on the children:**

*The profession of a teacher is the most responsible one in every country. If the teacher strays from truth the entire society will suffer. It is only when the teacher himself is wedded to discipline and observes good habits that his pupils will be able to shape themselves into ideal individuals and citizens.*

*Sathya Sai Baba (03.03.1958)*

From these quotations it is clear that the “human values” approach is not merely a framework for imposing effective discipline, but a total approach in which good discipline becomes an integral component of the whole, in the form of self-discipline and self-reflection on the pupil’s own values.

### **Misbehaviour exists first and foremost in the mind**

“All things are created twice” (Covey, 1989; 1992; 1993; 1994). By this it is implied that first there is mental or “first creation” (often based on experiences/images in the subconscious mind or even wisdom from the superconscious), and then a physical or “second creation” to all things.

For example if you wish to paint a picture, first the image must appear in the mind and then on the canvas. The same is true of teaching. If the aim is to develop responsible, self-disciplined children, the end must be kept clearly in mind when interacting with the children on a daily basis. The second creation fails to manifest if the teacher then behaves towards the class in a way that undermines their self-discipline or self-esteem. By the same token, if a child misbehaves or continually displays a negative habit, then corrective measures should be

linked directly to the cause (the mind), rather than the effect (the action).

Too often as teachers, we have a tendency to re-act to the action, thus creating a vicious circle of misunderstanding and possibly resentment. By taking time to reflect on the underlying cause, not so much in terms of why, but more as to what values are needed, the teacher is able to utilise the opportunity to give suitable corrective behaviour. Central to this approach is an understanding of trust between the teacher and student. In such an environment dialogue is viewed as opportunities to grow.

This approach is further supported by the work of The Centre for Nonviolent Communication. In her book “The Giraffe Classroom”, Nancy Sokol Green purports:

If students are truly motivated and challenged at their appropriate level, then the majority of classroom discipline problems automatically become minimized. This simply happens because the students are now just too busy interacting with each other, thinking critically and creatively, and enjoying themselves to be plotting disruptive ways to interfere with any learning going on.

But granted, there are still those days when students (or teachers) have “got out of bed on the wrong side” or when actual conflicts occur. However, in the Giraffe classroom, any disciplinary action implemented is intended to “teach”, not to punish. (Green, 1991)

The Sathya Sai EHV Model is based on the premise “the end of education is character”. Therefore every opportunity is used to enhance character. The next section of this article provides some ideas as to how a human values approach can be applied in the process of implementing disciplinary measures. Obviously these need to be adapted to the age range of children being considered and the particular circumstances of the situation.

A person who wants to change to become more patient, effective, happy, peaceful, confident etc., needs to participate in activities that will help programme the mind in a positive way. The five methodologies used to teach the Sathya Sai EHV can be used to facilitate this:

- Silent sitting: visualisation
- Quotations: positive affirmations
- Stories: different perspectives and consequences
- Songs: insight and harmony
- Group work: co-operation and a sense of oneness

The discipline strategies that we have suggested here are designed to draw on these methodologies and promote students’ reflection on the five values. It is envisaged that teachers will use them as a tool to reflect on their practices and possibly experiment using different approaches. We would very much welcome an exchange of ideas with teachers about other strategies they have found to be effective.



*“Disciplinary rules have to be well thought out and adapted to the age group they want to correct. The atmosphere must be so charged that obedience to discipline come automatically, with full heart. Such discipline will shape good leaders for the nation”*

Sathya Sai Baba

<b>Misdemeanour:</b>	Answering Back
<b>Corrective Consequence:</b>	Ask the child to re-write the dialogue from the other person’s point of view
<b>Values:</b>	Empathy (Love) and Respect (Right Action)
<b>Key Vocabulary:</b>	<i>I would like to you to reflect on this experience and imagine your self as the other person who is receiving these comments. How would you feel?</i>
<b>Anecdote:</b>	Experience has shown that this type of activity not only helps the children to reflect on his or her behaviour, but also enhances literacy skills as well.

<b>Misdemeanour:</b>	Being unfriendly
<b>Corrective Consequence:</b>	Adopt a younger child for the day and, if appropriate, document the experience
<b>Values:</b>	Caring (Love) and Responsibility (Right Action)
<b>Key Vocabulary:</b>	<i>I know that deep down you a very caring person, so I would like you to help me today by taking care of BB.</i>
<b>Notes:</b>	The Flour Babies by Anne Fine (ISBN 0-241-13252-5) is a good story that builds on this kind of approach

<b>Misdemeanour:</b>	Bullying
<b>Corrective Consequence:</b>	Ask the child to compile a list based on... "I do not need to bully anyone because I am.... (positive qualities)"- in some cases responses can be elicited from fellow peers through a survey
<b>Values:</b>	Self- esteem (Love and Peace)

<p><b>Key Vocabulary:</b></p>	<p><i>I am not sure why you felt the need to bully X, but I know that this is not a true reflection of the beautiful person you are inside. Therefore, I would like you to write me a list of at least 10 positive qualities about yourself.</i></p>
<p><b>Anecdote:</b></p>	<p>One day a teacher asked her students to list the names of the other students in the room on two sheets of paper, leaving a space between each name. Then she told them to think of the nicest thing they could say about each of their classmates and write it down. It took the remainder of the class period to finish their assignment and, as the students left the room, each one handed in the papers.</p> <p>That Saturday, the teacher wrote down the name of each student on a separate sheet of paper, and listed what everyone else had said about that individual. On Monday, she gave each student his or her list. Before long, the entire class was smiling.</p> <p>"Really?" she heard whispered. "I never knew that I meant anything to anyone!" and, "I didn't know others liked me so much." were some of the comments.</p> <p>No one ever mentioned those papers in class again. She never knew if they discussed them after class or with their parents, but it didn't matter. The exercise had accomplished its purpose. The students were happy with themselves and one another.</p> <p>That group of students moved on. Several years later, one of the students was killed in Vietnam and his teacher attended the funeral of that special student. She had never seen a serviceman in a military coffin before. He looked so handsome, so mature. The church was packed with his friends. One by one, those who loved him took a last walk by the coffin. The teacher was the last one to bless the coffin. As she stood there, one of the soldiers, who acted as pallbearer, came up to her.</p> <p>"Were you Mark's math teacher?" he asked. She nodded: "Yes."</p> <p>Then he said: "Mark talked about you a lot."</p> <p>After the funeral, most of Mark's former classmates went together to a luncheon. Mark's mother and father were there, obviously waiting to speak with his teacher.</p> <p>"We want to show you something," his father said, taking a wallet out of his pocket. "They found this on Mark when he was killed. We thought you might recognize it." Opening</p>

	<p>the billfold, he carefully removed two worn pieces of notepaper that had obviously been taped, folded and refolded many times.</p> <p>The teacher knew, without looking, that the papers were the ones on which she had listed all the good things each of Mark's classmates had said about him.</p> <p>"Thank you so much for doing that," Mark's mother said. "As you can see, Mark treasured it."</p> <p>All of Mark's former classmates started to gather around. Charlie smiled rather sheepishly and said, "I still have my list. It's in the top drawer of my desk at home."</p> <p>Chuck's wife said, "Chuck asked me to put his in our wedding album."</p> <p>"I have mine too," Marilyn said. "It's in my diary."</p> <p>Then Vickie, another classmate, reached into her pocketbook, took out her wallet and showed her worn and frazzled list to the group. "I carry this with me at all times," Vickie said, and without batting an eyelash, she continued: "I think we all saved our lists."</p> <p>That's when the teacher finally sat down and cried.</p> <p>She cried for Mark and for all his friends who would never see him again.</p>
<p><b>Parental involvement:</b></p>	<p>Ask parents also to list 10 positive qualities about their child and at a follow-up teacher-parent meeting compare the two lists.</p>
<p><b>Notes:</b></p>	<p>Once the list is prepared, discuss each quality with the child. A follow up could be to ask the child to choose someone else in the class and write 10 good qualities about them. This can be presented to the other child, as a means of encouraging friendship.</p>

<p><b>Misdemeanour:</b></p>	<p>Chatting in class</p>
<p><b>Corrective Consequence:</b></p>	<p>Ask the child to prepare a short presentation for the class; prime the listeners to role-play a chatty person throughout. Either through discussion or written work ask the child how he or she felt.</p>

<b>Values:</b>	Consideration (Love), good behaviour (Right Action), concern for others (Non-violence), self-discipline (Peace)
<b>Key Vocabulary:</b>	<i>When we chat, we are unable to hear that special voice inside us, which helps us with our work and tells us the difference between right and wrong.</i>
<b>Parental involvement:</b>	Encourage the parents to practice silent sitting at home, as a family.

<b>Misdemeanour:</b>	Cheating
<b>Corrective Consequence:</b>	Comprehension “Cheating”
<b>Values:</b>	Honesty (truth), fairness (truth) and justice (truth)
<b>Key Vocabulary:</b>	<i>To help you understand why you are only cheating yourself, I want you to complete this comprehension.</i>
<b>Parental involvement:</b>	Send the completed work for parents to see.
<b>Notes:</b>	For children with learning difficulties, present the story as a picture and orally discuss the questions and consequences.

<b>Misdemeanour:</b>	Constantly interrupting
<b>Corrective Consequence:</b>	Present the child with 5 paperclips, at the start of the day and agree with the child that every time he or she interrupts they have to give back one of the paperclips. After all the paperclips have been given back – the child is not allowed to interrupt. At first all the paperclips will be returned over a short period of time. However as the child progresses he or she will learn to think before speaking.
<b>Values:</b>	Reason (Truth), Empathy (Love) and Reflection (Peace)
<b>Key Vocabulary:</b>	<i>To help you learn the importance of thinking before we speak, we are going to play a game. I am going to give you 5 paper clips. Every time you interrupt me, you must give me one back. The aim is to see can you hold on to all 5 paperclips by the end of the day.</i>
<b>Anecdote:</b>	A similar exercise was tried with a child in year 4 (8 years old), who constantly asked silly questions in class. By the end of the first week, the child had learnt the difference



	between an important question and a silly one. By the end of the second week, this child had learnt to hold on all five paperclips.
--	---

<b>Misdemeanour:</b>	Continual lateness
<b>Corrective Consequence:</b>	Give the child an early morning responsibility (e.g. giving out registers or preparing the hall for assembly).
<b>Values:</b>	Punctuality (Right Action), dependability (Right Action), trust (Truth), calm (Peace)
<b>Key Vocabulary:</b>	<i>You are a very responsible member of my class, therefore I want you to take on an important responsibility – can you [insert monitorial duty] every morning?</i>
<b>Anecdote:</b>	A boy in Year 7 had the highest number of late marks in the year group, but during the week, when he was responsible for the register, he turned up on time every day without fail.
<b>Parental involvement:</b>	Inform the parents, through a letter of recognition, of the positive contribution the child will making to the working life of the school.

<b>Misdemeanour:</b>	Destroying property
<b>Corrective Consequence:</b>	Using the Ceiling on Desires project, help the child to appreciate the value of the item damaged
<b>Values:</b>	Gratitude (Peace), Consideration (Love), Gentleness (Love)
<b>Key Vocabulary:</b>	<i>I am not very happy with your actions today. Acting without thinking can be very expensive. The item you broke cost X, that is equivalent to..... How many days' work do you think would cost? I want you to pay it back and therefore I will write to your parents, asking them to help you save for a new one. By giving up something that you value and saving the money instead, hopefully you will learn to value the things other people need and use.</i>
<b>Parental involvement:</b>	Write a letter to the parents/carers informing them the child in question has been asked to give up something (e.g. sweets), in order to save and repay the debt for damaging property



<b>Misdemeanour:</b>	Fighting
<b>Corrective Consequence:</b>	Engage both parties in a joint service project
<b>Values:</b>	Co-operation (Peace), Service to Community (Non-violence)
<b>Anecdote:</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>Other similar initiatives include encouraging the children to develop a shared hobby e.g. chess or singing</p>

<b>Misdemeanour:</b>	Name calling
<b>Corrective Consequence:</b>	Invite the child to keep a feelings diary and the teacher can monitor it at the end of each week or write a letter to the person they are angry with and suggest how their conflict can be resolved. The recipient should also write back expressing how he or she felt when called that name.
<b>Values:</b>	Compassion (Love), Acceptance of Individual Differences (Non-violence)
<b>Anecdote:</b>	The feelings diary is very popular amongst high school pupils as it gives them a peaceful outlet for their emotions. In fact one boy, after seeing his friend do one, came and asked if he too could start a feelings diary.

<b>Misdemeanour:</b>	Possession of alcohol/drinking/smoking
<b>Corrective Consequence:</b>	Research the negative effects of consuming alcohol/smoking and where appropriate make a presentation to the class or in assembly.
<b>Values:</b>	Health awareness (Right Action)
<b>Parental involvement:</b>	Inform the parents of the task given and ask them to attend the relevant lesson/assembly.

### **Comprehension Passage: Cheating**

Tommy was a smart boy, but he was lazy. Instead of doing his homework or revising for a test, he would play with his toys. Everyday he used to say, “I’ll do it tomorrow!” But tomorrow came, he would not bother and during lunchtimes, and even sometimes during the lesson, he would copy his friend’s work. His friend didn’t like him copying, but Tommy was his friend after all. Tommy and his friend always got the best marks in the class.

One day, the teacher decided to give the class a surprise test. Miss Sparrow was so confident that Tommy and his friend would get the best marks and they did...how? When Miss Sparrow wasn’t looking Tommy quickly copied his friend’s work. Tommy friend was so annoyed, but Tommy was his friend after all.

The head teacher was so impressed with Tommy and his friend that he entered them both in a school competition. Tommy loved all the attention and was confident that he and his friend would win the trophy. On the day of the contest, Tommy’s friend fell ill and was unable to attend, so Miss Sparrow asked Natasha to take part with Tommy. Natasha was a hard worker, but she made careless mistakes. The papers were handed in – now all they had to do was wait for the results.

One week later, Natasha and Tommy were called into the head teacher’s office. He looked very serious. The school had had a letter from the competition organisers. The letter said that they felt Natasha and Tommy had cheated in the competition, as both their papers were identical. Tommy looked out of window, to avoid look the head in the face. Natasha went red. After a lot of discussion, the head decided it must have been Natasha who cheated as Tommy always got good marks. Natasha pleaded innocence – but no one listened. Tommy’s friend and Tommy knew Natasha was telling the truth.

Tommy found it very difficult to sleep at night. He kept dreaming of the competition and Natasha being called a “cheater” by the other children. The next day he went into school and confessed to his teacher. Everyone was very cross and it took Tommy a long time to convince anyone that he was telling the truth.

- a) Why did Tommy cheat?
- b) How did his friend feel about him cheating?
- c) What was Natasha accused of? Was this fair on her?
- d) How do you think Natasha felt?
- e) Why couldn’t Tommy sleep at night?
- f) How do you think Tommy felt when he told the truth?

### **Visualisation: Not paying attention**

Close your eyes and focus your attention on the darkness behind them. The reason for this visualization is to help you to improve your concentration and listening skills in lectures. This will enhance what you learn from the lecture and it will also enhance your consideration for your lecturer and your classmates. Focus your concentration behind your eyes for a few moments. This one-pointedness will help you to concentrate better. Now take your concentration to your ears. Allow them to be filled with a sensation of warmth, like warm

salty water. This will help to make your ears more receptive to what is being spoken in class. Now allow the feeling of warmth to fill your whole head, while still focusing your concentration behind your eyes. When you open your eyes you will find that your mind and your ears are more focused and you will no longer feel the need to talk in class.

### **Other useful texts/quotes**

(This can be used for the children to copy, make posters, share...but most of all internalise)

- *For rude children or who consider themselves to very important, sometimes at the expense of others' feelings*

The six most important words: **I admit I made a mistake**

The five most important words: **You did a good job**

The four most important words: **What is your opinion?**

The three most important words: **If you please**

The two most important words: **Thank you**

The one most important word: **We**

The least most important word: **I**

- *A poem very useful for children who ask "What's the point?"*

#### Anyway

People are unreasonable, illogical and self-centred.

Love them anyway.

If you do good people will accuse you of ulterior motives.

Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you win false friends and true enemies.

Succeed anyway.

The good you do will be forgotten tomorrow.

Do good anyway.

What you have spent years building might be destroyed overnight.

Build anyway.

People really need help but may attack you if you help them.

Help people anyway.

Give the world the best you have and you will get kicked in the teeth.

Give the best you have anyway.

- *For children who find it difficult to accept different people's opinions*

"Your map is not necessarily the territory. Other people may have different perceptions, aspirations, beliefs, values and interpretations. There is more than one version of reality. You do not have a monopoly on the truth. We all delete, distort and generalise in different ways. Some work, some don't. It's a big world out there – old habits die hard!"

## References

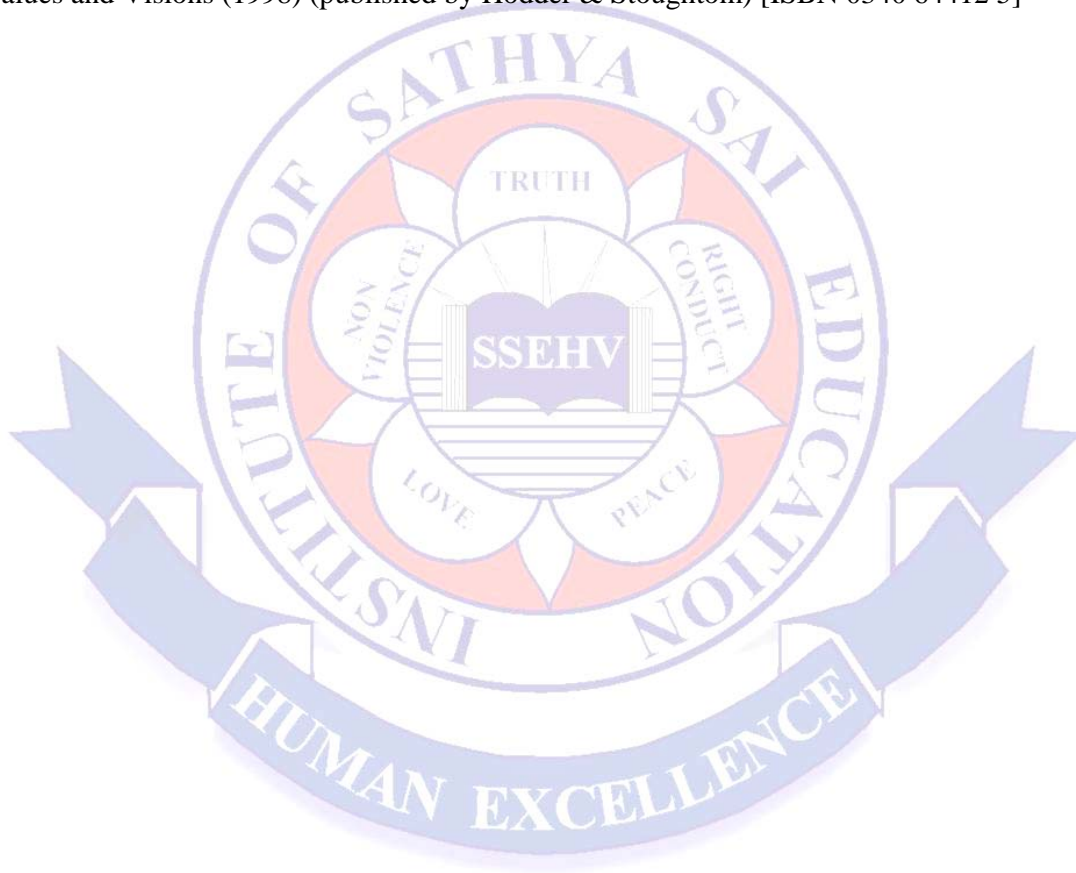
Alderman, Terry. (2001) In Good Discipline, One Size DOESN'T Fit All. Education Digest, Vol. 66 Issue 8, pp 38-41.

Covey, Stephen R., (1992), *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* [ISBN 0-671-71177-2]

Green, Nancy Sokol, (1991), *The Giraffe Classroom* (published by the Center for Nonviolent Communication)

Mulvaney, Alison, (1998), *Talking with Kids* [ISBN 981-04-0734-3]

*Values and Visions* (1998) (published by Hodder & Stoughton) [ISBN 0340 64412 5]





## Chapter 5. Human Values Approach to Teaching – Its Impact on Teachers and Pupils

Most teachers – wherever they are – are dedicated to their jobs and love their students. But the reality is that teaching can be a very stressful occupation, we are all human beings, and sometimes we get tired, unhappy or angry in such a way that it reflects on our pupils. We all know the validity of the sentiments expressed below:

“It is important to note that to say good words, give wise advice to a child has little effect, if one does not show by one’s living example the truth of what one teaches. The best qualities to develop in children are sincerity, honesty, straightforwardness, courage, disinterestedness, unselfishness, patience, endurance, perseverance, peace, calm and self-control; and they are taught infinitely better by example than by beautiful speeches” (Kireet Joshi, p.52)

*“If teachers do not follow the normal ethics of truthfulness etc. how can they instill good habits and values in children?”*

Sathya Sai Baba

But we do not always find it easy to put these into practice, particularly on the bad days. The purpose of this chapter is to describe some observations of teachers of the Sathya Sai School of Zambia. This is a school based on values education, so the 22 teachers are expected to be exemplary role models. But it is not necessarily always easy for them to do so – they face the usual teaching-related stressors like large classes (30-40) and long working hours (more than twice the number of contact hours of other Zambian schools). Yet it is clear that the Sathya Sai School teachers are happy teachers and that there is something very special about the ways they interact with their pupils and the environment of love and peace that prevails. So we set out to observe what they said and did that enabled them to create this special environment.

In order to gain insight about the characteristics of the Sathya Sai teachers, a two-part questionnaire instrument was developed. In the first section of the questionnaire the teachers were asked to rate, on a 5-point Likert scale, the perceptions of the extent to which they believed themselves to be models of a given list of core values, where a rating of 5 indicated that they perceived themselves to be models of the value most of the time. The teachers’ mean ratings were higher than 4 for all of the values, the highest being self-confidence (4.79), followed by compassion (4.76). Similarly, when asked to indicate the extent to which they believed they encouraged the development of the values in their pupils, the mean ratings were all higher than 4. The highest-rated value was honesty (4.86) followed by self-confidence (4.76) and compassion, kindness and sincerity (all 4.71).

The second section of the questionnaire invited the teachers to give open comments about some of their best practices, to give further insights about how they reflect human values in their teaching. First, it is interesting to examine the reasons why they became teachers in the first place. With the exception of one who had accepted the first job that was offered, they all indicated that they had chosen to become teachers because of love for people and/or because they regarded teaching to be a noble profession, in many cases because they had been inspired themselves by a particular teacher. Interestingly, even the one who ‘didn’t want to remain unemployed’ later indicated that he had come to love and value his profession in time.

When asked why they were still involved in teaching, the respondents unanimously indicated that it was because they still love and respect the profession – even though two indicated that they might stop at some time in the future if this should cease to be the case. Many of the responses indicated that the teachers felt they were successfully serving their community and/or their country through nurturing the characters of the children. We invited the teachers to reflect on the most useful piece of advice that was given to them during teacher training. Once again, their comments reflected higher ideals, to love the children, see them as human beings, and be an exemplary model to them at all times.

## **What they say**

In listening to what the teachers said in the classroom, we were very much aware that they were constantly reminding pupils of the important values. For example, when one class of boys was faced with a difficult task the teacher reminded them of the benefits of sitting silently and reflecting on the task before beginning it (please refer to the paper *Silent Sitting and Creative Visualisation in the Classroom*), asking, “How does silence help you?... In a state of silence one can think properly.” At another stage during the same lesson the teacher reminded the pupils of the importance of perseverance in the face of difficulty, “What value, starting with p, does this remind you of?”

In a group activity, another teacher reminded the pupils to, “Give moral support and respect to each other....Think before you speak – will it hurt anyone?” Another commonly-used comment arose from a deliberate strategy to encourage the students to accept failure as a learning experience rather than to fear it, “Please say what you are thinking – there is no need to be afraid of giving a wrong answer.”

The teachers were careful not only to reflect on the knowledge that was gained from their lessons, but were also aware of the need to promote skills that equip them for ‘life not just merely for making a living’ (Sathya Sai Baba). For example, they would commonly ask the pupils to reflect on, “What skills will you gain from this activity?”

It was also noticeable that the teachers made careful choice of words, always choosing words that make the pupils feel valued and constantly building up their self-esteem. For example, students were always greeted politely and with genuine interest in their well-being, such as the teacher who began each day by saying, “I hope you are all fine today”. Rather than demanding pupils to pay attention, another teacher would use the expression, “...are we together?”, thus conveying the importance of the whole class co-operating together as a unit, as well as his respect for every individual’s contribution to the whole. Similarly, the same teacher conveyed the teamwork atmosphere through comments such as, “I have some examples – if you have any other I’m sure you will help me out”, and, “You are free to make any contribution, question or observation”. This sense of freedom to contribute in the knowledge that their contributions would all be treated with equal respect was a feature commented upon by many of the staff and pupils. Teachers were continually emphasizing the students’ positive qualities, as in the example of the teacher who asked, in a discussion about moral choices, “Which one would you – being a sensible person – choose?”

These choices of words may seem like a small thing, but it was this attention to the small details that had some of the most positive impacts on the pupils. For example, it is a policy in the school to refer to the pupils, even in the youngest classes, as “ladies” and “gentlemen” rather than as “girls” and “boys”, and even this has had an impact:

*Before I came to Sathya Sai School I was called a boy. Now I am called a gentleman. It is this title that has contributed to my transformation. I now behave like a gentleman instead of a boy (Year 8 student).*

*I discovered that schoolboys of my age were called gentlemen. As I was learning I gained some self respect because I was called a gentleman” (Year 7 student).*

## **What they do**

How often do we, as teachers, say something positive and encouraging to our pupils, while our body language is conveying an entirely different, negative message? We observed many examples in which the Sathya Sai teachers showed through their actions and body language that they were indeed role models of the values they were trying to impart to their pupils. For example, they would all keep calm and demonstrate bottomless patience if a pupil did something wrong but at the same time would show when something is unacceptable. There were two examples of this that were particularly notable to us. One was when a pupil came to class out of uniform. His teacher told him that he was expected to wear his uniform at all times, but the chastisement was delivered with an air of gentility and compassion even though the message was clear that his behaviour was unacceptable. The second example was when a child was found cheating by bringing a page of definitions into a test. The teacher calmly and lovingly told the child that this was the wrong thing to do, explored with her the reasons why she had thought it necessary to cheat, explained what the consequences were that she would have to face as the result of having done something dishonest, and then forgave her and began again with a clean slate. We felt convinced that both of these pupils would never make the same mistake again – not from fear of being caught and punished, but rather from the experience of having been listened to and forgiven in a loving way.

Another feature of the teachers’ body language is their listening skills. We could see that they were sincerely listening to and interested in what the pupils were saying. Typically, they listen with head on one side, smiling, making eye contact, and acknowledging what the pupil is saying by nodding and smiling sincerely. They are also great story-tellers, and can make particularly good use of humour in telling stories. In fact, their ability to laugh with the pupils is a feature – even in one instance where the teacher made a mistake on the blackboard and it was pointed out by the pupils, he was willing to laugh with them at himself.

The teachers are very much aware that the body language they use can have a big impact on their pupils, so they are constantly vigilant to project positive emotions that will develop confidence, rather than anger or frustration that can have a negative impact:

*“I most of the time show positive emotion because I don’t want to show my children that all is lost. But I want them to be confident.”*

*“I speak with drive each time they meet tough challenges.”*

Every opportunity is utilized for emphasizing the importance of good character, and every decision made within the class is on the basis of character, as indicated in the writings of one boy who thought that he should be given a leadership role because of his strength and size:

*“My teachers were always interested in character. I thought they were going to make me a monitor because I was bigger than most of the boys. I was surprised to see that my teacher chose a boy who was medium-sized but with good character. I learnt that to be a leader, you*



*have to lead by example and not just be physically big while you are small in character' (Year 7)."*

What we documented were practices that, taken one by one, were very small things. But the impact was in the fact that the teachers were firstly consciously aware of the need to be vigilant about these practices and secondly were genuinely sincere about the importance of putting them into practice. The outcome of these practices was an atmosphere of love and support that permeated the whole school environment and in turn further generated the teachers' motivation to perpetuate the strategies that generated the love and were in turn generated by it. On the topic of love for their pupils, the teachers wrote:

*"The best advice I was given during my teacher training was to love the children and be a model to them."*

*"As a teacher you don't have to be very harsh on pupils. Not all pupils come from good homes. Firstly, if you can see any problem in a child, try to find out what is causing the child to behave in that way."*

*"Teaching is a noble career. You join the teaching career not because you will be paid a lot of money but that love of children you teach is far more important than monetary gain. Put the service of the child first."*

*"...has led me to treat the pupils I teach as my own biological children."*

*"Punish a child always with a smile."*

*"In terms of compassion, I show it according to the situation. My voice is low, sorrowful and composed. My metamessage is completely compassion. When anything happens, as a role model I must be equal minded."*

*"I use comforting and kind words to people who are stressed."*

In describing their best practices in the classroom, it is clear that the teachers are again modelling and projecting the values of peace and love. Most indicated the use of silence and/or gestures to maintain discipline, talking less and using techniques such as silent sitting for this purpose. They are firm and give punishment if necessary, but this is done from the base of love. Several of the teachers also commented on the importance of modelling time management strategies and punctuality. While their comments indicated that there is nothing unique or different from the mainstream about their actual teaching and assessment practices, there is again the underlying pattern that the pupils are seen as individuals and as human beings and that the primary concern is to nurture all aspects of their growth. In particular, several of the respondents mentioned the importance of smiling at the pupils – even on occasions when they need to be firm with them. The teachers indicated their belief in the importance of love, compassion and sympathy for their pupils, and it was clear that these values are carried over into their practices *continually*. What they are really doing, in the words of one of the teachers, is

*"Giving that 'healing touch' so much required in today's world."*



## Chapter 6. Creating a 'Safe', Supportive Mathematics Classroom Environment

Recently I had a conversation with some colleagues who teach in a university. They were very worried about something they had noticed about their undergraduate students - a fear of making mistakes. They had noticed that these students were very reluctant to hand in assignments in case they were 'wrong' and were often spending time very unproductively in checking and re-checking their answers. While it is, of course, important to encourage students to be careful about checking their work, and to help them to develop a repertoire of checking strategies, this conversation does seem to reflect a growing problem, that more and more students are becoming afraid to try new things in case they fail, and/or become depressed and question their own self-worth if they do make mistakes. Mathematics, with its emphasis on 'right' or 'wrong' answers can potentially reinforce these fears. On the other hand, however, the mathematics classroom can also be the perfect environment for sensitive teachers to help their pupils to face up to and overcome these fears - and, of course, the earlier in the child's school life that this support begins, the better.

The purpose of this article is to illustrate some ways in which mathematics teachers can help to create a secure, supportive classroom environment in which the pupils learn to not fear failure and to value making mistakes as an opportunity to learn and grow. Each section begins with a quotation from Sathya Sai Baba.

***“True education should make a person compassionate and humane.”***

It is likely that unwillingness to participate in the mathematics classroom arises from lack of *understanding and compassion*, which can often be unconscious, by teachers and other pupils. Consequently, we need to ask the question: how can we encourage more effective participation by any students not participating fully?

- Do not be angry if a child cannot understand something or makes a mistake, because this can lead to fear of failure.
- Show them how to recover from the mistake and try again.
- Tell them about famous people who were not afraid to make mistakes (see stories below), or about some of the mistakes you have made - but also encourage accuracy and patiently ask them to correct their careless errors. A useful source of ideas is a book called "Mistakes That Worked" by Charlotte Foltz Jones.

***“Students should not allow success or failure to ruffle their minds unduly. Courage and self-confidence must be instilled in the students.”***

- Use positive visual and body-language cues (nodding, smiling) and prompts (ah ha, hmm) to encourage them to arrive at appropriate answers.
- Be careful not to frown if a child makes a mistake, and don't allow other children to frown if a classmate makes a mistake either.

***“There is over emphasis on quick and easy gains rather than patience, fortitude and hard work.”***

Peter was a very clever eleven-year-old. In the final year of his primary schooling, there was only one test on which he scored less than 100%, and then he only lost half a mark. His classwork was always done quickly and correctly. When he knew that he could succeed, he was confident and willing to work hard. To challenge his thinking, Peter's teacher would give him some difficult problems. If Peter could not immediately see a way to solve a problem, he became a different child. He would sit, drawing on his notepad, or wander around the room. He would even ask his teacher if he could spend the time tidying the storeroom. Peter, who was normally so successful and confident, was afraid to tackle a difficult task because he was afraid that he might fail. So his solution was to quit, to make the fears go away. Fortunately, the story had a happy ending, because Peter and his teacher worked together to help him to develop more courage to tackle difficult problems rather than taking the easiest path of stopping.

Many writers have written about students such as Peter, who expect solutions to come to them quickly and easily and will give up rather than face negative emotions associated with trying the task. Another concern is that they often are not aware of when it is worthwhile to keep on exploring an idea and when it is appropriate to abandon it because it is leading in a wrong direction. They need to know when it is appropriate to use a particular approach to the task, and how to recover from making a wrong choice.

Clare, aged ten, was given the following problem to solve:

By changing six figures into zeros you can make this sum equal 1111.

$$\begin{array}{r}
 111 \\
 333 \\
 555 \\
 777 \\
 \hline
 +999 \\
 \hline
 2775
 \end{array}$$

Clare selected the strategy of changing numbers in all three columns simultaneously. She worked at the task with *patience* and *fortitude* for two hours. As she worked, she said to herself, "I know that this is going to work. All I need is time, to find the right combination." After she repeated the strategy 21 times, her teacher interrupted and suggested that it might be time to look for another way to solve the problem.

In Peter's case, it was enough for his teacher to tell him that frustration, is a normal part of problem solving, and to encourage him to spend more time working on the task. Clare, on the other hand, was "overpersevering", locked into persistently pursuing one approach when it may be more appropriate when stuck to use other strategies, even such as help-seeking. One of the responsibilities of a mathematics teacher is to help pupils to learn how to persevere when the problem-solving process becomes difficult. They also need to know how to make decisions about avoiding time being wasted on "overperseverance".

### STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING PERSEVERANCE

1. Equip learners with a range of strategies/techniques for solving different types of problems.
2. Encourage them to experience the full range of positive and negative emotions associated with problem solving.
3. Promote the desire to persevere.
4. Help them to make "managerial" decisions about whether to persevere with a possible solution path (when to keep trying, and when to stop).
5. Encourage them to find more than one way to approach the problem.

One sequence of strategies which is used frequently by successful, persevering problem solvers is the following:

1. Try an approach.
2. Try it 2-3 times in case using different numbers or correcting errors might work.
3. Try something different. (You might decide to come back to your old way later.)

The Appendix shows how one student used the sequence to persevere successfully with a problem.

### Stories About Famous Mathematicians

When you are teaching the appropriate topic, take a minute to tell your pupils an anecdote about one of the famous mathematicians who contributed to this particular field of mathematics. It is important for pupils to be aware of the 'human' side of these famous people. "Using biographies of mathematicians can successfully bring the human story into the mathematics class. What struggles have these people undergone to be able to study mathematics?..." (Voolich, 1993, p.16)

#### *MARY SOMERVILLE*

Born 1780 in Burntisland, Scotland

Examples of Contribution to Mathematics: algebra, differential and integral calculus

Mary was one of the world's first famous female mathematicians. She became interested in mathematics, and desperately wanted to study it, at a time when it was not considered acceptable for a woman to do so. She bought books on algebra and geometry and read them at night. Despite disapproval from the people around her, she persisted with her struggle to learn. Later in her life she began to solve problems in a magazine, and won a prize for her solution to an algebra problem. She went on to write several books about mathematics and science. Later in her life, she reflected on "the long course of years in which I had persevered almost without hope. It taught me never to despair" ( p.6).

Perl (1993)

### *MARIA AGNESI*

(1718-1799) Italy

Example of Contribution to Mathematics: calculus

"Maria was a child prodigy, but was also shy. She stayed at home, teaching the younger children and following her own studies. When her mother died after giving birth to twenty-one children, Maria took over the running of the household.

At the age of twenty she started a ten-year project, a book bringing together the work on calculus of Leibnitz and Newton titled *Analytic Institutions*. Sometimes she would have trouble with a problem. But her mind went on working even in her sleep; she would sleepwalk to her study and back to bed. In the morning, she would find the answer to the problem waiting on her desk. Her book made her famous; she was living proof of what she had argued at nine years old [that women had a right to study science].

But Maria had other interests in her life apart from mathematics. She had always worked with the poor people in her area, and she had asked her father for separate rooms and turned them into a private hospital. She worked at the hospital (and another) until she died at the age of eighty-one.

Maria Agnesi wrote an important book on mathematics, as well as another unpublished book. She ran a household of over twenty people, and she worked for people who had not had her luck and opportunities. Each one of these things was remarkable, but she did them all."

(Lovitt and Clarke, 1992, p.560)

***“Education should impart to students the capacity or grit to face the challenges of daily life.”***

For students who have tried but are still having difficulties, McDonough (1984) advised that the teacher:



- ◇ ask the pupils to restate the problem in their own words and if this indicates that they have mis-read or mis-interpreted the instructions, ask them to read the instructions again,
- ◇ to help with the understanding of the written instructions question the pupils carefully to find out if they know the meanings of particular words and phrases (i.e. mathematical terminology),
- ◇ have the pupils show the teacher what they have done, compare this to what is asked in the instructions, and question the pupils to see if they could think of another method, for example, "Could you have done this another way?" or, "Have you ever done a task like this before?"
- ◇ if necessary, give the children a small hint but only after questioning them carefully to find out what stage they have reached.

- If the teacher follows procedures such as those described above, the pupils will be encouraged to be more thoughtful and self-reliant.
- If pupils are panicking or unable to think what to do, introduce them to the valuable technique of silent sitting - that is, sitting for a few minutes in a state of complete outer and inner silence. You can tell them about famous mathematicians who have solved problems by using this technique.

#### *SIR ISAAC NEWTON*

"We all have something within us which helps us, guides us, gives us the conscience to know what is right and wrong. This "something" also gives us knowledge and wisdom. Whenever we cannot think of a solution to a problem we sit still and calm our mind. Very often the answer will come in a moment of intuition. Sir Isaac Newton, after thinking for some time on the effect of gravity, could not solve the problem. So Newton went for a walk to relax and when sitting quietly under an apple tree, saw an apple fall down; in a flash of understanding Newton understood the law of gravity which governs the movement of minute particles as well as the stars and planets. Many great scientific discoveries have been made not during serious thinking or when doing a lot of calculations but while the mind is relaxed. This is when intuition starts."

#### *MARY SOMERVILLE*

Born 1780 in Burntisland, Scotland

Examples of Contribution to Mathematics: algebra, differential and integral calculus

(continued from above)

"Mary Somerville used an approach to her work that is useful today. If she couldn't find the key to unlock a difficult problem she stopped work and turned to the piano, her needlework, or a walk outdoors. Afterward, she returned to the problem with her mind refreshed and could find the solution. If she could not understand a passage in her reading, she would read on for several pages. Then, going back, she could often understand what was meant in the part which had been confusing" (p.12).

Perl (1993)

***Education must award self-confidence, the courage to depend on one's own strength.***

- Some of us may believe that it is acceptable to be untruthful if it is to avoid hurting somebody else's feelings. On the other hand, some people can also be cruelly truthful and blunt if they do not like something about another person. We need to realise that neither of these behaviours is really appropriate.
- If we are patient and consistent in our approach and give criticism with compassion, we will have a more significant influence on the child's subconscious levels of thinking than we realise.

This does not mean that you have to be blunt or to hurt somebody else's feelings by telling them something unkind. For example, when correcting students you could say, "I don't like the way you answered that question. I like it better when you give me a sensible answer and I know that you have put thought into it." Or you could say, "I don't really like the way you have done this piece of work. I prefer it when you do it more slowly and make fewer mistakes". This means that you are making it very clear to the other person why you are not happy and how you would prefer her to behave.

***By example and precept, in the classroom and the playground, the excellence of intelligent co-operation, of sacrifice for the team, of sympathy for the less gifted, of help...has to be emphasised.***

**MARY EVERETT BOOLE**

Born 1832 in England and lived in Poissy, France as a child

Examples of Contribution to Mathematics:

geometry of angles and space; string geometry (curve stitching), mathematical psychology (understanding how people learn mathematics)

As a young girl, Mary was very compassionate towards animals. Perl reported that she frequently rescued insects that had been hurt by frost or rain, and nursed them back to health. As an adult, she worked as a librarian in a women's college, and showed the same compassion in becoming a friend and mentor to the students. She invited students to discussion sessions about mathematics and science, and one of these students later wrote; "I found you have given us a power. We can think for ourselves, and find out what we want to know" (p.50). Even as an old lady, during World War I, Mary opened her house to people who needed to "find a quiet place for an hour, away from the turmoil of a country at war and the terrible news in the newspapers" (p.55).

Perl (1993)

Some teachers' comments:

Listening to what children say during discussion offered me a continuous and detailed means of assessing their understanding and progress. Before this session I doubted whether talk/discussion could be obtained in working with a class of thirty-six children. The class was formed into groups, which would discuss mainly on their own. I interacted with these groups by circulating. I controlled a second level of interaction between groups, by calling on spokespersons to report, and drawing in other children appropriately. I reinforce my belief that children need more opportunity to talk about their mathematics.

I learnt that children working together not only have the opportunity to listen and learn from each other, but also to try out some ideas in a non-threatening environment. Every member of a group has the chance of seeing the activity in more than one way than if they were working alone.

Team work can lead to better development of mathematical understanding because of the communication that must occur for the group to function. These activities necessitate that children use all four components of language skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Interactions are indeed the heartbeat of the mathematics classroom. Mathematics is learned best when students are actively participating in that learning. One method of active participation is to interact with the teacher and peers about mathematics. (Primary School Teacher)

I chose to work with a group of children about whom I felt I knew very little. I realised that these children could have ability which was not being shown, so I decided to make a more concentrated effort to provide a variety of experiences and activities, to allow some 'non-performing' children to demonstrate their skills. I also recognised the need to discourage a group of 'noisy' boys from putting down the girls and their contributions. A colleague undertook a similar exercise with an older class. She was surprised that she knew the boys better as being more confident and responsive. She intends to investigate this further by asking a colleague to observe her teach to find out whether her suspicions are true that she is responding more to the boys than to the girls. (Secondary School Teacher)

I was concerned about two things. One was the way I could use praise to develop self esteem. The other thing was the way in which I was involved in my pupils' activities. I chose these issues because I had got into the habit of teaching from the front of the room and responding to the students' answers with comments such as "Okay", "Good", "Sensible". I was also concerned that the girls were outnumbered by boys in the class and there was an underlying assumption that the boys were better than the girls, made particularly evident by a vocal group of boys. I consciously placed myself with different pupils in the classroom and moved to groups when asking or answering questions. I deliberately targeted the quieter children to encourage them to participate in group/class discussions. I developed a repertoire of responses to students' answers, including, "Good thinking strategy," or "Can you clarify that response?" I allowed more response time, focused on permitting girls to respond following incorrect answers and followed their answers immediately by further questions. Although I only had two weeks in which to implement these initiatives, I felt sufficiently positive about the change in quality of the students' responses to warrant continuing this approach. (Primary School Teacher)

The teachers who wrote the comments above were asked to recommend ideas which they could try in their classrooms to encourage more understanding of those students who may not feel safe to participate as fully as they should or could be. Recommendations included:

- give continuous encouragement, mainly verbally. Value everybody's responses and have firm rules about interruptions and 'put downs',
- encourage a balance between co-operative and competitive teaching and learning styles,
- demonstrate an 'expectation' for students to participate,
- encourage group work and peer tutoring, particularly on activity-based and problem-solving tasks,
- allow students sufficient time to complete their work,
- encourage different strategies for approaching and solving problems,
- talk to the non-participants about their reasons for lack of participation - perhaps our perceptions are invalid.

## References

Bell, E.T.(1937). *Men of Mathematics* (Touchstone Edition, 1986). New York: Simon & Schuster. ISBN 0-671-62818-6 PBK

Lovitt, C. & Clarke, D. (1992). *The Mathematics Curriculum and Teaching Program, Professional Development Package, Activity Bank Volume 2*. Victoria, Australia: Curriculum Corporation. ISBN 0 642 53279 6.

McDonough, A. (1984). 'Fun maths in boxes', in A.Maurer (Ed.). *Conflict in Mathematics Education*, (pp.60-70). Melbourne, Australia: Mathematical Association of Victoria.

Perl, T. (1993) *Women and Numbers*. San Carlos, California: Wide World Publishing/Tetra. ISBN: 0-933174-87-X



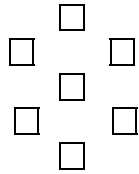
Voolich, E. (1993). 'Using biographies to 'humanize' the mathematics class'. *Arithmetic Teacher*, 41(1),16-19.

**Appendix:**

How Claire's teacher guided her to persevere effectively:



In the circles, arrange the digits 1 to 7 so that the sum of the digits is the same number in any three boxes in a row.



My goal is to put numbers in the boxes so that they add up to the same total in each direction.

These are the clues I have:

- I can use each number from 1 to 7 once.
- I have to find a total for each row
- Row 1, row 2 and row 3 must add up to the same total.

One way I can do this is to guess. [Put numbers in randomly.]

That didn't work, so I'll try putting in some different numbers. [Repeat]

I'll try again. [Repeat]

I've tried that way three times and I don't think it is working. I'll try something different. I'll pick a total - 13 will do - and try to make the numbers add up.

$2+4+7=13$ . I'll put 4 in the middle.

$3+4+6=13$

That leaves  $1+4+5$ . That's not 13.

I'll try again. Pick 11.

$1+3+7=11$ . Put 3 in the middle.

$6+3+2=11$

That leaves  $4=3+5$ . That's not 11.

I've tried that idea twice and it doesn't seem to be working. I think I'd better try something different. I'll put 4 in the middle because that's the middle number. Then I'll match the highest and lowest numbers.

The lowest is 1 and the highest is 7, so  $1+4+7=12$ .

That leaves 2 as the lowest and 6 as the highest, so  $2+4+6=12$ .

That leaves 3 and 5, so  $3+4+5=12$ .

That's it.

I found the numbers, but I had to try it three different ways.

We can see that this student was demonstrating the values of *patience*, *fortitude*, and was remaining *unruffled by ups and downs, successes and failures*. The student tried an idea for long enough to give it a chance to work, but knew when it was a good time to try a different

approach.

Now, let us see how Clare's teacher helped her to persevere successfully with the problem on which she had been overpersevering:

In this second attempt, Clare began by using the strategy of changing numbers at random. After four attempts I suggested that she should try a different strategy. She did not have any ideas, so I suggested that she might look at the problem column by column. She started with the units column and used the strategy "I have to get rid of 4, so change 3 and 1." She continued this strategy into the tens column, "21 - get rid of 6 so change 5 and 1" and the hundreds column, "27 - need 11 - get rid of the bigger numbers, 9 and 7".

**Question 2 (with prompting):**

In this magic square, each row, each column and the two long diagonals must each add to the same total and each of the numbers from 1 to 25 is used once and once only. Find the missing numbers.

		25	18	11
3	21		12	
	20	13		4
16	14			23
15		1		17

At first Clare had some problems with this question. She did not read the question before starting. She started on the right track and knew that all rows and columns had to add up to 65. She did not read that each number could only be used once. After she changed numbers three times I suggested a fresh start. Clare selected a different row, but again it was one with two gaps and she encountered the same problems. After another three attempts I intervened. We discussed the problem and Clare worked her way across the square pointing out that they all had two or more missing numbers. It was at this point that she found that one column only had one gap. Clare went on to solve the question with no further difficulty.

**Question 3 (with prompting):**

$\square \times \square = 91$
$\square - \square = 6$
What can you put in $\square$ and $\square$ to make both of these true?

Clare was keen to begin this problem after the confident note on which we had finished the previous question. She began by randomly selecting  $12 \times 9$ , an approximate guess. She then tried verbalising multiplication facts:

$10 \times 9 = 90$  - not high enough  
 $11 \times 9 = 99$  - too high.

She then looked unsure of what strategy she should adopt. I provided a hint, that "having one on the end is hard isn't it, not many multiplication facts have a one on the end". This did not prove to be helpful so I suggested a change of approach, looking at the subtraction part of the question. This seemed to help Clare as she began to list subtraction facts beginning with 20 and giving an answer of 6:

20-14  
19-13  
...  
13-7

She then said, "Now I'll go back and see if any of these multiplied equals 91". Thus she was able to select her own strategy and was successful.

**Question 4 (without prompting):**

What is my mystery number? If I divide it by 3 the remainder is 1. If I divide it by 4 the remainder is 2. If I divide it by 5 the remainder is 3. If I divide it by 6 the remainder is 4.
--

In solving this problem, Clare randomly chose a number and divided it by 3, 4, 5 and 6. When this did not produce the desired answer, she tried it two more times, using different random numbers. As these attempts were both unsuccessful, she decided to change her strategy. Clare thought of using a strategy which had been suggested to her in a previous problem solving activity, that of developing a system in her choice of numbers. As the mystery number had to have a remainder of 3 if divided by 5, it had to either end in 8 or 3, as each multiple of 5 ends in either 5 or 0. Clare then wrote down all the numbers that, when divided by 6, had a remainder of 4, as this was the largest of the numbers in the clues and therefore would require going through fewer figures. Of these she looked for the numbers



ending in 8 and 3 and divided them by the various numbers in the clues. On her third attempt, she found that 58 was the mystery number.

As can be seen from the above examples, Clare showed increasing *courage*, *self-confidence* and *independence* in her ability and willingness to *face the challenges* of the problems. At first she did not use the strategy instinctively. On problem 2, it was necessary for the teacher to intervene several times, to prompt her to change strategies and to suggest some alternative strategies. The need for teacher intervention had decreased by problem 3, and by the time she reached problem 4 she was able to recognise for herself when it was appropriate to change strategies.

The following procedure can be useful for teachers to follow, in teaching students how to persevere effectively with a task.

Recommended procedure for  
introducing problem solving management model

---

1. Give the student a preliminary problem to solve without guidance. Observe whether the student instinctively used the model.
  2. If the model was not instinctively used, introduce it and work through a second problem, demonstrating how to use it.
  3. Ask the student to repeat the first problem while you guide him/her to use the model, i.e. prompt the student to change to a different approach after a maximum of three repetitions of the previous strategy.
  4. Give two more problems, monitoring the strategy pattern and reminding students, when necessary, to follow the model.
  5. Give a fifth problem and ask the student to try to follow the model, changing approach when appropriate, without any prompting from you.
-

## Chapter 7. Peace in the Classroom

*“Human values cannot be learnt from lectures or text-books. Those who seek to impart values to students must first practise them themselves and set an example.”*

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

These days, classrooms are often turbulent, unhappy places. Students are no longer automatically respectful to their teachers as they were in the past. Gangs and bullying are becoming more prominent and often carry over from the playground to the classroom, so that many students feel intimidated or even afraid. Conflicts between students can often arise and teachers find it difficult to resolve them. There are increasing numbers of students with learning difficulties that cannot be catered for in the normal classroom, and because they are unwilling or unable to learn, they can become disruptive and make it difficult for those who do want to learn. Added to this are the pressures of time and syllabus constraints and growing pressures to succeed in examinations - and overall, school can be a very stressful place for a lot of teachers and students.

As a way of addressing this situation, SSEHV advocates peace as one of the five values that need to be instilled in pupils if they are to be able to cope with their student lives and become well-balanced citizens. Of course, the problem is that, although many teachers would certainly acknowledge the need to talk about peace, they would also, quite rightly, claim that there is no time in the curriculum to teach about it and that many of their pupils would probably not be receptive to direct teaching about values anyway. However, there are some simple but effective techniques that have been tried - with considerable success - by teachers who have wanted to make a difference in their classrooms but have not had any extra time or resources to make big changes.

One of the most effective ways of promoting peace in the classroom is to start with the inner peace of the teacher himself/herself. If the teacher is able to establish and maintain a basis of inner peace that is strong enough not to be unbalanced by disturbances in the classroom, then this can provide a very valuable role model for the pupils and a settled atmosphere. This, also, is important because, these days, many children and young adolescents come from home environments that are unsettled and anything but peaceful, and so there are many who never have the opportunity to experience first hand the strength that comes from inner peace.

Of course, to be able to establish a base of inner peace, and maintain it when things become difficult, takes commitment and regular practice by the teacher. If we are to help our students to develop and maintain a state of inner peace, it is important for us to be models. It is not easy to establish this inner balance at first and it is even less easy to maintain it. With practice, however, it will become increasingly easier for you to put yourself into a peaceful state and stay in that frame of mind throughout the day.

### *\* Creating Your Own Inner Peace \**

A useful starting exercise is to go to a place where you feel very safe, relaxed and secure, and know that you will not be disturbed by outside influences. Allow your mind to be still and simply concentrate on accepting the feeling of calmness and letting it flow over you.

Even if you are unable to maintain that state during your daily life at first, make a pact with yourself that you will return to the same place, either physically or in your imagination, at least once a day and allow yourself to experience the same feeling of calmness and peace.

After you have practised this exercise a few times, you will probably start to feel that the sensation of peace is staying with you for longer and longer each time. This can be a good time to start to focus on what is happening within you. When you are in this state of calmness your cardiovascular, muscular and nervous systems will slow down to a pace where they are each able to work in harmony with the other to bring about your health and well-being. When this state is disturbed or agitated, then one or another aspect of your system will speed up or tense up and disharmony will occur within you. An exercise to maintain your inner balancing system is to sit quietly and focus your attention on the place in your body where the feeling of calmness begins to grow. Allow the sensation to spread from this centre until it fills your entire body and the area surrounding you. Take your attention in turn to your cardiovascular system, then your muscular system and then your nervous system, and feel the sense of balance and equilibrium. In particular, notice the way your breathing becomes slow and regular, and allows fresh energy to be pumped through your body and mind. Attach a colour to the sense of balance that you are feeling, and allow the colour to fill your whole system. With practice, you will begin to find that you only have to think about that colour for a few minutes and allow it to flow through you, and you will easily slip into the state of balance. If you know that you are going into a potentially stressful situation you can take a few moments to fill yourself with your chosen colour and your inner balance will protect you from being harmed.

It is important for you to try to maintain this state of inner peace through your interactions with others. If you are in a situation where the other person is in a state of turmoil then just by simply maintaining your own centre of balance you are creating a feeling of peace that will have an effect on the other person as well. Let yourself be like a rock, a central pivot for the peaceful feeling, and the students will turn to you as a source of strength. If you respond to them with gentleness and do not allow yourself to disturb your sense of inner peace by becoming angry then you will provide a model that will help them in the development of their own inner peace.

A second way in which teachers can encourage a sense of peace in the classroom is to explore alternative strategies for dealing with conflict - either conflict between pupils, or situations in which there is conflict between the teacher and the pupil. In the classroom or playground there are many situations where conflicts can potentially arise and these are the times when you need to focus on the colour that you have chosen and allow it to be your balancing agent. You are not going to be able to help the situation by becoming agitated, impatient or even angry. It is better for your own health and the state of the environment if you remain calm and send your peaceful vibrations to the students involved in the conflict. Speak to them quietly and politely and they will be more likely to respond to your modelling.

Another exercise that can help you to maintain your own inner peace when dealing with a situation of conflict is to imagine the scenario in your mind when you are in a quiet, relaxing place. In the replaying of the situation you are more easily able to control your own feelings and therefore more easily able to maintain your own state of inner peace than you might have been in the heat of the moment. Replay the entire scene but, in doing so, make certain that you have first used the colour technique to balance and centre yourself. Then imagine how the scene might have unfolded differently if you had been able to remain calm and detached.



Each time you replay a situation in this way you are creating a type of healing of the situation and you are also training your subconscious mind to trigger the same kind of reaction whenever you are in a similar situation in reality.

### **\* Helping students who are in conflict \***

A teacher has to deal with situations that arise countless times in the school day when students get into some kind of a conflict with each other. Often these conflicts arise from very small beginnings. For example, somebody might take another student's possession without asking for permission, or say something that is potentially hurtful. If this happens, a lot of children and adolescents are very quick to become sparked into angry reactions and conflict is inevitable. This state of conflict is not only releasing potentially dangerous chemical reactions within them, it is also creating negative patterns of energy flow between them and in the general environment around them. This can eventually lead to disease, either while they are still in childhood, or at some later stage of their adult lives. More immediately, the angry energy patterns can have an adverse effect on the whole environment and disturb anyone else who comes into contact with it. The teacher is often able to stop the conflict and even prevent it from happening again by punishing the perpetrators. But usually the teacher is powerless to do anything about changing the angry feelings that the pupil might be containing and the way these can affect others.

The following exercises offer some suggestions that could be useful to try in a situation where pupils are in conflict, as an alternative to punishment, and as a way of changing the nature of the negative thought patterns that have arisen.

### **\* Cooling-down time \***

The students will not be prepared to listen to your reasoning when they are already in a state of anger. They will not be able to focus on anything else except their negative feelings. This is why many teachers and psychologists advocate the use of a "time-out" place where the student can "cool down" to a state where it is more feasible to reason with her. When the student has settled down, the teacher is able to discuss the reason for the conflict and to explain to her the effects of staying in a bad mood. If the student is still angry the teacher might like to try one of the silent sitting visualisations suggested above, either with the whole class or on a one-to-one basis with the individual student. I used to do this with my classes of 12-year-olds when they became restless or if there was conflict in the air. The first few times they treated it as a joke, but after a while they began to ask for it when they felt it was needed, and a minute was plenty of time to help them to feel more balanced. Another strategy could be to have them make up their own visualisations that they can use whenever they feel the need to.

### **\* Monitoring anger \***

If a student has been involved in some kind of a conflict that has perpetrated the social conventions of the community, then it is sometimes necessary for some kind of "punishment" to be given, which will enable him to take responsibility for the consequences of the action and hopefully prevent a recurrence. Traditional forms of punishment, such as withdrawing a privilege or completing an unpleasant task, can often have an effect - but equally as often, this type of outcome does not have a long-term effect on the child's thinking or reactions to situations. There are some strategies that can be very useful in changing the child's whole behaviour pattern and enabling him to experience the advantages of remaining in a stable



state of inner peace.

One exercise that can be done to encourage the child to reflect on his behaviour is to give him a calendar and ask him to make a mark every time he becomes angry. Better still, ask him to write down his reasons for becoming angry. It is important for the teacher to meet with the child regularly to discuss the calendar and to help to identify any patterns in the source of anger. If the child is able to maintain a clean record for a few days, he will begin to feel that it is not worthwhile becoming angry if it means that the record will be spoilt.

### **\* Forgiving and letting go \***

It is also a good time to teach students the value of forgiving and letting go. Instead of inflicting a punishment for the behaviour, the students involved in the conflict can be required to spend a certain amount of time writing down a list of all the consequences of not forgiving the other person and in a corresponding list write all the consequences of forgiving and letting go of the conflict. These can include physical or emotional consequences for the children who were directly involved in the conflict, and also the ways in which other people around them could be affected. They need to be able to be aware that to hold onto old grudges can eventually lead to physical or mental illness, and to recognise the positive health consequences of letting the grudges go and taking time to forgive the other person for not meeting their expectations. In the letting go, they are really finding a powerful way of creating their own reservoir of inner peace. In doing so they are inevitably contributing to the peaceful nature of the environment around them.

### **\* Co-operative problem-solving \***

Another activity that can be given to students who have been in conflict with each other is to set them a joint task on which they are required to work co-operatively together. One example of such a task might be to find ways of preventing other students from having conflicts, or to find ways of expressing their disagreements without allowing this to lead to damaging, hostile feelings. If they are able to work together on such a project without having any ill feelings towards each other, then they can be rewarded for their efforts - before they begin, you can negotiate with them what this reward might be. At the end of the project it would be a good idea to talk to them about their feelings towards each other and the ways in which they might have changed since the initial conflict. In particular, it can be a good idea to ask them to focus on the physical reactions to their feelings, so they can recognise the potentially damaging effects of harbouring anger or resentment.

Of course, the strategies described here go only a small step towards resolving some of the problems experienced by teachers and pupils in current classrooms. Nevertheless, with regular and persistent practice, teachers can lay a foundation of strength and peace that can not only help them to cope better with difficult situations but can also help their pupils to experience a greater sense of balance and strength.

## **Chapter 8. Silent Sitting and Creative Visualisation in the Classroom**

We all know that teaching, these days, is becoming increasingly difficult due to increasing problems with discipline, lack of concentration by pupils, and lack of pupil motivation. Just as life is becoming more difficult for teachers, it is also becoming more difficult and complicated for pupils. Therefore, for the sake of both their own well-being and that of their pupils, teachers are constantly searching for ways to address these problems. The purpose of this article is to suggest some ways in which the techniques of "silent sitting" and "creative visualisation" can be utilised in the classroom without taking too much time away from other activities. Neither of these techniques needs to take up a lot of time in the classroom - just a few minutes once or twice a day are enough.

The value of silent sitting and creative visualisation was illustrated in Jumsai's (1997) model described in the Introduction. This model considers the three levels of the mind: the conscious, the subconscious and the superconscious. Through the five senses, the conscious mind receives and processes information from the environment in order to create awareness and understanding. The subconscious stores the memories of everything that we have experienced, and feeds these memories to the conscious mind to control the individual's thoughts and actions, and even to color our perceptions of events that happen around us. The superconscious mind is the source of our wisdom, knowledge, conscience and higher consciousness. In a holistically-balanced person, these three levels of the mind interact together to contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being, and ultimately to bring out the latent divinity within the person. Jumsai proposes that there are two important ingredients for this healthy interaction to occur. The first is to free the three levels of the mind from extraneous 'chatter', to enable enhanced concentration and memory. The second is to ensure that the information that is stored in the various levels of the mind is 'clean', positive and constructive, since its retrieval will have such a significant effect on the individual's thoughts and actions which in turn contribute to the presence or absence of holistic well-being. The technique of silent sitting is a useful way to quieten the chatter and hence promote a feeling of inner peace, and that of creative visualisation can programme the mind in a positive, healthy way.

### **\* Silent Sitting \***

Children need to have time to just sit and get into contact with their inner selves if they are to be able to improve their concentration and maintain balanced physical, mental and emotional health. Silent sitting can be a useful strategy to settle them down when they are restless or when they have come back in to class after recess or lunch breaks. You can ask them to just sit quietly on their chairs, or sometimes allow them to lie on the floor and close their eyes. In my own experience I have found that the first few times I ask a group of children to do this they are inclined to be a little bit self-conscious and to make silly noises or try to distract their neighbours. After doing it a few times, however, most children settle into the routine and often even ask if they can do it if they are feeling restless. It can be particularly beneficial to give them some guidance by asking them to focus on slow, steady breathing or even to visualise a silver-white light moving steadily through their bodies, bringing relaxation and positive thoughts wherever it touches. Children only need to practise silent sitting and inner listening for a few minutes each day to be able to experience its benefits. Five or ten minutes is usually quite enough. Most children appreciate the opportunity to listen to their own inner silence for a while. If they do not find this easy to do, you can help them by playing some soft music that will give them a focal point. In time they will experience the sense of inner

calmness and the music will not be as important.

It is an important component of establishing a sense of inner peace to learn to be happy with our own company, rather than looking for other people to be around us, distracting and sometimes even disturbing. Every one of us needs to learn how to find time to be completely alone and to enjoy that time. Yet so many of the children that we teach have never, ever been completely alone out of the sight and hearing of another person. During a school camp once, we decided to use the opportunity to take our city kids into an isolated place to experience this feeling of complete solitude. The first time we did it was during the day. First thing in the morning, before breakfast, we went to the area behind our hostel, and asked the children to each find a place where they could feel completely alone, where they could not see anybody else, and we asked them to sit there and experience the aloneness for ten or fifteen minutes until we called them back. At first there were the inevitable whistles and noises, but the children eventually settled down to their experience. The real impact of the experience came when we returned to the same place at dusk and asked them to sit in exactly the same spot to watch it grow dark. Sitting there alone in the darkness, many of the children had their first experience of complete solitude and silence, and for some it was an intense experience. Afterwards Robert, who was a very big child and a bully who frequently terrorised other children and quite often the teachers as well, wrote, "I could feel the power of the universe and it made me feel very small but safe".

### **\* The Light Visualisation \***

In SSEHV a particularly powerful and beneficial form of silent sitting is used at least once a day or more with children of all ages as well as adults. The Light Visualisation is in fact fundamental to the SSEHV Programme. It allows the child to progress safely through the three stages described by Sathya Sai Baba as necessary for contacting the superconscious mind: concentration, contemplation and meditation (where meditation simply means the state of being in touch with one's own superconscious mind). The following extract appears in many SSEHV materials but, in this instance, has been taken directly from *The Five Human Values and Human Excellence* by Art-ong Jumsai Na Ayudhya (Bangkok: International Institute of Sathya Sai Education), pp. 83-88.

This is a valuable exercise to do with children on a regular, preferably, daily basis. The light is very important because it is associated with knowledge, wisdom, power and warmth - it literally dispels darkness.

Imagine that there is a light in front of us. If this is difficult to imagine we may light a lamp or a candle and place it in front of us then open our eyes and look at the flame for a short while. Then we should close our eyes and try to visualise this light. Now using our imagination, bring this light to the forehead and into the head. Let the head be filled with light. Then think, "Whenever there is light, darkness cannot be present. I will think only good thoughts". Now bring the light to the area near the heart and imagine that there is a flowerbud there. When the light reaches the bud imagine that it blossoms into a beautiful flower, fresh and pure: "My heart is also pure and full of love". Now let the light travel down the two arms to the hands. Let these hands be filled with light: "Let me do only good things and serve all". Now the light is moved through the body and down the legs to the feet: "Let me walk straight to my destination, let me walk only to good places and to meet with good people". Now bring the light up to the head once again and leave it there for a little while. Now continue to move the light to the eyes and let our two eyes be filled with light. Again concentrating on the light, think "Let me see the good in all things". Slowly move the



light to the ears. Let the ears be filled with light and think, "Let me only hear good things". From the ears we move the light to the mouth and tongue. "Let me speak only the Truth, and only what is useful and necessary". Now imagine that the light is radiating from your being to surround your mother and father. They are now full of light. "May my mother and father be filled with peace." Now radiate the light to your teachers and send it out to your relatives and friends and especially to any people who you think are being unkind to you. Let it expand out into the whole world to all beings, animals and plants everywhere. "Let the world be filled with light; let the world be filled with love; let the world be filled with peace". Remain immersed in this light and send it out to every corner of the universe and think to yourself, "I am in the light...the light is in me...I AM THE LIGHT"..... Then take the light back to your heart and let it remain there for the rest of the day.

### **\* Creative visualisation \***

As mentioned above in Jumsai's model, our consciousness operates at many different levels. First there is the conscious level, the mode that we are usually in while we are awake and aware of what is going on around us in such a way that we can think about it and describe it with detail and clarity. Then there is the subconscious mind that continues to be our "watchdog" whether we are awake or asleep, as it takes notice of the messages sent by the conscious mind and passes these messages to the various organs and centers within the body. For example, if you are awake and you accidentally touch something hot, your conscious mind will pass this message to your body and your body will react. If you are asleep and your subconscious mind senses some kind of danger, then it will similarly send a message to your body and your body will take some action to remove the danger. Another level is the intuitive level. This is where you are able to just "sense" or "know" that something is right or wrong without being able to logically explain why or why not. Some people have developed this level to a greater extent than others, but we all have the capacity to tune into our intuitive consciousness. There are many other levels of consciousness as well - in most of us, only a small portion of our brains is ever used, and so many of our levels of consciousness remain untapped.

However, the subconscious mind is constantly and often creatively sending messages to our physical, mental and emotional bodies. You might like to try an experiment in which you tell yourself repeatedly that you are feeling hot, even if it is on a cold day. If you repeat this message often enough then eventually your body really will begin to feel warm. Similarly, if you are constantly telling yourself that you are unhappy or unlucky, then your whole mind and body will become convinced that this is the truth and you will then start to attract more and more situations that make you unhappy or unlucky. In the 1970s and 80s an Australian doctor, Ainslie Meares, did some pioneering work using creative visualisation to help cancer patients. It has been shown to be a very powerful healing technique.

In the classroom, it is possible to help pupils to develop strategies for programming their subconscious minds in positive, constructive ways. The following are examples of two visualisations that they can be led through in a relatively short time, to help to facilitate this positive programming.



## ***Visualisation to improve relaxation and coping with stress***

One of the best ways of improving our state of relaxation is by focusing on our breath. Our breath is the source of our life and our energy and if it doesn't flow freely through our bodies then toxins can build up and these chemicals can prevent us from relaxing. Also, if we focus on our breath it helps our mind to settle and to release all the thoughts that buzz around and keep us awake.

You can do a simple exercise to focus on your breathing. First make sure that you are sitting or lying in a comfortable position and that your breathing is not restricted by any tight clothing. Start by listening to the sounds that you can hear in the room around you, and then take your attention to the sounds outside. Try to hear sounds as far away as you can.

Now bring your attention to your breathing. Don't try to change it - just take notice of every time you breathe in and every time you breathe out.

Try to slow down your breathing so that you are only breathing once for every two times that you were before.

As you breathe out, imagine that you are sending the breath right down to your toes. As the toes receive the breath, they feel heavy and relaxed.

Now send your breath into your legs, so that they become filled up with air, starting at your feet and working up to the top. As each section of your legs fills up with air you can feel it becoming warm and heavy.

Continue to take in slow deep breaths of air and, as you breathe out, fill up your whole body - your torso - your arms, starting from the finger tips and working up to your shoulders - your neck - your head. As the breath fills each part of your body, feel it becoming warm and heavy.

Now just sit or lie for a few minutes and enjoy the sensation of the warmth of the breath that has filled your whole body.

When you are ready, slowly start to move your fingers, your toes, your limbs and your head. Stretch your arms high above your head and point your toes. Take in one more deep breath, let it out with a big sigh, and when you are ready you can slowly get up.

If you repeat this 2 or 3 times every day, you will notice that you begin to feel more relaxed, even when you are under stress or pressure.

## ***Visualisation before taking an exam***

You can do this visualisation the day before and again on the morning of your exam, but it can also be a good idea to take 2-3 minutes when you are actually sitting in the examination room, after you have looked at the questions on the paper but before you start to write. This will help you to clear your mind enough to be able to access the information that you have stored in your memory.

First, take three long, slow, deep breaths. This will help you to relax and will settle any feelings of nervousness that you might have, which can block your thinking. Next, just close your eyes and concentrate on looking at the blackness behind your eyelids. Sometimes you

might see imprinted colors or images - if you do, just observe them and let them fade away. Imagine that you are a very tiny person and that you are walking inside your own brain. Picture yourself going to the section where the knowledge that you need for your exam is stored. Imagine that this is stored in cupboards and that you are unlocking the doors and opening them so the knowledge can be released. The knowledge you need is neatly arranged in a row, in the correct order that you will need it. Any superfluous knowledge that is not relevant is stacked to the side on the shelves. You are the one in control. When you give the signal, the knowledge will jump down from the shelf and move out, ready for you to use it. Repeat to yourself, 'I have the wisdom and the common sense to use this knowledge in the most appropriate way to answer the questions'. Take three more deep breaths, and begin writing.

### ***Visualisation to do at the beginning of a mathematics lesson***

Close your eyes and take some slow, steady breaths. Think very hard about the part of your brain where your mathematics skills are kept. Think of that place in your brain as being like a flower. As you breathe in, imagine that the breath is caressing the flower like a soft gentle breeze. As it touches, the flower starts to open slowly, petal by petal, until it is fully open. This flower is your potential to understand mathematics and to do the problems. Now that the flower is open you will find that the mathematical thinking will come to you quickly and easily. Open your eyes now and you can begin your work.

### **\* Reported evidence of effects of silent sitting and creative visualisation in the classroom \***

Several studies have explored the effects of utilising techniques such as those described above regularly in the classroom. In particular, positive benefits have been derived for disruptive or inattentive pupils (Bealing, 1997). One study found that it helped to improve their decision making and put them in touch with their deeper core values (Rozman, 1994), while another found that it helped them to cope better with stressful events (Rickard, 1994). Further benefits have included decrease in levels of impulsivity, increase in attention span and general improvement in behaviour (Kratte and Hogan, 1982). In the UK, Anita Devi found with her Grade 4 class that regular use of silent sitting led to a significant improvement in the children's concentration, behaviour and mathematics attainment. When, as a control, she stopped the practice for a month there was a decline in all three of these aspects, and eventually the children themselves asked to start it again. From this and other anecdotal evidence, it appears that this could be something worth pursuing!

### **References**

- Bealing, J. (1997). "Meditation prescribed for unruly children", *Times Educational Supplement*, 06/13/97, Issue 4224, p.23.
- Jumsai Na Ayudhya, A. (1997). *The Five Human Values and Human Excellence*. Bangkok: International Institute of Sathya Sai Education.
- Kratte, J. & Hogan, J. (1982). *The Use of Meditation in the Treatment of Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity*. ERIC Document #ED232787.

Rickard, J. (1994). *Relaxation for Children*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Rozman, J. (1994). *Meditation with Children: The Art of Concentration and Centering*. Boulder Creek, CA: Planetary Publications.



## Chapter 9. Integrating Values Education into English Lessons

### Introduction

It has been mentioned in earlier papers that if values education is to be truly effective it is necessary to explore ways of integrating it into the whole curriculum rather than by treating it as a separate, stand-alone topic. The purpose of this paper is to describe a workshop in which a group of 15 pre-service teachers of English as a second language in Hong Kong were asked to identify ways in which they could effectively integrate values education into existing English curricula.

### Problems

The student teachers had recently completed their final teaching practicum. While they had many positive experiences, they had also expressed concern about some of the personal and inter-personal difficulties that had arisen, either with their pupils, their mentors, or other teachers in the school. As beginning teachers, they were concerned about how they could address these issues, which they saw as being potentially threatening to their own well-being as teachers, or as preventing them from being able to interact as effectively as possible with their pupils. The problems and conflicts they described include:

- motivating pupils,
- conflicts with mentors or senior teaching staff who felt threatened by the newcomers trying to introduce innovative teaching practices or, in some cases, having better English language skills than their superiors,
- coping with students who did not participate in class, for example one student who spent most of the time sleeping,
- coping with their own feelings of self-worth and self-blame when things did not go according to their plans,
- students not valuing or appreciating what the teacher was trying to do, and in many cases treating the teacher as a ‘performer’ rather than an educator,
- the self-fulfilling prophecy of students who were stereotyped as the ‘bad’ ones ,
- catering for all students’ abilities in a large class.

Our next step was to examine which of these problems or conflicts suggested that there may be some problem with values, either of the pupils, the colleagues, or perhaps of the student teachers themselves. For example, conflicts with colleagues suggested a problem with egoism on the part of those not willing to listen to suggestions. The child falling asleep in class suggests the need for compassion on the part of the teacher, to find out if there are any underlying causes with which the teacher might be able to help. The lack of appreciation by pupils suggests the need to focus on promoting this value.

The student teachers were asked to respond to the question, ‘In an ideal school situation, what would be the values that could help to prevent these problems?’ The values that the teachers suggested included:



- tolerance of other people's feelings and beliefs – but also intolerance of inappropriate behaviors,
- open-mindedness,
- awareness of different perspectives,
- strategies for constructive conflict resolution,
- forgiveness,
- teachers enjoying their jobs because a good attitude is contagious,
- security,
- a feeling of gratitude, or of being valued.

We agreed that to address many of these issues it is important for the teachers to examine their own values, both on an individual level and collectively, to identify how their value systems can implicitly or explicitly affect their interactions in the classroom. This, of course, is a major, potentially long-term, task for teachers to reflect on their practices, how these relate to their own values, and the insights that their reflection brings to their teaching practice. However, in the short-term, we decided that it was possible to look for another way of addressing some of these issues - by looking at how the actual English lesson itself can be used as a vehicle for modelling and, sometimes, if appropriate, discussing the teacher's and the pupils' value systems so that exposure to values education becomes an ongoing thing rather than something just confined to moral education lessons.

### **Addressing the pupils' values: Developing lesson plans**

In response to this suggestion that we could incorporate a great deal of values education into the existing English programme, the student teachers were asked to form groups and brainstorm about how they could do so. It was agreed that the problem is not so much that pupils are not aware of appropriate values, but that they do not choose to apply them to their lives. Consequently, the challenge was to develop lesson outlines that would encourage them to make decisions about values and to reflect on the consequences of their decisions, while at the same time addressing the four strands of the English curriculum, namely Reading, Writing, Listening and Discussion.

The groups were given three sample materials for discussion, representing three of the main SSEHV teaching methodologies, namely story-telling, quotations or proverbs, and role-playing. The use of proverbs and/or other positive, inspirational quotations is considered to be a useful tool because with regular, frequent exposure it is possible for them to have a 'reprogramming' effect on our thinking, which in turn has positive effects on the way we act. Teachers are encouraged to utilise opportunities to tell stories and anecdotes about famous people, heroes and ordinary people who have demonstrated the kinds of values with which we are concerned. By regular exposure to stories of such people, students will come to value the good qualities described. Role play is a motivational and dynamic group activity that enables students to make decisions, in a supportive, co-operative environment, about how to cope with different life situations. The following sections summarise the lesson outlines that were developed.

## Story-telling

A story to make you think.....

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back. The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on vacation. And every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his room-mate all the things he could see outside the window.

The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the world outside. The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every color of the rainbow. Grand old trees graced the landscape, and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance. As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene. One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man couldn't hear the band - he could see it in his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words. Then unexpectedly, a sinister thought entered his mind. Why should the other man alone experience all the pleasures of seeing everything while he himself never got to see anything? It didn't seem fair. At first thought the man felt ashamed. But as the days passed and he missed seeing more sights, his envy eroded into resentment and soon turned him sour. He began to brood and he found himself unable to sleep. He should be by that window - that thought, and only that thought now controlled his life.

Late one night as he lay staring at the ceiling, the man by the window began to cough. He was choking on the fluid in his lungs. The other man watched in the dimly lit room as the struggling man by the window groped for the button to call for help. Listening from across the room he never moved, never pushed his own button which would have brought the nurse running in. In less than five minutes the coughing and choking stopped, along with that the sound of breathing. Now there was only silence - deathly silence.

The following morning the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths. When she found the lifeless body of the man by the window, she was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take it away. As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone. Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the world outside. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it all himself. He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall.

The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window. The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."

Epilogue. . . .

You can interpret the story in any way you like. But one moral stands out: There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations. Shared grief is half the sorrow, but happiness when shared, is doubled. If you want to feel rich, just count all of the things you have that money can't buy.

*A Story to Make you Think* is just one of the many 'inspirational stories' that are readily available on the Internet and often circulated by email. The main value to be interpreted from this story is that 'there is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations'. It also raises the issues of jealousy and selfishness and their consequences.

The teachers suggested that a lesson based on this story could begin with a listening activity in which two pupils act out the roles of the two men. To support their listening skills, the rest of the class could be given a multiple-choice handout that gives options about what is being

acted, for example, ‘What is the man doing....?’.

If the ending of the story is kept from the students during this first lesson, a writing and discussion activity for the next lesson could be to have them write their own endings in groups. This helps to develop their skills of collaborative decision-making and consensus-reaching. As a whole class, they can discuss the various endings, which enhances discussion skills while at the same time encouraging the value of appreciating each others’ contributions. Finally they can be given the original ending and be asked to comment on their feelings about its effectiveness in conveying the intended message. The teacher can help to draw out expressions of the students’ own values and feelings by sensitively asking probing questions such as, ‘Why...?’, ‘What if...?’ or, ‘Is there another way to...?’

This lesson plan is an interesting illustration of two ways in which values education can be incorporated into the English programme. One is by directly addressing the underlying values concurrently with developing the students’ language skills. The other, with sensitive awareness and guidance on the part of the teacher, is the opportunity to encourage them indirectly to work co-operatively to support each other and value each others’ contributions. One suggested example of a way in which the teacher can model that he/she values the students’ contributions is to acknowledge tacitly that their ideas are valuable even if they do not have the appropriate vocabulary to express these ideas – for example by providing them with a vocabulary sheet that can help them to access the richness of language that is needed to help them to express their feelings.

### Proverbs

The teachers were given a list of proverbs to use as a basis for their lesson planning, shown below, although they could easily select their own that have relevance to their pupils’ local culture.

When your neighbor's house is on fire, you put yourself in danger if you don't help extinguish it.	Chinese Proverb
When you open a door, don't forget to close it. Treat your mouth accordingly.	Jewish Proverb
Whether you think you can or think you can't -- you're right.	Henry Ford
If you put out another's candle, you also will be in the dark.	German Proverb
Advice is least heeded when most needed.	American Proverb
The mouth is the cause of calamity.	Japanese Proverb
Truth is not determined by the volume of the voice.	Chinese Proverb
If you look up, there are no limits.	Japanese Proverb
All my successes have been built on my failures.	Benjamin Disraeli
A man is judged by his deeds, not by his words.	Russian Proverb
If you don't light fires, smoke won't get in your eyes.	German Proverb
A kind word is like a spring day.	Russian Proverb
A heavy burden does not kill on the day it is carried.	Kenyan Proverb
Tomorrow, tomorrow, not today, all the lazy people say.	German Proverb
The one-eyed man doesn't thank God until he sees a blind man.	West Africa Proverb



For reading exercises, it was suggested that the pupils could be given a selection of stories and asked to match the proverbs to these. For example, *A Story to Make you Think* could be matched to several of these proverbs. The idea of supporting and uplifting others could be linked to the one that says, 'If you put out another's candle, you will also be in the dark'. To emphasise the importance of appreciating what they have instead of coveting what they think somebody else has that is better, the matching proverb could be, 'The one-eyed man doesn't thank God until he sees a blind man'.

As a follow-on writing activity, the pupils could be asked to write their own stories to illustrate a proverb of their own choosing. These stories could be exchanged with classmates who read them and identify which proverb the story is trying to illustrate.

As a conclusion to this series of lessons, and another writing activity, the pupils could be asked to locate or create their own proverbs or quotations that reflect their own values for life, that is the ones that give them some inspiration for their own lives. These can be the basis for discussion.

The teachers suggested that the same activities could be undertaken utilising cartoons, particularly Calvin and Hobbs, Snoopy and, for older pupils, Dilbert. That is, the pupils could be given a selection of cartoons and asked to match given proverbs to them or to find their own appropriate proverbs. Discussion can focus, for example, on whether the cartoonist really did intend to convey the message that the students identified, and what might 'happen next' in the cartoon if the main character acts upon the chosen proverb.

### **Role Playing**

You are walking across the playground when you see a \$100 note lying on the ground in front of you. What will you do? What if the same thing happened as you were walking along a busy street in the main shopping area of your town?

You are getting ready for a maths test and you and your two friends are worried because this topic has been particularly hard for you. At recess time your teacher is on yard duty and asks you to go into the classroom and get her coat that is hanging on the back of her chair. As you pick up the coat, you accidentally look at a piece of paper on the teacher's desk and before you realise it is the maths test you have read it. What will you do?

You are home alone with your little sister. She has been playing with her Barbie dolls and has left them lying on the floor when she goes off to play a computer game. You come into the room and find your dog with a Barbie doll. He has pulled one of the arms off and chewed it. You know that the dog will be in trouble if your parents find out, and will probably have to stay outside for the rest of the day. What will you do?

You are at a party and one of your friends brings out a packet of cigarettes and offers them around. Everyone else in the group takes one and then it comes to your turn to be offered. What will you do? Will it make any difference to your decision if your friends have been saying that it's cool to smoke and that anyone who doesn't is a [teachers can insert the currently popular term here before presenting the scenario to children]?

You are at the beach with your family and you see that somebody has left a lot of plastic bottles lying around in the sand. You want to pick them up but you don't have anything to carry them in until you find a rubbish bin. What can you do?

At home you and your brother have been playing with your father's computer while he is at work. You have put in a disk that has become stuck and you cannot find any way to get it out. You are afraid that you have damaged the computer. What should you do - wait until your father comes home and risk getting into trouble, or keep trying to fix it yourself?



You and your friend are riding your bikes home when you see an old man half sitting and half lying on the footpath. He doesn't look very clean or well cared for. You are already late and your parents get very worried if you are not home on time. Should you stop and help the man or should you keep going and hope that one of the other passers-by will help him?

You are new to the school and you desperately want to be accepted and liked by your new classmates. You are really happy when you are asked to join a gang, because a lot of the other kids in your class look up to them and would love to be asked, and you were the one that was picked. You finally feel that you "belong" and you really like being with the gang. After a few days you discover that your gang is bullying children in younger classes and taking "protection" money from them. What should you do - risk losing your popularity, or stay with the gang?

The scenarios that are represented here create opportunities for pupils to make decisions about which values they should apply to situations that they are typically likely to encounter in their lives. One of the benefits of role playing lies in the process of debriefing, in which the participants are asked to describe the way they felt, and to suggest ways in which different outcomes could have made them feel differently. Role playing is not like acting, as the pupils remain as themselves rather than becoming another character, and react according to their own feelings. It does not necessarily have to be done in front of an audience – several pairs can be role playing the same scenario simultaneously.

The role playing itself is a valuable activity to promote listening and speaking skills. One suggestion made by the student teachers was to utilise these scenarios for discussion, by having pairs role play a range of different possible outcomes and then using this as a basis for whole-class discussion about the different choices that we make and why.

It was also suggested that, as a writing activity, the pupils could create their own dilemmas, then exchange them to allow others to think about how they would respond. A further extension could be to utilise stories with 'morals', such as parables from the Bible, and have the pupils write their own modern-day equivalents.

## **Discussion**

The previous sections described three series of lesson plans that the student teachers developed in response to the challenge of finding ways to contribute to the achievement of 'ideal' values for the school community, whilst at the same time addressing the requirements of the English language curriculum. Let us now return to the list of values that they developed and examine how each of these might have been promoted through these activities.

All of these values are inherent in the teaching materials that were used as examples here. For example, the value of 'tolerance' appears in some of the proverbs, for example:

*If you put out another's candle, you also will be in the dark.*

*Were there no fools, there would be no wise men*

*A slanderer kills three: himself, his listener and the person who was slandered.*

The moral dilemmas pose opportunities to put into practice strategies for conflict resolution. They focus on values that include honesty, compassion, and awareness of different perspectives. The stories focus on values that include appreciating what one has, and supporting others. However, it is important to realise that these activities will only have full effect if the teacher, through skilful questioning and knowing when to step back and not intervene, creates the appropriate opportunities for discussion about the students' own

feelings and experiences. This cannot be 'forced' and the teacher cannot afford to be half-hearted, as the pupils will recognise this and the purpose will be defeated. It is important for the teacher to relate to the pupils not from the head, but from the heart – encourage them to speak truthfully about their feelings and experiences without any judgement from the teacher or other pupils about what is right or wrong, but constantly encourage them to consider situations from the points of view of all participants, and not just themselves. It is important that they are constantly reminded that everyone has a right to their own values, but when a person's values might conflict with or harm another's then it is necessary to reconsider their actions. As Jumsai (1997) has suggested, it is through this constant exposure to 'positive programming' that we, as teachers, can best set a good example that will help our pupils form a basis for moral decision-making. Through doing this we can best serve the pupils we are responsible for shaping, and hence help society. And, interestingly, a teacher who is able to achieve this will find that the job does become more enjoyable, and hence will find it easier to model a good attitude.

## Conclusion

Teachers often ask the question, 'What difference can I make? I am just one teacher and my students spend only a very small portion of their lives with me.' I would like to suggest that, like the boy in the story below, if every teacher can make a difference in shaping the values of just one pupil, it will be a positive contribution. This article has suggested just a few examples of ways in which teachers can utilise existing materials to create opportunities for values education, without adding to or interfering with the existing syllabus. Through creative and careful selection of appropriate examples, it is possible to develop many more – and hence to meet the challenge for 'every teacher to become a teacher of human values'.

One day an old man was walking along the beach in the early morning and noticed the tide had washed thousands of starfish up on the shore. Up ahead in the distance he spotted a boy who appeared to be gathering up the starfish and one by one tossing them back into the ocean.

He approached the boy and asked him why he spent so much energy doing what seemed to be a waste of time. The boy replied, "If these starfish are left out here like this they will bake in the sun, and by this afternoon they will all be dead."

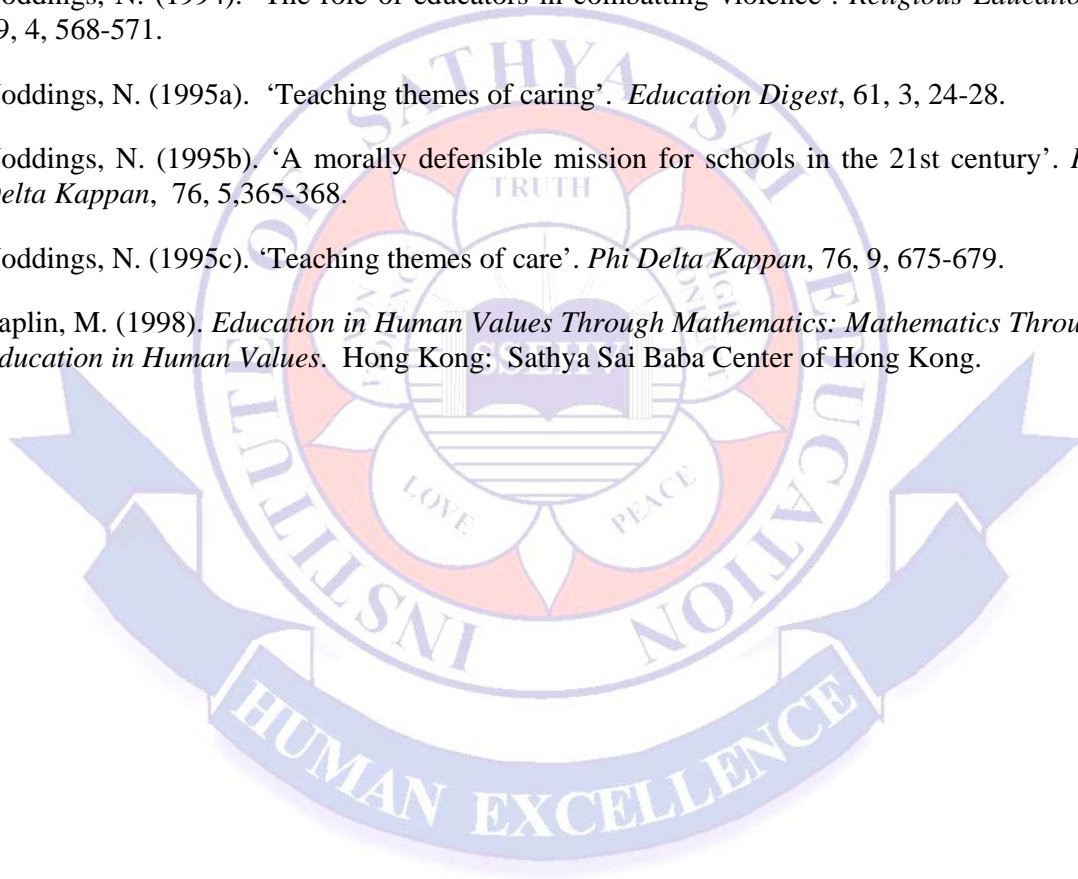
The old man gazed out as far as he could see and responded, "But, there must be hundreds of miles of beach and thousands of starfish. You can't possibly rescue all of them. What difference is throwing a few back going to make anyway?"

The boy then held up the starfish he had in his hand and replied, "It's sure going to make a lot of difference to this one!"

[Source unknown: reprinted on <http://www.cyberstory.com/CyberStoryText2/TheBoyAndTheStarfish.html>]

## References

- Carr, D. (1997). 'Educational values and values education: some recent work'. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 18, 1, 133-142.
- Jennings, B. & Nelson, J. (1996). 'Values on campus'. *Liberal Education*, 82, 1, 26-31.
- Jumsai Na Ayudhya, A. (1997). *The Five Human Values and Human Excellence*. Bangkok: International Institute of Sathya Sai Education
- Lockwood, A. (1993). 'A letter to character educators'. *Educational Leadership*, 51, 3, 72-75.
- Noddings, N. (1994). 'The role of educators in combatting violence'. *Religious Education*, 89, 4, 568-571.
- Noddings, N. (1995a). 'Teaching themes of caring'. *Education Digest*, 61, 3, 24-28.
- Noddings, N. (1995b). 'A morally defensible mission for schools in the 21st century'. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76, 5, 365-368.
- Noddings, N. (1995c). 'Teaching themes of care'. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 76, 9, 675-679.
- Taplin, M. (1998). *Education in Human Values Through Mathematics: Mathematics Through Education in Human Values*. Hong Kong: Sathya Sai Baba Center of Hong Kong.



## Chapter 10. Enhancing Character Development, Reducing Teacher Stress: Some Reflections.

When I was a young teacher, I had an appointment to a 'good' school, where the pupils were eager to work hard and the parents and colleagues were supportive. I was successful in this environment. My ideas were innovative, and I was even asked to share some of these in professional development seminars with teachers from other schools. After a few years, I took a break from teaching to travel overseas. When I returned, I was posted to a housing estate school where the pupils refused to do any work in class and never any homework, were often fighting and arguing with each other, and were bigger than me, so I was often scared for my own physical safety. To make it worse, I felt that some of my colleagues were glad to see that I was not coping when, before, I had been such a young star. And my Principal, who had once been my teacher, still thought of me as a little girl and, while I wanted to prove to her that I was grown up and a professional, was not prepared to listen to any of my ideas. As I tried to cope with the situation, I became more and more stressed. I started to eat too much junk food to console myself, and still kept on trying to pretend to myself that I was able to cope. Unfortunately, however, my inability to do so led to disease, and within two years I developed a life-threatening disease that required months of very unpleasant medical treatment. Now, more than ten years later, when I look back at that time, I often ask myself if there is anything I could have done differently that would have protected my own health. Maybe if I had not been struggling so much with myself, with the pupils, and with the situation, I would have been able to do more for the children as well.

There are two reasons why I have been thinking about this experience in the past few days. One is because I have just read a newspaper article that described the stress and low morale that many teachers are suffering these days. The other is that I have recently been lecturing to teachers about values education. I have been emphasising that these days it is important for all teachers to be not only teachers of values such as truth, compassion, tolerance and patience, but that they also need to be role models.

***Human values cannot be learnt from lectures or text-books. Those who seek to impart values to students must first practise them themselves and set an example.***

A colleague with whom I was discussing this point raised her eyebrows and said, "I know that I'm supposed to be a role model of all of these values – but how can I when my students are disrespectful, refuse to do any work in class much less their homework, and other pressures that make me feel that I am struggling to keep up all the time". I think that my colleague had a valid point – on one hand, most teachers want to make a difference to the lives of their pupils – on the other hand the stresses of teaching today can often lead to burnout, and it is very difficult for a burnt-out teacher to be a consistently good role model of the kinds of values that are sadly lacking in society. The purpose of this article, therefore, is to explore some ways in which teachers can unlock the values of truth, compassion and wisdom in themselves in such a way that will make it easier for them to interact with their pupils and colleagues and hence make it easier for them to model these values so the pupils will also learn to respect and adopt them in their own lives. It is to be hoped that in doing so, teachers will become happier and more fulfilled in their jobs.



## Causes of teacher stress

Many studies have identified some common causes of teacher stress that, if left unattended, can lead to burnout (Borg, 1990, Stern and Cox, 1993, Chaplain, 1995, Byrne, 1998) These include (not in any order of priority):

- disruptive or unco-operative pupils,
- lack of communication and consultation at school organisation level,
- ill-designed or noise working environment,
- lack of support and care from parents and outside agencies,
- changing social values and excessive demands made by society,
- excessive workload,
- personality conflicts,
- lack of support or disregard from superordinates,
- self-doubt and questioning of professional competence.

## Consequences of teacher stress

Clearly there are direct consequences of teacher stress for the teachers themselves that can affect their quality of life as well as the quality of their teaching (Kosa, 1990). These can include fatigue, waking up each morning to dread the day (Stern and Cox, 1993), emotional and physical exhaustion, anxiety and lowered self-esteem (Friedman, 1995). Even more alarming is the fact that there can be dire consequences for the pupils. As Borg (1990) reported, 'general irritability and bad temper' has been one of the main consequences reported in several studies of teacher stress. Others have been withdrawal from and cynicism towards pupils (Friedman, 1995), and lack of enthusiasm for teaching that means students not being encouraged and challenged to learn (Stern and Cox, 1993). Pahnos (1990) has reported other studies that found significant correlations between teacher stress and low pupil/teacher rapport, pupil anxiety, and lack of teacher warmth, as well as negative effects on achievement.

***... "You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself. That is something you have charge of." -- Jim Rohn***

## Some successful coping strategies

Borg (1990) reported that many teachers try to forget about their stresses by distracting their minds with other activities, alcohol, etc. But he describes these as palliative measures, which are not really solving the problem. It is not always possible to take away the causes of the stress, but it is possible to change the way teachers react to them. For example, some of coping strategies that have been used successfully by teachers include:

- putting things in perspective,
- participation in stress and depression management seminars and relaxation and breathing exercise workshops (Wilson, 2000),

- establishment of collaborative working environments, promotion of empowering tasks, (Pahnos, 1990),
- continual re-evaluation of focus and direction of professional life (Stern and Cox, 1993).

***"The place to improve the world is first in one's own heart and head and hands." -- Robert M. Pirsig..***

### **Modelling values can succeed only when your lives are healthy**

One thing that is clear is that, while it is very difficult if not impossible to change the nature of pupils or other causes of teacher stress, it is possible to change the way in which we react to these stressors. The following are some questions that teachers may wish to reflect on regarding their own values and what might have influenced them, as a first step to enhancing their own job-related physical, mental and emotional well-being. It is hoped that these reflections might lead to insights about changes. The suggestions are based on the framework of five universal human values that are the basis of SSEHV.

***Truth: "If teachers do not follow the normal ethics of truthfulness etc., how can they instil good habits and values in children?" (Sathya Sai Baba)***

On reflection of my own experience, I realise that one of my mistakes was not being truthful with myself that I was in a situation I was unable to cope with. As McCarty (1993) has said, we need to "state precisely what the risk behaviour is, along with the realising consequences" (p.52).

- When you were at school, was there ever a time when one of your teachers was untruthful about something? How did this make you feel? Was there any time when a teacher was bitterly truthful in a way that hurt you or another pupil?
- Are there any ways in which you can be more open in dealing with your pupils - or your colleagues? This does not mean that you have to be blunt or to hurt somebody else's feelings by telling them something unkind. But it does mean telling them what you feel or believe in a thoughtful way. If you are not good at doing this then make a promise to yourself to consciously practise the art until you become skilled at it. For example, when correcting children you could say, "I don't like the way you answered that question. I like it better when you give me a sensible answer and I know that you have put thought into it." Or you could say, "I don't really like the way you have done this piece of work. I prefer it when you do it more slowly and make fewer mistakes". This means that you are making it very clear to the other person why you are not happy and how you would prefer her to behave. Of course, it is still the other person's free choice to behave in one way or another, so do your best not to become angry if she continues to behave in the manner which you said you did not like. Once you have told your truth, let it go. If, at a later time, you see the same wrong thing being done again you can repeat your statement with patience, and then let it go again.

***Right action: "If a pupil has a vice, he alone suffers from it. But if a teacher has a vice, thousands are polluted." (Sathya Sai Baba)***

- Do you make certain that the environment you have established for the children is clean and tidy, and encourage them to take responsibility for contributing to this? An organised environment is one effective way of reducing stress.

- Try not to become angry if a child cannot understand something or makes a mistake, because this can lead to fear of failure. Show the child how to recover from the mistake and try again. Tell him/her about a famous person who was not afraid to make mistakes, or about some of the mistakes you have made - but also encourage accuracy and patiently ask them to correct their careless errors. You will feel better about this than if you react with anger.
- As teachers, be aware of our own habits and behaviours so that we can avoid showing any disrespectful behaviour towards the children. If we become angry then they see this as being our confirmation that anger is an "OK" behaviour. If they hear us gossiping or putting somebody down, then they will think it is acceptable for them to do the same. If they hear us criticising other adults or other children in the class, then they will take their cues from us in this regard. So, as it becomes more difficult for us to earn children's respect, it becomes more important for us to model respectful behaviour for them.

***Peace:***

- What are the things that can make a teacher angry? Think about some of your own teachers and the way they acted or reacted when they were angry. Try to remember how you felt when this was happening, either because you were on the receiving end, or because you were a pupil in the class witnessing the incident. What about some times when a teacher might have been expected to become angry but didn't? Did his/her reaction lead to a satisfactory outcome?
- If you are frequently upsetting your own equilibrium by getting angry or frustrated at certain situations, you are wasting a lot of time and a lot of your own energy. If you can stay in a balanced frame you will probably be surprised to find how much more energy you have to complete your day's tasks, and at how much extra time you are able to create for yourself.
- Find ways to be able to feel a constant state of inner peace yourself, as you will be less likely to feel angry, disappointed or let down, and the many conflicts that we are all faced with in our daily lives will cease to bother you
- Forgive others and to let go of old hurts before they have a chance to become out of control and damaging.
- If you are in a situation where the other person is in a state of turmoil then just by simply maintaining your own centre of balance you are creating a feeling of peace that will have an effect on the other person as well.
- If you respond to pupils with gentleness and do not allow yourself to disturb your sense of inner peace by becoming angry then you will provide a model that will help them in the development of their own inner peace.
- When necessary to punish pupils, use punishments that require pupils to reflect on the causes and the consequences of their conflicts or anger and to suggest more positive alternatives.
- Speak to pupils in an appropriate tone to help them to recognise the importance of remaining in a constant state of peace



***Love: “Teachers who will promote qualities of mutual love and regard in their students are sorely needed today. You can teach love to students only through love.” (Sathya Sai Baba)***

- Consciously practise sending the feeling of unconditional compassion or love (without any expectations of return or reward, or expectations that they will behave in a particular way towards you) towards your colleagues and pupils. You will probably find that your relationships with other people are changing because you are able to respond to the situations around you with a different attitude and you will also begin to find that you are more accepting of others' faults and weaknesses.
- Communicate with your pupils or colleagues from heart to heart, rather than from head to head.
- When you need to correct your pupils or tell them when their behaviour is inappropriate, try to make them with compassion rather than anger. You will also find that this is less taxing and less stressful for you, because you will be able to let go of distressing situations more easily and will not be in as much danger of damage to your own physical and mental well-being.

### **Some questions to guide action research in the classroom.**

The purpose of these questions is to guide teachers to develop strategies that will help them to become happier and more fulfilled in their jobs and to be able to unlock the values of truth, compassion and wisdom in themselves that will make it easier for them to interact with pupils and colleagues, and make it easier for them to be good role models of the same values.

- Make an action plan to implement new or different behaviours in your interactions with a) your pupils or b) your colleagues. Maintain a journal of incidents that arise in the classroom, the strategy you used to cope with it, and the outcomes.
- Use a classroom environment inventory to monitor changes in the pupils' perceptions of the classroom environment as you implement your action plan for your own behaviours and interactions.
- Keep a record of the number of times when you become angry with pupils during the day. As you monitor changes in this, record your observations of changes in the classroom environment.
- Have your pupils write an evaluation of you, focusing on values/subvalues including inner peace, forgiveness, truthfulness, compassion, and right conduct. Use this as a basis for forming your own action plan, and have the pupils evaluate it over a period of time.
- Engage your pupils as action researchers too. Together select a value and develop an action plan to put it into practice in the classroom. Monitor the changes in a) their feelings and b) their perceptions of the classroom environment. Together, determine what needs to be adjusted and re-evaluated as you go along.
- Allow your pupils to experience solitude and/or silent sitting. Ask them to write about their feelings. Analyse their writings to examine changes in their feelings over a period of time.

When I reflect on my own teaching and the difficult time I had with the pupils in the housing estate, I realise that this was something I did not do. I regarded them as my problems and



constantly struggled with ways to solve the problem, rather than teaching them from the heart. I don't know if it would have made any difference to those children or to me, but I would like to have a chance to go back and try again.

## References

Borg, M. (1990). 'Occupational stress in British educational settings: A review'. *Educational Psychology*, 10, 2, 103-126.

Chaplain, R. (1995). 'Stress and job satisfaction: A study of English primary school teachers', *Educational Psychology*, 15, 4, 473-489.

Jumsai Na Ayudhya, A. (1997). *The Five Human Values and Human Excellence*. Bangkok: International Institute of Sathya Sai Education

Friedman, I. (1995). 'Student behavior patterns contributing to teacher burnout'. *Journal of Educational Research*, 88, 5, 281-288.

Kosa, B. (1990). 'Teacher-coach burnout and coping strategies'. *Physical Educator*, 47, 3, 153-161.

McCarty, T. (1993). 'Self-esteem enhancement workshop for elementary teachers'. *Guidance & Counselling*, 8, 5, 51-58.

Pahnos, M. (1990). 'The principal as the primary mediator of school stress'. *Education*, 111, 1, 125-129.

Stern, A. & Cox, J. (1993). 'Teacher burnout: The dull reality'. *Music Educators Journal*, 80, 3, 33-37.

Wilson, A. (2000). 'Teaching teachers to de-stress' *Psychology Today*, 32, 4, 18.

## Chapter 11. Combating Bullying Through Strategies of Truth, Right Action, Peace, Love and Non-Violence

A recent article in the South China Morning Post drew attention to the need for a full-scale anti-bullying campaign in schools, with startling survey results from Hong Kong having found that 70 per cent of students had suffered some form of bullying and that 96 per cent had witnessed it. There is no doubt that, in many countries, bullying has become a serious concern in schools, with statistics suggesting that as many as one child in 10 is regularly attacked either verbally or physically by bullies (Safeguarding Your Children at School, 1997).

It must be noted that bullying does not always have to take overt forms, but rather ‘any physical and emotional behaviors that are intentional, controlling and hurtful’ (Safe and Caring Schools Project, 1997), which includes behaviors like making offensive racial or sexual comments, belittling, excluding others from a group or activity, shunning, ignoring or lying (Safe and Caring Schools Project, 1997). The long-term effects of bullying can also be serious, with indications that as many as one in four children who bully will have a criminal record relating to aggressive, violent behavior before the age of 30 (Bullies: A Serious Problem for Kids). Quite often the only message that is given to bullies, either explicitly or implicitly, is “don’t get caught” (Action Against Bullying, 1992). In the short term, even seemingly mild forms of bullying such as teasing, taking lunch money, insulting or threatening can cause some children to avoid school or even become violent in retaliation (Bullies: A Serious Problem for Kids).

Numerous publications and websites have proposed strategies to help teachers, parents and children to combat bullying. Many of these point to the fact that there has been a decline in knowledge and particularly practice of basic, fundamental human values. The purpose of this article is to outline some of these strategies that have been suggested by experts, and to suggest that by utilising them, teachers and parents can be doing much to address the urgent need to restore a sense of values in young people at the same time as addressing the immediate problem of bullying. While many of the suggested strategies are not specific to the SSEHV programme, this article will show how well-tested strategies for combating bullying can be combined with SSEHV strategies to address the bullying problem.

### Truth

*“Speak the truth, but speak pleasantly. If speaking the truth will cause pain or grief, keep silent. Don’t have hypocrisy or crookedness in your speech. Both unpleasant truth and pleasant untruth have to be avoided. In the name of truth, one should not utter words which cause pain to others.”*

Sathya Sai Baba

In encouraging truth, we want students to learn to value honesty and to express their feelings in appropriate, constructive ways. It is believed that as many as one in four children who are bullied will not disclose the incident to parents or teachers (Safe and Caring Schools Project, 1997). If bullying is a problem, it is first important to acknowledge this and to raise awareness of bullying by encouraging staff and pupils to speak out about ways in which they

have observed it happening. One way to do this (Action Against Bullying, 1992) is to conduct a short questionnaire: have teachers/pupils experienced bullying, what was it, what did they do about it? Experts have suggested that “the best way to safeguard your children from becoming a victim of a bully is to teach them how to be assertive. ... to express their feelings clearly, to say no when they feel pressured or uncomfortable, to stand up for themselves verbally without fighting, and to walk away in more dangerous situations” (Safeguarding Your Children at School, 1997).

- Encourage children to talk about things that happen at school, and particularly any incidents that make them feel scared or uncomfortable (Safeguarding Your Children at School, 1997).
- Help children to recognize the difference between telling tales and reporting incidents of bullying (Safe and Caring Schools Project, 1997).
- Teach children to use “I feel” statements, for example encouraging them to look the bully in the eye and speak in a calm, clear voice to name the behavior he or she doesn’t like and state what is expected instead (Safe and Caring Schools Project, 1997).

### Right Conduct

*“We are endowed with the discriminating power to control our actions. This power must be used to decide whether any action is wrong.... Let not that which you do harm or injure another.”*

Sathya Sai Baba

“The key to promoting positive interactions among young children is teaching them how to assert themselves effectively. Children who express their feelings and needs while respecting those of others will be neither victims nor aggressors. Adults must show children that they have the right to make choices – in which toys they play with, or (within boundaries) what they wear and what they eat. The more children trust and value their own feelings, the more likely they will be to resist peer pressure, to respect warm and caring adults, and to be successful in achieving their personal goals (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1997). It has been suggested that “bullies are less likely to intimidate children who are confident and resourceful” (Safeguarding Your Children at School, 1997).

- Have a system for reporting incidents and spelled-out, consistently-applied consequences (Mackie, 2000).
- Parents and teachers can model appropriate behaviors of respecting the rights, bodies and properties of others (Safeguarding Your Children at School, 1997).
- Don’t respond to a bullying child with either physical or verbal bullying behavior of your own, such as ridiculing, yelling or ignoring (Bullies: A Serious Problem for Kids).
- Children should be kept active in sports, clubs, volunteer work, and family and community activities so they do not have time to become involved in gangs which can often lead to bullying behavior (Safeguarding Your Children at School, 1997).
- Help children develop the social skills to make friends, which will in turn reduce the likelihood of bullying or being bullied (Bullies: A Serious Problem for Kids).



- Instill in children the rules for “fighting fair”: Identify the problem. Focus on the problem. Attack the problem, not the person. Listen with an open mind. Treat a person’s feelings with respect. And finally – take responsibility for your actions (Noll, 2001).
- Encourage children to befriend or help a child who is being bullied, or even to be kind to the bully.

## Peace

*The treasure that is unmistakably precious is the quality of peace, equanimity, unruffledness. Practise this and make it your natural reaction.*

*The flower of peace should not be interpreted to mean that you should be silent whosoever is attacking you, or whoever is blaming you. It is not that. If you are unmoved and unperturbed in spite of anyone finding faults in you, this can be called real peace.*

Sathya Sai Baba

One of the reasons why bullies are bullies is because they lack inner peace (Bullies: A Serious Problem for Kids). During a school trip once, we decided to use the opportunity to take our city kids into the bush to experience this feeling of complete solitude. We did this exercise twice: first thing in the morning and again just as it was getting dark. We asked the children to each find a place where they could feel completely alone, where they could not see or hear anybody else, and we asked them to sit there and experience the aloneness for ten or fifteen minutes until we called them back. The child on whom this exercise had the most significant impact was Robert, who was a very big child and a bully who frequently terrorized other children and quite often the teachers as well. In a very small voice, he made the comment: "I could feel the power of the universe and it made me feel very small but safe".

In a case where a child is the victim of somebody else's anger, or bullying, or other abuse, it is particularly important to help that child to equip herself with skills and strategies to maintain a sense of inner strength to help her to cope with the situation. This is of course often a difficult thing for a child to do. The search for inner peace is a difficult one because it is so easy for us to slip back into our angry or fearful ways. We need to develop strategies to prevent ourselves from doing this, and we can play games with children to practise this art. For example, you can take them to a place where they feel peaceful and ask them to try to make themselves feel angry. Afterwards, you can talk to the children about the physical effects of the anger and why it is important not to allow the fears and pains to eat them up, but rather to transform these to more positive feelings.

It has been suggested (Bullying at School: Advice for Families, 1997) that one way to stand up to bullies is to let them know that you are not too much afraid of them to let them have their way. To be able to do this, it is important to have a foundation of inner peace that cannot be shaken even in unpleasant situations. With such a foundation in place, it is unlikely that the person being bullied will either show fear to the bully or, even worse, resort to retaliating with violence.

- Help your pupils to find ways to be able to feel a constant state of peace themselves. If they find themselves in a situation where somebody is trying to bully them, then just by simply being firm and maintaining their own centre of balance they are creating a feeling



of peace that will have an effect on the other person as well. You can help pupils to create inner peace within themselves by introducing them to the value of silent sitting - that is, sitting for a few minutes in a state of complete outer and inner silence.

- If you respond to pupils with gentleness and do not allow yourself to disturb your sense of inner peace by becoming angry then you will provide a model that will help them in the development of their own inner peace.
- When dealing with a bully, make use of a "time-out" place where the child can "cool down" to a state where it is more feasible to reason with him/her. When the child has settled down, the teacher is able to discuss the reason for the conflict and the consequences of being angry.
- Make pupils aware of the physical damage to their own health that can be caused by excessive anger and by suppressing it - teach them strategies for releasing it effectively but without harming others.
- When necessary to punish pupils, use punishments that require them to reflect on the causes and the consequences of their conflicts or anger and to suggest more positive alternatives.
- If pupils have been in conflict with each other, set them a joint task on which they are required to work co-operatively together.
- Teach children how to resolve arguments without using violent words or actions (Bullies: A Serious Problem for Kids).

## Love

*"The weapon of Love disarms every opponent. Love begets Love; it will be reflected back, it will have only love as a reaction. Shout, "Love", the echo from the other person's heart will also be Love."*

*"You can teach love to students only through love."*

Sathya Sai Baba

The state of unconditional love is one that will help children to relate better to other children and adults. No matter what others do or say to them, if they are able to maintain this state they will find that they are not as easily able to be hurt or distressed by what is going on around them and, in some instances, it may even have the effect of changing the situation simply by sending the right kind of energy to their attackers. It is a significant component of a balanced, harmonized classroom and a value that ought to be instilled in all children from a very early age. This can help not only the child who is being bullied, but also the bullies themselves, since bullying behavior can often arise from the bullies feeling pain inside, perhaps because of their own shortcomings (Bullies: A Serious Problem for Kids).

- When you need to correct your pupils or tell them when their behavior is inappropriate, try to do so with compassion rather than anger. If you are angry, you are demonstrating that it is "OK" to be angry, and the pupils are more likely to respond to their own frustrations with anger.

- For a minute at the beginning or end of the lesson, ask the pupils to sit silently and think about a favorite toy, pet or person. Extensions of this activity can be to sit in pairs and practise projecting the feeling of love that this creates to each other, or to think about a person or place that needs it and concentrate on projecting the love to the person or object of their thoughts. This not only has the effect of helping the children to become more settled, it also encourages them to become more aware of the needs of others to receive unconditional love.
- Do not be angry if a child cannot understand something or makes a mistake, because this can lead to low self-esteem that often characterizes a bully. Show the child how to recover from the mistake and try again. Tell him/her about a famous person who was not afraid to make mistakes, or about some of the mistakes you have made - but also encourage accuracy and patiently ask them to correct their careless errors.
- Spend time with children every day. Show affection and make them feel special and needed (Safeguarding Your Children at School, 1997).
- Seek help for a child with learning difficulties, as repeated failure at school can lead to bullying behavior (Safeguarding Your Children at School, 1997).
- Recognize that bullies may be acting out of feelings of insecurity, anger or loneliness, and help them to deal with these emotions (Bullies: A Serious Problem for Kids).
- “Giving friendship [to a bully] is the greatest magic of all” (Mackie, 2000).

## Non-violence

*“One should desist from causing pain to any living being, not only by deeds, but even by words and thoughts.”*

*“If you cannot help another, at least avoid doing him/her harm or causing pain. Even mosquitoes can pride themselves on the capacity to injure and harm, and cause disease! So if you feel proud of the skill to harm, you are only demeaning yourselves.”*

Sathya Sai Baba

Since the value of non-violence refers to the ability to live together in peace and harmony, respecting others’ points of view and respecting life and property, it is clear that instilling this value in children will go a long way towards overcoming problems of bullying. This is particularly true for those bullies who engage in their behavior because they want power over others or find it difficult to see things from someone else’s perspective (Bullies: A Serious Problem for Kids).

- Work with teachers, principals and other students in developing a community service program, where students give back to the community in a positive manner (Action Steps for Students, 1996).
- Stand up to bullies. If enough people stand up to a bully, eventually the bully will be forced to change (Safe and Caring Schools Project, 1997).
- Assess the situation. In dangerous situations, students should protect themselves and others by going for help immediately (Safe and Caring Schools Project, 1997).

- Tell the child that it is sometimes possible to make things better with a joke or a question such as, “Tell me what I did wrong and I’ll apologize”, as most bullies back down when they don’t get the response they expect (Safe and Caring Schools Project, 1997).
- Ensure that students understand what bullying means, what behaviors it includes, how victims, bullies and bystanders might feel, and what students should do when they or others are being bullied (Safe and Caring Schools Project, 1997).
- Encourage students to discuss bullying behavior and positive ways to interact with others (Safe and Caring Schools Project, 1997).

## Conclusion

What an empowering thing it would be if we could use some or all of these strategies to help to defuse children's anger or fear in the classroom, and even more empowering if we could teach the children to use it for themselves in times of potential conflict. As strange as it may seem, both of the following stories are true.

### Coping with a difficult class.

I was a young student teacher and was assigned to my final practice teaching session in a secondary school with a very bad reputation for students refusing to work and often becoming disruptive in class. I was put in charge of a biology class. The regular class teacher was usually not there, so I was on my own. The kids, particularly the boys, began to play up badly and I was getting more and more frustrated that my lessons weren't working out. The students knew I was frustrated and scared of them, and the more they sensed this, the worse they got. I had a lesson coming up in which the students were going to dissect frogs, and I was really panicking - I was actually scared that somebody would do something stupid with a scalpel and somebody could get hurt. I was really feeling desperate, and just didn't know what to do. In desperation, the evening before the lesson, I called my Mum, who is also a teacher, to ask for her advice. She is a very loving, compassionate person, and she reminded me of what she has been teaching me since I was a young child, that 'love can move mountains'. She suggested that if I had difficulty 'loving' these students, it could help to imagine that I was surrounding them in a bubble of pink light. Thinking that I had nothing to lose, I decided to try what she suggested. When I went into the class the next day, I took a few minutes to concentrate on building up a feeling of love towards the pupils. Then I 'let it go' - I literally threw the feeling out into the classroom from my heart. The result was unbelievable - for the whole lesson, the pupils were happy and worked co-operatively together. There were no incidents, and the lesson went far more smoothly than I could ever have hoped. I couldn't believe that the effect of 'throwing' the love at them could be so profound - but I have certainly remembered to do it at the beginning of any other lessons I teach!

### Defusing violence

I was working as a social worker in a school when I was called urgently to the Principal's office. I got there to find a particularly angry father. He had been called in because his son had been constantly in trouble and this time it had been necessary to suspend him. The father was furious with his son, and he was also furious with the Principal for making a decision that he knew would affect his son's future. It was a very ugly mood and we could not calm the man down. He became angrier and angrier, and physically grabbed hold of the Principal as if he was going to become violent. At that moment I remembered having been



taught the strategy of projecting 'love' towards an angry person. I did it and could not believe what happened. The man literally let go of the Principal and dropped his hands to his sides. Of course he was still upset and angry, and we still had to spend a lot of time talking to him, but the use of the strategy had calmed him down enough to turn the potentially violent moment around.

### Loving them along

This extract was taken from Bullough, R. & Baughman, K. (1993). Continuity and change in teacher development: First year teacher after five years. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 44 (2), 86-95.

A lot of my success comes from learning how to deal with the students and to treat them the way they need to be treated, positively. I call it loving them along, because that is what works for me. I want to have a loving environment in my classroom where my students can blossom. A second principle is that a classroom should be a warm, fuzzy place like a family, where students feel loved and cared for, but more than a family - a caring community where students feel connected and responsible for one another...

### References

- Action Against Bullying: A Support Pack for Schools (1992). <http://www.scre.ac.uk/bully/scenario3.html>
- Action Steps for Students (1996). <http://www.uncg.edu/edu/ericass/bullying/DOCS/action.htm>
- Bullies: A Serious Problem for Kids. <http://www.ncpc.org/10adu3.htm>
- Bullying at School: Advice for Families (1997). <http://www.scre.ac.uk/bully/bother.html>
- Mackie, D. (2000). Preventing Childhood Bullying. *Valley News*, 11/14/2000. [http://www.cary-memorial.lib.me.us/bullyweb/preventing\\_childhood\\_bullying.htm](http://www.cary-memorial.lib.me.us/bullyweb/preventing_childhood_bullying.htm)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (1997). Teaching Children Not To Be – Or Be Victims Of – Bullies. <http://www.uncg.edu/edu/ericass/bullying/DOCS/teach.htm>
- Noll, K. (2001). Empowering Kids to Deal with Bullies and Low Self-Esteem. [http://www.mathgoodies.com/articles/empowering\\_kids.shtml](http://www.mathgoodies.com/articles/empowering_kids.shtml)
- Safe and Caring Schools Project (1997). Bullying – Everyone’s Problem. <http://www.uncg.edu/edu/ericass/bullying/DOCS/safe1.htm>
- Safeguarding Your Children at School: Helping Children Deal with a School Bully (1997). <http://www.pta.org/programs/syech.htm>
- South China Morning Post*. Anti-bullying Drive Urged as 70pc of Pupils Claim to be Victims. (March 10, 2001, p.3)



## Chapter 12. Teaching Values Through A Problem-Solving Approach

*It may help one to earn a livelihood, but education should go beyond the preparation of earning a living. It should prepare one for the challenges of life.*

*Bookish knowledge alone is not enough. It is superficial and not practical. Students need also general knowledge and common sense.*

*Science alone is not enough. There must be discrimination for utilising the discoveries of science for right purposes.*

*Education should serve to develop powers of discrimination and foster the sense of patriotism so that the educated may engage themselves in service to society.*

*Education today is a process of filling the mind with the contents of books, emptying the contents in the examination hall and returning empty-headed....What you learn should become a part*

*of your whole being. Only then will you have a sense of fulfillment, and establish complete harmony in thought, word and deed. Today, the country needs persons who lead such integral lives.*

*Do not turn them into experts in mathematics, unable to add up a simple domestic bill; scholars in the geography of America, but unable to direct a pilgrim who desires to know in which direction Westminster Cathedral or the London Mosque lies; prodigies in Algebra who are helpless when asked to define the area of their own rooms....*

*Education should serve not only to develop one's intelligence and skills, but also help to broaden one's outlook and make him/her useful to society and the world at large.*

Sathya Sai Baba

The quotations above are concerned with the following characteristics that are becoming increasingly important in today's society:

- equipping students to meet the challenges of life,
- developing general knowledge and common sense,
- learning how to be discriminating in use of knowledge, that is to know what knowledge is appropriate to use for what purposes,
- integrating what is learned with the whole being,
- arousing attention and interest in the field of knowledge so it will be mastered in a worthy way

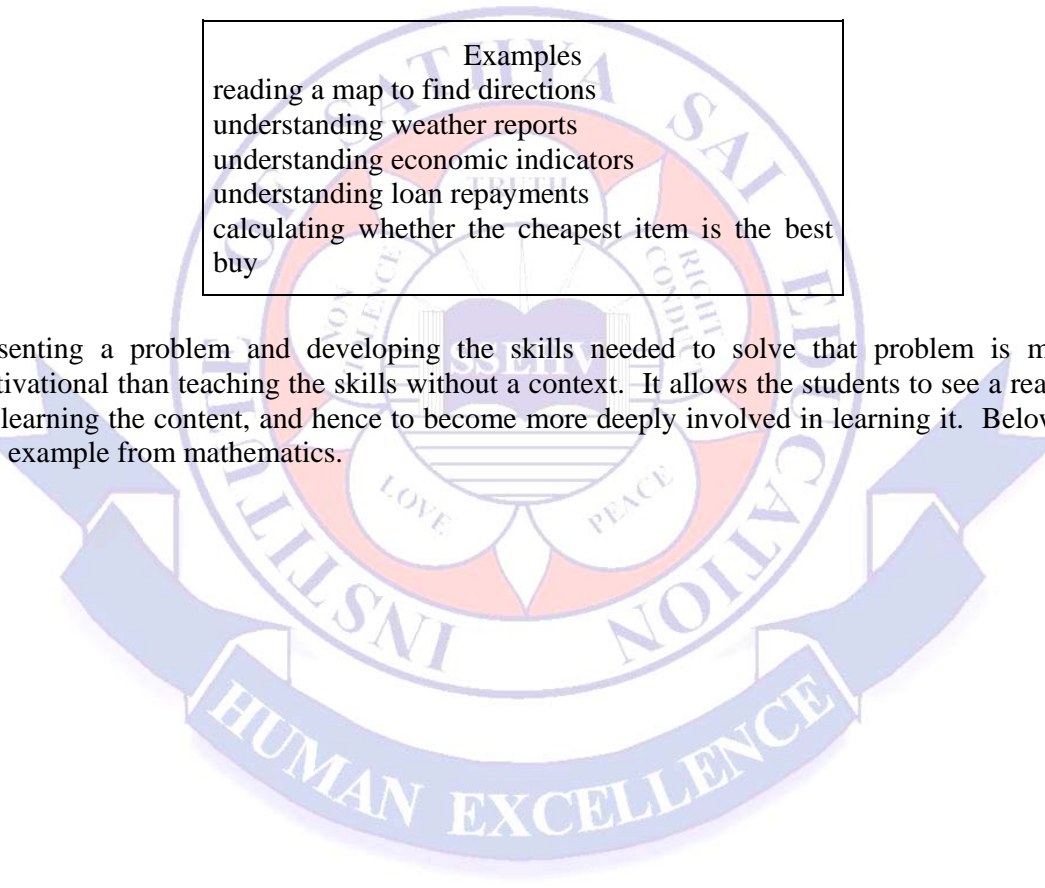
Traditionally, schooling has been very much concerned with filling pupils' heads with rules and knowledge, to be remembered until the examination, and then forgotten by all but those few who need to use the knowledge in their work. But, more recently, educators have come to realise that it does not have to be like this. By re-thinking the way we teach, we can help students to develop the values of common sense and discriminatory use of knowledge and

help them to be able to use their knowledge as a tool for meeting the challenges of life.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss some of the reasons why problem solving is a valuable teaching approach, and to suggest some strategies for enhancing its effectiveness. Throughout the article, italics have been used to indicate some of the potential benefits of using it.

### **Why is problem solving a valuable teaching approach?**

Increasing numbers of individuals need to be able to think for themselves in a constantly changing environment, particularly as technology is making larger quantities of information easier to access and to manipulate. They also need to be able to adapt to unfamiliar or unpredictable situations more easily than people needed to in the past.



Examples reading a map to find directions understanding weather reports understanding economic indicators understanding loan repayments calculating whether the cheapest item is the best buy
--

Presenting a problem and developing the skills needed to solve that problem is more motivational than teaching the skills without a context. It allows the students to see a reason for learning the content, and hence to become more deeply involved in learning it. Below is one example from mathematics.

### Example of a Concept Taught Through a Problem-Solving Context

Ms. Chan wanted to teach her class the concept of square numbers. She began by telling them a story about the Egyptian pyramids. She told them that the Great Pyramid of Cheops is 150 metres high, and is built of over 2 000 000 stone blocks each weighing about 2.5 tonnes, and took 100 000 men 20 years to complete.

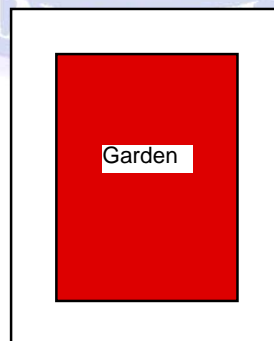
Next, Ms. Chan gave each group of students 276 small cubes and asked them to use all of the cubes to build their own square-based pyramids.



When they had done this, she asked them whether they noticed any pattern in the numbers of cubes which made up each layer. She asked them to predict how many cubes would be used for the tenth layer, the 100th layer, etc. and to test their predictions.

Teaching through problem solving can enhance logical reasoning, helping people to be able to decide what rule, if any, a situation requires, or if necessary to develop their own rules in a situation where an existing rule cannot be directly applied.

A group of twelve-year-olds was given the following diagram, and asked to calculate how many one-metre square paving stones would be needed to make a two-metre wide path around the garden, which is 9 metres wide and 13 metres long.



The pupils did not immediately know a formula to solve this problem. They needed to decide which of the formulae they *did* know, such as perimeter and area, could be used, and they also needed to decide *how* to use this information.

Problem solving can allow the whole person to develop by experiencing the full range of emotions associated with various stages of the solution process.

#### Examples

The problem that we worked on today had us make a hypothesis. Through testing, our hypothesis was proven incorrect. The problem solving approach allowed our group to find this out for ourselves, which made the "bitter pill" of our mistake easier to follow.

I found this activity to be quite a challenge. I felt intimidated because I could not see an immediate solution, and wanted to give up. I was gripped by a feeling of panic. I had to read the question many times before I understood what I had to find. I really had to "dig down" into the depths of my memory to recall the knowledge I needed to solve the problem.

Seeing patterns develop before my own eyes was a powerful experience: it had a stimulating effect. I felt that I had to explore further in a quest for an answer, and for more knowledge.

*Extracts from a student  
teacher's journal after three  
separate problem solving sessions*

The student who wrote the extracts above, has illustrated how *interest rooted in the problem* encouraged *steady interest needed to master worthy knowledge*. Experience with problem solving can develop curiosity, confidence and open-mindedness.

### **Incorporating problem solving into the teaching program**

The first section of this article explained why problem solving is an important vehicle for educating students for life by promoting interest, developing common sense and the power to discriminate. In particular, it is an approach which encourages flexibility, the ability to respond to unexpected situations or situations that do not have an immediate solution, and helps to develop perseverance in the face of failure. This section will describe the types of problem solving which can be used to enhance these characteristics.

It is important to remember that what is a problem for one student is not necessarily so for another. A situation becomes a problem when the individual cannot immediately resolve it, but needs to think of the information available and the way it can be used to arrive at a solution.

Problem solving is an approach to teaching rather than a topic, but students do need to be equipped with certain strategies to be able to respond to this type of approach. Problem



investigations can be long-term projects or short-term, and can be aimed at individuals, small groups, or the whole class.

There are three types of problems to which students should be exposed:

- (i) word problems, where the concept is embedded in a real-world situation and the student is required to recognise and apply the appropriate algorithm/rule (*preparing pupils for the challenges of life*),
- (ii) non-routine problems which require a higher degree of interpretation and organisation of the information in the problem, rather than just the recognition and application of an algorithm (*encouraging the development of general knowledge and common sense*),
- (iii) "real" problems, concerned with investigating a problem which is real to the students, does not necessarily have a fixed solution, and engages the pupils in attempting to find a solution (*engaging pupils in service to society*).

Each of these problem types will be described in more detail below.

### **Problems which require the direct use of a concept.**

This kind of problem is the type commonly used in mathematics. By solving these types of problems, students are learning to *discriminate what knowledge is required for certain situations, and developing their common sense*. The following examples have been adapted from the HBJ Mathematics Series, Book 6, to show how values such as sharing, helping and conserving energy can be included in the wording of the problems. They increase in difficulty as they require more steps:

#### Examples

7 children went mushrooming and agreed to share. They picked 245 mushrooms. How will they find out how many they will get each?

Nick helps his elderly neighbour for  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an hour every week night and for  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour at the weekend. How much time does he spend helping her in 1 week?

Recently it was discovered that a clean engine uses less fuel. An aeroplane used 4700 litres of fuel. After it was cleaned it was found to use 4630 litres for the same trip. If fuel cost 59 cents a litre, how much more economical is the clean plane?

Sometimes it is important to give problems which contain too much information, so the pupils need to select what is appropriate and relevant:

### Examples

Last week I travelled on a train for a distance of 1093 kilometres. I left at 8 a.m. and averaged 86 km/hour for the first four hours of the journey. The train stopped at a station for 1 1/2 hours and then travelled for another three hours at an average speed of 78 km/hour before stopping at another station. How far had I travelled?

Following is one example of how this kind of problem can be linked to real life. In this case, it is necessary for the children to identify what information they are going to need and then determine how they are going to find and use it.

This year instead of doing the planning for the annual school camp myself, I decided to let the children do it, as a problem-solving exercise. They needed to make decisions about many things - how much it would cost, what activities would be done, what equipment should be taken, and what safety precautions were necessary. I helped them to find a lot of information about bus hire, campsite hire, food costs for different menus, etc. The children had to search through this information and select what was relevant, discard that which was irrelevant, and then make decisions based in the information they had selected.

(Primary School Teacher)

To be able to solve these problems, the pupils cannot just use the *bookish knowledge* which they have been taught. They also need to apply *general knowledge and common sense*.

Another type of problem, which will encourage pupils to be *resourceful*, is that which does not give enough information. These problems are often called Fermi problems, named after the mathematician who made them popular. When people first see a Fermi problem they immediately think they need more information to solve it. Basically though common sense and experience can allow for reasonable solutions. The solution of these problems relies totally on knowledge and experience which the students already have. They are problems which are non-threatening, and can be solved in a co-operative environment. These problems can be related to social issues, for example:

### Examples

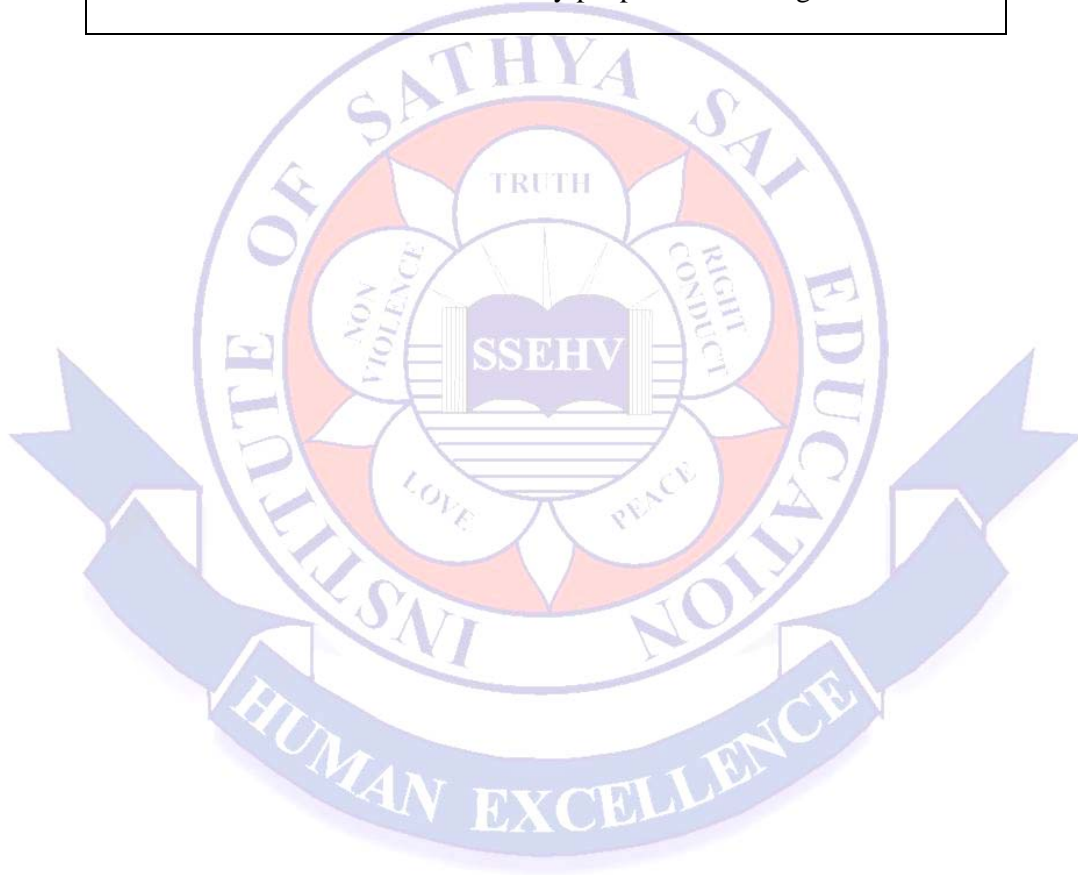
How many litres of petrol are consumed in your town in a day?

How much money would the average person in your town save in a year by walking instead of driving or taking public transport?

How much food is wasted by an average family in a week?

What sorts of people are the most likely to get into debt with their credit cards?

How much time is wasted in a week by people in an average office?



### One Example of Using a Fermi Problem

Ms. Lam wanted to teach her class of ten-year-olds about the value of money, and to appreciate what their parents were doing for them:

"I believe that students should be aware of this important issue and thus can be more considerate when a money issue raised in their own family, such as failure to persuade their parents to buy an expensive present. In solving the problems, I think that students can have a better understanding of the concept of money, not simply as a tool of buying and selling things.

"First I told the class a story about Peter's argument with his family. Peter failed to persuade his parents to buy expensive sportshoes as his birthday present and thought that his parents did not treat him well. The parents also felt upset as they regarded this son as an inconsiderate child. They thought that he should understand that the economy is not so good. They asked Peter if he knew about how much money was being spent on him throughout the whole year. Unfortunately, Peter could not produce the answer immediately. So I asked the class if they could help Peter. I asked them to find answers to the following problems:

How much money do your parents spend on you in a year?

How much money have your parents spent on you up till now?

How much money will your parents have spent on you by the time you finish secondary school?

How much money will be spent on raising children in the whole country this year?

"The students were formed into groups of 4 to find out the possible data that they need to know. Later, the groups were asked to present their data and the way of finding out the answer. Finally, I concluded that this is an open question as each person may have different expenditure along with some common human basic needs such as food, clothes and travelling fares. Anyway, the answer should be regarded as a large sum of money and thus give them a better understanding of their parents' burden."

Sometimes pupils can be asked to make up their own problems, which can help to enhance their understanding. This can encourage them to be *flexible*, and to realise that there can be *more than one way of looking at a problem*.

The pupils were given photos of different situations, including people who were hungry, homeless, and injured. They were asked to pose the social problems that led to these situations and the underlying causes of these problems.



## Non-Routine Problems

Non-routine problems can be used to encourage logical thinking, reinforce or extend pupils' understanding of concepts, and to develop problem-solving strategies which can be applied to other situations. The following is an example of a non-routine problem:

Take a letter. Add one more letter. Then add another letter. At every stage the letters must form a normal word (no acronyms, slang or proper names)

Example:

A

AT

CAT

COAT

ACTOR

FACTOR

FACTORY

TRUTH

A

AS

GAS

SAGE

RAGES

GREASY

GYRATES

STRATEGY

(Edward de Bono - Word Extension,  
<http://www.edwdebono.com/debono/exword2.htm>)

## Real problem solving and problem-based learning

With the growing need to promote students' abilities to reason and apply knowledge, the use of problem-based learning approaches has increased during the past decade. This encompasses any situation in which an initial problem, case or situation is presented to students as the catalyst for the learning that will occur. The problems are usually tailor-made for the situation so that the outcomes of the exercise will meet the course objectives. The students identify areas of skills and knowledge that need to be acquired and use this to guide their studies. Students are required to reason and apply this knowledge, and the learning that has occurred in working with the problem is integrated into their existing body of skills and knowledge. One example of a type of problem-based learning can be achieved by engaging pupils in their own research projects to identify real problems. Bohan, Irby and Vogel (1995) suggest a seven-step model for doing research in the classroom, to enable students to become "producers of knowledge rather than merely consumers" (p.256).

### **Step 1: What are some questions you would like answered?**

The students brainstorm to think of things they would like to know, questions they would like to answer, or problems that they have observed in the school or community. Establish a rule that no one is to judge the thoughts of another. If someone repeats an idea already on the chalkboard, write it up again. Never say, "We already said that," as this type of response stifles creative thinking.

### **Step 2: Choose a problem or a research question**

The students were concerned with the amount of garbage produced in the school cafeteria and its impact on the environment. The research question was, "What part of the garbage in our school cafeteria is recyclable?"

### **Step 3: Predict what the outcome will be.**

### **Step 4: Develop a plan to test your hypothesis**

The following need to be considered:

Who will need to give permission to collect the data?

Courtesy - when can we conveniently discuss this project with the cafeteria manager?

Time - how long will it take to collect the data?

Cost - will it cost anything?

Safety - what measures must we take to ensure safety?

### **Step 5: Carry out the plan:**

Collect the data and discuss ways in which the students might report the findings (e.g. graphs)

### **Step 6: Analyse the data: did the test support our hypothesis?**

What mathematical tools will be needed to analyse the data: recognising the most suitable type of graph; mean; mode; median?

### **Step 7: Reflection**

What did we learn? Will our findings contribute to our school, our community, or our world? How can we share our findings with others? If we repeated this experiment at another time, or in another school, could we expect the same results? Why or why not? Who might be interested in our results?

"The final thought to leave with students is that they can be researchers and producers of new information and that new knowledge can be produced and communicated through mathematics. Their findings may contribute to the knowledge base of the class, the school, the community, or society as a whole. *Their findings may affect their school or their world in a very positive way*" (Bohan et al., 1995, p.260).

## Problem solving through co-operative groupwork

*“By example and precept, in the classroom and the playground, the excellence of intelligent co-operation, of sacrifice for the team, of sympathy for the less gifted, of help...has to be emphasised.”*

Sathya Sai Baba

Current research about teaching suggests students can come to a better understanding of many topics if they have the opportunity to work together in pairs or small groups. To do this successfully, teachers need also to teach their pupils the skills of working with others in a truly co-operative situation.

### A Teacher's Thoughts About Co-operative Discussion

After experimenting with co-operative discussion in her classroom, Ms Cheung made the following comments:

Listening to what children say during discussion offered me a continuous and detailed means of assessing their understanding and progress. Before this session I doubted whether talk/discussion could be obtained in working with a class of thirty-six children. The class was formed into groups, which would discuss mainly on their own. I interacted with these groups by circulating. I controlled a second level of interaction between groups, by calling on spokespersons to report, and drawing in other children appropriately. I reinforce my belief that children need more opportunity to talk about their mathematics.

I learnt that children working together not only have the opportunity to listen and learn from each other, but also to try out some ideas in a non-threatening environment. Every member of a group has the chance of seeing the activity in more than one way than if they were working alone.

Teamwork can lead to better development of mathematical understanding because of the communication that must occur for the group to function. These activities necessitate that children use all four components of language skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Interactions are indeed the heartbeat of the mathematics classroom. Mathematics is learned best when students are actively participating in that learning. One method of active participation is to interact with the teacher and peers about mathematics.

Models for classroom interactions have been proposed which include whole-class discussion, co-operative grouping, and pair problem solving (Cobb, Wood and Yackel, 1993). It is linked

to the social constructivist notion that people learn most effectively by constructing knowledge in social settings (Vygotsky, 1962). The use of discussion is fundamental to this notion (National Research Council, 1989), and there is research evidence (for example, NCTM, 1989; Davidson and Lambdin Kroll, 1991; Webb, 1991; Cobb, Wood and Yackel, 1993; Hart, 1993) which has suggested that the appropriate use of discussion improves students' mathematical achievement. Yackel, Cobb and Wood (1993), for example, believe that "collaborative discourse can help children clarify their own understandings by talking... and by reconceptualising their own cognitive structures as they attempt to make sense of their partner's explanations" (p.35). Not only can it enhance learning, discourse can also be useful in enabling the teacher to gain insights into whether the students have inaccurate or incorrect understanding (Wood, Cobb and Yackel, 1993).

Young children are naturally inclined to want to help each other, and this tendency can be capitalised on to encourage pupils to practise new or difficult skills (Behounek, Rosenbaum, Brown and Burcalow, 1988). Pupils can supply background information that others do not have (Hart, 1993). As well as developing skills of co-operation, having the pupils working together for some of the time can free the teacher to devote more quality time to individual or groups of pupils, rather than being needed in many different places at once. Research has shown that these strategies can be used equally as effectively for older learners.

Behounek et al. (1988) reported that co-operative grouping can help pupils to feel more accepted by their peers, and to enhance their self-esteem, as well as increasing the quality and quantity of the time they spend on task. They report that the pupils, too, respond favourably to co-operative activities (p.13):

- Kate: When I have trouble, somebody is always there to help me so that I can get done faster and do a better job on my work.
- Lisa: I like it because I feel like I am sure of what I am doing when we get together and I can ask my team if I am not sure of something.
- Tracey: I like groups because I don't know all the words and others can help me.
- Jamie: If we keep coming up to ask the teacher questions, she won't get done with her work and then she won't be able to do the really fun things with us.

As well as increasing awareness of their own abilities and the development of confidence in them, co-operative learning can encourage pupils to develop respect for their peers' abilities (Martin, 1987).

### **Strategies for implementing co-operative discussion**

Martin (1987) described effective co-operative learning as being much more than just pupils working together in groups: "it involves the gradual development of the social skills needed for students to be able to learn from each other in a positive way....A problem is posed, it is the group's responsibility to solve it and make sure each member understands the solution" (p.28). As well as learning how to solve problems, pupils can learn valuable lessons in learning how to work productively together (Yackel et al., 1993). "The learning opportunities that arise from children's attempts to communicate with each other include those that arise not only as they attempt to resolve conflicts but also as they verbalize their



thoughts in the course of a dialogue and as they attempt to interpret and make sense of their partner's verbalisation" (Yackel, 1993, p.35).

The social skills will have to be deliberately taught (Sutton, 1992).

It is important for teachers to select groups which will be able to work effectively and constructively together, initially in pairs and later, as they become more accustomed to this, in groups of three or four (Behounek et al., 1988). One successful arrangement is to combine high-level thinkers with above-average and average thinkers, and low-level thinkers with average or above-average thinkers (Behounek et al., 1988). It is also important to consider the pupils' personalities and leadership skills when allocating groups. Each group should have at least one member who is capable of explaining the concepts to the others (Sutton, 1992). Behounek et al. (1988) emphasised that two rules should be established, that all members of a group contribute to the welfare of all other members, and that individual success is dependent on group success. To meet these aims, it is important to teach pupils two strategies: how to help another child without giving the answer, and how to work together toward a common goal. They suggest that this can best be done by the teacher modelling the correct behaviour, for example, "If I give Bill the answer, would this be an example of 'helping'?" (p.11). If one group member is unable to understand a topic or find a correct answer, it is the group's responsibility to explain how it should be done.

The social skills of co-operating with others in a group have to be deliberately taught:

- each group needs to have at least one member who can explain the topic to others,
- all members of the group must be responsible for the welfare of every other member,
- the teacher needs to demonstrate how to help another child without just giving the answer,
- students need to be genuinely dependent on each other to be able to complete the task,
- pupils should discuss what they did in the group.

The teacher's role is critical as catalyst and coach, in designing tasks and asking appropriate questions to guide the students' understanding (NCTM, 1989). Behounek et al. (1988) suggested that the following strategies can be useful for teachers who want to introduce co-operative discussion-based activities into their classrooms (p.13):

1. Teachers need to feel confident in their own classroom-management skills, because the responsibility for learning shifts from the teacher to the pupils.
2. Groups should be selected with care, and re-arranged if necessary.
3. It can be useful, particularly in the early stages of using co-operative learning, to break tasks down so that each group member has a specific task to complete. This helps to make group members more accountable to their teams, which is an important component of co-operative learning (Sutton, 1992). For example, pupils can be allocated the roles of

encourager, checker, recorder, reader and time-keeper, and these roles can be rotated for different activities (Martin, 1987).

4. The teacher can move around the room, listening to the group conversations and giving feedback on strategies pupils are using to solve their problems. It can also be useful for the teacher to carry paper and pen to record notes about "significant moments in student and group developments of skills and concepts" (Martin, 1987, p.29).

The teacher has an important, and active, role to play as facilitator. Clopton (1992) stressed the importance of asking careful questions to build confidence. He suggested that asking a student to "Explain to me how you got this far" or "Explain the last couple of steps that you really understood" will help to build confidence and often enables them to resolve the difficulty without the teacher having to tell them what to do. This encourages the pupils to take responsibility for helping themselves. The teacher can encourage the pupils to think by asking questions like:

Tell me about this.

What does this mean?

How did you get that?

What did you think about next?

Can you explain...?

What did you do to get this?

What is the first/next thing you think of?

How did you figure that out?

Why is this step necessary?

Sutton (1992) believes it is important that co-operative activities are structured in such a way as to encourage "positive interdependence", with students being genuinely dependent on each other to be able to complete the task. Martin (1987) suggested the use of a check-list named "What Did I Do In the Group?", which can include such skills as listening, taking turns to speak, encouraging others, asking questions, explaining ideas and checking each others' understanding. She recommends that pupils complete these and discuss them, 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). She also recommended that, particularly in the early stages of introducing a topic, the teacher should impose fairly rigid times for completion of various aspects of the task.

One critical decision is to decide at what stage of the teaching process the use of groupwork is most effective. Martin (1987) reported two models. The first of these was a four-week program based completely on small group work. The other used group work activities for problem solving and concept understanding, followed by individual practice and application of skills. Sutton (1992) reported the use of groups of three to five students for going over homework, reviewing and studying for tests, and groups of two for understanding or reinforcing concepts.

*“By example and precept, in the classroom and the playground, the excellence of intelligent co-operation, of sacrifice for the team, of sympathy for the less gifted, of help...has to be emphasised.”*

Sathya Sai Baba

Some teachers' comments:

I chose to work with a group of children about whom I felt I knew very little. I realised that these children could have ability which was not being shown, so I decided to make a more concentrated effort to provide a variety of experiences and activities, to allow some 'non-performing' children to demonstrate their skills. I also recognised the need to discourage a group of 'noisy' boys from putting down the girls and their contributions. A colleague undertook a similar exercise with an older class. She was surprised that she knew the boys better as being more confident and responsive. She intends to investigate this further by asking a colleague to observe her teach to find out whether her suspicions are true that she is responding more to the boys than to the **girls. (Secondary School Teacher)**

I was concerned about two things. One was the way I could use praise to develop self esteem. The other thing was the way in which I was involved in my pupils' activities. I chose these issues because I had got into the habit of teaching from the front of the room and responding to the students' answers with comments such as "Okay", "Good", "Sensible". I was also concerned that the girls were outnumbered by boys in the class and there was an underlying assumption that the boys were better than the girls, made particularly evident by a vocal group of boys. I consciously placed myself with different pupils in the classroom and moved to groups when asking or answering questions. I deliberately targeted the quieter children to encourage them to participate in group/class discussions. I developed a repertoire of responses to students' answers, including, "Good thinking strategy," or "Can you clarify that response?" I allowed more response time, focused on permitting girls to respond following incorrect answers and followed their answers immediately by further questions. Although I only had two weeks in which to implement these initiatives, I felt sufficiently positive about the change in quality of the students' responses to warrant continuing this approach. (Primary School Teacher)

The teachers who wrote the comments above were asked to recommend ideas which they could try in their classrooms to encourage more understanding of those students who may not feel safe to participate as fully as they should or could be. Recommendations included:

- give continuous encouragement, mainly verbally,
- value everybody's responses and have firm rules about interruptions and 'put downs',
- encourage a balance between co-operative and competitive teaching and learning styles,
- demonstrate an 'expectation' for students to participate,
- encourage group work and peer tutoring, particularly on activity-based and problem-solving tasks,
- allow students sufficient time to complete their work,
- encourage different strategies for approaching and solving problems,

- talk to the non-participants about their reasons for lack of participation - perhaps our perceptions are invalid.

## Conclusion

It has been the intention of this chapter to explain why problem solving, in its many varied forms, is a teaching approach that should be utilised often in order to produce thinking, adaptable pupils. As well as giving some examples of different types of problem activities that can be used across the curriculum, some suggestions have been made about co-operative group problem solving and strategies for creating a 'safe' environment in which pupils feel comfortable to solve problems without feeling threatened or afraid of making mistakes. We still have a great deal to learn about how to teach effectively via problem solving, and there is certainly no one 'right' way of doing this. However, it is important that we try, because only through implementing it and experimenting with it in our contexts can we make good use of this valuable approach.

## References

- Bell, E.T.(1937). *Men of Mathematics* (Touchstone Edition, 1986). New York: Simon & Schuster. ISBN 0-671-62818-6 PBK
- Lovitt, C. & Clarke, D. (1992). *The Mathematics Curriculum and Teaching Program, Professional Development Package, Activity Bank Volume 2*. Victoria, Australia: Curriculum Corporation. ISBN 0 642 53279 6.
- McDonough, A. (1984). 'Fun maths in boxes', in A.Maurer (Ed.). *Conflict in Mathematics Education*, (pp.60-70). Melbourne, Australia: Mathematical Association of Victoria.
- Behounek, K., Rosenbaum, L., Brown, L. & Burcalow, J. (1988). 'Our class has twenty-five teachers'. *Arithmetic Teacher* (December), pp.10-13.
- Clopton, E. (1992). 'Ask questions that build confidence'. *The Mathematics Teacher*, 85 (1), p.30.
- Cobb, P., Wood, T. and Yackel, E. (1991). 'A constructivist approach to second grade mathematics'. In von Glaserfeld, E. (Ed.), *Radical Constructivism in Mathematics Education*, pp. 157-176. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Davidson, N. and Lambdin Kroll, D. (1991). 'An overview of research on cooperative learning related to mathematics'. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 22 (5), 362-265.
- Martin, M. (1987). 'Co-operative Learning in Mathematics Not Just Group Work. Recreating Maths and Science for Girls', *Participation and Equity Program*, Special Programs Branch, Ministry of Education, Melbourne, Australia, 28-29.
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) (1989). *Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics*, Reston, Virginia: NCTM.



Wood, T., Cobb, P., & Yackel, E. (1993). 'The nature of whole-class discussion'. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, Monograph No. 6., 33-54.

Yackel, E., Cobb, P. and Wood, T. (1993). 'Developing a basis for mathematical communication within small groups'. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, Monograph No. 6., 33-54.



## Chapter 13. Conflict Resolution in the Classroom

*“The world yearns for ‘a new way of fighting’, one in which people can be strong without being mean. Conflict is part of life, and we wouldn’t want to eliminate it even if we could. But we urgently need ways to end the violence between diverse groups of people that causes so much unnecessary pain and suffering” (Lantieri, 1995, p.14).*

The increasing prevalence of destructive conflicts in society suggests the need for skills of creative conflict resolution to be taught to children from as early an age as possible (Stevahn and Johnson, 1997), not only for the purpose of preventing destructive behaviours, but also to enable them to learn how to use conflict positively and constructively to improve the quality of their lives (Johnson and Johnson, 1997, Stevahn and Johnson, 1997) and lead them on the road to empowerment (LeBlanc and Lacey, 1998). This is important because “response to conflict itself helps transform individuals from fearful, defensive, or self-centred beings into confident, responsive and caring ones, ultimately transforming society as well” (Bush and Folger, 1994, pp.82-83).

Teachers can help the development of constructive conflict resolution by consciously making use of naturally-arising conflicts as well as deliberately creating controlled situations of conflict as part of the curriculum. These kinds of skills are essential if people are to learn to build caring relationships and function effectively in society (Tyrrell and Schully, 1998).

Much of the literature about conflict resolution has suggested valuable strategies such as peer mediation (Lanteri, 1995; Jones, 1996; Graham and Pulvino, 2000) that are add-ons to the curriculum, or punitive “after the fact” solutions to the problem (Daunic et al., 2001, Woody, 2001). Research has suggested that teaching conflict resolution strategies can be effective (Johnson and Johnson, 1997, Hay et al., 2000) but that it is at its most effective when it is an integral part of the daily activities in the classroom and is dealing with issues that the pupils can relate to personally (Polite and Adams, 1997). This kind of integration enables pupils to ‘overlearn’ conflict-resolution techniques (LeBlanc and Lacey, 1998) so that it becomes more natural for them to transfer these strategies to other contexts. The purpose of this article is to examine some of the literature about conflict resolution and to make some recommendations about how it can be incorporated into teaching programmes rather than making it an “add-on” to the curriculum.

### Positive programming

*Each student must, after intelligent inquiry, decide for his guidance during every occasion which goal is best and which action is best suited to realize it. Both the goal and the action must serve the needs of society and help it to progress.*

Positive mental programming is particularly important for children these days, because so many of them experience much exposure to “secondhand violence” through media that include toys and television (LeBlanc and Lacey, 1998). Jumsai (1997) proposes that, through the five senses, the conscious mind receives and processes information from the environment in order to create awareness and understanding. The subconscious stores the memories of everything that we have experienced, and feeds these memories to the conscious mind to

control the individual's thoughts and actions, and even to colour our perceptions of events that happen around us. He suggests that if a child is constantly exposed to negative programming such as "second-hand violence", it is these stimuli that will be drawn from the subconscious mind and guide the child's response when a situation of conflict arises. Therefore, Jumsai suggests that it is important to ensure that the information that is stored in the various levels of the mind is 'clean', positive and constructive, since its retrieval will have a significant effect on the individual's thoughts and actions.

One way of effecting positive programming is to use the technique of silent sitting and positive visualization. Silent sitting can enable children to relax and unwind for a few minutes. It is often linked to breathing exercises, since there is scientific evidence that when we are stressed, angry or frightened, we take fast, shallow breaths, but that when we take some deep breaths we feel better. It is important for children to be taught how to use their breathing to help to bring about inner peace and happiness. Positive visualization can be incorporated into a silent sitting activity to guide pupils to focus on constructive, healthy thoughts and actions, rather than negative or destructive ones.

Alderman (1996) gives two examples of positive visualisation activities that have been used successfully to guide pupils to programme themselves positively with respect to conflict resolution. Each of these will take only a few minutes of class time, but with repeated practice they can have positive effects. In both cases, the children can first be guided to close their eyes, relax and focus on their breathing for a few moments before the visualization is read to them:

(p.155). Think of a time when you felt angry with someone....Feel the anger....Look carefully at what made you angry....Is it because you wanted something and did not get it?....Is it because there was some injustice involved?....Imagine yourself telling the person gently that you felt angry and why....Or if you think it would be better, just walk away from the situation. Imagine yourself drinking a cool glass of water and the heat of anger leaving you....You feel calmer....You were able to resolve the situation without shouting, insulting or hitting the person. So congratulate yourself on your self-control....You begin to feel more peaceful and happy.

(p.205) Think of a time that you regret because you were violent in thought, word or deed....See yourself doing that action....See the consequences of your action for the other people....And for yourself....Silently say sorry to everyone involved, including yourself, for all the hurt you caused....Feel yourself surrounded with love and forgiveness....Imagine yourself acting differently in this situation, so that no one, including yourself, is hurt....Think of a time when you did something to reduce conflict....or stop something hurtful happening....or imagine something you would like to have done....See yourself doing it....Feel the pleasure of achievement....Imagine good spreading out from your action like ripples in a pond.

## Group activities

*"This is the apathy of education today. It teaches us languages and concepts but it does not teach us how to live in a balanced way with ourselves and others."*

Sathya Sai Baba

It has been argued that conflict is not something to be avoided, but rather that it is a most important catalyst for moral growth, particularly in adolescents (McHenry, 2000). McHenry suggests that emphasis on the value of community and group attachments is an important part of teaching students how to cope with conflicts. Group activities can provide ideal contexts for pupils to learn how to resolve conflicts and respect each other's opinions in a controlled

environment, but it is important that they are actually taught these strategies and that the teacher discusses with them how effectively they are being implemented. Mutual respect and trust is an important component of conflict resolution (LeBlanc and Lacey 1998), so it is important to establish and discuss rules for group situations that can include (Black, 2000):

- not putting down the other person, using sarcasm, disagreeing more often than agreeing, or being defensive;
- not withdrawing (avoiding eye contact, displaying low levels of self-disclosure, or diverting discussion);
- listening and speaking to convey supportiveness, understanding, and expressing warmth or concern;
- agreeing with/acknowledging what is being said, and encouraging the other person.

Sometimes topics can be set that focus directly on conflict resolution, as illustrated in the following activities suggested in *Learning to Live Together in Peace and Harmony*, a UNESCO-APNIEVE Sourcebook, UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 1998):

- Present pictures and articles from newspapers highlighting difficulties for people caused by political/religious conflicts or natural disasters. (Choose material that is as recent as possible and related to events which provoked much argument in your society, and in which many students will be interested.)
- Discuss what the people who live in areas of conflict should do: for instance, by being tolerant of other people's religions or political ideologies, understanding other races' cultures, not invading other people's rights, etc.
- Discuss what people who live in areas beyond the conflict could do, e.g. to reconcile the conflicting nations or races, sending relief goods and volunteers, etc.
- Discuss young people's activities aimed at achieving peace in the world.
- Ask 'why' questions:
  - Why should all countries or people help each other to solve global problems?
  - Why do people set up international co-operative organizations?

Similarly, pupils can be given stimuli for writing activities that will focus on values such as effective conflict resolution:

- Reviewing your life, who are the people you have found yourself in conflict with?
- What issues usually surround your conflicts?
- How did you feel each time you found yourself in conflict with someone? Do you notice a general pattern with regard to the way you feel towards conflict? Fear? Irritation?
- How do you usually handle conflicts - through fight, flight or not facing up to resolving them? Once again, do you notice a general pattern in the way you usually deal with conflicts?
- What accounts for your feelings and/or behaviours toward conflict? What factors in your life influence your response?



- What usually results from the way you handle conflict situations?
- What alternatives might you consider for handling these conflict situations more effectively?

Pupils can reflect on, or share with a partner, any insights and discoveries they have drawn from this activity. Starting points could be:

- Through this activity, I was particularly struck by ...
- I became much more aware of ....
- I once more realize that I....
- It made me happy/disappointed to see that I....
- As a result, I am seriously considering....

In addition to talking directly about conflict resolution, the teacher can set group activities that will deliberately cause conflicts to occur. One way to do this is to be aware of the three types of conflict, as suggested by Palmer (2001), and to create opportunities for:

- Conflict over resources, for example when there is only one computer in the classroom and pupils need to learn how to compromise regarding its use;
- Conflict of needs, for example if one pupil needs to have attention but this makes others feel jealous;
- Conflict of values that occur when a person's beliefs, ideals or goals are challenged.

It is particularly easy to set group tasks that are catalysts for the third of these, that is on topics about which pupils' opinions are likely to be divided, but an astute teacher can also make use of the other types in setting appropriate tasks.

## Roleplay

*When an atomic bomb is exploded thousands of miles away by America or Russia in some far-off country, the fall-out travelling all over the world contaminates the atmosphere, poisons vegetation and distorts life, say the doctors who have to deal with them. The vibrations of hatred and greed, of pride and envy that result from the shouts of discontent or animosity also pollute the air equally seriously.*

Roleplay can develop skills of working co-operatively together and reacting appropriately to different situations. Palmer (2000) suggest that in language classes pupils can be asked to roleplay a scene where, for example, somebody pushes in front in the cafeteria line. After the roleplay, the teacher can ask questions like:

- How did you feel when the person broke in front of you?
- Why do you think the person broke in ahead of you?
- How did you react?
- Did your response cause a conflict?

- Did your action resolve the conflict or escalate it?
- Are there other ways to resolve the conflict?

### Teacher behaviour in handling conflicts

*“Human values cannot be learnt from lectures or text-books. Those who seek to impart values to students must first practise them themselves and set an example.”*

*“The quality of patience is a most important quality. Of all the good qualities a person can have, patience and forbearance rank at the very top.”*

Sathya Sai Baba

As the two quotations above suggest, the teacher has a vital role to play in influencing how pupils react to situations. Whether we like it or not, our pupils do look up to us and base their behaviours on ours. If they see us reacting to conflict in an inappropriate way, they are likely to follow our example, whereas if we engage in appropriate behaviours they are more likely to follow this lead. Palmer (2001) gives three examples of how a teacher can behave in a conflict with a student. In these examples, the conflict has happened because the pupil has said, "I don't want to do this stupid activity." The first way the teacher can respond is by saying, "You're going to do it." This can possibly lead to a stand-off situation, where no satisfactory conclusion is reached by either party. The second way the teacher can react is to say, "Well, maybe it is a stupid activity. I guess you don't have to do it." In this situation, the resolution is not satisfactory because the teacher relents. The third way that the teacher can respond is to say, "You sound upset. Why are you so upset? Tell me more. ...[and after further response from the student] So you think the activity is stupid. What would you need to have happen to feel good about doing it?" In this case the teacher is neither relenting nor creating a stand-off, but instead is modeling an effective way to bring about a resolution to the conflict.

According to Palmer, another important strategy in conflict resolution is effective listening, since conflicts can often arise when somebody hears something other than what was actually said. Teachers can of course help children to improve their listening skills, but they can also do much valuable role-modelling by engaging in active, attentive listening in their own interactions with their students.

### References

Alderman, C. (1996). *Sathya Sai Education in Human Values*. Middx., England: EHV Promotions Ltd.

Black, K. (2000). Gender differences in adolescents' behavior during conflict resolution tasks with best friends. *Adolescence*, 35 (139), 499-512.

Bush, R. & Folger, J. (1994). *The Promise of Mediation*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Daunic, A.; Smith, S; Robinson, T; Landry, K.; & Miller, M. (2000). School-wide conflict resolution and peer mediation programs: experiences in three middle schools. *Intervention in School & Clinic*, 36 (2), 94, 7p

Graham, B. & Pulvino, C. (2000). Multicultural Conflict Resolution: Development, Implementation and Assessment of a Program for Third Graders. *Professional School Counseling*, Feb2000, 3 (3), 172-179.

Hay, I; Bryne, M & Butler, C. (2000). Evaluation of a conflict-resolution and problem-solving programme to enhance adolescents' self-concept. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 28 (1), 101-113.

Johnson, D. & Johnson, R. (1997). The impact of conflict resolution training on middle school students. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 137 (1), 11-21.

Johnson, D.& Johnson, R. (1994). Effects of conflict resolution training on elementary school students. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 134 (6), 803-817.

Jones, S. (1996). Schools try conflict resolution to help students stay... *Christian Science Monitor*, 88 (228), 11-14.

Jumsai Na Ayudhya, A. (1997). *The Five Human Values and Human Excellence*. Bangkok: International Institute of Sathya Sai Education

Lantieri, L. (1995). Peacing our schools back together. *Education Digest*, 60 (8), 14-17.

LeBlanc, P & Lacey, C.. (1998). Conflict resolution. *Journal for a Just & Caring Education*, 4 (2), 224-244.

McHenry, I. Conflict in Schools. (2000). *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82 (3), 223-227.

Palmer, J. (2001). Conflict resolution: strategies for the elementary classroom. *Social Studies*, 92 (2), 65-68.

Polite, V. & Adams, A. (1997). Critical thinking and values clarification through Socratic seminars. *Urban Education*, 32 (2), 256-278.

Stevahn, L.& Johnson, D.(1997). Effects on high school students of conflict resolution training integrated into English literature. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 137 (3), 302-315.

Tyrrell, F.& Schully, T. (1998). Building peaceful schools *Thrust for Educational Leadership*, 28 (2), 30-33.

Woody, D. (2001). A comprehensive school-based conflict-resolution model. *Children & Schools*, 23 (2), 115-123.



## Chapter 14. What Can We Do To Raise Students' Self-Esteem?

*“The place where true teachers and students are gathered should be filled with serene peace and orderliness. On the contrary, we find today that where students gather fear and insecurity prevail.”*

**Sathya Sai Baba**

Recently in Hong Kong there was a sad incident with a primary school boy who was caught viewing pornographic material on the Internet. He was called to the Headmaster's office but rather than facing the disciplinary consequences he went home and committed suicide. In another incident a secondary pupil who was punished for handing in homework late and being late for school by having to sit and work outside the Headmaster's office each day for a week felt so humiliated by his classmates' teasing that he claimed it caused him to become schizophrenic. A friend who is a teacher recently told me about one of her 14-year-old pupils who took an overdose of pills before coming to class in a suicide attempt, not her first. Her reason was that she was lonely and could not see any other way out of it. A twelve-year-old told me that the reason he made no attempt to do any work in class was because, "I won't be able to get any posh job anyway, so what's the point?" In my fairly small home town there has been a recent spate of unemployed youths, with nothing better to do, attacking cars stopped at traffic lights, breaking windows and slashing the tyres. Various acts of bullying, whether physical, mental or emotional, are rampant in schools everywhere (Safe and Caring Schools Project, 1997).

All of these acts seem to point to a common problem – lack of the kind of healthy esteem for self and others that is needed to encourage our youth to become positive about their own lives and their contributions to society (Burke and Nierenberg, 1998). While the job of teachers has traditionally been to convey skills and knowledge, it is becoming an increasingly important challenge for us to help our pupils to acquire a sense of their own self-worth and of the worth of others (Burke and Nierenberg, 1998). It is not an easy challenge, particularly in those education systems where academic achievement is regarded as the priority and intensive curricula allow little time for the development of personal qualities. The purpose of this paper is to share some strategies that can help, without adding anything extra to already-demanding programmes. It includes some quotations from spiritual teachers that challenge us to examine our own teaching practices and the ways in which we interact with our pupils, to make certain that we are not inadvertently and unconsciously engaging in any behaviours that can be damaging to their self-esteem, particularly in cases, as for example with many adolescents, where self-esteem is fragile to start with. Interestingly, there has been some research evidence to suggest that, in taking time to focus on self-esteem, we will most likely also be contributing to enhancing the pupils' achievement, since negative feelings such as concern, fear, frustration, and loneliness have been shown to negatively affect learning as well as behavior (Peterson and Skiba, 2001).



## What contributes to low self-esteem?

*“In the case of children we find the inordinate ambition, aroused by an exaggerated sense of inferiority, acting like a poison in the soul – forever making the child dissatisfied. Such a dissatisfaction is not one which leads to useful activity. It remains fruitless because it is fed by a disproportionate ambition.”*

*Adler (1996), p.49*

Apart from the above-mentioned overt signs of low self-esteem, we need to be aware of some of the more subtle signs. As mentioned above, bullying other pupils is often a sign that the bully’s self-esteem is low (Safe and Caring Schools Project, 1997). But research has also suggested that other behaviours, such as tardiness with handing in papers or assignments, procrastinating on projects and displaying a tendency to attribute difficulties to personality flaws like being lazy, undisciplined or not knowing how to organize time, can all be significantly associated with anxiety, depression and low self-esteem (Senecal and Koestner, 1995). Another telltale sign can be fear of failure (or of blame, rejection, or other anticipated social consequences of failure), characterized either by trying to escape from situations in which their performance will be judged, or setting aspirations for themselves that are so low they can easily fulfil them without effort or so high that they can excuse themselves for failing because it is impossible to fulfil them (Brophy, 1996).

It has been suggested that our society tends to equate achievement with self-worth, which leads to a perception that individuals are only as worthy as their achievements (Scott, 1999). This perception is particularly evident, both explicitly and implicitly, in schools, where students often confuse ability and worth (Renchler, 1992; Scott, 1999), and, as Scott suggests, where there may not be sufficient guidance to help them modify this perception.

## How can the school climate promote student self-esteem?

*“Students today are oblivious to self-support. How, then, can they achieve self-control?”*

**Sathya Sai Baba**

There is much that teachers can contribute to the growth of self-esteem by creating classroom environments that students perceive as caring, supportive and where there is a sense of belonging and everyone being valued (Lumsden, 1994). One way in which this has been achieved has been to give students greater opportunity to become self-supportive, for example by allowing them to choose and control their learning. This can result in greater confidence and self-esteem along with other qualities like higher motivation and greater commitment (Adler et al., 2001). We need to help pupils to have a realistic awareness of their personal strengths and weaknesses and the ability to create reasonable goals (Maitland, 2000). Furthermore, Maitland advocates that encouraging self-monitoring of their success in achieving these goals, rather than relying on the teacher, contributes to the development of positive self-esteem. Self-monitoring and basing instruction and evaluation on outcomes can make it possible for slower students to experience success without having to compete with faster ones; attribution retraining can help apathetic students view failure as a lack of effort rather than a lack of ability; and co-operative learning activities help students realize that

personal effort can contribute to group as well as individual goals (Renchler, 1992)

Peterson and Skiba (2001) have suggested that building self-esteem and a sense of community can be brought about by promoting specific qualities that include:

- Self-respect that derives feelings of worth not only from competence but also from positive behavior toward others;
- Social perspective taking that asks how others think and feel;
- Moral reasoning about the right thing to do;
- Moral values such as kindness, courtesy, trustworthiness, and responsibility.

They suggest that these can be brought about by paying attention to "Six Pillars of Character":

- Trustworthiness. Be honest; don't deceive, cheat, or steal. Be reliable--do what you say you'll do. Have the courage to do the right thing. Build a good reputation. Be loyal--stand by your family, friends, and country.
- Respect. Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule. Be tolerant of differences. Use good manners, not bad language. Be considerate of the feelings of others. Don't threaten, hit, or hurt anyone. Deal peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements.
- Responsibility. Do what you are supposed to do. Persevere; Keep on trying! Always do your best. Use self-control. Be self-disciplined. Think before you act. Consider the consequences. Be accountable for your choices.
- Fairness. Play by the rules. Take turns and share. Be open-minded; listen to others. Don't take advantage of others. Don't blame others carelessly.
- Caring. Be kind. Be compassionate and show you care. Express gratitude. Forgive others. Help people in need.
- Citizenship. Do your share to make your school and community better. Cooperate. Stay informed. Vote. Be a good neighbor. Obey laws and rules. Respect authority. Protect the environment.

Having discussed a few examples of **what** needs to be done, we will now take a look at some strategies for **how** we can achieve some of these needs to promote our pupils' self-esteem. One way is through monitoring what we say and do to them.

### **Appreciating pupils' good qualities**

*“Educators can develop a sense of self-respect and self-esteem among their pupils by respecting them as individuals of unique abilities. As a matter of fact a real teacher always does so. When a real teacher teaches his pupil he makes him feel his uniqueness and the potential of things that he can do after his full development.”*

**Jayaswal (1997), p.63**

Sometimes we underestimate the effect that a teacher can have on a pupil's self esteem. Carson (1996) has described the potential transformative power of a teacher's ability to see

personal worth and academic ability that may often be unrecognized by the students themselves, and she suggests that this can have a life-long impact.

The story on the website <http://www.motivateus.com/stories/ican.htm> is about a third grade teacher who made a great difference to one pupil's self-esteem through a seemingly very small action. Another such story is summarized below:

Sarah was a seven-year-old girl who loved her teacher and always tried her best with her schoolwork. When the headmistress came into the classroom one day and announced that some important visitors would come to the school and that everyone must do their best to make a good impression, Sarah hoped desperately that her artwork would be chosen to display for the visitors. But sadly for Sarah she was always the slowest and always the last to be chosen for anything, so she thought that it was very unlikely that her work would be chosen. So she was incredulous when her teacher asked her to stay behind after school and told her that she had been chosen for the most important task of the day. The following extract from the story speaks for itself:

'She couldn't believe what she'd heard. "Me?" she asked incredulously in a small voice. You've chosen me?'

"Yes, you Sarah," said Miss Ellis, smiling. "You have a very special quality."

A look of such amazement and joy swept over Sarah's face that it was a moment before Miss Ellis went on. "Tomorrow, Sarah, when our important visitors arrive, I want you to be there at the door to greet them. You will be the very first person they see. The very first! And I want you to give them your beautiful smile!"

"First Impressions" by Rosemary Abbeyfield,

Australian Woman's Day, October 25, 1999, p.87.

### **Modeling self-esteem enhancing behaviour**

*"When ridiculing, reprimanding or punishing pupils, teachers must try to picture themselves in their position and discover how they would have reacted to the same, when they were pupils. Self-inquiry of this kind will be very useful."*

**Sathya Sai Baba**

Natural but deliberate modeling by teachers has been shown to be a particularly effective way to bring about character development in students (Scott, 1999). In particular, it is valuable to model perseverance with difficult tasks and the use of failure as a learning experience to move on to new levels of growth (Scott, 1999; Taplin, 2000). Of course in modeling these behaviours we are not only enhancing the pupils' sense of self-worth, but also encouraging them to mirror the same behaviours in their interactions with others.

Silberman (1978) has suggested some positive modeling strategies for bringing about positive self-esteem in children. They include:



- distinguish between the trivial and the important.... Ask children to make their list of important values and to ask the question ‘why does this matter to me?’ – narrow down to the essentials and then have some honest talk about what’s important and what’s not
- be the kind of person you want your children to become
- emphasise your approval whenever possible:
 

‘It is always tempting to transmit values by criticism. “Why is your room so messy? Why are you so careless with money?” Yet we seldom praise our children when their rooms are neat or when they have handled money well. We should, because compliments enable parents and teachers to transmit values by heaping deserved praise instead of inflicting unnecessary guilt.’ (pp.135-136)
- Count how many times in a day you make negative comments:
 

“I never realized how many times a day I made negative comments to the children,” a mother told me, “until I actually began to keep score. I was appalled!” (p. 136).

Webster (1996) suggests some enabling strategies that we can utilize to enhance children’s sense of self-worth. She cautions that there are certain ‘disabling’ things that we should be careful **not** to say because constant repetition of these messages may cause long-term damage that may undermine the child’s sense of well-being now and in the years ahead:

- be careful when and how to give constructive criticism:
 

‘Even constructive criticism can sting when it’s delivered at the wrong moment – for instance, right after a youngster has mucked up a project. That’s when he’s most vulnerable.... Later on...put your effort into discussing the child’s feelings and working together on ways to improve his performance.’ (p.24)
- avoid excessive teasing, particularly about their physical appearance or shortcomings:
 

‘teasing that comes from parents [or teachers] is the most painful teasing of all.’ – and can lead to more negative views of themselves as they grow up (p.24)
- encourage them to express their feelings:
 

‘When we continually deny their feelings, our children get the message that they shouldn’t express them. They begin to think that they’re supposed to keep anger and other emotions to themselves.... If you child expresses acute disappointment or a negative emotion... listen to what she or he has to say, and acknowledge his or her feelings with respect. (p.25)
- don’t be over-effusive with praise:
 

because children will stop believing it and are likely to experience a big letdown when they get into the larger world. Temper praise with honesty. p.25
- express anger without being hurtful:
 

criticize the child’s behaviour instead of the child himself. Don’t say, “You’re such a slob.” Try: “Your room is a mess. You need to pick up the dirty clothes.”(p.26).
- share the child’s enthusiasm about sharing something he has done:



“don’t always put him off with ‘not now’ – a persistent pattern of putting him off can leave a lasting impact.” (p.27).

## Silent sitting

*“He [the child of the future] .... is never lonely because he has found his true self. He knows that happiness means enjoying the things around him, and for that he doesn’t have to possess them; that true joy is to possess the wholeness of things, the wholeness of himself and the wholeness of the universe – a wholeness which, since his babyhood, he has never left.”*

**Medhananda (1996), p.78**

What most of these strategies discussed above have been advocating is helping children to get in touch with their true selves. What an enabling thing it would be if we as teachers can help to bring about this sense of inner strength. One simple technique that can be used on a regular basis to help with this is that of silent sitting and creative visualization (please refer to the chapter *Silent Sitting and Creative Visualisation in the Classroom*). Silent sitting is a tool for silencing the mind's extraneous 'chatter' to improve concentration and problem solving. It refers to encouraging pupils to sit quietly and allow their minds to relax for a few minutes, particularly at the beginning of a lesson, to make them feel more focused and peaceful. Positive visualization can be incorporated into a silent sitting activity to guide pupils to focus on constructive, healthy thoughts and actions, rather than negative or destructive ones. It is an empowering technique that can have immense benefits for all pupils - even those who are initially reluctant to participate in silent sitting sessions begin very quickly to look forward to and even to ask for them. The following visualization is one that can be utilized on a regular basis to enhance their self-esteem by helping them to get in touch with their true selves.

### **Visualisation for getting in touch with your true self (to be used on a daily basis)**

[Begin with a few slow, deep breaths to encourage relaxation.] Take your concentration deep inside your chest. Hidden there is your true self. This is the part of you that knows no fear and is always courageous. It is the part of you that never knows loneliness because it always knows love. It is the part that knows no attachments to external things because it is always complete within itself. Hold your attention on that deep, inner part of yourself and imagine that a beam of light is shining down through the top of your head onto that spot. Continue to allow the beam to pour onto that spot. Watch as the light touches your inner self and allows it to expand, like a flower opening. As the flower unfolds, your inner self grows and grows, larger and stronger, until it fills your whole body and your mind and your emotions with an intense feeling of peace and love. This is the time when you can trust yourself the most, to make the best decisions, and to have your own strength and completeness. Open your eyes slowly in your own time, and appreciate the inner strength you have unlocked.

## Value statements, proverbs and positive affirmations

Student self-esteem can be enhanced by the use of value statements, that is statements of positive characteristics that all teachers and students can accept as desirable goals and that are

prominently displayed in key locations in the school and are sometimes included on stationery, newsletters, and assembly programs (Peterson and Skiba, 2001). This use of value statements can be enhanced by the use of proverbs and/or other positive, inspirational quotations - with regular, frequent exposure it is possible for these to have a 'reprogramming' effect on our thinking, which in turn has positive effects on the way we act. Some examples of esteem-enhancing quotations are shown below.

"Someone once asked me what I want on my epitaph when I pass away. Just the words - 'I tried.' That's what this game of life is all about. Trying. There's the tryers, the criers, and the liars." -- **Mickey Rooney**

"As long as we are persistent in our pursuit of our deepest destiny, we will continue to grow. We cannot choose the day or time when we will fully bloom. It happens in its own time." -- **Denis Waitley**

"Persisting through lesser difficulties builds your capacity to persist through greater difficulties, and achieve even greater things." -- **Brian Tracy**

"The establishment of a clear central purpose or goal in life is the starting point of all success." -- **Brian Tracy**

"Don't dwell on what went wrong. Instead, focus on what to do next. Spend your energies on moving forward toward finding the answer." -- **Denis Waitley**

"The problem is not that there are problems. The problem is expecting otherwise and thinking that having problems is a problem." -- **Theodore Rubin**

"You can do anything in life you set your mind to, provided it is powered by your heart." -- **Doug Firebaugh**

"How different our lives are when we really know what is deeply important to us, and keeping that picture in mind, we manage ourselves each day to be and to do what really matters most." -- **Stephen Covey**

"Every living creature that comes into the world has something allotted him to perform; therefore, he should not stand an idle spectator of what others are doing." -- **Sarah Kirby Trimmer**

"You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself. That is something you have charge of. You don't have charge of the constellations, but you do have charge of whether you read, develop new skills, and take new classes." -- **Jim Rohn**

"The choice is yours. You hold the tiller. You can steer the course you choose in the direction of where you want to be - today, tomorrow, or in a distant time to come." -- **W. Clement Stone**

"Don't go around saying the world owes you a living; the world owes you nothing; it was here first." -- **Mark Twain**

"My philosophy is that not only are you responsible for your life, but doing the best at this

moment puts you in the best place for the next moment." -- **Oprah Winfrey**

"Whatever you believe with emotion becomes reality. You always act in a manner consistent with your innermost beliefs and convictions." -- **Brian Tracy**

"If you believe you can, you probably can. If you believe you won't, you most assuredly won't. Belief is the ignition switch that gets you off the launching pad." -- **Denis Waitley**

"Somehow I can't believe that there are any heights that can't be scaled by a man who knows the secrets of making dreams come true. This special secret - curiosity, confidence, courage, and constancy, and the greatest of all is confidence. When you believe in a thing, believe in it all the way, implicitly and unquestionable." -- **Walt Disney**

"One person with a belief is equal to a force of ninety-nine with only interests." -- **John Stuart Mill**

"People begin to become successful the minute they decide to be." -- **Harvey Mackay**

"Learn how to be happy with what you have while you pursue all that you want." -- **Jim Rohn**

"Happiness comes when you believe in what you are doing, know what you are doing, and love what you are doing." -- **Brian Tracy**

"Happiness is an attitude of mind, born of the simple determination to be happy under all outward circumstances." -- **J. Donald Walters**

"Opportunity often comes disguised in the form of misfortune, or temporary defeat." -- **Napoleon Hill**

"Effective people are not problem-minded; they're opportunity-minded. They feed opportunities and starve problems." -- **Stephen Covey**

"Be more concerned with your character than with your reputation. Your character is what you really are while your reputation is merely what others think you are." -- **John Wooden**

"Character is a quality that embodies many important traits, such as integrity, courage, perseverance, confidence and wisdom. Unlike your fingerprints that you are born with and can't change, character is something that you create within yourself and must take responsibility for changing" -- **Jim Rohn**

The history of the human race is the history of ordinary people who have overcome their fears and accomplished extraordinary things. -- **Brian Tracy**

If I were asked to give what I consider the single most useful bit of advice for all humanity, it would be this: Expect trouble as an inevitable part of life, and when it comes, hold your head high. Look it squarely in the eye, and say, "I will be bigger than you. You cannot defeat me." -- **Ann Landers**

Hard work often leads to success. No work seldom does. -- **Harvey Mackay**

Optimists are right. So are pessimists. It's up to you to choose which you will be. -- **Harvey**



**Mackay**

"I can't do it" never yet accomplished anything. "I will try" has accomplished wonders. -- **George P. Burnham**

"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it". -- **Lou Holtz**

"Any fact facing us is not as important as our attitude toward it, for that determines our success or failure." -- **Norman Vincent Peale**

"Positive thinking will let you do everything better than negative thinking will." -- **Zig Ziglar**

"Don't say, 'If I could, I would.' Say, 'If I can, I will'" -- **Jim Rohn**

"Whether you think you can or think you can't -- you're right." -- **Henry Ford**

"If you look up, there are no limits." -- **Japanese Proverb**

### **Finding inner potential**

***'The first duty of the teacher is to help the student to know himself and to discover what he is capable of doing'***

**The Mother (1996), p.16**

Much that has been written here about strategies for enhancing self-esteem has been concerned with helping pupils to understand their inner potential and how this can be used to make a meaningful contribution (Dowsett, 1996). Everyone has something unique and special about them and it our responsibility as teachers to help them to find and to value what this inner potential is and how it can be used to contribute positively to the student's **own** life, for the **whole** of life, as well as to contribute to society (Dowsett, 1996). To do so is quite a challenge considering the many roles and responsibilities of a teacher, but to help a pupil to develop self-confidence is undoubtedly one of the most valuable gifts we can give.

***"Without self-confidence no achievement is possible. If you have confidence in your strength and skill, you can draw upon the inner springs of courage and raise yourselves to a higher level of joy and peace."***

**Sathya Sai Baba**

### **References**

Adler, A. (1996). 'Goal-forming activity of the child'. In Dowsett, N., Jayaswal, S. & Srinivasan, M. (Eds). Education and the Growing Child. Pondicherry, India: Sri Auribindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences, pp.46-57.



Adler, R., Milne, M. & Stablein, R. (2001). 'Situated Motivation: An Empirical Test in an Accounting Course'. Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences, Vol. 18 Issue 2, pp. 101-114.

Brophy, J. (1996). 'Working with Perfectionist Students'. ERIC Digest.

Burke, R. & Nierenberg, I. (1998). In search of the inspirational in teachers and teaching Journal for a Just & Caring Education, Vol. 4 Issue 3, p. 336-354.

Carson, B. (1996). 'Thirty years of stories: The Professor's place in student memories. Change, Vol. 28 Issue 6, pp. 10-17.

Dowsett, N. (1996). 'Realities of spiritual education'. In Dowsett, N., Jayaswal, S. & Srinivasan, M. (Eds), Dimensions of Spiritual Education. Pondicherry, India: Sri Auribindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences, pp.42-51.

Jayaswal, S. (1996) 'Education of the future'. In Dowsett, N., Jayaswal, S. & Srinivasan, M. (Eds., Education of the Future. Pondicherry, India: Sri Auribindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences, pp. 56-64.

Lumsden, L. (1994). 'Student motivation to learn'. ERIC Digest, Number 92.

Maitland, L. (2000). 'Ideas in practice: Self-regulation and metacognition in the reading lab'. Journal of Developmental Education, Vol. 24 Issue 2, pp. 26-31.

Medhananda (1996), 'The child of the future', In Dowsett, N., Jayaswal, S. & Srinivasan, M. (Eds., Education and the Growing Child. Pondicherry, India: Sri Auribindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences, pp. 77-81.

The Mother (1996). 'Teaching children', In Dowsett, N., Jayaswal, S. & Srinivasan, M. (Eds), Education and the Growing Child. Pondicherry, India: Sri Auribindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences, pp.10-21

Peterson, R. & Skiba, R. (2001). 'Creating school climates that prevent school violence. Social Studies, 92 (4), 167-175.

Renchler, R. (1992). 'School leadership and student motivation'. ERIC Digest, Number 71.

Safe and Caring Schools Project (1997). Bullying – everyone's problem. <http://www.uncg.edu/edu/ericcass/bullying/DOCS/safe1.htm>

Scott, C. (1999). 'Modeling self-esteem: The potential impact of school personnel on students'. Professional School Counseling, Vol. 2 Issue 5, p367-372.

Senecal, C. & Koestner, R. (1995). 'Self-regulation and academic procrastination'. Journal of Social Psychology, 135 (5), 607-619.

Silberman, A. (1978). 'Teach values, not guilt', Reader's Digest, October, 131-136.

Webster, H. (1996). 'Seven things smart parents never say', Reader's Digest, March, 23-27.

Taplin, M. (2000). 'Creating a safe, supportive math classroom'. Published electronically:  
Mrs. Glosser's Math Goodies.  
[http://www.mathgoodies.com/articles/safe\\_math.shtm](http://www.mathgoodies.com/articles/safe_math.shtm)



## Chapter 15. Loving Pupils in Their Unlovable Moments

*Her name was Mrs. Thompson. And as she stood in front of her 5th grade class on the very first day of school, she told the children a lie. Like most teachers, she looked at her students and said that she loved them all the same. But that was impossible, because there in the front row, slumped in his seat, was a little boy named Teddy Stoddard.*

*Mrs. Thompson had watched Teddy the year before and noticed that 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 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.*

Bits & Pieces - June 1995  
Economics Press

It has been well documented (for example Burke and Nierenberg, 1998; Noddings, 1988, 1992, 1995a, and 1995b) that most teachers work very hard and care about their students. Mrs. Thompson was clearly one of these. But despite the fact that we know how important it is for all pupils to be loved, she, like many teachers, found that there are times when it is difficult to love them, either because there is something about the child that we do not like, or because we are feeling stressed in a situation and forget about the love. This raises two questions. The first is, "Can we be successful as teachers if our work is not based on love?" And the second is, "How can we overcome our own personal problems and be able to create a classroom environment in which love is consistently projected to all of our pupils?" The purpose of this article is to suggest some ways in which inspirational teachers have been able to make their pupils feel loved even when it has been difficult for them to do so. First, however, we will look at why it is important to love the students we teach.

### **What is love and why is it important for teachers to project it?**

*"Love perceives a spirit of identity with others, a feeling of oneness. It is the realisation of the brotherhood of man and the kinship of life, arising in one's own heart. It is the concept of not only being loving and kind to others, but of treating them as oneself. Love is not an emotion, but a spontaneous reaction from the heart." (Programme of 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Sathya Sai Education in Human Values, Thailand, 1991, p.20*

Love, which incorporates compassion, consideration, forgiveness, humaneness, interdependence, selflessness, and tolerance, is considered to be the basis of character and encompasses other desirable human qualities: "love in thought is truth, love in feeling is peace, love in understanding is non-violence, and love in action is right action (Sathya Sai Baba). It is for this reason that love is fundamental to Sathya Sai Educare, which is concerned with eliciting from children their latent inner values and their ability to become caring individuals:

*“Educare is education which makes one a caring individual, because one becomes a caring individual when one realizes that one is not different from the other, that both are the same. My brother’s pain, my sister’s sorrow is my sorrow, my pain. When you become aware that there is no difference, you become a caring individual.... The answer lies in our implementing this technology in our lives. Am I able to control my desires? Am I conscious of the inputs of five senses in my mind? Am I able to turn my mind inside? Am I able to experience the power of love within? These are the questions that all of us have to ask.”*

Sathya Sai Baba

The greatest healing power of all is love. The state of unconditional love is a very powerful protector of our own well-being. Creating and maintaining a state of unconditional love, without any expectations from others, is a great physical, mental and spiritual health tonic for ourselves and for others around us as well. If we allow the love to be projected to those around us, we will also be helping them to heal and be purified. Where selfishness or jealousy are allowed to flourish, disease can grow and pain can thrive. The most powerful way to overcome these is to let the love be sincere and without self-interest.

The state of unconditional love is one that will help children to relate better to other children and adults. No matter what others do or say to them, if they are able to maintain this state they will find that they are not as easily able to be hurt or distressed by what is going on around them and, in some instances, may even have the effect of changing the situation simply by sending the right kind of energy to their attackers. It is a significant component of a balanced, harmonised classroom and a value that ought to be instilled in all children from a very early age. As well as teaching children to project the feeling of unconditional love to other people, they can be encouraged to try the exercise with animals, plants and even places. There can never be an over-supply of this positive energy.

Bullough and Baughman (1993) have presented an interesting discussion of the role of 'love' in enhancing the classroom environment, as exemplified by the following comment from an experienced teacher (p.90):

A lot of my success comes from learning how to deal with the students and to treat them the way they need to be treated, positively. I call it loving them along, because that is what works for me. I want to have a loving environment in my classroom where my students can blossom. A second principle is that a classroom should be a warm, fuzzy place like a family, where students feel loved and cared for, but more than a family - a caring community where students feel connected and responsible for one another...

In fact, it has been suggested that this can be one of most important factors in enabling teachers to cope effectively with adolescent pupils (Gordon, 1997). One of the most valuable things a teacher can do to model this value is to interact with colleagues and pupils from heart to heart rather than from head to head. Teachers who consciously practise acting and reacting to their pupils and their colleagues with compassion and acceptance find that their interactions are more positive because they are able to respond to the situations around them with a different attitude and they are able to be more accepting of others' faults and weaknesses. They also find that this is less taxing and less stressful, because they are able to



let go of distressing situations more easily and will not be in as much danger of damage to their own physical and mental well-being.

Opening our hearts to our pupils helps them to become aware of the “ever-present flow of joyous love within themselves and others” (Sathya Sai Baba Central Council of the United States of America, *Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Teachers’ Manual, 1996...* p. 3-A-49). This helps them to:

- Awaken their faith in themselves,
- Trust in the goodness of others,
- Give service to others,
- Desire sincere friendship,
- Recognise others’ needs,
- Desire to relieve others’ suffering
- Love their country,
- Have reverence for all life,
- Love themselves

*You can teach love to students only through love.*

Sathya Sai Baba

### **Some teachers’ stories about the power of love**

Many people have had experiences about situations of potential physical or mental abuse, that have been diffused by projecting the energy of pure, unconditional love towards the potential perpetrator. What an empowering thing it would be if we could use this strategy to help to diffuse children's anger or fear in the classroom, and even more empowering if we could teach the children to use it for themselves in times of potential conflict. As strange as it may seem, both of the following stories are true.

#### ***Coping with a difficult class.***

I was a young student teacher and was assigned to my final practice teaching session in a secondary school with a very bad reputation for students refusing to work and often becoming disruptive in class. I was put in charge of a biology class. The regular class teacher was usually not there, so I was on my own. The kids, particularly the boys, began to play up badly and I was getting more and more frustrated that my lessons weren't working out. The students knew I was frustrated and scared of them, and the more they sensed this, the worse they got. I had a lesson coming up in which the students were going to dissect frogs, and I was really panicking - I was actually scared that somebody would do something stupid with a scalpel and somebody could get hurt. I was really feeling desperate, and just didn't know what to do. In desperation, the evening before the lesson, I called my Mum, who is also a teacher, to ask for her advice. She is a very loving, compassionate person, and she reminded me of what she has been teaching me since I was

a young child, that 'love can move mountains'. She suggested that if I had difficulty 'loving' these students, it could help to imagine that I was surrounding them in a bubble of pink light. Thinking that I had nothing to lose, I decided to try what she suggested. When I went into the class the next day, I took a few minutes to concentrate on building up a feeling of love towards the pupils. Then I 'let it go' - I literally threw the feeling out into the classroom from my heart. The result was unbelievable - for the whole lesson, the pupils were happy and worked co-operatively together. There were no incidents, and the lesson went far more smoothly than I could ever have hoped. I couldn't believe that the effect of 'throwing' the love at them could be so profound - but I have certainly remembered to do it at the beginning of any other lessons I teach!

### Defusing violence

I was working as a social worker in a school when I was called urgently to the Principal's office. I got there to find a particularly angry father. He had been called in because his son had been constantly in trouble and this time it had been necessary to suspend him. The father was furious with his son, and he was also furious with the Principal for making decision that he knew would affect his son's future. It was a very ugly mood and we could not calm the man down. He became angrier and angrier, and physically grabbed hold of the Principal as if he was going to become violent. At that moment I remembered having been taught the strategy of projecting 'love' towards an angry person. I did it and could not believe what happened. The man literally let go of the Principal and dropped his hands to his sides. Of course he was still upset and angry, and we still had to spend a lot of time talking to him, but the use of the strategy had calmed him down enough to turn the potentially violent moment around.

These two stories give very dramatic examples of how projecting love can bring about transformation in people. But the reality is that, like Mrs. Thompson with Teddy Stoddard, even the most aware teachers find that it is not always possible to remember to project love. Sometimes in the heat of the moment we might become angry or simply too busy to think about projecting love. Sometimes if a child is naughty or rebellious it is difficult to love unconditionally – it is much easier to love them if they are clean, tidy and well-behaved than if they are being obnoxious. However, there are many different ways that we can “love” our pupils, even at the difficult times.

### **Generating the feeling of love through regular self-programming**

*Only if there is water in the tank can you get water in the tap. If the tank is dry, how can you draw water from the tap? If you fill the tank of your heart with unconditional love, you can have love towards everyone and receive love from everyone.*

Sathya Sai Baba

One strategy is to programme yourself to project love. The following visualisation can be very effective in programming the subconscious mind. If the subconscious hears the message often enough, it will take control and continue to project the love even when you are not able to consciously think about it.

### ***A visualization for teachers:***

It can be helpful if you can get into the habit of doing this visualization every morning before school, and at least once during the day to retain the momentum that it generates. It only needs to take a few minutes.

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 your pupils.

### **Other ways of giving love**

#### ***Acceptance***

*Quiet acceptance is the best armor against anxiety: not the acceptance of the weak, but the courageous acceptance of the heroic.*

Sathya Sai Baba

If we are able to accept others in spite of their faults and weaknesses, we are able to do much to make them feel loved. The following extracts from Bits and Pieces, (*Economic Press*, June, 1995) illustrate the profound effect that teachers can have on pupils' lives simply by accepting them for what they are rather than putting them down for not meeting our expectations.



*.... his parents said they wanted me to know "what" I had done for their son. They said that after he was in my class he had a really bad year where a teacher constantly put him down. He began writing that he was stupid, he was dumb and that he hated himself. Then one day he went out into their barn with the intention of hanging himself. He thought of me and my faith in him and couldn't do it. His parents then thanked me for their son.*

Pamela Elliott

*Just when I was about to give up because I thought my teaching wasn't even changing or helping even one child, my mind was completely changed. I went to school the next week to begin my placement and one of my first grader's parent came to me and just fell into my arms and cried out, "THANK YOU." She had explained that her child had ADHD (I had already discovered that) and no one had the patience to teach or just love her for who she was. She told me that I made a difference in her daughter's life, just by showing I cared and having patience with her. She wanted to learn when she was with me, but her other teachers constantly condemned her because they couldn't control her. What a compliment, needless to say I am continuing on with my student teaching. Never give up, if you teach from the heart, you may not realize it at that precise moment, but you are making a difference in someone.*

Crystal Anderson

Gordon (1997) has described the importance of a teacher accepting the students' social culture in order to be able to bring out the best in them.

*A student teacher was discussing a particularly complex topic in genetics with a 10th grade ESL (English as a Second Language) class. The students were struggling with the content but were focused intently on the student teacher. She radiated warmth and professionalism, and she used a popular video game as an example to help the students remember the structure of a gene. Everything about her, including her body language, verbal expression, and even eye contact, communicated sensitivity and empathy with her students. They recognized that she understood them; she had encountered the same feelings they were experiencing. The teacher was familiar with their culture, and this familiarity laid the groundwork for mutual respect. Students did not need to act out with her. Additionally, if any disruption occurred, she spotted it immediately and acted accordingly.*

The following summarizes the strategies this student teacher used to ensure that she was in touch with her students' culture, thus facilitating her connection and rapport with students.

1. Expose yourself to adolescent culture. As painful as it may seem, watching MTV, listening to current music, and attending popular movies can help provide a connection to what is current in students' lives. This does not require teachers to participate in the latest fashions. For example, having an eyebrow pierced will not endear an adult to young people and can actually alienate them. Adolescents need to distinguish themselves from the adults who nurture them. Teachers can appreciate adolescent culture without embracing it as their own.



2. Affirm students' "weather." It can be helpful to express an understanding of why students have a high level of energy or are not interested in class on a particular day. For example, the school dance, holiday, a lunch fight, or approaching vacations can all contribute to volatile student weather. Telling students it makes no difference that the prom is the next day is whistling in the wind.
3. Relate content to students' outside interests. Making abstract ideas more concrete by using examples that come from the students' adolescent world can be very effective. For example, in one classroom, the teachers explanation of why an oxygen atom attracts two hydrogen atoms did not seem relevant to Jesse; however, phrasing the concept in terms of the fact that two 7th grade girls were attracted to him hit closer to home.
4. Know your students. The secondary teacher has very little time to talk with students one-on-one, but it is important to find time for individual chitchat. Effective teachers use strategies such as greeting students at the door, referring to a student's interests in their lectures, or talking to students as they monitor classwork. Attending sporting events and school plays, reading the school paper, or being a club advisor are just a few ways teachers can connect with their students' educational and social loops.
5. Share your humanity with your students. Celebrate life with them. Successful teachers are not afraid to show' their strengths and weaknesses to students in the proper context. The classroom is not a therapy group, but teachers can enjoy life along with their students.

## Beauty

One of the ways in which we can be more in touch with loving our pupils in their unlovable moments is to look beyond the exterior and to try to find the inner beauty on the inside. In some of the moments when I have been feeling the most "down" about children's behaviour I have seen some of the most touching glimpses of their inner beauty. Two recent incidents reminded me of this. I was trying to teach a new mathematics game to a class of 10-year-olds but they were over-excited and becoming unruly. So I stopped the game and packed the materials away and said, with a very serious face, that we would have to try another time when they were more settled. Instantly several of them crowded around to apologise and one little girl touched me on the face and said, "Please smile again teacher". I was deeply touched by their genuine concern that they had done something to make me sad. On another occasion we were having a big clean-up of the school grounds. I decided to see what would happen if I didn't ask the children to help, so I started by myself to clean up a gazebo that was full of litter and dried mud. For a while none of the children playing nearby bothered to come to help me and I was starting to feel annoyed with them. Eventually one little girl appeared. She ran off to get a broom, swept the floor for a while, and then ran off again. I was feeling disappointed that she hadn't concentrated on the task for long, when I looked up and saw her, with four classmates, struggling to carry a big bucket of water. With no fuss, they divided the labour and worked at cleaning and scrubbing for the next hour and a half. At one stage somebody appeared with some soap and they washed the floor thoroughly. Eventually we had a team of eight working – when one became tired, she would move to a less strenuous task and one of the others would replace her. Once again I was touched by the industriousness of these little girls who were willing to work so hard to help without having to be asked, and at their resourcefulness in allocating the tasks between themselves. Both of these experiences reminded me that even when I am feeling annoyed with children, if I can be reminded to take a glimpse of their inner beauty – even if it's necessary to dig deeply to find it - I can still feel love for them. Sometimes in times like school assemblies I play a game with myself where I try to focus on one child and to think of one thing that is beautiful

about him/her. Usually after a few minutes something comes into my mind, even if it is a child I don't know very well – and by playing this game I learn to see the unlikeable children in a very different way.

## Brotherliness

*When the behaviour of some one person or some one family disrupts life and breeds fear, faction and fighting in the community.... the forces of brotherhood, mutual help and sympathetic understanding have to overpower the sinister influence of these individuals and promote unity and strength.... Above all, cultivate unity and brotherhood. A single fibre of hemp cannot bind even an ant; thousands rolled into a rope can tame a wild elephant into submission. In unity lies strength and prosperity.*

Sathya Sai Baba

Seeing ourselves as one family or one community can be a very powerful way to help a child to feel loved as long as the child is made to feel like a valued member of the community with the rights but also the responsibilities that come with belonging. Some teachers are able to think of the class as an extension of their own family:

*“The best advice I was given during my teacher training was to love the children and be a model to them....this has led me to treat the pupils I teach as my own biological children.”*

Secondary School Teacher

In this kind of community we can all learn from each other – we can learn from the children just as much as they can learn from us. If we are aware of this concept of unity, or “oneness” we can often recognise that when a child is behaving in an unlovable way, we can see it as a mirror of ourselves and think about what we can learn from him/her. For example, if a child reacts by losing his temper and throwing things around, it can help us to think of ourselves when things go wrong and whether we behave in a similar way – and we can silently thank the child for bringing this lesson to our attention.

## Compassion

*Seeing a person in distress and expressing verbal sympathy is not compassion. Compassion must express itself in action to relieve the suffering. Nor should you adopt an attitude of aloofness of indifference on the plea that each one is suffering for his own folly. Though suffering may be due to one's mistakes – mistakes to which everyone is prone – we should seek to remedy such suffering just as we try to get rid of our own suffering....*

Sathya Sai Baba

Compassion can be defined as deep sympathy for the suffering of another. If we are finding it difficult to feel love for a child, then perhaps it may be easier to tune into the child's inner feelings – the pain, confusion or anxiety that s/he may be feeling because of the situation.

Burke and Nierenberg (1998) describe one teacher's decision to become a primary support person for a child battling against leukemia, visiting her in hospital and at home. The child, as a young adult, reflected that the teacher's support at this very vulnerable time of her life had influenced her profoundly.

Some other teachers have commented:

As a teacher you don't have to be very harsh on pupils. Not all pupils come from good homes. Firstly, if you can see any problem in a child, try to find out what is causing the child to behave in that way.

In terms of compassion, I show it according to the situation. My voice is low, sorrowful and composed. My metamessage is completely compassion. When anything happens, as a role model I must be equal minded.

I use comforting and kind words to people who are stressed.

When I need to correct my pupils or tell them when their behaviour is inappropriate, I try to do it with compassion rather than anger. I also find that this is less taxing and less stressful for me, because I am able to let go of distressing situations more easily and am not be in as much danger of damage to my own physical and mental well-being.

### **Forbearance and tolerance**

*Forbearance is truth, righteousness, right living, Love, non-violence , all virtues rolled into one.*

*Tolerate all kinds of persons and opinions; all attitudes and peculiarities.*

Sathya Sai Baba

Forbearance refers to the discipline of refraining from or overcoming anger and other harmful emotions. If we are frequently upsetting our own equilibrium by getting angry or frustrated at certain situations, we are wasting a lot of time and a lot of our own energy. If we can stay in a balanced frame we will probably be surprised to find how much more energy we have to complete our day's tasks, and at how much extra time we are able to create for ourselves.

In the opening story about Mrs. Thompson and Teddy Stoddard, Mrs. Thompson found it very difficult to love Teddy because he was dirty and badly behaved. However, she later found out that his troubles had started when his mother had become ill and then died. Having learned this, Mrs. Thompson became more tolerant of Teddy's shortcomings. The outcome of the story was that she formed a special bond with him that inspired him to succeed with the rest of his education and to become a successful and responsible adult who never forgot this special gift his third-grade teacher had given him.



## Forgiveness

*Self gets and forgets: Love gives and forgives.... Love can never entertain the idea of revenge.... When some other person insults you or inflicts pain, allow wisdom to have mastery over you. Discover the truth and do not rush to conclusions....*

*Forget the harm that anyone has done to you and forget the good that you have done to others.*

Sathya Sai Baba

One of the most powerful ways to love others is by forgiving them for anything they have done wrong to you. Certainly there are times when a teacher needs to be firm and to give punishment. However, once the incident is over it is important for us to forgive the child and give him/her another chance. If a child must be punished always do it with love. A school principal told the story of a girl who was caught cheating in an examination. She had written some definitions on a piece of paper. When the principal looked into the reason for cheating, she discovered that the child was having so much difficulty with English (not her native language, but the language of the exam) that she could not understand the important terms needed for the exam. Of course the principal had to punish her by deducting marks. But she then forgave the girl, told her that everyone is entitled to a second chance after making a mistake, and arranged for her to have extra English tuition so she could catch up with the rest of the class. Much later, after she had left the school, the girl wrote to the principal to tell her how important that second chance had been, and how the forgiveness had touched her conscience in a way that punishment in anger could not have done.

## Giving, selflessness and service

*Give with humility. Give in reverence. Give in plenty. Give with modesty. Give as to a friend. Give without any thought of reward.*

*Develop the love that asks for no return*

Sathya Sai Baba

Burke and Nierenberg (1998) recount several young adults' accounts of teachers who had shown love to them by giving selflessly. One was the teacher who was remembered by his former student as a teacher who, "Said 'Hi' to everyone, eyes lit up when past students came to visit, drove past my house every morning at 7:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m, ate doughnuts every Thursday and would sneak me one, came to every sporting event if at all possible". Any of these is a small action within itself, but it is these small acts of giving that make the students feel they are special and cared for. We might not think that our pupils notice these small things, but they very often do.



## Trust and respect

*One should respect all others as one's own kin.*

Sathya Sai Baba

One of the greatest gifts of love we can give our pupils is to show them we trust them and that they can trust us not to ridicule them or break their confidences. The following anecdotes (Burke and Nierenberg, 1998) illustrate the impact of teachers who were able to build this kind of trust.

*Dr. J. was probably 70 years old when he decided to retire. I was very bashful until that year. I hated to read out loud in class and he knew it. He knew it because I told him. His response to me was, "If you don't practice reading out loud, how are you going to get better?" He then proceeded to call on me at least once a week. Not only to read, but to answer questions. I hated him! I was only a freshman and felt that he was picking on me. One day he decided to make reading out loud more fun for me, so he put me into a group of four other people and gave us 20 minutes to read over a play. As we started to practice he called me over and said, "Rikki, this is your time to shine!" I couldn't let him down, so I practiced harder than anyone else. My entire group and I got up in front of the class and put so much emotion into our play. I had fun! The class couldn't believe it and neither could I. I didn't stumble; my face still got red, but I smiled. This is the one time that I can remember feeling good about reading and having a better self-esteem.... I will never forget him. I think about him weekly. Now I smile when I think about everything he did for me.*

*When I was in third grade I was a "tomboy." I got ridiculed sometimes, but she taught me to look beyond remarks from other people. She brought out things in me that I never thought I had. One time we studied theatre. We got into everything from dancing, which was her specialty, to mime work. She needed someone to be "the mime." Nobody wanted to do it because it was so outrageous. So she nominated me. I thought my life was over. But, she really boosted my ego and told me that I could do it, without a doubt. When it came time for me to go on stage, the other children loved it. It really helped me. . . . She always had a huge smile on her face. Her energy was nonstop. I loved her and I still do.*

In both of these incidents, the students recognised that the teachers trusted them to do the job well and in turn they placed their trust in the teachers and strived to do their best. In both cases the teachers knew about the student's weaknesses (fear of reading aloud and being a tomboy) but did not use this knowledge to put the students down in any way, and this helped to build the relationship of trust. Traditionally we have learned to expect that students will automatically respect their teachers but this is no longer the case. Even for teachers it is necessary to earn respect and one of the most powerful ways of doing this is by first showing respect to the students:

*Mrs. Z. treated us like adults. She respected us and for that we respected her. She treated us as team members on her team, she treated us like her friends, and she also treated us like her own children. She was funny. Mrs. Z. laughed with us and enjoyed making us laugh. She was stern in her rules, yet unconditional in her support.... She taught us that every child has his or her bad days-, however, every child is still good inside. She loved even the worst of us. She always made time to laugh or to say something positive and nice.*

### **“Giving that ‘healing touch’ so much required in today’s world.”**

The above is a quotation from a teacher who was very much aware of the need to give healing to our pupils through love. We don’t only have to project love from our hearts – if we don’t feel able to do that for some reason, we can just as effectively project it from our eyes or our hands. If a child is restless I will sometimes think about drawing in blue energy from the universal supply around us and allowing it to flow through my body and out of my hand into the child to calm him down. Usually I can notice a change after a few minutes. (This can work just as well without actually touching the child if you are in a school system where touching is prohibited.) Similarly, blue energy can help to cool down a child who is angry. If the child seems sad, sending pink energy through my hands helps her to feel loved. The most effective of all is to send them pure white energy because this can have the effect of calming, settling, healing and loving all at once.

### **Conclusion**

The teachers’ stories and anecdotes have given some examples of ways in which we can project love to students even in their “unlovable” moments or when other emotions get in the way of our ability to feel loving. While we can sometimes see immediate effects from using these techniques, sometimes, as several of these anecdotes suggest, we might not see any effects and the pupils themselves might not even be aware of the effects until much later in their lives.

*Once upon a time there was an island where all the feelings lived; Happiness, Sadness, Knowledge, and all the others..... including Love. One day it was announced to all of the feelings that the island was going to sink to the bottom of the ocean. So all the feelings prepared their boats to leave. Love was the only one that stayed. She wanted to preserve the island paradise until the last possible moment. When the island was almost totally under, Love decided it was time to leave. She began looking for someone to ask for help. Just then Richness was passing by in a grand boat.*

*Love asked, "Richness, Can I come with you on your boat?" Richness answered, " I'm sorry, but there is a lot of silver and gold on my boat and there would be no room for you anywhere." Then Love decided to ask Vanity for help who was passing in a beautiful vessel. Love cried out, "Vanity, help me please." " I can't help you", Vanity said, "You are all wet and will damage my beautiful boat." Next, Love saw Sadness passing by. Love said, "Sadness, please let me go with you." Sadness answered, "Love ,I'm sorry, but, I just need to be alone now." Then, Love saw Happiness. Love cried out, " Happiness, please take me with you." But Happiness was so overjoyed that he didn't hear Love calling to him. Love began to cry. Then, she heard a voice say, "Come Love, I will take you with me." It was an elder. Love felt so blessed and overjoyed that she forgot to ask the elder*

his name. When they arrived on land the elder went on his way. Love realized how much she owed the elder. Love then found Knowledge and asked, "Who was it that helped me?" "It was Time", Knowledge answered. "But why did Time help me when no one else would?", Love asked. Knowledge smiled and with deep wisdom and sincerity, answered, "Because only Time is capable of understanding how great Love is."

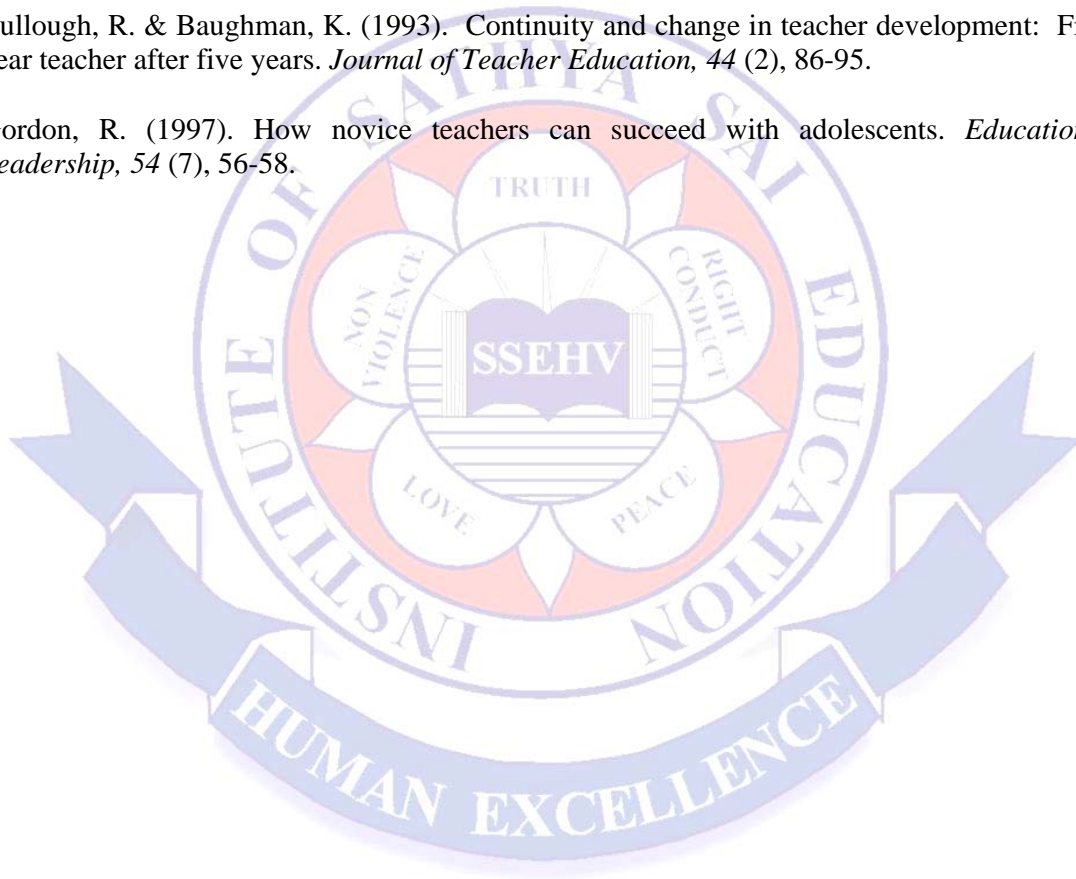
Source unknown

## References

Burke,R. & Nierenberg, I. (1998). In search of the inspirational in teachers and teaching Journal for a Just & Caring Education, Vol. 4 Issue 3, p. 336-354.

Bullough, R. & Baughman, K. (1993). Continuity and change in teacher development: First year teacher after five years. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 44 (2), 86-95.

Gordon, R. (1997). How novice teachers can succeed with adolescents. *Educational Leadership*, 54 (7), 56-58.



**Creating a Culture of “I Can” through Sathya Sai EHV**  
Margaret Taplin, Institute of Sathya Sai Education of Hong Kong and Anita Devi, UK



School climate has been defined as “the feelings that students and staff have about the school environment over a period of time... We would hypothesize that comfortable and supportive feelings would support effective and efficient learning and teaching as well as positive student behavior and attitudes” (Peterson and Skiba, 2001). How to create, maintain and evaluate a climate that encourages the growth of a comfortable, mutually supportive community based on fairness, caring, cooperative relationships and mutual respect has been the subject of research and discussion for decades.

In 1998 Hay McBer (part of the HayGroup in the UK) undertook research into how highly effective headteachers achieve standards. In 1999 a similar framework was used to explore the factors contributing to highly effective teaching. The aim was to create a vivid description of teacher effectiveness, based on evidence of what teachers do in practice at different stages of the profession. A number of complementary research methods were used including classroom observation, in depth interviews with teachers and pupils, questionnaires, focus groups and the collection of personal and school data. Nearly 1500 teachers were involved in the research and the investigation provided practitioners the opportunity to define excellence.

The Hay McBer research found three measurable factors that significantly influence value-added measures of pupil progress: teaching skills, professional characteristics and classroom climate. The research also found that aspects such as age, educational background, qualifications and teaching experience of an individual teacher are not predictors of how effective a teacher will be in the classroom.

In summary, it was found that:

- Classroom climate, reliability and consistency can be measured
- There was a proven correlation between a teacher’s actions and attributes (characteristics) and climate
- The teacher and pupil’s perceptions of classroom climate can be quite different.
- Outstanding teachers create an excellent classroom climate and they are in tune with pupils’ expectations and perceptions.

Classroom climate was further defined by nine dimensions:

1. **Order** – discipline and structure in the classroom
2. **Participation** – pupil involvement and influence in running the class
3. **Standards** – expectations of achievement and encouragement to improve
4. **Clarity** – the transparency and explicit relevance of what goes on in the class
5. **Support** – encouragement to try new things and learn from mistakes
6. **Fairness** – justice and equality in the classroom
7. **Safety** – absence of threat or fear
8. **Interest** – stimulation and fascination in class
9. **Environment** – the comfort and attractiveness of the physical environment.

Models such as the Hay McBer one provide a useful framework for creating effective



classroom environments. In this article we would like to build onto this framework by suggesting some examples of what effective teachers actually **say** and **do** to create the kind of environment described by the Hay McBer research. To do this, it is necessary to have a framework for appropriate **vocabulary** and **concepts** that can be drawn upon in deciding upon appropriate words and actions. In previous articles we have referred to the Sathya Sai Model of Values Education (SSEHV), a secular programme based on a matrix of five universal human values that correspond to the five domains of the human personality, as summarised in the figure below.

<b>Value</b>	<b>Domain of Student's Personality</b>	<b>For Example:</b>
<b>Truth:</b>	<b>Cognitive</b> (knowing and understanding)	accuracy, curiosity, discrimination, honesty, human understanding, integrity, self-reflection, sincerity
<b>Right Action:</b>	<b>Physical</b> (engaging in action)	courage, decision-making, dependability, determination, efficiency, endurance, healthy living, independence, initiative, perseverance, responsibility, time management
<b>Peace:</b>	<b>Emotional</b> (inner vision)	calmness, concentration, contentment, equanimity, optimism, self-acceptance, self-discipline, self-esteem
<b>Love:</b>	<b>Psyche</b> (intuition)	compassion, consideration, forgiveness, humaneness, interdependence, selflessness, tolerance.
<b>Non-violence:</b>	<b>Spiritual</b> (being in harmony with humanity and nature)	benevolence, co-operation, concern for ecological balance, respect for diversity, respect for life, respect for property.

There is nothing new or unique about the values that are the basis of the SSEHV programme – they are universal, ageless and inherent in most traditional cultures – and the five teaching methodologies were also used in most traditional cultures to teach the laws of holistic well-being to successive generations. It is only with the advent of formal education systems that these were overlooked for a time, although in recent years they have again begun to receive attention in school systems. What the SSEHV model does provide, however, is a framework for teaching the vocabulary and concepts of these values that emulates the frameworks that were used traditionally. It also ensures that these values and subvalues cover all dimensions of the holistic development of a child: cognitive, physical, emotional, intuitive and spiritual. Daily or weekly specific values education lessons are used to teach children the **vocabulary**. For example, in teaching the meaning of **perseverance** they will read stories about real and imaginary characters who persevered against difficulties, study quotations and proverbs about perseverance, sing inspiring songs and do group activities designed to put this value into

practice. But once the value has been defined in this way, it is only through teachers carefully and consistently modelling the values, encouraging pupils to model them, and utilising every opportunity to elicit the values from the formal curriculum, that the **concept** can be internalised.

We believe that the SSEHV model, through its emphasis on the vocabulary and concepts of character development, has great potential to contribute to the quality of the school climate. The figure below illustrates some examples of how the SSEHV vocabulary and concepts can be utilised to bring out the dimensions of classroom climate proposed by the Hay McBer research.

<b>Characteristics of an effective classroom environment (Hay McBer)</b>	<b>Some examples of vocabulary and concepts to develop (SSEHV)</b>
<p>1. <b>Order</b> – discipline and structure in the classroom</p>	<p><b>Truth:</b> self-reflection, sincerity  <b>Right Action:</b> dependability, independence, initiative, time management  <b>Peace:</b> concentration, self-discipline  <b>Love:</b> consideration, interdependence, selflessness, tolerance.  <b>Non-violence:</b> co-operation, respect for diversity, respect for property</p>
<p>2. <b>Participation</b> – pupil involvement and influence in running the class</p>	<p><b>Truth:</b> human understanding, integrity, self-reflection  <b>Right Action:</b> decision-making, dependability, efficiency, independence, initiative, perseverance, responsibility  <b>Peace:</b> equanimity, self-acceptance, self-discipline, self-esteem  <b>Love:</b> consideration, humaneness, interdependence, selflessness, tolerance.  <b>Non-violence:</b> co-operation, respect for diversity</p>
<p>3. <b>Standards</b> – expectations of achievement and encouragement to improve</p>	<p><b>Truth:</b> accuracy, integrity, self-reflection, sincerity  <b>Right Action:</b> determination, perseverance  <b>Peace:</b> optimism, self-acceptance, self-discipline, self-esteem  <b>Love:</b> compassion, consideration, forgiveness  <b>Non-violence:</b> co-operation, respect for diversity</p>

<p>4. <b>Clarity</b> – the transparency and explicit relevance of what goes on in the class</p>	<p><b>Truth:</b> accuracy, honesty, self-reflection  <b>Right Action:</b> efficiency  <b>Peace:</b> concentration  <b>Love:</b>  <b>Non-violence:</b></p>
<p>5. <b>Support</b> – encouragement to try new things and learn from mistakes</p>	<p><b>Truth:</b> accuracy, honesty, self-reflection  <b>Right Action:</b> courage, determination, endurance, efficiency, perseverance  <b>Peace:</b> calmness, concentration, optimism, self-acceptance, self-esteem  <b>Love:</b> consideration, forgiveness (of self), interdependence  <b>Non-violence:</b></p>
<p>6. <b>Fairness</b> – justice and equality in the classroom</p>	<p><b>Truth:</b> discrimination, human understanding, integrity, self-reflection, sincerity  <b>Right Action:</b> dependability, efficiency  <b>Peace:</b> equanimity, calmness  <b>Love:</b> compassion, consideration, forgiveness, interdependence, selflessness, tolerance  <b>Non-violence:</b> respect for diversity, respect for life, respect for property</p>
<p>7. <b>Safety</b> – absence of threat or fear</p>	<p><b>Truth:</b> human understanding, integrity  <b>Right Action:</b> courage, dependability, healthy living, independence  <b>Peace:</b> calmness, contentment, equanimity  <b>Love:</b> compassion, consideration, humaneness, interdependence, selflessness, tolerance  <b>Non-violence:</b> respect for life, respect for property</p>
<p>8. <b>Environment</b> – the comfort and attractiveness of the physical environment</p>	<p><b>Truth:</b>  <b>Right Action:</b> healthy living, responsibility  <b>Peace:</b> calmness, concentration, co-operation  <b>Love:</b> consideration  <b>Non-violence:</b> respect for property</p>
<p>9. <b>Interest</b> – stimulation and fascination</p>	<p><b>Truth:</b> curiosity, discrimination, human</p>

in class	understanding <b>Right Action:</b> decision-making <b>Peace:</b> contentment, optimism, self-esteem <b>Love:</b> interdependence <b>Non-violence:</b> co-operation
----------	--

Below we have collected some samples of teachers' words and actions that utilise the vocabulary of the SSEHV model to internalise concepts that are conducive to an effective classroom environment. As well as basing these on our recent observations of effective teachers, we have also included some currently popular classroom activities. One of these is the 'I Can' Model which places positive emphasis on raising children's awareness of what they can do rather than on what they cannot, and helping them to realise they have the capacity to do and be whatever they aspire to. In particular we have attempted to illustrate ways in which effective teachers can model values education vocabulary and concepts to emphasise the "I Can" aspect of an effective classroom environment. (Please note that some of the ideas mentioned below were given to one of the authors during an inservice professional development programme and the sources were not available. We therefore apologise for any materials not properly referenced in the following section.)

## Order

- The teacher speaks to the pupils with respect, even when they are off-task: 'John and James, **concentrate** on the task, please.'
- Some children appeared to be off-task and fidgeting, but were still tuned in and able to join in with the discussion if they had an opinion. The teacher reminded them, 'For this work you need to be **listening to and respecting** others' ideas.'
- She encourages children to **respect** each others' thinking, for example when James was not paying attention: 'James, Chantal is saying .... Do you agree?'
- The students are allowed to move around the classroom all at once, for example to put their books on the teacher's desk, and have developed ability to do this in an orderly way. However, when she wants them to be quiet she asks them to stay in their seats and read or work quietly while waiting for her attention: 'Because Mrs. X's class nextdoor is reading we need to show some **consideration** for them, so I'd like this to be a quiet time.'
- Gives appearance of having endless patience – waits for everyone's attention
- Emphasises importance of time management: to Ricky [who had not completed his work]: 'I suggest you haven't been **using your time as efficiently as you could have** been'

## Participation

- The teacher focused more on the discussion and children's responses and keeping the discussion moving rather than focusing on behaviour management, ie the class had some leeway to be relaxed. She encouraged them to listen to each other: 'Put your hand up if you understand what Aaron is saying. Keep it up if you agree with him.'



- In a mathematics lesson about estimation of the length of the basketball court, the teacher asked the class to make judgements about the estimates that were made. She made effective uses of the strategies the children suggested to encourage them to **understand others' ideas**: 'Did you understand what he's saying?' She was not making any comments about 'right' or 'wrong' but let the children **make decisions** whether they agreed or disagreed with each other. She waited for the children to suggest that they go and look at the basketball court, then asked, 'Do you want to go and have a look at it?' This was a routine, teacher-directed lesson but the children still had ownership of what they were doing so were engaged effectively with the task: 'We now have five different suggestions. What are we going to do? The children **decided** to have a vote. **Does anyone want to** make any final comments before we vote?... **Does anyone agree or disagree strongly** with this comment? [in response to a child who questioned one of the choices] 'Why might it not be?'
- The children were encouraged to reach a consensus: 'As a class group, because it's everyone's daily Physical Education [offered as a reward for getting an accurate answer] **we all have to be happy with the decision** – any further discussion? **As a group do you want to have another vote** [between the final two estimates] to see if you agree? **'Think independently.** Don't look at what anyone else is doing.'
- The pupils are constantly involved in the decision making: 'You're looking restless. You have **two choices** – do daily Physical Education and do the run, or not have daily Physical Education and start the video [a social education video about a topic in which they were particularly immersed]. **When you make the decision you need to think about** how you are feeling and whether you can sit for another half hour.'
- The teacher set a '**self-management**' challenge, telling the class that she was not going to nag anyone today but anyone seen distracting others would lose 5 minutes of recess and anyone losing 15 minutes would not be able to see a performance scheduled after recess.
- She is constantly reminding the students of their **responsibilities** and the **consequences** of not meeting them: "We have to **live with the consequences** of our decisions – and learn from positive as well as negative comments."
- Marbles in the Bottle (source unknown): This type of incentive scheme works on the whole class principle. Examples of good behaviour are rewarded by marbles in the bottle. Once the bottle is full, the whole class is given extra "Golden Time" or the opportunity to do a specific activity of their choice.
- Social Stories(source unknown): A social story is a short story that describes a situation or skill in terms of relevant social cues, common responses and expected behaviours. "The goal is to teach **social understanding** over rote compliance, to describe more than to direct." (taken from "Social Stories" materials)

*Social stories consist of three types of sentences:*

- a) *Descriptive – where the situation occurs, who is involved, what they are doing*
- b) *Perspectives – how a person may be thinking? Feeling/their mood.*
- c) *Directive – positively stated, statements of desired response – eg. I can try, I will try*

**Example 1:** *To encourage quiet reading time (taken from "Social Stories" materials)*

Descriptive:

*Most days we read in class.*

*We practise our silent reading by 'reading in our heads or quietly to ourselves*

Perspective:

*Sometimes I read out loud and other children on my table can hear my voice.*

*This disturbs the others in my class and they find it hard to read their own books.*

Directive:

*When we have reading time I will work on using silent whispers, so that only I know what I am reading.*

*Mr. Shearman will be happy with me and all the other children will enjoy their own books.*

**Example 2:** *To promote listening (taken from "Social Stories" materials, source unknown)*

*When I'm in class I know that Mr. Shearman is in charge.*

*Mr. Shearman makes the rules for the classroom and makes sure that all the children obey the classroom rules.*

*That's why when Mr. Shearman talks, I will work on stopping what I am doing and listen right away.*

*Sometimes, Mr. Shearman's voice says, "Year 4, can you stop your work and listen to me."*

*When Mr. Shearman says something, he likes us to stop working and listen to him.*

*Mr. Shearman knows when I am listening because I'll look and face him. He will be happy with me. When I listen, I can learn a lot from the teachers and I will know what is going to happen next in class.*

*We suggest that the social story is taken one step further and the pupils are asked to name the specific values that are related to the directive sentence, for example **consideration** or **selflessness**.*

## Standards

- The teacher stated her expectations clearly and explicitly before the children began the task: 'This has to be **accurate** and published. So if you make mistakes please expect that I will give it back to you to be re-done.'
- Recording can be used to encourage **self-reflection**: 'Write down... so I know that you know what ... means.'
- The teacher made a lot of use of positive reinforcement, for example praising children who settled to work quickly or who remained focused on task, and constantly reminding them of the **importance of doing their best**.
- During a story-telling session, this teacher reminded the class, 'Don't think these are just stories. They are morals that we need to **reflect** about and think how we can practise these in our daily lives...should always be on the right track
- Donna, the teacher featured in the story 'Rest In Peace: The I Can't Funeral', taken from *Chicken Soup for the Soul* by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen (see Appendix), demonstrated a creative way in which children can be encouraged to develop **optimism, determination** and **perseverance** by putting to rest their thoughts of "I can't".
- The children were completing their student self-assessment forms. The teacher reminded them that it includes personal and social awareness, 'How you get along with people, how you handle criticism, etc. Has my behaviour changed? How do I handle situations? Have I improved in any areas? Likes and dislikes are good things

to think about.... If you still dislike computers it might be because you still haven't developed your skills fully.'

- A school Mission Statement:

“To go further than I thought,  
To run faster than I hoped,  
To reach higher than I dreamed,  
To become the person I need to be.”

(Underlying values – **courage, hope, confidence, perseverance, integrity**)

## Clarity

- In a story-telling lesson, this teacher used questioning to focus the pupils' attention on the desirable qualities of the characters: 'What kind of qualities do we see in this story?... **What does this mean for us in our daily lives and our own examples?**' 'How many of you would like to be like [the person who is rich and powerful but lacking positive characteristics]? How many would like to be like [the simple, compassionate character]?'
  - Many teachers who have effective "I Can" classroom environments encourage meta-cognition (i.e. thinking about thinking) at the end of each day or session to reflect on what has gone on in the class. For example: (source unknown):
    - a) *What did you notice about your **thinking**, your **concentration** or your learning today?*
    - b) *What will you do next time to make your learning better? [**self-reflection**]*
    - c) *How did your understanding change from the beginning of the lesson to the end of the lesson?*
    - d) *Turn and talk to your partner and **agree on three important ideas** from today's sequence, then record them.*
    - e) *Outline how you would teach your understandings to someone*
    - f) *Rate your understanding of today's focus 4 3 2 1 and give evidence*
    - g) *What did you add to your understanding as a result of today's lesson?*
    - h) *What changes/improvements would you make?*

## Support

- The teacher makes eye contact and genuinely listens to the children. When she smiles it is 'heart to heart' and sincere.
- [to child being disruptive]: 'Aaron, are you OK? Do you understand what you have to do?'
- Even if a child gives a silly answer, the teacher takes it seriously and discusses it: 'We need to listen to and **respect** everyone's ideas'.
- The children were completing their self-assessment, as part of their school reports for the term. The teacher encouraged them to be positive about their self assessments: 'You've been a bit negative. **What about the positive things?**' She was very conscious of raising the children's self-esteem, for example, 'What about maths? Do you think you're good at maths? I do [and again as she walked away]...Don't forget to **write something positive** about maths'. She spoke openly and frankly to individuals



about their strengths and weaknesses, especially if she thought they had been too hard on themselves: 'I reckon your literacy's higher [than the child's self rating].

- She always gives full attention to the child receiving individual attention, so that each child gets at least a few minutes of top quality one-to-one time.
- When editing children's work she makes comments like 'I'd put a comma there' rather than being more blunt [e.g. 'you should...']
- When a pupil achieves something, no matter how small, this teacher reflects genuine pleasure with the achievement. She makes small signs while listening to students, such as nodding or smiling. These all send messages to the pupils that they are **accepted** and **esteemed** by their teacher.
- Concerned because some of the class appeared to be carrying over last week's problems instead of making a fresh start, the teacher talked about how they can utilise their weekends to let go and regenerate.
- Bubble Time (source unknown) Children feel safe, when they know there is someone to talk to, someone who will listen. Bubble Time encourages the enhancement of teacher-pupil relationship through one-to-one listening. A clipboard is kept in the classroom and when the child feels a need to discuss something s/he peg his/her name to the board. At the first opportune moment, the teacher announces "Bubble Time" – this is an indication to other children not to disturb the teacher and pupil during their discussion. Again this activity conveys the message that the pupils is **accepted** and **esteemed** by the teacher and worthy of undivided attention, even if for a short time.
- A reminder to pupils that if they believe in themselves they can achieve: 'When you **have faith in yourself...**'

#### **Fairness** – justice and equality in the classroom

- The teacher expects everyone's feelings to be acknowledged and respected equally, including her own. She encourages the children to use "I feel" statements and models this even when disciplining them. When some members of the class had vandalised some school property, she used the "I feel" approach to encourage them to show **respect for others'** feelings and **respect for property**, by talking at length about, "How we feel as teachers about these issues..." On another occasion, she had to ask a child to leave the room because he was disrupting others. Again she used the "I feel" approach: "I'm asking you to leave the room because I feel ...." To a child repeatedly not paying attention she said, "I am really feeling frustrated. You're going to have to **co-operate** with me.'
- Some children had been on school premises before 8.35 a.m., which they were not supposed to do, and had disrupted some of the teachers in their preparation work. In speaking to the whole class about this 'It was very immature and **inconsiderate**. Remember that some people are working, so please show **respect** for their need to do that. It put me in a bad mood...'

#### **Safety** – absence of threat or fear

- The teacher speaks with respect to the class at all time, for example when giving directions: 'I would like you to....'



- When a child complained to his teacher that another child had been harassing him in the playground, she took his complaint seriously and promised to act upon it because, “**You have a right** to feel safe in the playground”.
- In a class debate the teacher urged the confident pupils to encourage others in the group to be the speakers to support each other: “Give our **moral support** and **respect** to each other”
- Many teachers have introduced their pupils to the expression ‘put downs’, that is a negative comment that makes the other child feel inadequate. They are trained to understand that we avoid using ‘put downs’ out of **consideration** and **respect** for the other person. Frequently these teachers will remind the pupils not to use ‘put downs’ and if one is heard, it is pointed out to the pupil who has made the comment that it is not **respectful** or **caring** behaviour.
- Dodge Model (1986)
- The peer group plays a part in the maintenance of a child’s difficulties. It is a systematic approach which involves targeting other children’s perceptions and judgements about the child in order to develop their **acceptance** of the child, change their behaviour towards the child and in turn, change the focus child’s perceptions and behaviour. In terms of the SSEHV model, this approach can be described as “Love in Action”.

### Environment

- The teacher’s mannerisms can play a very important role in setting the tone of the physical environment. The teacher’s tone is very relaxed in both voice and mannerisms, even when bringing children back onto task. She does not raise her voice at all, and has a very **calm** air which in turn makes the children and hence the whole environment calm.
- Children are responsible for contributing to the cleanliness and tidiness of the environment. The teacher constantly reminds them of the importance of cleanliness and hygiene as a part of **healthy living**. Each group is responsible for maintaining cleanliness in a particular area of the room and the playground, and from time to time a spot “two-minute clean-up” is carried out. The teacher uses this strategy because she believes that encouraging children to maintain a tidy environment is more useful training than allowing it to become untidy or dirty and then having to nag them to clean it up. She constantly reminds them that: “We are all **responsible** for creating a pleasing environment that everyone can enjoy. We are being **considerate** to others if we keep our areas clean and tidy.
- Groups of children take turns to be responsible for setting up displays on topics of their own interest, which are not necessarily related to topics being studied in class. They work together on collecting materials and planning the display in their own time. The emphasis is on **co-operating** together as a group and the teacher discusses techniques that will help to make the displays aesthetically pleasing.
- Corners of the classroom are set up in various ways to enable the children to have quiet corners where they can be **calm** and **concentrate** if necessary. These include study carrels for private work and cushions in a corner where they can sit or lie comfortably for reading. There is a listening post where they can listen to calming music as they work if they wish to do so. Other areas have tables grouped together to enable group work to be done more effectively.

- The emphasis is on **respect for the needs of others** and the children are aware that there are certain areas in the room where they may talk with their classmates and others where they are expected to be quiet for the sake of those who need to concentrate.

**Interest** – stimulation and fascination in class

- Sometimes the teacher would utilise extrinsic motivation to stimulate children’s interest in a topic. For example, in the previously-mentioned estimation lesson, she told the class: ‘I will offer the reward of daily PE if your estimates are close.’
- If a child asks a question the teacher cannot answer she is careful to respect their interest and replies, “I’ll come back to you”. She always makes sure she follows this up.
- The use of games is frequent in this class to stimulate the children’s interest. The teacher selects games that have an element of chance as well as skill so it is not always the brighter children who have a chance to win. The games usually involve teams competing against each other. This emphasises the value of **team-work** and **co-operation**. At the same time the children are experiencing the motivational effects of healthy competition and are learning how to win graciously as well as to lose graciously without damaging their **self-esteem**.
- Groupwork activities are often utilised to stimulate the children’s interest and to enable them to The teacher will remind the groups: “It is important for you to **co-operate** with each other and assign a task to every group member. You need to **respect** each others’ strengths and weaknesses because we are all good at some things and not so good at others”. When the children were asked to explain their reasoning for allocating different tasks to different members, one group replied: “We identified the 2 best drawers and the 2 worst typists. The good artists were assigned the drawing and the bad typists were assigned the typing because they thought they needed practice”
- In one classroom where we noticed that the children were particularly stimulated and engaged with the tasks, we asked them what made it more interesting for them. Their answers reflected that they had already internalised a good understanding of “I Can” vocabulary and concepts of what caused them to be effectively engaged with a task and what caused them to lose concentration: “It’s better if you’re interested but if not you can still learn **if you focus**. My recent project was about cats – but I didn’t quite finish because **I was being too talkative** and **not using my time management skills very well** – talkative because I was a bit bored, so got a bit sidetracked...bored because I already knew a lot about them so got a bit bored about re-telling the information – next time I would choose something like fish I don’t know much about – not really interested but I wouldn’t get sidetracked.”

“She cracks jokes, gives different activities so we are **having fun while we are learning - finding out things for ourselves**.”

“She gives set work but it makes it more interesting being able **make our own decisions** about what order to do it in – but then people sometimes start to get talkative and **lose concentration**. Homework – we can do whenever we want and hand it in on Friday. Creative writing – can write about anything. She makes it interesting, fun to do, for example instead of plain English she makes it a fun activity, like a fun story. It is more interesting if the teacher lets the children have input into what goes on – Ms Brown does it sometimes **by giving choices** – I probably choose medium difficulty – sometimes she tries to encourage us **not to take an easy way out, to challenge ourselves**.”

## Reference

Peterson, R. & Skiba, R. (2001). 'Creating school climates that prevent school violence. Social Studies, 92 (4), 167-175.

## Appendix

### Story:

Rest In Peace: The I Can't Funeral (taken from Chicken Soup for the Soul by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen)

Donna's fourth-grade classroom looked like many others I had seen in the past. Students sat in five rows of six desks. The teacher's desk was in front and faced the students. The bulletin board featured student work. In most respects it appeared to be a typically traditional elementary classroom. Yet something seemed different that day I entered it for the first time. There seemed to be an undercurrent of excitement.

Donna was a veteran small-town Michigan school-teacher only two years away from retirement. In addition she was a volunteer participant in a county-wide staff development project I had organized and facilitated. The training focused on language art ideas that would **empower** students to **feel good about themselves** and **take charge of their lives**. Donna's job was to attend training sessions and implement the concepts being presented. My job was to make classroom visitations and encourage implementation. I took an empty seat in the back of the room and watched. All the students were working on a task, filling a sheet of notebook paper with thoughts and ideas. The ten-year-old student closest to me was filling her page with "I Can't's".

"I can't kick the soccer ball past second base."

"I can't do long division with more than three numerals."

"I can't get Debbie to like me."

Her page was half full and she showed no signs of letting up. She worked on with determination and persistence. I walked down the row glancing at students' papers. Everyone was writing sentences, describing things they couldn't do.

"I can't do ten push-ups."

"I can't hit one over the left-field fence."

"I can't eat only one cookie."

By this time the activity engaged my curiosity, so I decided to check with the teacher to see what was going on. As I approached her, I noticed that she too was busy writing. I felt best not to interrupt.

"I can't get John's mother to come in for a teacher conference."

"I can't get my daughter to put gas in the car."

"I can't get Alan to use words instead of fists."

Thwarted in my efforts to determine why students and teacher were dwelling on the negative instead of writing the more positive "I Can" statements, I returned to my seat and continued



my observations. Students wrote for another ten minutes. Most filled their page. Some started another.

“Finish the one you’re on and don’t start a new one,” were the instructions Donna used to signal the end of the activity. Students were then instructed to fold their papers in half and bring them to the front. When students reached the teacher’s desk, they placed their “I Can’t” statements into an empty shoebox.

When all the student papers were collected, Donna added hers. She put the lid on the box, tucked it under her arm and headed out the door down the hall. Students followed the teacher. I followed the students.

Halfway down the hall the procession stopped. Donna entered the custodian’s room, rummaged around and came out with a shovel. Shovel in one hand, shoebox in the other, Donna marched the students out of the school to the farthest corner of the playground. There they began to dig. They were going to bury their “I Can’ts”! The digging took over 10 minutes because most of the fourth-graders wanted a turn. When the hole approached three-feet deep, the digging ended. The box of “I Can’ts” was placed in position at the bottom of the hole and quickly covered with dirt. Thirty-one 10-and 11-year olds stood around the freshly dug gravesite. Each had at least one page full of “I Can’ts” in the shoebox, four-feet under. So did their teacher.

At this point Donna announced, “Boys and girls, please join your hands and bow your heads.” The students complied. They quickly formed a circle around the grave, creating a bond with their hands. They lowered their heads and waited. Donna delivered the eulogy.

“Friends, we gather today to honour the memory of “I Can’t”. While he was with us on earth, he touched the lives of everyone, some more than others. His name, unfortunately has been spoken in every public building – schools, city halls, state capitals and yes, even The White House. “We have provided ‘I Can’t’ with a final resting place and a headstone that contains his epitaph. He is survived by his brothers and sister, **‘I Can’, ‘I Will’ and ‘I’m Going to Right Away’**. They are not as well known as their famous relative and are certainly not as strong and powerful yet. Perhaps someday, with your help, they will make an even bigger mark on the world.

“May ‘I Can’t’ rest in peace and may everyone present pick up their lives and move forward in his absence. Amen.”

As I listened to the eulogy, I realised that these students would never forget this day. The activity was symbolic, a metaphor for life. It was a right-brain experience that would stick in the unconscious and conscious mind forever. Writing “I Can’ts”, burying them and hearing the eulogy. That was a major effort on the part of the teacher. And she wasn’t done yet. At the conclusion of the eulogy she turned the students around, marched them back into the classroom and held a wake. They celebrated the passing of “I Can’t” with cookies, popcorn and fruit juices. As part of the celebration Donna cut out a large tombstone from butcher paper. She wrote the word “I Can’t” at the top and put RIP in the middle. The date was added at the bottom. The paper tombstone hung in Donna’s classroom for the remainder of the year. One of those rare occasions when a student forgot and said, “I Can’t” Donna simply pointed to the RIP sign. The student then remembered that “I Can’t” was dead and chose to rephrase the statement.



I wasn't one of Donna's students. She was one of mine. Yet that day I learned an enduring lesson from her. Now, years later, whenever I hear the phrase, "I Can't", I see images of that fourth-grade funeral. Like the students, I remember that "I Can't" is dead.



## Chapter 16. Teacher Self-Esteem: An Educare Approach to Caring for Teachers

*"Human values cannot be learnt from lectures or text-books. Those who seek to impart values to students must first practise them themselves and set an example."*

*Sathya Sai Baba*

*"The place to improve the world is first in one's own heart and head and hands." Robert M. Pirsig.*

Recently a friend in the Indian village where I am currently working underwent minor surgery. Because the public hospital was seriously overcrowded, he was sent home early. There was some complication with the healing process, so the doctor who treated him told him to come back each day as an outpatient. For him and his wife, this daily visit involved a 15km journey by taxi from their village to the hospital, over badly-formed roads. The jarring of the roads caused him a lot of pain, they needed to make arrangements for their three young children to be looked after, and the expense of the daily taxi trip was putting a huge financial burden on the family. On more than one occasion they made the journey and waited at the hospital for several hours, only to be sent home again because the doctor was too busy - and probably over-stressed himself - to see them. The patient was distressed and his wife was in tears. Luckily after some negotiating he managed to see a different doctor. This second doctor could see that he was dealing with human beings whose lives extended beyond the recuperating body. He made arrangements for the patient to visit the local clinic, and only every three days rather than every day. This time the couple returned smiling, and in a much better condition for the patient's healing to happen. The difference in the perceptions of the two doctors was only small, but to this couple it made an enormous difference to their mental and emotional well-being, and especially to their self-esteem. Of course, we can't blame the first doctor entirely for his attitude, because he was overworked and overstressed too, but it shows how small acts of seeing the client as a human being can make such a lot of difference.

This incident caused me to reflect on the similarities to teaching. Like the doctors in this hospital, most teachers these days are also over-worked and over-stressed, but, like the doctors, some are still able to see the human beings in their clients and do small things that enhance their well-being and self-esteem while others see only the faces and not the human beings behind the faces. Like patients with their doctors, students do not expect their teachers to be perfect but they do know those people who are helping and giving of their time, and are genuine people interested in their welfare (Gratch, 2000).

Teachers and doctors both know that it is their professional duty to behave in this way, but often they find it difficult to put into practice even if they want to. And if, because of the expectations they have of themselves or others have of them, they do it in a way that is forced or not coming directly from the heart, it can be very stressful and even damaging for them. Recently I observed a very good, committed teacher who has a wonderful rapport with her class. I was very impressed by her smiling face, her calm, unruffled manner, and the way she projected patience and peacefulness to the children. I told her how impressed I was and she grimaced, then replied, "I have to be like this because if I am not the pupils will complain to their parents and then the parents will also complain". When I probed further she admitted that there is often a mismatch between the calmness she is expected to show on the outside and the stress and pressure she is feeling on the inside. McCreary (1990) describes this contradiction as the 'forgotten dimension', that pressure is put on teachers to 'perform' for the benefits of their pupils' self-esteem but that the self-esteem of the teachers themselves is often

forgotten. It is important for teachers to take time to reflect on and nurture themselves. McCreary (1990) notes that in the research on teacher-self-esteem, the word "self" is often absent in relation to teachers. She comments that, "This verifies my long-held conclusion that educators are among the most selfless of professionals. I mean selfless in the sense of less self-serving, and primarily other-serving". It is clear that if teachers are to continue to give selflessly year after year for the benefit of their pupils, there also needs to be some opportunity for their own rejuvenation. This, I suspect, was what made the difference between the first doctor mentioned above, who made the patient's whole family feel worthless because of his own stress, and the second doctor who was able to make them feel worthwhile.

The purpose of this article is to try to offer some support to teachers to rediscover this forgotten dimension of "self". It raises some discussion questions in the hope that teachers and school leaders will reflect upon some or all of them, either alone or in collegial groups, to help them to remind themselves of who they are and why they are in the profession, so that while they are keeping sight of the holistic well-being of their pupils and their colleagues they can also keep sight of their own well-being. The renewal that can be initiated by this kind of self-reflection can be invigorating for teachers (Craig, 1991; Noddings, 1991) because through re-examining they can become able to renew their sense of worth of their profession and themselves within this profession (Lumsden, 1998).

In addition to the questions for teachers, there is also a section included for school leaders, since these people have such a significant role in the well-being or otherwise of their staff. In some cases the teachers are seen as "whole people" with lives and problems outside of the workplace, and in other cases they are expected by their leaders to carry the burdens of their duties without any special support.

The questions have been based on the Sathya Sai Educare philosophy, which promotes the development of human excellence. In Educare pupils and teachers:

- are encouraged to appreciate the five basic human values of Truth, Right Action, Peace, Love and Non-violence as essential to the development of character,
- learn to accept the cultures, customs and religions of other people along with their own, in order to appreciate the brotherhood of man,
- acquire decision-making skills, which helps to facilitate development of moral learning,
- develop a sense of responsibility for the consequences of their actions and act with regard for the rights, life and dignity of all persons,
- develop self-discipline and self-confidence necessary to promote the fulfilment of their potential - by enhancing their moral, physical, social and academic achievements,
- develop value skills needed for personal, family, community, national and world harmony,
- develop a caring attitude towards all forms of life and to value the need for preservation, conservation and general care of the environment.

When we talk about values it is of course a personal thing. Part of the philosophy of Educare is that rather than trying to teach or impose a given set of values on children - or on teachers -

we try to draw out the values that are already inherent within them. Nevertheless, it is useful for us to have a framework to draw on to help us to understand what human values really are, and the following set of universal values inherent in most cultures is a useful point of reference:

- Truth: accuracy, curiosity, discrimination, honesty, human understanding, integrity, self-reflection, sincerity
- Right Action: courage, dependability, determination, efficiency, endurance, healthy living, independence, initiative, perseverance
- Peace: calmness, concentration, contentment, equanimity, optimism, self-acceptance, self-discipline, self-esteem
- Love: compassion, consideration, forgiveness, humaneness, interdependence, selflessness, tolerance.
- Non-violence: benevolence, co-operation, concern for ecological balance, respect for diversity, respect for life

### Question 1

The purpose of this exercise is to help teachers to identify which of their 'values' in becoming a teacher have been sustained through their careers and which need refreshing. Craig (1991) and Noddings (1991) have both suggested that reflection on these questions can be very invigorating for teachers who may have lost the initial enthusiasm with which they started on their careers.

- What were the values that made you decide to become a teacher in the first place? Make a list and discuss which of these values still hold true and which have changed. Have you been disillusioned in any way? Have your values been particularly inspired in any way by your teaching experience?
- What do you want your pupils to gain from having been taught by you?
- Has there ever been an incident in your classroom that you've regretted or that you wish you had handled differently?
- How does your teaching affect your health?
- Create a vision statement for yourself, for your colleagues or for your classes (create together) - not where you are but where you want to be.. Use "I am"...

### Question 2: Values conflicts as causes of teacher stress

One of the biggest problems for teachers and their pupils can occur when there are conflicts in values. To address this kind of issue, Gratch (2000) recommends the technique of problem-based discussion, in which one teacher shares issues and concerns and the group of colleagues works to help this teacher better understand and resolve the problem:

1. Teacher presents problem
2. Facilitator and group try to help teacher gain deeper understanding of problem and generate alternative interpretations through asking information-seeking questions and pushing for clarification and further refinement of problem
3. Brainstorms possible solutions and develops initial plan of action



4. At subsequent meetings, teacher reports on success of plan
- Write about 3 incidents (in the classroom, in the wider school, with pupils, colleagues or parents) that caused you to feel stressed or distressed.

Describe the incident in detail.

What, if any, effects did this incident have on how you define yourself as a professional? as a person?

Describe your feelings as accurately as possible. Why do you think the incident caused you to feel this way?

Describe the action you took and why you took this action.

How did others respond (ie the student/s involved, other students, colleagues, senior staff) and how did their responses affect you?

Reflect on and describe what you think were the feelings of the other people involved in the incident.

Were you able to draw on your awareness of your own values in any way to help in this situation?

If so, please describe what you did and how it helped.

Could you have dealt better with the situation? If so, what would you have done? What might have been the consequences of this different action?

What support did you really need in this situation?

- Brainstorm: 2 columns

Column 1: What are the worst problems you face as a teacher?

Column 2: What do you perceive to be the worst problems faced by students these days?

Examine any items from the two columns that are related in some way. What are the matches or mis-matches in values that are evident here?

Are there any mis-matches that could be addressed by looking at the situation from the pupils' point of view?

- Recall occasions where comments made by others affected your self-esteem. Use a piece of paper to represent your self-esteem. As the sentences are read, if the statement applies tear off a piece according to how much it affected your self esteem (spoken and unspoken messages)
- "Self-esteem is based on those values and goals which individuals consider most critical to their feelings of worth. While perceptions of others' appraisals of our worth impact importantly on our self-esteem, our own comparisons of actual performance with ideal self-standards are equally important" (McCreary, 1990). Write a group story about the perfect teacher who was able to create a perfect classroom environment:

- What did he/she do?

- How did the pupils react?

- How did the parents react?

- How did the teacher's colleagues react?
- What were the outcomes [include positive or negative]?
- How many people do you know who fit this? How realistic do you think the ideal is? How does it affect your self-esteem to try to live up to this ideal? What can you realistically do to live up to the ideal without placing undue strain on yourself?

Question 3: Effects of your own teachers

The purpose of this question is to examine your own experiences as pupils at school, the way your own former teachers taught, punished and reacted to mistakes, and the effects these behaviours have had on 'programming' you as a teacher.

- Reflect for a few minutes on your own teachers. Who was your best teacher? What was he or she like? What did he or she do?
- In this activity, we would like to examine some of the negative emotions - anger, envy, guilt, fear and the effects that these might have on you as a teacher.

Make 3 columns.

Brainstorm: What are the things that can make a teacher angry? List these in the first column.

Think about some of your own teachers and the way they acted or reacted when they were angry. List these reactions in the second column.

Next, try to remember how you felt when this was happening, either because you were on the receiving end, or because you were a pupil in the class witnessing the incident. Make a list of these feelings in the third column.

What about some times when a teacher might have been expected to become angry but didn't? Discuss the circumstances and whether or not these led to a satisfactory outcome

A similar exercise can be conducted with those of the other emotions that are relevant to you. Some alternative approaches to promote discussion might include:

- Ask somebody in the group to describe a negative interaction and then roleplay it. Discuss the participants' feelings and then find a possible alternative and roleplay that
- Write down your reflections on the scenario and pass them around (without names) for others to read and respond to
- Examples of the questions: Was there ever a time when one of your teachers was untruthful about something? How did this make you feel? Was there any time when a teacher was bitterly truthful in a way that hurt you or another pupil?.
- List some words that describe the classroom environment that you remember the most from your own schooling. Analyse each word and categorise them according to whether they are 'positive' or 'negative' characteristics. What are the words missing from this list - for example, how many of the following are missing from your list: 'inner peace', safety to make mistakes, unconditional acceptance? Discuss: These days, what are the obstacles to achieving this kind of environment?

#### Question 4: Teachers as models of values

*"Teachers are remembered more for what they were than what they taught. "*

*"A teacher is the shining light to the world, but only if this light is shining all the time will it be able to light up other lamps. "*

*"The teacher must not teach with any ulterior selfish motive, for money, name or fame. [The teacher's real fulfilment comes when the work is] simply out of love, out of pure love for mankind at large."*

The above quotes by Sathya Sai Baba suggest that a teacher's impact on pupils and colleagues, can be enhanced if he/she becomes a model of the values that are important to him/her and to their particular society. In this section we would like to suggest that if the teacher is able to examine the extent to which he/she becomes not just a role model for the human values but is able to live his/her own values in the classroom context.

- Consider the list of universal human values given above. In what ways do you see yourself as being a model of the above values to your pupils? to your colleagues? And in what ways do you feel you really live any of these values in your classroom and collegial interactions? If you are discussing this question with colleagues, please include some specific anecdotes.
- In what ways do you think, upon critical self-reflection, that you fall short of being a model/living example of these values?
- What are your feelings about modelling these values. Is it something that comes easily to you and makes you feel good about yourself, or is it something that causes you stress because it's expected of you, rather than being the real you. What, if anything, can you do to change things so that it becomes a part of the real you, and not something you have to strain at?
- Do you think it is important for teachers to be constantly examining and developing their own values, or do you believe this is something static which cannot be changed? Perhaps you might wish to share your experiences with your colleagues.

#### Question 5: Interacting with parents

- What causes the most anxiety about meeting with a parent or parents?
- What are the main reasons why parents come to see you?
- Have you ever had an angry or unpleasant incident with a parent? If so please describe it. In what way was this brought about because of a conflict in values?
- What do you see as being your personal values that you have drawn on to deal with this kind of situation? Are there any other values that you could have drawn on that you did not?

#### Some questions and comments for reflection by school leaders

- What strategies can you use to find out what people do well, enable them to continue to do it, praise them, and then help them celebrate their accomplishments? (Blaydes, 1995)



- How can you affirm that, as educators, they can and do make a difference in children's lives? (Blaydes, 1995)
- How can you draw on your own values to help staff members know that they often achieve miracles, even under the most trying conditions and restraints? (Blaydes, 1995)
- How can you create a professional environment that enhances collegiality and team-building and reinforces the teachers' self-esteem so that they can, in turn, reinforce the students' self-esteem? (Blaydes, 1995)
- How can the way in which you are a model of human values influence the climate you create in your school? Our daily moods create the "weather" in our schools-sunny, bright and positive or cloudy, stormy and negative. (Blaydes, 1995)
- How can you demonstrate caring and compassion by stressing the importance of individuals? We can create rewards and recognition that show we care about a job well done. We can build trust by using no-strings rewards (taking yard duty, providing release time on birthdays) (Blaydes, 1995)
- In what ways can you work with teachers to write personal and professional [values] goals? (Blaydes, 1995)
- How can you build a sense of belonging and cooperation by creating a team of teachers that works collaboratively to improve its school, to build a feeling of esprit de corp and respect for each others' strengths and talents? (Blaydes, 1995)
- Positive feedback and reinforcement enhance teacher self-esteem. What can you do to celebrate individual achievements, let teachers know what a good job they are doing, and that you appreciate their dedication. (Blaydes, 1995)
- Principals need to let parents know how important it is to give teachers positive feedback. Meet with parent groups and brainstorm ways to honor the teaching profession.(Blaydes,1995)
- "Challenge, control, freedom, respect, success, and warmth are necessary for the development of students' healthy selves (Tonelson, 1981). For the students, teachers and principals are supposed to provide all of these. Rarely do we ask who is responsible for these same influences on the well-being of teachers and administrators." (McCreary, 1990)
- "Teachers need to have available role models for the standards and beliefs underlying their profession." (McCreary, 1990) How, as school leader, can you best provide such a role model?
- Earned self-esteem is based on learning to tolerate frustration and delay, to care for others, to work hard, and to persevere in the face of obstacles. These tasks of developing relationships and competencies enable one to stretch, to grow and to reach for excellence. (McCreary, 1990) What strategies can enhance this in the school environment?
- What can you do to provide teachers with a clear message of respect, encouragement and support? (McCreary, 1990)
- "Teachers must develop positive, realistic attitudes about themselves and their own abilities. Many teachers have idealistically unreal expectations for themselves. Outside pressure for accountability based on student test scores has widened the gap



between teachers' perceptions of their competence and the feedback about it from others. People who feel good about themselves need to have congruence between perceived real and ideal selves (Rogers, 1951), and the current educational milieu works against this". (McCreary, 1990) What can you do to help your teachers to bridge the gap between the expectation to achieve high student test scores and their real perceptions about themselves?

- Because of their relative isolation from other adults during the working day, teachers have little opportunity to share their successes with colleagues and administrators. This results in greater reliance on student responsiveness for teachers' professional satisfaction (Goodwin 1987 in Lumsden, 1998). How can this isolation be reduced so teachers have more opportunity to share with other adults in the school environment?

## References

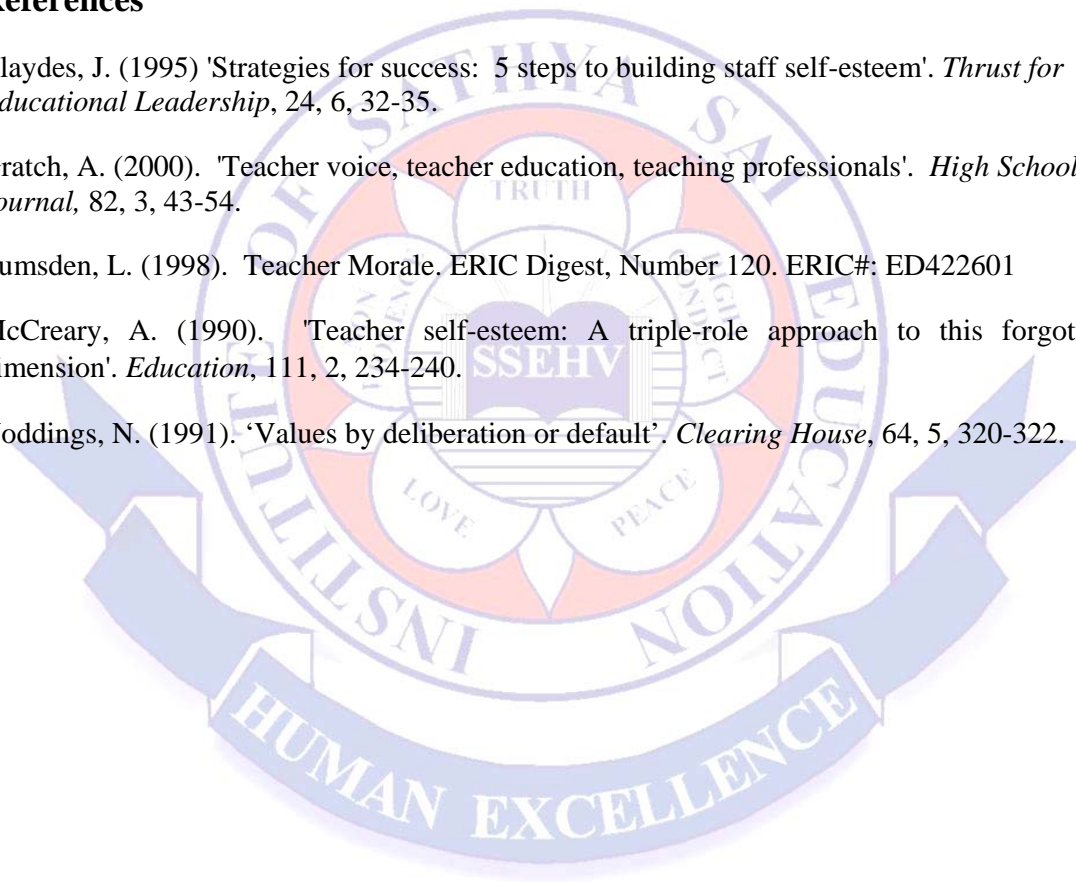
Blaydes, J. (1995) 'Strategies for success: 5 steps to building staff self-esteem'. *Thrust for Educational Leadership*, 24, 6, 32-35.

Gratch, A. (2000). 'Teacher voice, teacher education, teaching professionals'. *High School Journal*, 82, 3, 43-54.

Lumsden, L. (1998). Teacher Morale. ERIC Digest, Number 120. ERIC#: ED422601

McCreary, A. (1990). 'Teacher self-esteem: A triple-role approach to this forgotten dimension'. *Education*, 111, 2, 234-240.

Noddings, N. (1991). 'Values by deliberation or default'. *Clearing House*, 64, 5, 320-322.



## Chapter 17. Bringing out Human Excellence

### 3HV: The Harmony of Head, Heart and Hands



*"Harmony of head, heart and hands symbolizes the true human life."  
Sathya Sai Baba*

The aim of education in human values is to bring out human excellence at the levels of character, academic performance and "being". This means the all-round development of the child - which in turn means that we aim to develop the heart as well as the head and the hands. If we are to achieve this, one of the most important ingredients is to help children to automatise the process that "whatever thoughts come into their heads they think about and examine in their hearts before they act" (Sathya Sai Baba). Sathya Sai Baba refers to this as 3HV, the harmony of head, heart and hands.

Recently, during a professional development seminar in China, several of the teachers observed that in moral education classes the pupils will do and say what is necessary to please the teacher and pass the exam, but that there is a big gap between what they are saying in class and what they are practising in their lives outside the moral education classroom. It seems that this is a valid concern and that it is happening around the world, so we need to find ways to fill the gap. During a trip to India I discussed this problem with a very gracious swami who is actively involved in training teachers of values education around the country. I asked him what he does to help to bridge this gap between children's beliefs about what is "right" for the moral education classroom and what is "right" for life. His reply was, "It's easy - all you have to do is to reach into their hearts and unlock what is already there". To him, it may be easy, but to me this seemed like quite a difficult task, and I have been pondering on his reply ever since. Most people agree that this is WHAT we have to do, but the question of HOW to do it in today's schools is another matter. So in my search for an answer I have been observing teachers and pupils closely, and the purpose of this article is to share some of these observations about what teachers can do to help to bring about real, and lasting, harmony of head, heart and hands in their pupils.

One way is to use a direct approach, to make children aware of the importance of running their thoughts and words through the filter of their hearts before putting them into action with their hands. One such activity is a game called "Gatekeepers" (Institute of Sathya Sai Education, Thailand, 2002). Three children are selected to be gatekeepers. One holds a sign saying, "Is it true?" The second holds a sign saying, "Is it necessary?" and the third holds a sign saying, "Is it said with love?" Children take turns to think of a statement that will enable them to pass by each gatekeeper. After they have passed through, they tell the statement to their classmates, who become the judges of whether all of the criteria have been met.

Another example of the direct approach is through the use of storytelling. In most cultures there is a rich history of folk tales that address the moral and spiritual values of the culture: the Panchatantra of India, Aesop's Fables and the Australian Dreaming stories are just a few examples of these. In these tales the values are not preached directly, but they are implicit and the reader or listener is invited to make his/her own decisions about what is right and wrong. This has been a powerful tool for facilitating the harmony of head, heart and hands, and can still be used as effectively today as in the past.

A further example is the direct discussion or enactment of moral dilemmas. These are tasks

that aim to develop pupils' ability to "act upon commonly shared ideals or principles, even in situations when they are under pressure to acquiesce to non-moral factors like majority's opinion, prejudice, abusive authorities, or just laziness and low mood" (Lind, 1986). Lind advises that, in order to have maximum effect, these dilemmas should pose two or more moral principals that are of equal importance but that lead to mutually exclusive courses of action.

While the direct approach is necessary and important in raising awareness, I have observed, however, that the teachers who are really bringing about 3HV in their pupils are those who utilise every opportunity, in every aspect of their teaching, both planned and incidental. They succeed because they are constantly responding to three important questions that are fundamental to 3HV:

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

In one school I visited there was a recurring problem with litter. The children were repeatedly asked not to drop rubbish. They were given explanation after explanation about why it is important to look after the environment. But still they dropped their rubbish. One group of Grade 3 teachers had the idea of appealing to their consciences. These children had a very great love of nature, so the teachers asked them to draw pictures of what might happen to the animals and plants as a consequence of littering. They thought deeply about this for a while, then began to draw: a monkey with its feet cut on broken glass, a snake with its head caught in a discarded soft-drink can, small plants that could not grow because of the rubbish on top of them. Suddenly a change began in the children - their hearts had been touched by the plights of the animals and plants they loved, and their attitude to littering changed completely so that, even several months later, they were still reminding others not to litter.

A similar thing occurred in a village school in India. There is a sacred lake near the school. Frequent visitors and pilgrims had left behind their rubbish, and the area had become seriously polluted. As an environmental science activity, one of the teachers engaged her class in a clean-up campaign. They were very proud to show off their "before" and "after" photographs. But what made them even more proud, the teacher explained, was the long-term effect - because the children remembered how hard they had to work to clean up, she could see that they had definitely changed their attitudes about littering. Again, it was because the activity had become a way of touching their hearts rather than only their heads and hands.

In an earlier paper in this collection, (*The Human Values Approach to Classroom Discipline*) we referred to an anecdote about Anthony and Miss Wright. Miss Wright had been offended because Anthony spoke truthfully - but negatively - his feelings about her class, so she demanded that he write a letter of apology. When Anthony's mother, herself a teacher, read the letter she realised that he was really not sorry at all - in fact he was indignant to think he was being punished for telling the truth. After much discussion, Anthony's mother was able to reach the core of the situation and help Anthony to realise that, while he was not sorry for speaking the truth, he did feel sorry that he had hurt Miss Wright's feelings, and he was able to apologise sincerely for that. In this case, Anthony's mother was successfully able to engage the "heart filter" to link his thoughts to his actions.

A secondary school principal told the story of a student who was caught cheating in an



examination. Upon questioning the girl, she found that the underlying reason for her cheating was her lack of confidence in English, which was the language of the exam but not her first language. Of course the girl had to accept the consequences of her actions, and had marks deducted. But the principal told her that this brought the matter to a close, that everyone deserves to be given a second chance, and that she was now forgiven and could start again with a clean slate. Sometime later, when that student had left school, she wrote a letter to the principal, telling her that this incident had touched her deeply and that she had not been tempted to cheat again in any aspect of her life - not because she had been caught, but because she had been given a second chance after facing the consequences.

This incident reminded me of an experience that happened to me when I was a young teacher. In my class there was a twelve-year-old boy with severe emotional and behavioural problems and a history of stealing, vandalism and lying. One day some money had been stolen from another child's bag, and since all the evidence pointed to this particular boy, I confronted him. Of course he denied the theft. I felt powerless to know what to do next, and the only thing I could think of was to deliver a lecture on conscience. I told him that I would have far greater respect for somebody who was prepared to admit to having done wrong, and talked at length about how uncomfortable it would be for somebody to have done something wrong and to be carrying that knowledge in his conscience. Through the whole discourse I was careful not to accuse him of the theft or even to suggest that I doubted his denial. The following morning he came to me before school and confessed that he had stolen the money. Of course I had to be consistent with what I had said the previous day, so I made another speech about the respect that I felt for him for having confessed and we talked about how his conscience felt now that he had owned up. Then we discussed the consequences of the theft and he was duly punished for that, but all the time I continued to be careful to let him know that I respected him for his truthfulness. After that incident, we settled into a kind of comfortable truce. He still slipped back to his old ways from time to time and stole or vandalised, but at least he would then come and confess. I lost track of him after he moved on to secondary school, but I like to think that our experience during that year made some contribution towards touching his conscience and that perhaps at some time in the future he might have remembered to run his ideas through his conscience before putting them into action.

A well-known longitudinal study conducted at Johns Hopkins university is a good example of one teacher's ability to help students to bring about harmony of head, heart and hands. The study predicted that 90% of a group of students in Harlem would end up in jail within a short time of finishing school, but when they were followed up years later it was found that only 4% had actually done so. Further investigations revealed that all of those who had been expected to become criminals but had not done so traced their change of direction back to one teacher who had loved them and believed in them - who had touched their hearts and modelled for them the concept of 3HV.

The teacher of a Grade 3 class was concerned that his pupils were not listening to him or to each other. So he set up an experiment with the help of the Grade 2 class. He took his children to read stories to the Grade 2 children, but before they arrived the Grade 2 teacher had instructed the younger children not to listen or to pay any attention to those reading to them. The Grade 3 children became frustrated very quickly, so the lesson was stopped and the teachers discussed with them how it felt not to be listened to. The activity was then repeated with the younger children listening attentively, and the class was able to make comparisons about their feelings. This was a practical example of 3HV in action, with the Grade 3 children being given their own first-hand experience of feelings that they could remember and draw on when weighing up future decisions to talk in class.



Even in the regular curriculum subjects there are plenty of opportunities to facilitate 3HV. In an Art lesson, the teacher wanted to encourage the children to develop their own criteria for determining their actions, so she asked them to think very deeply about themselves and to paint a picture of, "Who is the real you?" One Grade 4 boy drew a monk. A Grade 2 boy drew himself inside the Universe. A Grade 2 girl drew herself as a star sending light to nature, the world, and the moon and giving love to everyone. The teacher utilised this exercise as an opportunity to remind the children to reflect on who they really are before they put their thoughts into action.

While writing this article, I am in a village in India where I am helping some teachers to develop English programmes for young children. A few days ago, one of the teachers, who happens to be a monk teaching English to the children in his monastery, came with a worksheet about parts of the body. We looked at ways to introduce and memorise the vocabulary and also at ways in which the words could be classified into phonetic groups to help the children's pronunciation and reading. Among other things, we were looking for ways to introduce alliterative rhymes to help the children to listen phonetically (Collins, 2000). Since the worksheet introduced all three of the words "head", "heart" and "hands", it provided a good opportunity to bring in a reminder about 3HV. The alliteration we developed was: "**H**atch it in your **h**ead, **h**old it in your **h**ear**t**, then **h**elp with your **h**ands." The monk was delighted to discover that he could introduce some of his dharmic teaching into his English classes!

So - what is the intended outcome of this kind of focus on 3HV? Hopefully it is children who are able to examine their thoughts critically within their own hearts before putting them into action, not because they are told this is what they need to do to pass their moral education exam but because, as the Indian swami mentioned earlier in this article described, we have been able to reach into their hearts and help them to open up the conscience that is within, so that they are doing it because they want to rather than because they will be rewarded for it. Recently I have had two very touching experiences with children who have developed this harmony of head, heart and hands. Both were in the Sathya Sai School of Thailand, where 3HV is the underpinning philosophy of the school. In the first incident I was walking back to my room in the dark after dinner and had forgotten to bring my torch. A Grade 6 boy came along and walked with me so we could share his light. When we reached the boys' dormitory he was very concerned that I should not go on without a light so he gave me his torch. That in itself was a kind act. But when I reached the door of my room, I heard a voice call out, "Goodnight, Teacher." Not only had he given me his torch, he had waited until he saw me safely reach my room before he went inside his own. On the second occasion I came across an area in the playground that had been left littered and dirty by some workmen. There were children playing nearby but I decided not to "force" them to come and help me, but rather to just start cleaning by myself and see what would happen. After a while, one little girl appeared, assessed the situation, went off to get a broom, and came back to help. We worked together for a while, then she put down the broom and disappeared. I felt a bit sorry that she had not completed the task, but glad that at least one child had come to help for a while. Then I looked up, and saw her coming back, with two other small girls, struggling to carry a big bucket of water. Gradually more came and joined in. Somebody found some soap, and they washed and scrubbed for two hours until the area was spotless. They divided the labour and when one became tired another one would step in and take her place. And in the whole two hours I had neither asked anyone to help me, nor given any instructions about what to do. In both of these incidents it was the children's spontaneous and caring acts that touched me - there was no reward or benefit for them, they just did it because it came from their hearts. This to me is what Sathya Sai Baba means when he says "Harmony of head, heart and hands

symbolizes the true human life", and it is heartening to see that there are so many ways in which teachers are able to bring about 3HV without making it an "add-on" to their programmes.

### Some Questions for Reflection or Action Research

Examine your own teaching on the "head-heart-hands" scale below.



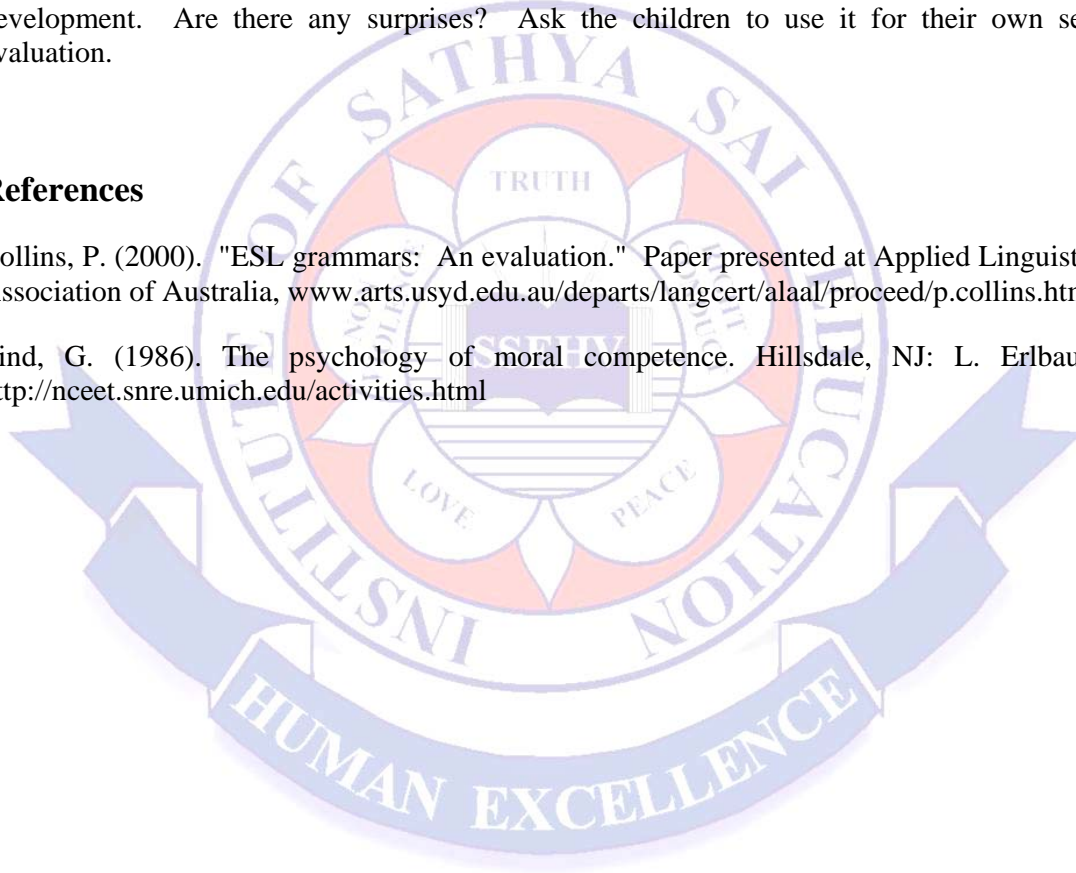
How much emphasis is on the two ends rather than distributed across the three?

Use the same scale as a criterion for evaluating children's social/emotional/moral development. Are there any surprises? Ask the children to use it for their own self-evaluation.

### References

Collins, P. (2000). "ESL grammars: An evaluation." Paper presented at Applied Linguistics Association of Australia, [www.arts.usyd.edu.au/departs/langcert/alaal/proceed/p.collins.html](http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/departs/langcert/alaal/proceed/p.collins.html)

Lind, G. (1986). *The psychology of moral competence*. Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum. <http://nceet.snre.umich.edu/activities.html>



## Chapter 18. What is Spiritual Health and How Can Schools Achieve It?

These days we are aware that education is concerned with the holistic development of the child and we are becoming increasingly aware that this includes spiritual health along with physical, social and emotional well-being:

“Maintaining personal wellbeing requires an understanding of the issues around physical, social, emotional and spiritual health and the development of the ability to manage changes and to act for a lifestyle that is healthy, socially rewarding and fulfilling... Learners grow in their understanding about the factors that contribute to physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health of self, others and the communities....” (Department of Education, Tasmania, 2002, Personal Futures: Maintaining Wellbeing, pp.25-26).

From my life experience and observations of truly healthy people, I have come to realize that spiritual education is in fact the ultimate goal of education. It started with my personal quest to achieve holistic health after a brush with a life-threatening disease and the recognition that brought of my mortality and my vulnerability as a human being. Recently, while traveling and working in various countries, I have experienced two extremes. In Hong Kong the majority of people worship the money god – materially they want for nothing. But their dissatisfaction is high and so is the suicide rate, with people jumping out of windows because they have ‘lost hope’ over what should be very minor problems. In contrast, the Gaddi people of northern India with whom I have been working recently and a group of Buddhist monks from Ladakh to whom I taught English, are amongst the most fulfilled and fulfilling to be with I’ve met anywhere in the world. Materially they have very little, but it is clear that their high level of fulfillment comes from their spiritual health. This has prompted me to think seriously about the whole issue of spiritual health as a very important component of personal wellbeing, and particularly how we can nurture this in those who really need it, without necessarily relating it to the personal and sometimes sensitive area of religion.

In traditional societies spiritual health was considered to be the responsibility of families and community elders. Nowadays, with less of this happening, the responsibility is being passed more and more to schools. Until now, however, the concept of spiritual education in schools has been linked to religious education, which is certainly a subset but not all. So it potentially presents a challenge for teachers to understand what spiritual health really is and how it can be nurtured.

In the past eighteen months I have visited and worked in several special schools around the world - Zambia, Thailand, India, UK and Australia - where education in human values with an emphasis on spiritual health have been emphasized. In this article I would like to share some examples of how these schools have addressed this potentially sensitive issue in ways that have proved to be satisfactory for all, independently of their religious or other beliefs. I will address issues including:

- why spiritual education is so important these days and why it is becoming the responsibility of schools,
- some examples of how spiritual education in the school has made a difference to the whole community,
- why spiritual education is a way of thinking and acting, not another subject,



- why spiritual education is not the same as religious education,
- how schools are defining spiritual education and strategies they are using to develop it,
- why spiritual education doesn't mean teaching children an externally-imposed set of values, but rather helping them to establish their own
- the relevance of these ideas to mainstream schools.

### **What is spiritual education? How is it different from religious education?**

Spiritual health can be described as:

*“the art of ensuring a perfect constant balance of the five elements within, by managing the mind and the inputs from the five senses, so that the surge of the Divine energy from within, flows uninterrupted. In other words, a harmony between thought, word and deed has to be achieved in such a manner that the physical world is perceived as an extension of the spiritual world”* (Sathya Sai Baba).

To bring out these qualities, teachers need to be constant and consistent in examining all of their activities and interactions with their pupils, by reflecting on the questions:

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

*“Does [spiritual education] entail a new curriculum or a new course content? Once again the answer is ‘No’. The answer lies in our implementing this technology in our lives. Am I able to control my desires? Am I conscious of the inputs of five senses in my mind? Am I able to turn my mind inside? Am I able to experience the power of love within? These are the questions that all of us have to ask. Because we are not communicating knowledge, we are not communicating words, what we are really communicating is experience.”*

Sathya Sai Baba

The children are taught two important ingredients for life. One is that whatever thoughts come into their heads they think about and examine in their hearts before they act. This is referred to as 3HV, the harmony of head, heart and hands. The other is concentration and inner stillness. The main ingredient is love and through love they are helped to become self-reliant, self-confident, self-sacrificing and hence eventually self-realised.

What does it mean to be a spiritual person? In Australian Aboriginal culture it has been described as being fully alive:

"When a human being is fully alive Yarralin people [from the Victoria River district, NT] say that the person is *punyu* (Ngarinman language) . *Punyu* is variously translated as good, strong, healthy, happy, knowledgeable,'smart', socially responsible (to 'take care'), beautiful, clean and 'safe' both in the sense of being within the Law and in the sense of being cared for. This is a complete state



of being. The person who is knowledgeable is best able to live within the Land and can expect to be strong, healthy, happy, and so on, while the person who is at odds with the Law is physical as well as social danger and can expect to become ill as well as to face the anger and retaliation of others.

I [the author] understand *punyu* to be a state of being which involves living in the fullness of life, maintaining one's own health, promoting that of others, and promoting the health of the whole world. *Punyu* – the fullness of life – is a state which must be nurtured. When Yarralin people talk of 'growing people' they refer to actions which include feeding, protecting, singing, and teaching. The term does not distinguish between physical, mental, social, and spiritual being, nor does it distinguish between country, Dreaming, and people: these are all part of being alive. Mowaljarlai and Malnic, J. (1993).

Gowing (2002, p.34) describes a spiritually healthy person as:

“one who possesses the universal and unchanging values in their highest and purest forms: Truth, fulfillment of the quest of the intellect for Truth; Right Action, channeling of the will into satisfying expression through right action; Peace, resolution of the conflicts of human emotions and interactions in the achievement of outer and inner peace; Love, expansion of the heart in the flow of love, and Non-violence, realization of perfect sympathy of all creation through non-violence.”

This kind of health can be realized through in action a combination of:

- inner self-discipline...
- inner peace...
- unity of thought, word and deed (in students, teachers and parents)...
- love of selfless service...
- sense of discrimination and enquiry...

Gowing (p.15, with quotations in italics from Sathya Sai Baba) has summarized the advice of many of the world's great spiritual masters, that transformation into spiritual health can be brought about if we are able to:

- **Activate in our lives the 5 human values inherent in us and in nature:** Non-violence, Truth, Peace, Love, Right Action.
- **Control our senses:** sound, touch, sight, taste and smell.
- **Remove desires:** desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, jealousy.
- **Take in pure “food”:** through all the five senses.
- **“Develop self-confidence:** *the floor, self-satisfaction the walls, self-sacrifice the roof of the house, and self-realisation that is inside will emerge*
- **Give service:** *“Love all Serve all.” “Help ever, Hurt never.”*
- **Learn adoration:** love the inner divinity in all of humanity and nature.

- **Illuminate the mind:** *“The mind is the cause of all things.” “Conscience is the inner witness.”*
- **Break through to our inner wisdom:** to who we really are.
- **Practise non-violence to the elements:** *“the elements are the seed of the tree that is the world.”*

Not all the outcomes of spiritual education can be measured easily because the transformations that come about in children are often very subtle and quite often don't emerge until they have left school and entered into adult life. Even as adults, like the rest of us, they will probably still make mistakes. But the big gift given to children by spiritual education is that they can pick themselves up from their mistakes and move on.

### **Why is spiritual education so important?**

Recently in Hong Kong there was a sad incident with a primary school boy who was caught viewing pornographic material on the Internet. He was called to the Headmaster's office but rather than facing the disciplinary consequences he went home and committed suicide. In another incident a secondary pupil who was punished for handing in homework late and being late for school by having to sit and work outside the Headmaster's office each day for a week felt so humiliated by his classmates' teasing that he claimed it caused him to become schizophrenic. A friend who is a teacher recently told me about one of her 14-year-old pupils who took an overdose of pills before coming to class in a suicide attempt, not her first. Her reason was that she was lonely and could not see any other way out of it. A twelve-year-old told me that the reason he made no attempt to do any work in class was because, "I won't be able to get any posh job anyway, so what's the point?" Apart from all the obvious problems facing society these days, like our inability to live in peace and harmony in the world in spite of tremendous advances in technology, lack of individual peace, exposure to violence, increased numbers of children seeing psychiatrists, misuse of drugs (prescribed as well as illegal), malnutrition (especially in developed countries), loss of culture, environmental destruction, overprotection of children that leads to lack of self-confidence, over-indulgence that leads to lack of self-control and rejection that leads to aggressiveness, there is also the growing problem that many people are depending on externals like relationships and material things for their happiness and sense of self-worth. In contrast, spiritual education is about helping children to find the real fulfillment that cannot be found in transitory external things. Rogacion (1994) has suggested that this fulfillment cannot come about until we are able to recognize and accept our limitations, acknowledge that these negative qualities are within our control and be able to assume responsibility for ourselves, appreciate the need for time to be with oneself:

“if only to bring the self to a homeostasis or a balance that will enable the self to cope better with life's stresses and problems” .... to confront ourselves with the question, ‘Why are you doing what you are doing?’ and have an answer to that, to listen to what is going on within ourselves so we can intervene in our own processes and shape our responses to life more effectively, to recognize the positive qualities with which we are gifted and that these are ‘a gift to the world when [one] uses all of one's gifts for the welfare of others’ and not for self-aggrandisement, to know what mobilizes our negative expressions and to be able to avoid situations where our negatives are set into motion and to develop the ability to identify the positive behavior and use our energy for the development of one's gifts.” (pp.148-149).

Medhananda (1996, p.78) believes that spiritual education is important because it can develop children who:

“are never lonely because they have found their true selves. They know that happiness means enjoying the things around them, and for that they don’t have to possess them; that true joy is to possess the wholeness of things, the wholeness of themselves and the wholeness of the universe – a wholeness which, since babyhood, they have never left.”

Medhananda (p.78)

### **How is this different from religious education?**

All of the schools I visited are putting into practice the essence of what has been described above - the spiritual education permeates the total curriculum and extra-curricular programmes, and where religion is considered, the emphasis is on the unity of religions and the common values underpinning them all, rather than the teachings of one particular one. In the Thai school for example, there were Buddhist, Christian and Muslim children and in the assembly hall there was an area to honour each of these religions, however the children all participated in human values classes together. The children were not taught about any specific concept of or means of communicating with the Divine.

In spiritual education as it is defined in all of these schools, the aim is to help children to learn who they really are, and what each one’s special and unique gift is that they can use to contribute to humanity. They are helped to develop inner peace, rely on themselves to solve their own problems by going deep within their own minds, and to love themselves and others unconditionally.

### **What is Love?**

As mentioned above, the main ingredient of spiritual education is love, and through love children are helped to become self-reliant, self-confident, self-sacrificing and hence eventually self-fulfilled.

*“Love perceives a spirit of identity with others, a feeling of oneness. It is the realisation of the brotherhood of man and the kinship of life, arising in one’s own heart. It is the concept of not only being loving and kind to others, but of treating them as oneself. Love is not an emotion, but a spontaneous reaction from the heart.” (Programme of 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Sathya Sai Education in Human Values, Thailand, 1991, p.20*

Love, which incorporates compassion, consideration, forgiveness, humaneness, interdependence, selflessness, and tolerance, is considered to be the basis of character and encompasses other desirable human qualities. It is unconditional, which means that it is given spontaneously, without any expectation of any return. An good reason for teaching children to react with love has been given by Jumsai (2002): ‘If someone is angry it means that they are already suffering. If we have love in our hearts, will we cause them to suffer more by reacting with more anger?’

Love is not something that can be taught, but it develops when the child has achieved:



- self-awareness: recognizing that "I have the capacity to make an impact ",
- self-worth: the belief that "I am worthy. "
- self-esteem: not drawn from external sources like friends or job status that can be taken away at any moment, but from internal things like honesty, trust and not consciously hurting people, that enable you to appreciate yourself.
- self-love
- self-confidence that comes from a combination of trust, humility, hope and courage
- self-respect that comes from appreciating and honouring you emotions and becoming a valuable person to yourself
- accepting people and things to be the way they are
- being able to detach: if something comes up to make you hurt or angry, being able to express it, release it and move on.

In one school, some children were asked to draw themselves as they really are. One girl drew herself as a star projecting light to the world. In all of the schools I visited, this is the aim for all children to have this kind of belief in themselves, but of course these qualities need to be inculcated continually, so that children are not drawn into their negative counterparts:

☺	☹
self-awareness	self-delusion
self-worth	self-centredness
self-esteem	self-importance
self-love	self-serving
self-confidence	self-illusion
self-respect	self-destructiveness

Children are taught to understand love through the interaction of all five fundamental human values.

*“The reflection and the spark that comes out of Love is called Truth [Conscience]. The same Love, when expressed in action is called Right Action [following the Conscience]. When this Love is contemplated upon, mind attains supreme Peace. When we enquire from where this love has come and understand its very source, then we realize the great principle of Non-violence.... When we adhere to Truth and Right Action we can experience the fullness of Peace. One who experiences this Peace will never take to violence. Therefore, these are the main values to cherish and to follow.”*

(Sathya Sai Baba).

*‘In order to experience this truth man must learn to handle his own human workshop. True spirituality therefore is learning the art of integrating the love embedded in the heart with the mind, and thereby getting the heart, the mind and the five sentences integrated into one whole system.’*

(Sri Sathya Sai Educare Convention, July 2-4, 2001, in Gowing, 2002, p.4).



As mentioned above, all of the five fundamental human values of truth, right action, peace, love and non-violence are important in spiritual education, but here I would particularly like to mention Peace, since that is something that is lacking in the individual and in society these days.

## **Peace**

One of the important aspects of spiritual education is to help children to find inner peace – that is the true, deep inner peace that doesn't get disturbed when you are under any amount of pressure.

*“Purify your hearts, your thoughts, feelings, emotions, speech; strengthen your nobler impulses, then no panic can unnerve you; nothing can shake your stability, your inner peace.”*

*“The treasure that is unmistakably precious is the quality of peace, equanimity, unruffledness. Practise this and make it your natural reaction.”*

*“In the state of peace, human nature will be like the unruffled water surface.”*

*“Peace is the best treasure, without which power, authority, fame and fortune are all dry and burdensome.”*

*“Peace of mind is the most desirable thing in this world.”*

Sathya Sai Baba

## **How can spiritual health be achieved?**

First and foremost, the philosophies of the schools I visited reflect that we cannot teach spiritual health or values, but rather it is our obligation as teachers to draw out what is within the pupils. These schools utilize some timeless strategies, including story-telling, music, positive affirmation, quotation and silent sitting and creative visualization to achieve this. These all combine to have the effect of stilling the conscious and subconscious levels of the mind and storing positive stimuli so that the individual can come to be in touch with his/her true inner self and draw on the wisdom and values that are inherent in the true self (Jumsai, 2002).

## **Silent Sitting**

An earlier article has described the benefits of silent sitting to children's concentration, behaviour, academic performance and general well-being. In one of the schools I visited, the vice-principal had decided to introduce the light visualization (see article on Silent Sitting and Creative Visualisation). In assembly every morning she would lead the whole school – of 4000 pupils – through this exercise that is designed to help them improve their concentration, feel more calm and stress-free, and thus be able to listen more easily to the wisdom of their own inner voices. I was amazed at the calm, peaceful atmosphere that pervaded the whole school – it was powerful, and literally 'hit' me as I walked through the front entrance. We asked the children about their experiences of using the silent sitting, and

some of their comments were:

*It really helps me when I have to do an examination.*

*I can feel the beauty of nature and when the music starts I feel complete.*

*I have been teaching my family how to do silent sitting. Now they ask me to do it with them often because they feel relaxed.*

## **Music and singing**

Experiments with plants have found that music – particularly spiritually-inspired music such as Indian classical, can have profound effects, even moreso than silence (Berendt, 1987). So since music can be so effective in nurturing plants, it must also have an effect on nurturing children: “Our nerves, our ganglia, and our cells also vibrate. The law of resonance teaches us: Anything that vibrates reacts to vibrations.” (Berendt, 1987, p.40)

Berendt tells us that in traditional cultures:

“sound is God.... That is, musical sound and the musical experience are steps to the realization of the self. We view music as a kind of spiritual discipline that raises one’s inner being to divine peacefulness and bliss... one of the fundamental goals [a person] works toward in his lifetime is a knowledge of the true meaning of the universe – its unchanging, eternal essence – and this is realized first by a complete knowledge of one’s self and one’s own nature. The highest aim of our music is to reveal the essence of the universe it reflects.... Thus, through music, one can reach God” (p.154).

In the Sathya Sai School of Zambia the students sing in assembly, twice a day, the rhythmic songs of their Bemba tradition. This creates incredibly strong vibrations and the students in fact become so immersed in their singing that they continue unsupervised for fifteen or twenty minutes while the teachers have their early-morning staff meeting. Recently I was part of a group of 150 teachers taught to sing one of these Bemba songs at a conference. Afterwards, many people in the audience remarked on the tremendous surge of positive energy that this rhythmic singing created in the auditorium. Similarly in the Sathya Sai School of Delhi, their traditional Vedic singing is a part of morning assembly and it sets a most uplifting tone for the day to hear more than one thousand little girls singing wholeheartedly. In the Sathya Sai School of Thailand, the children are trained in traditional singing and participate in sessions twice a week, while in the classroom every opportunity is utilized to sing encouraging songs. For example, the younger children are taught to sing, with accompanying actions, words such as:

I am the way I am, and I’m very happy with that.  
I may be short or I may be tall, my body may be thin or fat,  
But it really doesn’t matter at all,  
Because I am the way I am, and I’m very happy with that.

And the older pupils:

Fly higher, dream higher,  
Look within your heart, it’s in there,  
Everything you need is there inside...

and (to the tune of “Yellow Submarine”);

We all live in a world of harmony,  
A world full of love,  
A world full of peace.

### **The role of prayer**

Webster’s dictionary defines prayer as “a solemn address to the Supreme [Divine] Being”. And ‘divine’ is defined as that which is ‘excellent in the highest degree, godlike’. So, in other words, it can be suggested that prayer can be used even outside the context of religion as a way of helping people to get in touch with the ‘highest degree of excellence’ within and around them. In all of the schools I visited, prayer played an important part in helping the students to develop the feeling that they are not alone, that something is there to help them, and as a way to put them in touch with themselves. The following examples of universal prayers show that we can use prayer effectively without offending anyone’s religious beliefs:

To express love and compassion for the whole world:

“May all people, animals and living beings on this Earth be filled with love, peace and joy.”

To express gratitude:

We thank our parents, who gave us life. We thank our teachers, who give us knowledge, and Nature, who gives us food. We will eat this food to be useful, to do our duty to serve others with love and humility.

For self-empowerment or to solve problems:

May I have the courage to make mistakes, the wisdom to recognize them, and the strength to try again.

To recognize their own inner divinity:

If there could be only one thing in life for me to learn  
I would learn to love...  
To respect others so that I may find respect in myself,  
To learn the value of giving, so that if ever there comes a time in my life that someone really needs, I will give,  
To act in a manner that I would wish to be treated; to be proud of myself,  
To laugh and smile as much as I can, in order to help bring joy back into this world.  
To have faith in others,  
To be understanding....  
To stand tall in this world and to learn to depend on myself,  
To only take from this Earth those things which I really need, so there will be enough for others,  
To not depend on money or material things for my happiness, but  
To learn to appreciate the people who love me, my own simple beauty and to find peace and security within myself.  
I hope I have learned all of these things,  
For they are love.

Adapted from “A Teacher’s Prayer”, Donna Dargis  
*Sathya Sai Human Values*,  
Sathya Centre of Telok Blangah,  
Singapore, 1996.



## Selfless Service

Children in the schools I visited are encouraged to participate in selfless service activities to help those who are less fortunate in their communities. The purpose for this is to enable them to recognize the beauty and the “divinity” in others, that is that we are all the same despite different circumstances and appearances. This appears to be a critical component of a spiritual health programme. One teacher told me she had become very concerned that the children had been learning what they needed to know about values education to pass the exam, and would give the answers that they knew the teachers wanted to hear, but that they didn’t reflect this in their actual behaviour. She wanted to find a way to help them to move from knowing about the values to living them, so she carried out an action research project in which she arranged for them to become involved in various service projects. She even took them to visit patients in an AIDS hospital. The children were reluctant to go, and many of them were frightened, but they went and they not only lost their fear of these sufferers, but realized they were all human beings like themselves and learned a lot about love and compassion. She was amazed at the results. Children who, up until that time, were showing very little concern for others, suddenly became very caring and considerate, and really began to put the values into practice in all aspects of their daily lives. She firmly believed that the service projects brought about two essential ingredients of a spiritual person:

- harmony of the head, heart and hands, that is filtering their thoughts through their hearts and consciences before putting them into action, and
- understanding of interconnectedness and unity in diversity,

*‘that is the umbrella of Educare. It is to understand that there is an inherent, intrinsic complete interconnection within all aspects of creation, all aspects of human capacity and capability and all aspects of nature as it is.’ (V. Srinivasan, in Gowing, 2002, p.5)*

## Forgiveness

One of the features of the spiritual education I observed was the role of forgiveness. Rather than trying to avoid pain and negative experiences, the children are shown that these can be seen as sources of valuable lessons.

A school principal told the story of a girl who was caught cheating in an examination. She had written some definitions on a piece of paper. When the principal looked into the reason for cheating, she discovered that the child was having so much difficulty with English (not her native language, but the language of the exam) that she could not understand the important terms needed for the exam. Of course the principal had to punish her by deducting marks. But she then forgave the girl, told her that everyone is entitled to a second chance after making a mistake, and arranged for her to have extra English tuition so she could catch up with the rest of the class. Much later, after she had left the school, the girl wrote to the principal to tell her how important that second chance had been, and how the forgiveness had touched her conscience in a way that punishment in anger could not have done. For the principal too it was an effective strategy for de-stressing because there was no further tension between her and the child, and both were able to forget the incident and make a clean start.



## But this means teachers have to be all these things too!

*“Mere technique or skill or easy teaching techniques will not lead to good results if the teachers themselves do not practice what they preach. Human values cannot be developed by the government spending a great deal of money, nor can they be purchased from the market. Human values are a natural product of the heart.”*

*“Merely teaching human values is not proper teaching. Every teacher must examine, ‘Am I practicing what I am teaching?’ If the answer is ‘no’ how can the teacher expect pupils to follow? Teachers are as water tanks. When filled with pure water the tank will fill the taps with pure water. Students are as taps. We have therefore to clean the tank.”*

Sathya Sai Baba, in Dhall (1993), p.24-25

*“If teachers do not follow the normal ethics of truthfulness etc. how can they instill good habits and values in children?”*

Sathya Sai Baba

*“It is important to note that to say good words, give wise advice to a child has little effect, if one does not show by one’s living example the truth of what one teaches. The best qualities to develop in children are – sincerity, honesty, straightforwardness, courage, disinterestedness, unselfishness, patience, endurance, perseverance, peace, calm and self-control; and they are taught infinitely better by example than by beautiful speeches”*

Kireet Joshi, p.52

Because the schools I visited are based on values education, the teachers are expected to be exemplary role models. But it is not necessarily always easy for them to do so – they face the usual teaching-related stressors like large classes (30-40) and longer working hours than in the regular schools in their communities. Yet it was clear that these teachers were mostly happy teachers and that there is something very special about the ways they interact with their pupils and the environment of love and peace that prevails.

In describing their best practices in the classroom, it is clear that the teachers are again modeling and projecting the values of peace and love. Most indicated the use of silence and/or gestures to maintain discipline, talking less and using techniques such as silent sitting for this purpose. They are firm and give punishment if necessary, but this is done from the base of love. Several of the teachers also commented on the importance of modeling time management strategies and punctuality. While their comments indicated that there is nothing unique or different from the mainstream about their actual teaching and assessment practices, there is again the underlying pattern that the pupils are seen as individuals and as human beings and that the primary concern is to nurture all aspects of their growth. In particular, several of the respondents mentioned the importance of smiling at the pupils – even on occasions when they need to be firm with them. The teachers indicated their belief in the importance of love, compassion and sympathy for their pupils, and it was clear that these values are carried over into their practices continually. What they are really doing, in the words of one of the teachers, is

*“Giving that ‘healing touch’ so much required in today’s world.”*

## Summary

What is spiritual health? (as demonstrated by these schools):

- living the 5 values of truth, right conduct, peace, love and non-violence – especially inner peace and love as foundations of these,
- being in touch with one’s own deep inner resources and intuitive superconscious mind,
- surrendering to a greater force – expressing gratitude, ie doing our best without undue concern for the results of our actions,
- recognizing unity in all beings – fundamental unity between superficial differences in world culture,
- being in touch with ‘who I am’
- knowing their unique gifts and how to use them to help humanity,
- detachment, ie transcending attachments to things or to people,

These are similar to what Maslow referred to as self-actualization (p.439):

- the discovery of a vocation or destiny,
- the knowledge or acquisition of a set of values,
- the realization of life as precious,
- the acquisition of peak experiences,
- a sense of accomplishment,
- the satisfaction of psychological needs,
- the refreshing of consciousness to an awareness of the beauty and wonder of life,
- the control of impulses,
- the grappling with the existential problems of life,
- learning to choose judiciously.

Spiritual health cannot be measured, because it is often much later in life that the evidence manifests.

It is already there in children – we don’t teach it, we elicit it by:

- teaching the vocabulary and concepts of important values (most schools are already doing this with their various values education programmes that are already in place, ie programmes that cater for physical, emotional, mental, social, moral, civic health) – note that the teachers need to develop these just as much as the children do!
- teachers living and modeling and using every opportunity to encourage students to reflect on these values (the way the traditional scholars taught their students in

ancient times), e.g. through Socratic questioning, storytelling, and with the teachers also always working on themselves to grow continually

- transforming the senses, reprogramming them at the subconscious level,
- communicating heart to heart (harmony of head, heart and hands).
- silent sitting,
- ‘prayer’
- music, singing and rhythm

## References

Berendt, J (1987). *The World is Sound*. Destiny Books: Rochester, Vermont

Dhall, P. (1993). *Divinity and Love: The Essence of Human Values Programmes*. Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Gowing, B. (2002). *Educare*. Sri Sathya Sai Organisation of Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Jumsai Na Ayudhya, A. (1997). *The Five Human Values and Human Excellence*. Bangkok: International Institute of Sathya Sai Education.

Jumsai Na Ayudhya, A. (2002). Lectures to Diploma Students, Institute of Sathya Sai Education, Lobpuri, Thailand, May.

Medhananda (1996), ‘The child of the future’, In Dowsett, N., Jayaswal, S. & Srinivasan, M. (Eds., *Education and the Growing Child*. Pondicherry, India: Sri Auribindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences, pp. 77-81.

Mowaljarlai and Malnic, J. (1993). *Yorro Yorro: Everything Standing up Alive*. Broome, Western Australia: Magabala Books Aboriginal Corporation.

Rickard, J. (1994). *Relaxation for Children*. Melbourne: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Rogacion, M. (1994). *The Eastern Enneagram: A Tool for Social Change*. Manila: Peer Counseling Foundation of the Philippines, Inc.

Rozman, J. (1994). *Visualisation with Children: The Art of Concentration and Centering*. Boulder Creek, CA: Planetary Publications.

## Chapter 19. Integrating Education in Human Values Into Mathematics Lessons

In earlier articles I have tried to share some suggestions for making education in human values an integral part of the total school programme, rather than just isolating it to the values education lesson. One way to do this is through existing subjects in the curriculum. Rather than treating values education only as a subject in its own right, this kind of integration has the advantage that schools do not have to abdicate in any way their responsibility to teach the academic skills but simply that they will be rethinking the ways in which they do this (Noddings, 1994). Teachers often mention that they find it relatively easy to draw out values in humanities subjects but that they find it more difficult to do so in mathematics. The purpose of this article, therefore, is to suggest some ways in which values can be drawn out of existing mathematics topics.

In generating the activities described below, teachers have attempted to integrate the five universal human values as shown in the table below:

Five universal values and examples of sub-values

<b>Truth:</b>	accuracy, curiosity, discrimination, honesty, human understanding, integrity, self-reflection, sincerity
<b>Right Action:</b>	courage, dependability, determination, efficiency, endurance, healthy living, independence, initiative, perseverance
<b>Peace:</b>	calmness, concentration, contentment, equanimity, optimism, self-acceptance, self-discipline, self-esteem
<b>Love:</b>	compassion, consideration, forgiveness, humaneness, interdependence, selflessness, tolerance.
<b>Non-violence:</b>	benevolence, co-operation, concern for ecological balance, respect for diversity, respect for life, respect for property.

They have also paid attention to the questions of whether the lesson contributes to:

- bringing out human excellence at all levels: character, academic, and "being";
- the all-round development of the child (the heart as well as the head and the hands);
- helping children to know who they are;
- helping children to realise their full potential;
- developing self-reliance, self-confidence, and attitudes of selfless service

### Re-wording problems

The easiest way of bringing values into the mathematics lesson is by re-wording problems to set them in a values-related context. This has been discussed further in the article *Teaching Values Through A Problem-Solving Approach*. Jumsai (1997) has suggested that even by maintaining constant exposure to positive values in this way, we can be giving children continuous messages about appropriate behaviours. He gave an example of a subtraction problem that appeared in a textbook being used in a lesson he was observing:



*A farmer had 35 cows. A thief stole 14 of them. How many did he have left?*

Jumsai expressed concern that this problem is reinforcing an inappropriate value. He reported, however, that when the teacher reached this problem, he changed it to a more positive context:

*A farmer had 35 cows. He was so generous that he gave away 14 of them to neighbours who were in need. How many did he have left?*

In addition to problem solving, problem posing is an important aspect of mathematics. Pupils are given an answer or an equation, such as:

- $36 - x = 20$
- $x / 5 = 7$
- $x + 5 = 11$
- $6x = 48$

and asked to make up a suitable problem. To bring out the values education theme, they can be asked to relate their problem to a particular value, such as honesty, sharing, persistence or caring for the environment.

Another popular type of problem, which encourages the development of mathematical thinking skills and resourcefulness, is that which does not give enough information. These problems are often called Fermi problems, named after the mathematician who made them popular. When people first see a Fermi problem they immediately think they need more information to solve it. However, common sense and experience can allow for reasonable solutions. The solution of these problems relies totally on knowledge and experience which the students already have. They are problems which are non-threatening, and can be solved in a co-operative environment. These problems can be related to social issues, for example:

- How much money do your parents spend on you in a year?
- How much have they spent on you up till now?
- How much will they have spent on you by the time you finish secondary school?
- How much money will be spent on raising children in the whole country this year?
- How much water do we waste in a year if we leave the tap running while we clean our teeth?
- How much time do we spend in a week saying uplifting things to other people?
- How many starving people could be fed with the grain that is used to raise animals for meat consumption in America?
- How many poor people could we feed with the food we throw away in one day?

Other suitable themes that have been used to integrate values education into mathematical problems, and some extensions of these themes are:

- Proportions of areas planted with different kinds of seeds: As an extension activity, plant some fast-growing seeds (eg beans). Put some in the classroom where you have your music and silent sitting (PEACE). Put some, as a control, in another classroom (with the same amount of light and water) where there is no music or silent sitting. You can also ask the children during their silent sitting to concentrate on sending loving feelings to one of the plants but not to the others (LOVE). Compare the growth of the different plants over time. What do the results tell us about people's needs?
- Budgeting percentages of pocket money for different purposes (RIGHT CONDUCT): As a supplementary service project, children can be introduced to the value of “Ceiling on Desires” – that is to develop self-discipline and self-sacrifice rather than expecting to get everything we want. Each child can be asked to sacrifice something that they think they want (e.g. buy less sweets for a month) and discover how much money they save. The teacher can also participate. At the end of the month, the money they have saved can be used to help somebody in need. Discuss with the children how this makes them feel.
- Percentage: One teacher introduced the percentage lesson with the scenario, ‘In a class of 100 pupils, 17 thought of themselves as truthful children (ie always told the truth and never told a lie). In a class of 200 children, 20 said they were truthful.’ As an extension, he did a survey with the children in his class, in which he gave them a list of values and asked them to think carefully and honestly about which of these values applied to themselves. The survey data were used to develop the percentage activities and at the same time encouraged them to self-reflect about their own good qualities or where they need to improve.

### **Examples of teachers’ ideas for incorporating values education into existing mathematics topics**

#### **Topic:**

Measurement without the use of units: direct comparison, e.g. comparing children and objects according to height (taller, tallest; bigger, biggest)

#### **Values for discussion with pupils:**

Does it always mean that the biggest is ‘better’ than the smallest? What is the truth about this? Is the one who is the tallest in the class necessarily the one who is the heaviest? has the longest armspan? the one who can run the fastest? the one who can hold his/her breath the longest? ie we all have some special thing at which we are outstanding. We need to find that special thing and use it wisely. We don’t need to be jealous of others because everyone’s outstanding thing is different. (NON-VIOLENCE/respect for diversity)

#### **Topic:**

Measurement: Comparison with informal units

#### **Values for discussion with pupils:**

When we measure with informal units it is difficult to make comparisons because the units are all different. The same applies to our daily lives. If we all do our ‘own thing’ it is difficult to compare and we have chaos – how does this relate to our lives in general? (LOVE/interdependence)

**Topic:**

Measurement: Comparison with formal units

**Values for discussion with pupils:**

We need standards/rules so we can all have a unified concept, common ways of looking at things. What are some real-life examples that support this idea? (LOVE/ interdependence)

**Topic:**

Simple and compound interest, percentage

**Values for discussion with pupils:**

Some financial advisors suggest that we should immediately save 10% of any income that comes to us before we spend any of it. If you have a monthly income of [insert amount] and you save 10%, and invest it at an interest rate of [insert rate], how much will you have after 1 year? After 10 years? They also suggest that 10% is a small amount that we will not miss, so we can afford to give away 10% of everything we earn to those who are needy. Over a period of 10 years how many people do you think you could help by giving away 10% of all your earnings? (RIGHT ACTION/efficiency, NON-VIOLENCE/benevolence)

**Topic:**

Division by zero

**Values for discussion with pupils**

$$\text{Happiness} = \frac{\text{Number of desires fulfilled}}{\text{Number of desires entertained}}$$

*Sathya Sai Baba*

Ask students to discuss what happens when the number of desires entertained is zero – i.e. that is when we achieve infinite happiness (PEACE/contentment, self-discipline)

**Topic:**

Games to practise number facts.

Example: Sit in a circle and hold hands. As each child has his/her turn the previous child passes on the pulse of loving energy by squeezing his/her hand and sending support that s/he will get the right answer. Start with a number fact, eg 2x4. The next child answers 8, then continues with a new fact, eg (... x 2 = 16 – note that they do not repeat 8 as part of the game is to listen carefully to the number the first time it is said). The game continues until everyone has had a turn. Conclude by having the children talk about their experiences with the game.

**Values for discussion with pupils**

If we send love and support to other people to help them to get the right answer, rather than being jealous or hoping they make a mistake, it makes them feel good and it also makes us feel good (LOVE/compassion, selflessness).

Games that involve an element of skill and an element of chance promote discussion about:



TRUTH/honesty – not cheating by changing numbers or pretending you have an answer if you don't,

PEACE/self-esteem – everyone has an equal chance in life as long as they put in the work (i.e. to know the answers to the questions)

If some children are clearly disappointed that they do not get a chance to win, this provides a chance to talk about how they feel if somebody else wins and not themselves (jealousy) – how jealousy can damage us, not the other person, so it is better if we feel happy for the person who is successful

**Topic:**

Equivalence of fractions

**Values for discussion with pupils:**

We can have different names and appearances, but we are all the same (NON-VIOLENCE/respect for diversity).

After pupils have looked at the patterns in equivalent fractions, tell the story of Fraction Land and have them make up their own stories using equivalent fractions, that bring out the underlying value.

Once upon a time in Fraction Land there was chaos. All the fractions were constantly arguing with each other.  $\frac{6}{12}$  thought he was the best because he had the biggest numbers on both the top and the bottom, so he was cruel to the fractions with smaller numbers, like  $\frac{2}{4}$  and  $\frac{3}{6}$ .  $\frac{4}{8}$  would not allow his children to play with the children of  $\frac{3}{6}$  because they always cut their food into 6 pieces and  $\frac{4}{8}$  believed that the only proper way was to cut it into 8 pieces – he did not want his children to learn any “wrong” ways of doing things. Mrs.  $\frac{2}{4}$  would shout at Mrs.  $\frac{5}{10}$  in the market because Mrs.  $\frac{5}{10}$  always bought  $\frac{5}{10}$  of a kilogram of everything and Mrs.  $\frac{2}{4}$ , who only ever bought  $\frac{2}{4}$  of a kilogram, thought she was being very greedy. The  $\frac{2}{4}$  family would always cross the street if they saw anyone from the  $\frac{3}{6}$  or  $\frac{4}{8}$  families approaching them because they looked so different that they thought they must be very bad people indeed.

Things became so bad that the fractions all began to pray to their own gods to make their enemies go away. It was no longer a safe or happy place to be. One day a brilliant bright light appeared, and out of it stepped the most beautiful angel the fractions had ever seen. Her dress was painted with golden numbers that said  $\frac{1}{2}$ . Suddenly everything went dark and when the lights came on again the fractions looked at each other in great surprise. They all looked exactly the same as each other. Everyone's tops had turned into a 1 and the bottom parts had turned into a 2. What had happened? Were they still the same Fraction Land people they had always been? Or had the angel turned them into different people?

**Topic:**

Addition and subtraction of fractions

**Values for discussion with pupils**



What have we learned from this rule that tells us fractions and people have the same needs? Fractions need to be the same family before we can add or subtract. It is only by becoming "one family" that we can work together. Ask children to suggest some real-life examples to illustrate this. (LOVE/interdependence, NON-VIOLENCE/respect for diversity)

**Topic:**

Logarithms

**Values for discussion with pupils:**

Illustrate the method of logarithms by considering the sequence of powers of 2. If one person ( $2^0$ ) has love and peace in his/her heart and influences just one other, that will be 2 ( $2^1$ ). If they each influence one other it will be 4 ( $2^2$ ), then 8 ( $2^3$ ), then 16 ( $2^4$ ) etc. Graph these and show the effect of the exponential increase. We all think that we, as individuals, cannot make an impact, but this illustrates that if we change ourselves, "one candle can light many lamps" (PEACE, LOVE).

**Topic:**

Basic algorithms

**Values for discussion with pupils:**

Commutativity, eg  
 $2 \times 3 = 6$ ,  $3 \times 2 = 6$

They may look different but they are the same. Pupils can be encouraged to make lists of things that are the same about all people despite the fact that they look different.

Number sentences, eg

- $5+3+2+1=11$
- $2+3+5+1=11$
- $3+1+5+2=11$
- $4+6+1=11$
- $2+7+2=11$
- $3+3+5=11$

There are many different ways of arriving at the same answer. What does this mean in relation to people? People may do things in different ways but we should not accuse them of being wrong if their way is different from ours. This discussion can be extended to cultural and religious differences between people (NON-VIOLENCE/respect for diversity).

**Topic:**

Equations

**Values for discussion with pupils:**

This teacher began with a silent sitting exercise in which the pupils were asked to visualize a village which was at first surrounded by trees but which changed as the trees were cut down and was eventually destroyed by a flood because there were no trees to protect the soil. The children were asked to think for a moment about, "What can I do right now to prevent this problem?" and what they had learned from reflecting on this scene. This helped them to

realize that everyone has a responsibility to the environment, not just to leave it to others.

The theme of balancing the environment was used to lead into the topic of balancing equations. It could also be related to balance in themselves, i.e. keeping themselves peaceful even when things go wrong, and how they can get back into balance if they feel disturbed or bothered by something (e.g. breathing deeply, doing silent sitting, having a drink of water and lying down for a while). (PEACE/calmness, equanimity, NON-VIOLENCE/concern for ecological balance)

**Topic:**

Area of a parallelogram: cutting and rearranging the parallelogram to form a rectangle

**Values for discussion with pupils**

This is an example of Truth (i.e. “that which never changes), that the area will remain the same no matter how the shape is rearranged. It is good for children to develop a sense that some such things have held true forever and will continue to be true forever. Can they think of any other examples of this kind of Truth? (TRUTH)

**Topic:**

Calculation of income tax

**Values for discussion with pupils**

From where does the government get funds? The government provides roads etc. For us, so we have some responsibility/moral obligation to give something in return, i.e. take taxation as a moral duty towards the society that is doing so much for us, not as a burden.

Talk about tax evaders and the effects of increasing the taxes/increasing the burden of the salaried people, therefore the importance of co-operation (RIGHT ACTION/dependability, NON-VIOLENCE/respect for property).

Regarding concessions for money given in donations: We are not getting anything out of it so why should we donate? We should give from the heart because we want to and because it is going to benefit some people who we may or may not know. We are not here for ourselves only, we have duties to others. If you don't have money you can do it with your hands, but when it comes to income tax the government encourages you to give money for a good cause. This is the concept of selfless service. Don't be stingy with the amount of money you are prepared to part with, compared to being prepared to spend a lot of money for our own purposes (LOVE/compassion).

**Silent Sitting**

In some of my previous articles I have discussed the use of ‘silent sitting’ and creative visualization, and reported some research findings that this technique can have benefits for students’ concentration and academic performance. The following are examples of visualizations that teachers have used in their mathematics lessons (RIGHT ACTION/courage, perseverance, PEACE/concentration, self-esteem).

## **Visualisations for starting a mathematics activity**

### ***Visualisation 1***

Close your eyes and take some slow, steady breaths. Think very hard about the part of your brain where your mathematics skills are kept. Think of that place in your brain as being like a flower. As you breathe in, imagine that the breath is caressing the flower like a soft gentle breeze. As it touches, the flower starts to open slowly, petal by petal, until it is fully open. This flower is your potential to understand mathematics and to do the problems. Now that the flower is open you will find that the mathematical thinking will come to you quickly and easily. Open your eyes now and you can begin your work.

### ***Visualisation 2***

Close your eyes and imagine that there is a candle burning inside your head. Let the light get brighter and brighter until it fills your whole head. Let it light up your brain so that you will be able to think clearly and well. Imagine that the same light is going from you to everyone in your class, so they will be able to think clearly too.

After this visualization the following points can be discussed with pupils:

- You have the knowledge and ability inside your head already.
- Regular use of this kind of visualization will help to improve your concentration.
- Wishing for classmates what you wish for yourself (i.e. to do well) is more healthy than feeling envy or jealousy.

## **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.

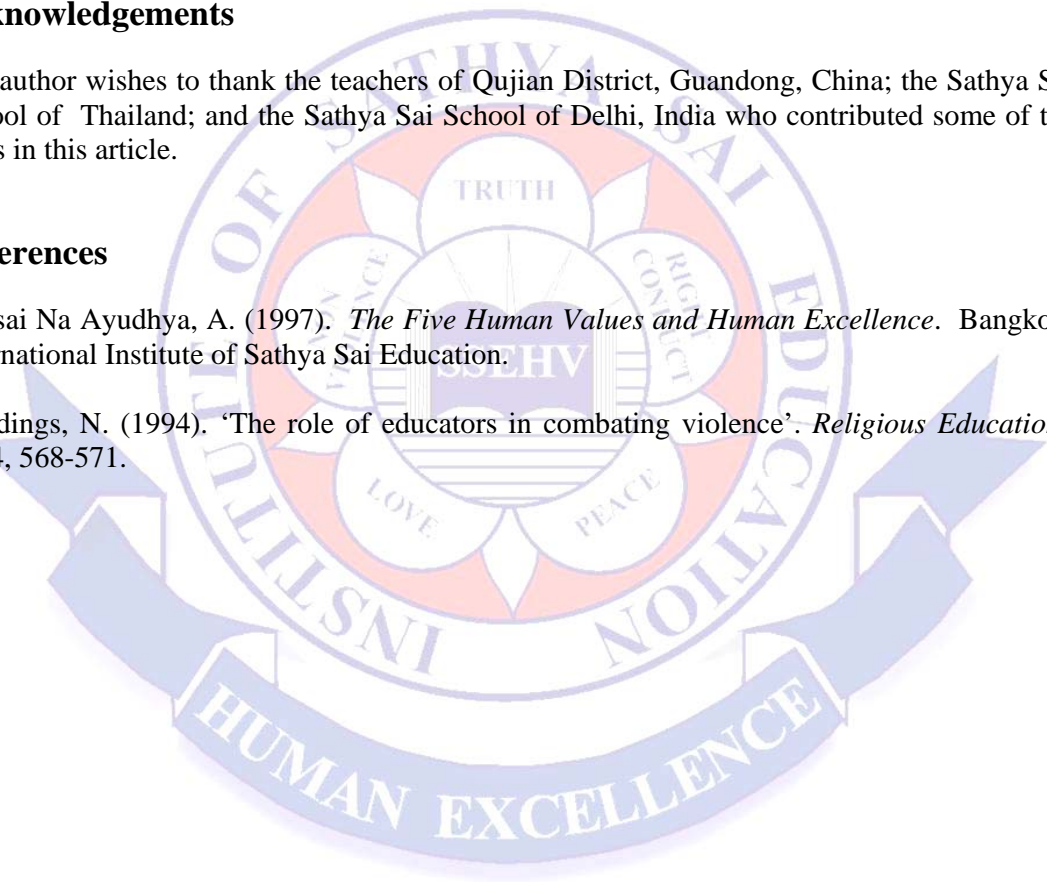
### **Acknowledgements**

The author wishes to thank the teachers of Qujian District, Guandong, China; the Sathya Sai School of Thailand; and the Sathya Sai School of Delhi, India who contributed some of the ideas in this article.

### **References**

Jumsai Na Ayudhya, A. (1997). *The Five Human Values and Human Excellence*. Bangkok: International Institute of Sathya Sai Education.

Noddings, N. (1994). 'The role of educators in combating violence'. *Religious Education*, 89, 4, 568-571.





## Chapter 20. Water Education and Education in Human Values

Increasing attention is being given these days to the need for formal education to promote holistic development that includes spiritual health along with physical, social and emotional well-being. At the same time, there is increasing awareness that while it is important to conduct specific classes in values education that introduce children to the vocabulary and concepts of human excellence, if they are to come to live these values in their daily lives it is important for values education to be an integral part of the entire programme. A programme developed over the past two years in the Sathya Sai School of Zambia, Africa, has been successful in integrating education in human values not only throughout the whole school curriculum but also into the community – so much so that it has captured the attention of the United Nations and has now been adopted in several other African countries. The focus of this project is water education, an important issue in the Zambian culture because of problems with shortages, pollution and corruption and cheating in managing supplies. It was considered an important focus because “water education is embedded in traditional values of solidarity, respect for nature and shared responsibility” (Kanu, 2001). Kanu has suggested that, “Water education can play a strategic role in bringing about positive attitudinal changes among both water consumers and providers, and in the longer term, can help develop a new water-use ethic in society”. It was not, however, treated as an “add on” to the school programme – instead the teachers were asked to find the topics in the existing curriculum that were related to the topic of water, particularly conservation and preservation, and to explore how these topics could be utilized to promote the dual goals of water education and education in human values.

Of course these issues of water preservation and protection are far from limited to Africa. They are relevant to communities all over the world. The purpose of this article, therefore, is to describe some of the activities used in this particular project and other similar ideas, in the hope that other teachers may be able to use them and expand upon them to introduce the dual goals of water education and education in human values. Figure 1 gives an overview of some of the ways in which existing water-related topics can be utilized for this purpose. The important thing to keep in mind is that while the water education aspect is being emphasized, it is also important to be reminding children constantly about the moral, ethical and spiritual issues that underpin what they are learning. The examples given below have been specifically chosen because they are supplementary activities that fit in with existing topics about water education but enable this emphasis on the values education (Figure 2) and water education aspects.

Figure 1: Overview of water and values topics

**Social Studies**

- Sacred lakes and rivers around the world (ie similarities between customs, cultures and religions)
- Ways in which people use rivers and oceans (positive and detrimental outcomes)
- Social issues, eg drinking water projects in other areas: 'Am I willing to share the cost for others who are poor?'; effects of wasting water – less for people further downstream to use

**Health**

- Diseases arising from improper water care
- Wet season diseases and how to prevent them

**WATER**

**Mathematics**

- Conservation (eg amount of water wasted by various activities: Fermi problems, graphs, surveys)
- Surface area and evaporation/composition of water in human body? "If my body is mostly made up of water, who am I really?"

**Science**

- Monitoring pollution: check drinking water to see what pollution has leached into it, filtering water, storage and purification of domestic water
- Plants and water: using plants to counter damaging effects of water eg erosion, transpiration, plants that damage lakes and rivers, succession ie keep the lake free of plants so it doesn't disappear altogether
- Adopt a stream
- Effects of lowering of water table
- How water conservation can benefit farming

**Service Activities**

- Awareness posters
- Changing washers in taps
- Alerting authorities to broken pipes/carrying out temporary repairs (?)
- Helping old people to carry water into the home



Figure 2: Five universal values and sub-values

<b>Truth:</b>	accuracy, curiosity, discrimination, honesty, human understanding, integrity, self-reflection, sincerity
<b>Right Action:</b>	courage, dependability, determination, efficiency, endurance, healthy living, independence, initiative, perseverance
<b>Peace:</b>	calmness, concentration, contentment, equanimity, optimism, self-acceptance, self-discipline, self-esteem
<b>Love:</b>	compassion, consideration, forgiveness, humaneness, interdependence, selflessness, tolerance.
<b>Non-violence:</b>	benevolence, co-operation, concern for ecological balance, respect for diversity, respect for life, respect for property.

### **Example 1: Problem Solving**

- Plant waterer: Design and make a device which will keep your house plants moist while you are on holiday for two weeks. Materials: 1 plastic bag, 1 plastic cup, 1 straw and plant pot in a tray
- The dripper: make a device which will provide ten drips each minute. Materials: plastic cup, sellotape, one pair of scissors, straw.

*Problem Solving in Primary Schools, UK: Liase, April, 1983.*

- What is the best soap for washing clothes in cold water?
- How quickly can materials absorb water?
- How much water is there in milk?
- How fast does water evaporate?
- Why does milk boil over but not water?
- “What if” – exercising imagination (creative writing or discussion)

What if.... all the oceans dried up?  
 .... there was another Ice Age?

**Underpinning values education** (From: *Eckankar, Ancient Wisdom for Today, USA: Eckankar (1995), pp.83-84*

“No problem is given man which is greater than himself. Each being is tested according to his capacity; none are tested beyond it. Each problem which man encounters has a spiritual solution, and each person has his troubles at the point where he is most negative and vulnerable.”

“In any subject you take in school, whether it’s science, maths, history, or art, the secret to success is problem solving. Generally, the solution is contained within the problem. The more experienced you become, the more problems you solve, the more you grow in mastery and confidence, especially with problem

solving on a mental level. The same is true in the school of life. Sometimes, however, the problems we face seem beyond our abilities. Here is our opportunity to grow spiritually. Knowing how to work with the Divine Spirit helps us overcome the fear of facing something that seems beyond our ability. We live a much more joyful, fulfilling life. Knowing how to strike a balance between doing everything in our power to address a problem and handing it over to the [higher power] is the secret of problem solving from a spiritual perspective. Whether the problems we face are financial or health related or spring from a lack of self-discipline, there are spiritual exercises to help us address them. (TRUTH: understanding, integrity, self-reflection; RIGHT ACTION: courage, determination, endurance, perseverance; PEACE: optimism, self-acceptance)

**Example 2: Social Issues** (Developed from documents by the Sathya Sai School of Zambia, Ndola, Africa)

These issues can be used as the basis for group discussions, role playing, writing, debate etc.

Issue	Value-based dilemmas	Value-based solution	Underlying human values
Lack of safe water and basic sanitation facilities could be life-threatening to all – poor and rich alike. How could water and sanitation be made accessible and affordable to the poor?	Am I willing to share the cost of providing water to the poor in needy areas? This may mean that I will have to pay a higher price for water than I do today.	Yes, I care for my poor neighbour. I am ready to pay a higher price for water when I am convinced this will help extending water supply to poor neighbourhoods. I will afford it by cutting down my entertainment expenses	LOVE: caring for and sharing with others RIGHT CONDUCT: self-sacrifice, respect for others, service to others
How to deal with corruption in daily life which ultimately affects sustainability of services.	Should I pay the high water bills every month or make a deal with the meter reader who offers to under-read it or tamper with it so that I can pay a flat rate that will be less costly to me?	Yes I will pay for the actual cost of water I consume. If I follow unscrupulous means, this will set a bad example for my children, whom I want to see grow up as responsible citizens.	TRUTH: truthfulness RIGHT CONDUCT: honesty PEACE: integrity, self-respect
How to promote the concept of water as a social and economic good?	We are told that water is a gift of God. Then why are we asked to pay for water? Water in the river and in the wells, after all, belongs to everybody and should be freely available to all.	Yes, I have an obligation to pay for the water I consume. Water is a limited resource, to be shared by many users. Each must pay according to his need and ability to cover the cost of supply. Nothing is absolutely free in Nature.	RIGHT CONDUCT: respect for others' needs NON-VIOLENCE: awareness of responsibility towards common good, readiness to co-operate, fellow feeling, sense of social justice



**Example 3: Water Quotations** (From Oxford Dictionary of Quotations)

These quotations can be used in language lessons, to encourage pupils to reflect on the underlying meanings.

“Our disputants put me in mind of the skuttle fish, that when he is unable to extricate himself, blackens all the water about him, till he becomes invisible.” (Joseph Addison, 1672-1719). (TRUTH: honesty, integrity, self-reflection; RIGHT ACTION: courage; PEACE: self-acceptance; LOVE: compassion, consideration, selflessness; NON-VIOLENCE: respect for the environment, respect for others’ needs)

“Dripping water hollows out a stone.” (Ovid, 43BC-AD17) (RIGHT ACTION: perseverance)

“I will give unto him that is at thirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. (Bible, Revelations).” (RIGHT ACTION: sharing; LOVE: compassion, selflessness; NON-VIOLENCE: respect for others’ needs)

“Merses profundo: pulchrior evenit. Plunge it in deep water: it comes up more beautiful.” (Horace, iv.65) (TRUTH: self-reflection)

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God.” (Bible, Revelations 22.1) (TRUTH: self-reflection)

“Does a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? (Bible, James 11)” (TRUTH: self-reflection; RIGHT ACTION: courage; PEACE: calmness, acceptance)

“Unstable as water thou shall not excel.” (Bible, Exodus, 49:4) (TRUTH: accuracy, self-reflection, integrity; RIGHT ACTION: dependability; PEACE: calmness, equanimity)

"Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass on a summer day listening to the murmur of water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is hardly a waste of time." (Sir John Lubbock) (PEACE: calmness, contentment)

**Example 4: Activity that Could be Linked to Science Lessons about Ice:** (From Sai Anoo (2001). *Sai Baba’s Teachings on the Direct Flight to Divinity*. Prashanti Nilyam, India: Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust. Pp.21-28.)

**Underpinning values education:**

**Equipment:** Glass of water with several ice cubes floating in it.

An imaginary conversation between the water and the ice cubes:

**Water:** Ice cubes, I am always with you. I am all around you. I am on your left, on your right, in front of you, at your back, above you and below you.

[Ask the children if this statement is true or not. Usually they will claim it to be true.]

**Water:** Ice cubes, you are in me and I am in you.

[Again, ask the children if this statement is true or not. Usually they will claim it to be true, because everyone knows that ice cubes are really just frozen water.]

**Water:** Ice cubes, I am water. You are also water: we are one.

**First Ice Cube:** I am not water. I am an ice cube, I am the most perfect and beautiful form in the whole universe. All my sides are equal, and what is really unique is that each side is at a perfect right angle to the other. How could anyone even imagine that I am mere water? (Then, with great pride and deliberation, he repeats) I am an ice cube.

**Second Ice Cube:** Brother, what you say is absolutely true. But don't forget that I am very special. I am an Indian ice cube, very ancient, and I know all the scriptures by heart.

**Third Ice Cube:** Well, don't forget that I am an American ice cube, from the number one nation in the world. I am more special than anyone here.

**Fourth Ice Cube:** I am sure you have all heard of the small cheque of only \$9 million that I donated to the hospital.

[Discuss with the children what the ice cubes are doing, ie ignorant of the reality that all of them are water, they are so obsessed with their temporary identity that they have no time to even pause and ask the question, "Who am I?"]

Explain to children: Just as a glass container is full of water and ice cubes float in it, the entire space and beyond is full of a formless cosmic power or force in which floats all that we can perceive – galaxies, solar systems, suns, planets and moons, including a little speck called planet Earth and all that exists on it. This power or force cannot be seen with the eyes, but numerous spiritual scientists, who have experienced its omnipresence, omnipotence, and omniscience, have labeled this power differently: God, I, Self, Brahman, Allah, Tao, Supreme Creator, Chu, Om, Over-Soul, Atma, Divinity, Field, Paramatma, etc.

Just as the raw material for ice cubes is water, the raw material for all that we perceive in the seen universe is this power named God. Just as ice cubes are a temporary form of water, all that we perceive is the temporary form *sat* (energy), with the needed amount of consciousness.

It is now well accepted that all matter is temporarily condensed energy and that all galaxies and solar systems have a birth, a life span, and an end, merging back to the permanent source (ie energy) just like ice cubes merge back into water. We know that our solar system is already half way through its life span. At the end, it will collapse and become a black hole.

Discuss with children the fact that we are all like the ice cubes, all made of water and all going back to merge with each other and with the water. So this is why we need to recognize that we are no more important or less important than any others - not like the ice cubes who were each claiming that they were the most important. (TRUTH: understanding; LOVE: interdependence, we are all one; NON-VIOLENCE: respect for diversity, respect for others)

**Example 5: Biology: Transpiration and Translocation** (from Sathya Sai School of Zambia)

Loss of water from stomata:

- The leaf has air spaces
- Water from the roots is used by the leaves for photosynthesis
- Excess water is lost through the stomata (transpiration)

**Underpinning values education:**

- The roots persevere against all obstacles in their paths (hard soil, rocks etc.) to carry out their task of finding water. (RIGHT ACTION: perseverance)
- When the roots find water they do not keep it for themselves, they share it with the rest of the plant so the whole plant can grow to be strong and healthy. (LOVE: consideration, selflessness)

**Example 6: Mathematics: Baby in the Car -Volume and Surface Area** (Charles Lovitt & Doug Clarke (1992), *The Mathematics Curriculum and Teaching Program*, Melbourne: Curriculum Corporation, Vol. 1, p.105-110).

“There is a mathematical principle that as volume decreases, the proportional surface area increases. Knowing this principle helps people to understand why a baby, in proportion to an adult, has a much larger skin area, which is one factor that makes it more vulnerable to dehydration. Knowing this, in turn, makes the mathematical principle real and relevant for children.” In this activity, students use one cube to represent a baby and a 2x2x2 cube to represent an adult. Comparing the volume and surface areas of the small and large cubes, they find that the surface area: volume ratio is 6:1 for the baby and 3:1 for the adult. This means that there is more relative surface area through which moisture can escape from a baby. They can then use extra blocks to make more realistic models of the baby and the adult, to find if the baby is still at a disadvantage” (p.106).

**Underpinning values education:**

The mother has a lot of responsibilities to the child, not only for its physical well-being but also its emotional, moral and spiritual health. We therefore need to understand the needs of the child and that these may be different from the needs of an adult.

(TRUTH: human understanding; RIGHT ACTION: dependability, initiative; LOVE: humaneness; NON-VIOLENCE: respect for life)

**Example 7: Literature Extract** (From A.A.Milne, *The House at Pooh Corner*).

“By the time it came to the edge of the Forest the stream had grown up, so that it was almost a river, and, being grown-up, it did not run and jump and sparkle along as it used to do when it was younger, but moved more slowly. For it knew now where it was going, and it said to itself, “There is no hurry. We shall get there some day.”



**Underpinning values education** (From Benjamin Hoff (1982), *The Tao of Pooh*. London: Mandarin, pp.67-69).

Wu Wei: Literally, Wu Wei means “without doing, causing or making.” But practically speaking, it means without meddlesome, combative or egotistical effort.... The efficiency of Wu Wei is like that of water flowing over and around the rocks in its path – not the mechanical, straight-line approach that usually ends up short-circuiting natural laws, but one that evolves from an inner sensitivity to the natural rhythm of things.

Let’s take an example from the writings of Chuang-tse:

At the Gorge of Lu, the great waterfall plunges for thousands of feet, its spray visible for miles. In the churning waters below, no living creature can be seen. One day, K’ung Fu-tse was standing at a distance from the pool’s edge, when he saw an old man being tossed about in the turbulent water. He called to his disciples, and together they ran to rescue the victim. But by the time they reached the water, the old man had climbed out onto the bank and was walking along, singing to himself.

K’ung Fu-tse hurried up to him. “You would have to be a ghost to survive that,” he said, “but you seem to be a man instead. What secret power do you have?”

“Nothing special,” the old man replied. “I began to learn while very young, and grew up practising it. Now I am certain of success. I go down with the water and come up with the water. I follow it and forget myself. I survive because I don’t struggle against the water’s superior power. That’s all.”

When we learn to work with our own Inner Nature and with the natural laws operating around us, we reach the level of Wu Wei. (TRUTH: human understanding, self-reflection; PEACE: self-acceptance)

**Example 8: Story-telling:** (From Sri Sathya Sai Bal Vikas Trust (2001). *Sri Sathya Sai Educare Lesson Plans*, Mumbai, p.23.

The following is a story from India.

There was an ill-tempered lady. She would get angry for very small reasons. When she became calm, she would feel sorry, but she could not overcome her anger. One day a wise man came to her house. The lady told him, “Sir, I am very sad. I become angry very easily. Please tell me some way out to overcome this habit?”

The wise man told her, “Dear lady, don’t worry. I have a very good medicine to overcome anger. I shall come tomorrow and bring it to you.”

Next day, the wise man came to her with a bottle full of some liquid. Giving it to her, he said, “Whenever you become angry, just take the bottle and sip the liquid until your anger subsides. I will come again after seven days.”

The lady started taking the medicine. Whenever she became angry, she would start sipping from the bottle.



After seven days, the wise man came as promised to find out the outcome. The lady said with great happiness, “Sir, you have saved me. You gave me such a good medicine and my anger has gone. Please tell me what the medicine was.”

The wise man replied, “The bottle contains nothing but pure water. Water gives coolness to the mind and heart. So your anger has gone.”

**Underpinning values education:**

Discuss the wise man’s theory that water gives coolness to the mind and heart which helps us to deal with anger. What other strategies can we use to deal with anger so that it doesn’t build up inside us and harm us or become expressed in a way that harms others? (TRUTH: human understanding, self-reflection; PEACE: self-acceptance)

The following Science experiment can also be used as a basis for discussing this issue.

**Example 9: Science Experiment: Water Contracting and Expanding when Cold and Hot.**

Fill a bottle with cold water and another one with hot water. Label the bottles. Cover them and set them aside until the next day. Observe the water levels. (The hot water has cooled so it is the same temperature as the cold water, and when cool, it does not occupy as much space as when it was hotter.)

**Underpinning values education:**

Discussion question: Is this principle true of all liquids? What happens to us when we get ‘heated’ by anger? (TRUTH: human understanding, self-reflection; PEACE: self-acceptance)

**Example 10: Creative Writing - Similes Using Water**

Make up similes that go with feelings/emotions/values that help us to deal with the ups and downs of life, for example:

“Life is like a river – go with the flow.”

Feelings can include the following: comfortable, angry, bored, frightened, sensible, rare, popular, nervous, miserable, lonely.

**Example 11: Language and Art - Water Photography** (From Masuro Emoto: *Messages from Water*, IHM General Research Institute, HADO Kyoikusha Co. Ltd, Vol.1 & 2)

Masuro Emoto took samples of water from various sources and froze drops. At the moment the ice started to melt, he took highly-magnified photographs of the droplets. He experimented with exposing the water to different stimuli, such as different types of music, prayer, anger etc. The following examples show droplets from the same water sample after one had been exposed to the message, “You make me sick. I will kill you,” and the other to the message, “Thank you.”

**Underpinning values education:**

If these words have such a dramatic effect on water, what kind of effects might they have on people? Discuss experiences of somebody's words hurting you. What can you do to prevent yourself from being hurt by others' words and actions? What can you do to prevent your words and actions from hurting others? (PEACE: calmness, equanimity; LOVE: compassion, respect for diversity, respect for life)

## Reference

Kanu, V. (2001). Water Education: A Human Values Approach. Paper presented to meetings of the United Nations, New York and Geneva.



## Chapter 21. Friendship Day: Integrating values education into the curriculum

Most of the articles I have previously written for *International Education Daily* have focused on ways in which education in human values can be integrated indirectly into existing curricular and extra-curricular activities in schools. In this one, I will describe a more direct integrated learning approach, in which the values education itself becomes the central focus of the activities while also incorporating the regular curricular skills and knowledge. There is, of course, nothing new about using integrated cross-curricular approaches to teaching, which have been used effectively for decades. As a vehicle for education in human values, it is particularly empowering if the topic and the content are chosen by the children (for example, Boomer, 1982) and the children are given the opportunity to discuss the values that they believe have been experienced during the activities.

The rationale for using an integrated approach to education in human values and of allowing the children to choose the project or topic for themselves is based on the notions that:

- it is difficult, if not impossible, to focus on just one value without acknowledging the interactive and synergetic effects of many,
- the standard way of teaching about values hasn't always been successful in terms of children carrying over what they learn in the lesson into their daily practices,
- children are motivated to study something that interests them,
- choosing their own topic helps them to get in touch with their own special gifts, talents, interests and to start to draw them out.

The challenges for the teacher in this kind of activity are:

- to be alert for every opportunity to draw out the values in as many different ways as possible, including silent sitting (to help them go within and find solutions to healing themselves and the environment), quotations, stories, music, art, role-playing, and doing service projects,
- to really understand the values in order to be able to do this,
- to create opportunities to model and encourage the harmony of head, heart and hands by talking about the values they are experiencing from the activities and constantly practising the art of examining ideas that arise in the **head** by running them through the filter of the **heart**/conscience before putting into action with the **hands**.

## **Sample topic: Friends**

Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive. -- [Anais Nin](#)

You can have everything in life you want if you'll just help enough other people to get what they want! -- [Zig Ziglar](#)

One person caring about another represents life's greatest value. -- [Jim Rohn](#)

Every man is the architect of his own fortune. You will never have a friend if you must have one without faults. -- Italian Proverb

If you put out another's candle, you also will be in the dark.-- German Proverb

Friendship is a topic frequently chosen by children because it is one that is so important to them. And of course, as the quotes above indicate, Friendship is in itself a fundamental human value. Figure 1 gives an example of an integrated cross-curricular programme on the topic of "Friends" that has been developed with the education in human values that can be elicited from this topic being the primary rather than a lesser aim. It utilizes not only the conventional curriculum areas but also activities such as silent sitting and service that are important components of education in human values (for more details, please refer to my earlier articles, *Silent Sitting And Creative Visualisation in The Classroom and What is Spiritual Health and How Can Schools Achieve It?*). Readers are invited to reflect on the values that can be elicited from this topic (see Figure 2 for examples of universal human values).

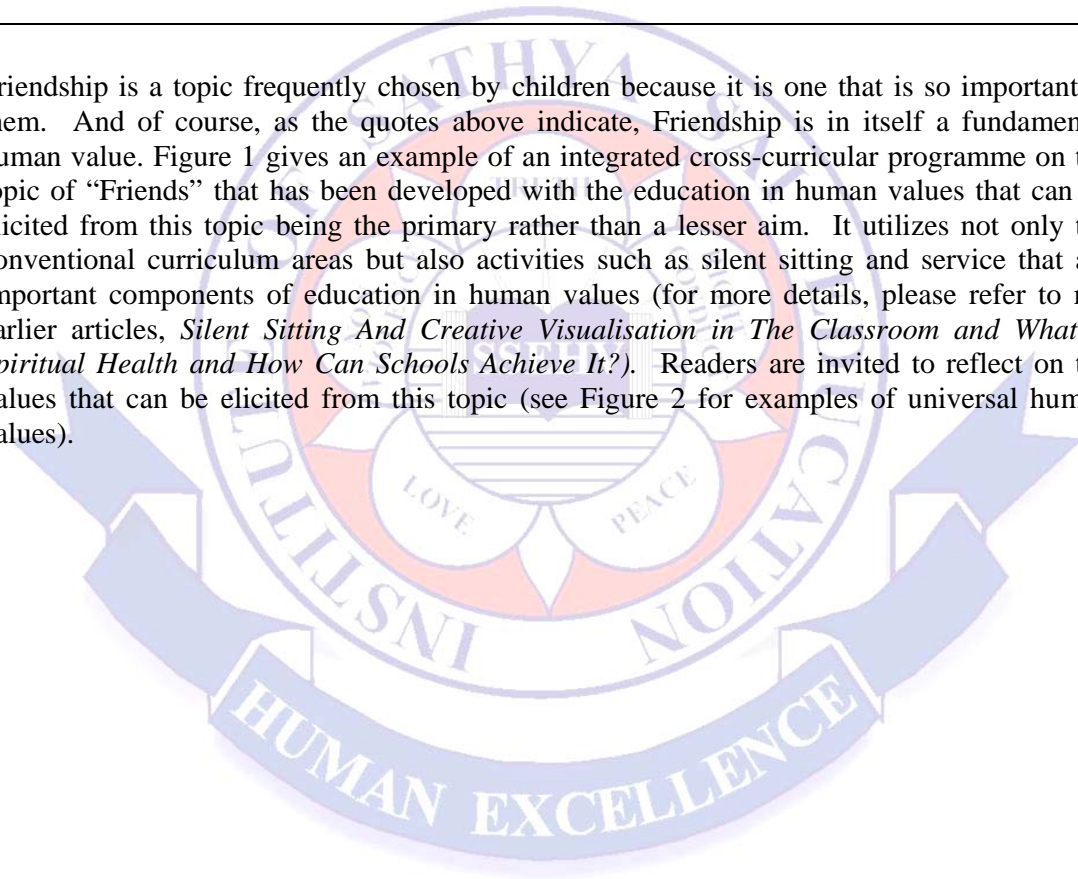




Figure 1: Example of integrated cross-curricular programme: “Friendship”

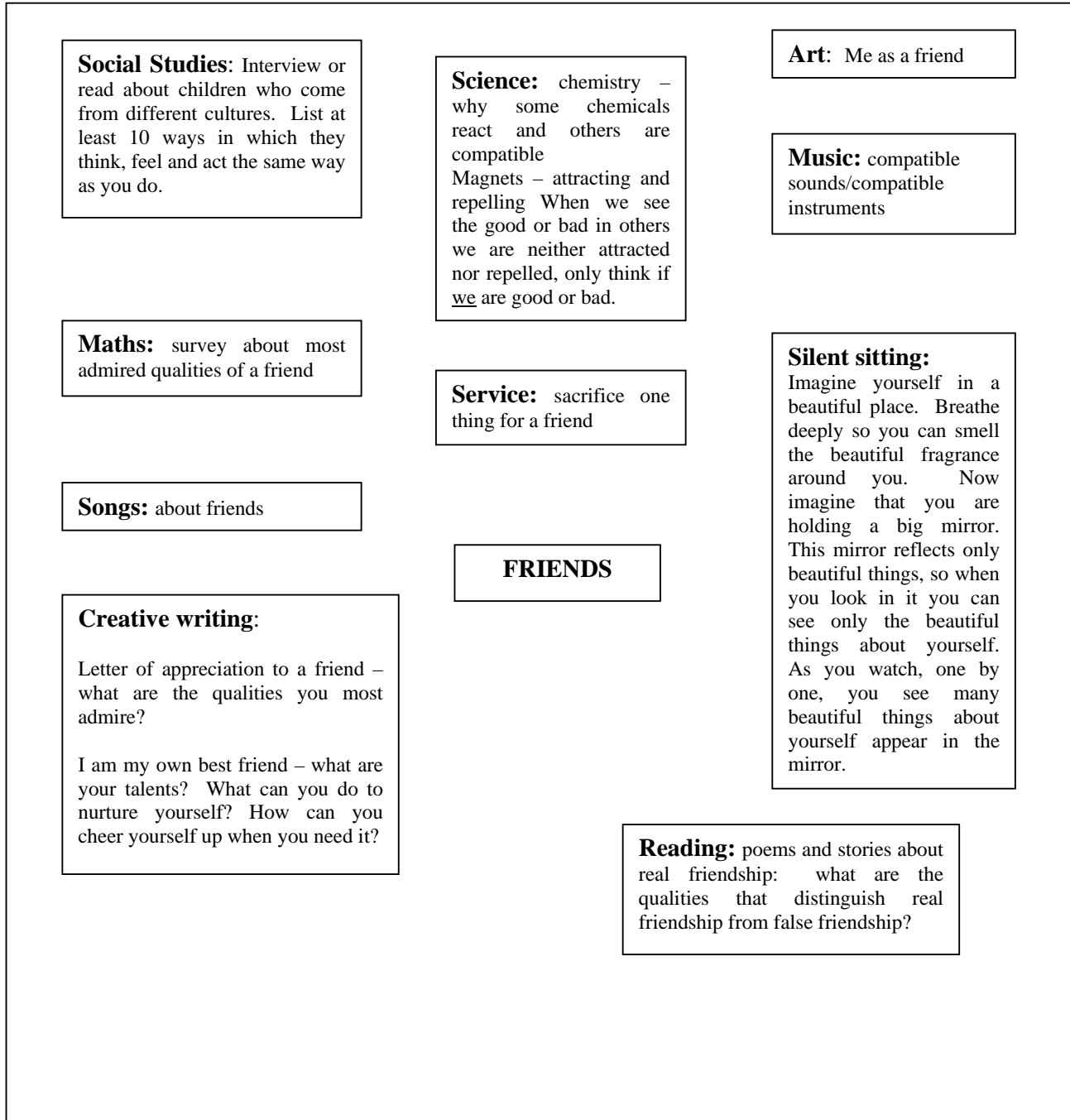


Figure 2: Five universal values and sub-values

<b>Truth:</b>	accuracy, curiosity, discrimination, honesty, human understanding, integrity, self-reflection, sincerity
<b>Right Action:</b>	courage, dependability, determination, efficiency, endurance, healthy living, independence, initiative, perseverance
<b>Peace:</b>	calmness, concentration, contentment, equanimity, optimism, self-acceptance, self-discipline, self-esteem
<b>Love:</b>	compassion, consideration, forgiveness, humaneness, interdependence, selflessness, tolerance.
<b>Non-violence:</b>	benevolence, co-operation, concern for ecological balance, respect for diversity, respect for life, respect for property.

### Example: Friendship Day at Deloraine Primary School

One very interesting example of the use of Friendship as a values-permeated topic was utilized by Grade 3/ 4 teacher Elizabeth Thrush at Deloraine Primary School, a secular government primary school in Tasmania, Australia. The Tasmanian Education Department has recently developed a new policy document *Essential Learnings* (Department of Education, Tasmania, 2002). One of the emphases of this document is developing the child's holistic wellbeing:

“Maintaining personal wellbeing requires an understanding of the issues around physical, social, emotional and spiritual health and the development of the ability to manage changes and to act for a lifestyle that is healthy, socially rewarding and fulfilling” (Personal Futures: Maintaining Wellbeing, p.25)... Learners grow in their understanding about the factors that contribute to physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health of self, others and the communities....: (p.26).

In keeping with this policy, this particular school has a focus on equipping children with the skills and attitudes required as a basis the growth of personal wellbeing. There is no one particular values education programme that is followed in the school, but rather a wide range of resources is utilised. Among other things, each fortnight there is a cross-school focus on one particular value, with one class taking responsibility for leading the activities. The school had previously had a Friendship fortnight. However, there was a problem with some out-of-class bullying by some of the Grade 4 girls in her class, so Elizabeth decided to have an integrated Friendship Day in her classroom. The following is a description of the activities she and the children did and a discussion of the values underlying these activities. These examples give a good illustration of how effectively education about personal wellbeing can be integrated into the regular programme.

### Groupwork: What is a friend?

This activity, done with the class before the Friendship Day, utilized de Bono's (1987) “Six Hat Thinking”. Apart from emphasizing the values associated with friendship, the group nature of this activity continued to promote the concepts of co-operation and interdependence

as well as the values of critical thinking, problem-solving, curiosity, discrimination, human understanding, integrity, self-reflection and sincerity.

Three of de Bono's six hats were utilized in this activity, with the actual questions being developed by Elizabeth:

- black (the negatives), i.e. "What are the negatives about having a friend?"
- yellow (the positives), i.e. "What are the positive things about having a friend?"
- red (the emotions), i.e. "How do you feel about having a friend?"

In the discussion the teacher helped the children to conclude that the positive things about having a friend were stronger than the negatives (which included things like not always getting to choose their own games). Clearly, many values were inherent in this activity. These include appreciation of other peoples' qualities and the importance of supporting and helping others when they are in need. Even the "black hat" activity could be utilized to help children to realize that, while it is good to have friends most of the time, there are some times when we can appreciate being alone and in control of our own independence (an equally important component of holistic wellbeing).

#### **What is a friend? Friendship flowers**

Earlier in the term, Elizabeth had provided a cardboard cutout of a person and the class had brainstormed about what a friend is, filling in the cardboard shape with their answers. They had also done activities on "positive tracking", that is looking for positive things in themselves and others. The friendship flower activity was a follow-on from this previous activity, and was adapted from Auton (1994). The children created cardboard flowers with the word "Friendship" in the middle and, on each petal, they were asked to write something about Friendship that they had reflected on from the previous activities and that was important to them. One example is shown below.



The purpose of this activity was to draw out from the children personal values including understanding what the qualities of a friend really are (human understanding), reflection on themselves as friends (self-reflection), appreciation of qualities like dependability, self-acceptance and acceptance of others, tolerance, respect for people's differences as well as their similarities, and compassion.

### **Friendship collage**

In this activity the children were grouped randomly into groups of 4. They were asked to create a group collage on the topic of friendship. No verbal or written communication was permitted, even though Elizabeth had to remind them from time to time about this rule.

The purpose of this activity was to encourage the children to concentrate on "sensing" what the other people in the group were trying to achieve and creating something in harmony with what they wanted to do. The underpinning value of the activity was to develop sensitivity to others by practising the skill of communication from heart to heart, since verbal and even non-verbal signals were not allowed.

Not only did the children produce some collages that showed deep insight about the nature of friendship (see below), but Elizabeth was also amazed at the way in which they were able to work in unison without any overt communication. She commented that, "It was just amazing to watch. Most children were able to get in and co-operate much better than they do when they are talking." The children experienced the feeling of truly working in unison rather than as individuals and of being sensitive to the needs of those around them in a way that could not have happened if other forms of communication had been allowed.



## Sharing reading

This was a free reading activity in which the children sat in pairs or threes to read a favourite book or story together. It was included just for the sake of having fun with a friend, because the children usually read individually in class. The values underpinning this activity were sharing and co-operating, and simply appreciating some quality time spent with a friend.

## Group singing

Group singing of songs that promote positive feelings and celebrate healthy values is a powerful way of promoting inner peace, creating a sense of hope, and emphasising positive values. Jumsai (1997) argues that if children are exposed to negative stimuli through music and media, then when a stressful or confrontational situation arises they will subconsciously recall these stimuli and hence respond in a negative or violent way, whereas if they are exposed to positive stimuli it is these that will trigger their response to crises. In this session the children sang a range of original and popular songs, including “Stand by Me” (by King, Leiber and Stoller, 1975, sung by John Lennon) and “I Can See Clearly Now” (Johnny Nash, 1972). The latter was linked to the previously-mentioned activities on positive tracking. The following original song was composed by Elizabeth:

### Friends will see you through

What do you do if your friend is sad?  
Do you whinge, complain and moan?  
No! Say, “Hey, mate, what’s bothering you?  
What’s making you so blue?”

If your friend won’t talk,  
Tell them that you care,  
And you’ll do whatever you can do.  
Be the best friend that you can be,  
‘Cause friends will see you through.  
Friends will see you through.  
Friends will see you through.

It can be seen clearly that the underpinning values in these songs include loyalty and self-acceptance and acceptance of others

## Conclusion

To conclude the Friendship Day, the children coloured in and completed a card that said, “I like you for a friend because....” (from Auton, 1994). These were exchanged with their “buddies” – that is the peer support partners that were established at the beginning of the year to enable Grade 4 children to help the Grade 3s. A few days later, the children were asked to write about what they had experienced on the day. Some of their comments are shown below:

“I learnt that true friends always stick together even in rough situations and they can help you through the bad times.” (John)

“I learned a bit more about Friendship Day and I learnt that you shouldn’t judge people before you get to know them and that not all people are what they seem to be. I thought Friendship Day is about getting along with people and getting to know them in different ways.” (Tammy)

“It’s about being nice and sharing and you don’t hate or be mean. You use respect and responsibility and you enjoy friendship.” (Jo)

“Now I know more about being friendly I am going to try harder.” (Michelle)

“I learnt that a friend is someone who works well, listens to what people are saying, comforts them, respects them and so on. I learnt that I can work in a group without talking.” (Debbie)

“I learnt that there is more to being a friend than sticking up for them.” (Sonia)

Elizabeth realizes that it is very difficult to assess the effects of this kind of programme on children’s behaviour because it might not be until much later in their lives that the values are really manifested. However, she was pleased to note that the bullying problem that had been one of the initial incentives for the day, while not having been completely solved, has since improved significantly.

Figure 3 shows a summary of the main values that were focused on during these Friendship Day activities. When compared to the more complete list of values shown earlier in Figure 2, it can be seen that from this integrated project on a topic which in itself was a very important fundamental human value, many opportunities were created for the children to experience, reflect on and discuss a very wide range of human values.

**Figure 4: Examples from five universal values and sub-values that were drawn out during the Friendship Day**

<b>Truth:</b>	human understanding, self-reflection, sincerity
<b>Right Action:</b>	dependability
<b>Peace:</b>	calmness, concentration, , self-acceptance, self-discipline, self-esteem
<b>Love:</b>	compassion, consideration, interdependence, selflessness, tolerance.
<b>Non-violence:</b>	co-operation, respect for diversity

## References

Auton, J. (1994). *Education in Human Values, Lesson Plans 1-3*. Ilminster, UK: Human Values Foundation.

Boomer, G. (1982). *Negotiating the Curriculum: A Teacher-Student Partnership*. NSW: Ashton Scholastic

de Bono, E. (1987). *Six Thinking Hats*. London: Penguin.

Jumsai Na Ayudhya, A. (1997). *The Five Human Values and Human Excellence*. Bangkok: International Institute of Sathya Sai Education



## Chapter 22. Finding Inner Potential

Last year while I was visiting a village in India, a friend had invited me to spend the night at her home so I could join her family and friends for a special early-morning celebration in honour of the birthday of the Hindu god Rama. After the celebration the guests dispersed. Suddenly I realized that my friend was not there, and as suddenly she came back into the room with five little girls, who sat in a row in the kitchen. My friend's mother put a food offering on a plate for each little girl, along with a one rupee coin for each. Then the girls stood up and, taking a pitcher of water, she gently washed the feet of each one, and as quickly as they had come they were gone again, continuing on their way to school. These little girls had been invited into the house and given such respectful treatment because of the belief that every little girl is an embodiment of the goddess Durga, and by paying respect to the girls, the family was paying respect to the goddess within each of them. This custom is a simple but a beautiful one – to recognize the divinity within a child is paramount to acknowledging that same divinity within each and every one of us. Five little girls, passing by on their way to school, were for a few moments recognized as divine. How empowering it would be if we could only remember that in every child is an emerging god or goddess, to be nurtured like an opening flower, not just on special festival days but in even the ordinary times and the times when they are naughty or frustrating. To see the divine beauty within and to cherish it and allow it to grow is the greatest gift of love we can give to our children.

This incident made me think of the opening lines of my favourite song, Whitney Houston's *The Greatest Love of All*:

I believe the children are our future.  
Teach them well and let them lead the way,  
Show them all the beauty they possess inside.  
Give them a sense of pride....

### Finding inner potential

*'The first duty of the teacher is to help the student to know himself and to discover what he is capable of doing'*

The Mother (1996), p.16

Everyone has something unique and special about them and it is our responsibility as teachers to help them to find and to value what this inner potential is and how it can be used to contribute positively to the student's **own** life, for the **whole** of life, as well as to contribute to society (Dowsett, 1996). To do so is quite a challenge considering the many roles and responsibilities of a teacher, but to help a pupil to develop self-fulfillment is undoubtedly one of the most valuable gifts we can give.

In a recent survey of some of Australia's most gifted young musicians, they were asked to explain why they play music. Their answers included:

- Because I love it. It's why I get up in the morning. I can't ever imagine doing anything else!!!!



- Artistic expression. I adore it to my soul's depth.
- It's become a part of my life that I can't be without.
- I love being part of the music. I love listening to it, feeling it and physically creating it all simultaneously.
- To let out the music that is in my head, to communicate with other people. My main reason for making music is that I love doing it.
- The emotion that music conveys is unparalleled in my experience and it has a great effect on me.
- Because I can express myself through music and I want to work at something I love and actually enjoy doing!
- I can't imagine my life not doing it.
- I love music. It is what I am passionate about. There isn't really anything else that I love to do hours and hours a day that I get so much stimulation, inspiration and enjoyment from.
- I love music and the joy it gives myself and others.
- ...utterly unexplainable. Ask me why I breathe

Clearly these young people are fortunate in that they have been able to recognize their own gifts and encouraged to utilize them to help others, and it's obviously something that brings them great fulfillment.

Each has his particular duty, task, role as an individual. Do that duty, carry on that task, play that role as best you can; that is how one can fulfil himself.

Sathya Sai Baba

The quotes below suggest that this should be one of the foremost aims of education, to help **every** individual to find that special gift that will enable him/her to be fulfilled and a useful contributor to society.

It is the task of the teacher to help the taught in self-discovery and thus make him realize his hidden potentialities.... As one thinks, so he becomes is the old saying.

...spirit of education lies in developing self-awareness and such a consciousness as removes the barrier between the body and the soul.... 'Each individual must find his own place, the place which he can alone occupy in the general concert, and he must give himself entirely to it, not forgetting that he is playing only one note in the terrestrial symphony and yet his note is indispensable to the harmony of the whole...' [quote from The Mother]

Jayaswal (1996)

There is a genius within every one of us – we don't know it. We must find the way to make it come out – but it is there sleeping, it asks for nothing better than to manifest; we must open the door to it.

The Mother

We have forgotten that the most important factor of education is the instrument of knowledge, the student himself, not how much objective information he can absorb. It is the student who is being educated and it is the student who must contribute something from himself that no one else can give. It is this contribution that will enrich his life and in consequence the life of the nation.

Dowsett (1997)

The first essential is to educe that greater potential lying dormant within every human being, that wealth of riches yet to be evolved in man as his true contribution to the human race.

Dowsett (1996)

Man today is trying to master every kind of knowledge, but is unable to discover his own true nature.

Sathya Sai Baba

As I read these quotations I could not help but wonder about the extent to which we are **really** doing this in schools. Years ago I came across the story *The Animal School* (see below) and the question has stayed in my mind of whether we are in fact creating this scenario more than that described in the quotes.

The Animal School (Dr. George H. Reevis, Assistant Superintendent, Cincinnati Public Schools, 1939-1948)

Once upon a time, the animals decided they must do something heroic to meet the problems of “a new world”. So they organized a school. They adopted an activity curriculum consisting of running, climbing, swimming and flying. To make it easier to administer the curriculum *all* of the animals took *all* the subjects.

The duck was excellent in swimming, in fact better than his instructor; but he made only passing grades in flying and was very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to stay after school and also drop swimming in order to practise running. This was kept up until his web feet were badly worn and he was only average in swimming. *But average was acceptable in school so nobody worried about that except the duck.*

The rabbit started at the top of the class in running, but had a nervous breakdown because of so much make-up work in swimming.

The squirrel was excellent in climbing until he developed frustration in the flying class where his teacher made him start from the ground up instead of from the tree top down. He also developed a “charlie horse” from over-exertion and then got C in climbing and D in running.

The eagle was a problem child and was disciplined severely. In the climbing class he beat all the others to the top of the tree, but insisted on using his own way to get there.

At the end of the year, an abnormal eel that could swim exceedingly well, and also run,

climb and fly a little, had the highest average and was valedictorian.

### **Looking beyond what we normally see**

A diamond is first just a dull piece of stone, a hard pebble, only when it is cut by a skilful artisan does it become a multi-faceted flame of fire.

Sathya Sai Baba

Matthew suffered from a specific learning disability that caused him to struggle with formal school subjects. He found reading, spelling and maths particularly difficult to comprehend. He had plenty of creative story ideas in his head, and wanted to be able to convey them, but his disability prevented him from being able to do this. He became frustrated, bored and rebellious. He loved to play with modeling clay and he spent a lot of time doodling on scrap paper instead of doing his work in class. Where his previous teachers had punished him for not paying attention, his Grade 4 teacher recognized his latent artistic talent. She gave him big pieces of paper and enough time to draw things properly. With two or three other children who were the same, he was allowed to do more artwork instead of other things and they were encouraged to prepare entries for a competition. Matthew reflected that this, “Made me feel pretty good, as if I was the number one student. This teacher and another one who taught me later were very encouraging to believe in me – made me feel comfortable – whereas the others made me feel separated, those two made me feel I could be myself and express myself”. Matthew went on to develop his artistic gifts and now he not only derives income as an artist, but brings great pleasure to himself and to others who have a chance to share his work.

David was another child who was regarded as a “slow learner”. He was a big, strong boy who worked on his family farm before and after school. He had little time left to do his homework. His handwriting was almost illegible and, although he tried very hard, he could never master the idea of spelling. But when his Grade 6 teacher took the trouble to try to decipher his writing, she discovered that it was concealing some of the most beautiful, sensitive poetry that she had read from a child of this age. With his gift revealed, it was possible to help David to present his work in a way that it could be shared with others.

Stephen was a very gifted child academically, but emotionally and socially very immature. He was ostracized by his classmates because he was unable to relate to them and they could not understand his sense of humour. From his conversation and the books he read, his Grade 5 teacher realized that he had a particular aptitude for science. She placed him in a group with two other children who were also scientifically gifted and allowed them time to work on special projects together during class time, instead of doing some of the other class work that they already knew how to do. As the result of this shared interest, a strong bond developed between these children and Stephen was able to find a friend who “accepted” him. Stephen went on to pursue his love for science as his career, and he maintained the friendship with his two like-minded Grade 5 classmates.

Fortunately, recent writers such as Gardner (1985, 1999) have reminded us that there are many different dimensions of “intelligence”: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist, spiritual and existential, which are all valuable and should be cultivated. However, as in all three of the cases



described above, it was not immediately obvious for the teachers to see the diamonds concealed within the rough stones. Left undiscovered, all three of these children would have continued to suffer from a sense of inferiority:

*'...acting like a poison in the soul – forever making the child dissatisfied. Such a dissatisfaction is not one which leads to useful activity. It remains fruitless because it is fed by a disproportionate ambition. This ambition may be seen twisting itself into character traits and personal mannerisms. It acts like a perpetual irritant making the individual supersensitive and on guard lest he be hurt or trodden upon. Types of this nature – and the annals of Individual Psychology are full of them – develop into persons whose abilities remain dormant, persons who become, as we say, “nervous” or eccentric. Persons of these types, when driven too far, wind up in the world of the irresponsible and the criminal because they think only of themselves and not of others.'*

Adler (1996), pp. 49-50

In a class of 35 children, it is probably not realistic to expect the teacher, no matter how sensitive, to be able to recognize the unique gifts of every child simply from observation. However, it is important to talk to children about the fact that every one of us has a unique potential – even to share with them some of the quotations used in this article – and it is possible to guide them to find their own gifts. Below are some suggestions for whole-class activities that can help to do this.

### **Helping them to find what they want**

*The **only thing** you should do assiduously is to teach them to know themselves and choose their own destiny, the path they will follow; to teach them to look at themselves, understand themselves and to will what they want to be.... But what is very important is to know what you want. ... They must discover in themselves the thing or things which interest them most and which they are capable of doing well....*

The Mother

### **Silent sitting and creative visualization**

One way to help people to find their potential is through the regular use of creative visualization (for more details please refer to the earlier paper *Silent Sitting and Creative Visualisation in the Classroom*). Following is one example of a visualization that can be used with people of all ages who are seeking to identify their purpose in life.

#### Opening yourself to find your goals in life

Allow yourself to become relaxed and comfortable. Take a few minutes to concentrate all of your attention on your breathing. Consciously allow it to slow down to a steady, even flow. As you breathe in, feel your entire body and mind filling with clean fresh air that will help to give clarity to your thinking. As you breathe out, expel any stale air or negative



thoughts that might interfere with your thinking.

Place your hands on your hear area and feel the warmth that they create around your heart. Then place your hands on your forehead and allow their warmth to fill your head. Next place them on your solar plexus and let the warmth flow into that area. When you are filled with warmth it will be easy for you to incubate your thoughts and ideas.

Imagine that you are inside your own mind and that it is like an archive filled with rows and rows of shelves. Stored on these shelves is all the knowledge and wisdom that your higher intelligence has accumulated and stored for many years – knowledge of which your conscious mind has retained only the smallest fraction. Deeply stacked away on one of the shelves is the information you are seeking, about your mission in life and the immediate goals which can help you towards fulfilling this mission. Ask the keeper of the archives to help you to find what you are looking for. Feel yourself being guided to the appropriate shelf and finding the book or container where the information is stored. As you open the receptacle, ask yourself the question, “What are the goals I am looking for to make my life complete and meaningful?” Open the book or container and look inside. There you will find something which will give you what you are seeking. It might be an object, or a word, or a thought. If you cannot see this clearly, do not be concerned. As long as you keep your mind open, the message will become clear to you – perhaps not straight away – perhaps tomorrow, or next week. It might be revealed through a thought that you have, through a dream, through somebody you meet, or something you read about. You can be confident that when the time is right for you, the message will be delivered loudly and clearly.

When you are ready, return the container to its place on the shelf and thank the keeper of the archive for helping you. Slowly leave the place and return your awareness to the room where you are sitting. Move your fingers and toes slightly, then stretch your arms and legs to make certain that your awareness is fully back in the room. Please remember – do not be disappointed if the answers to your question do not appear immediately. Remain patient and open-minded, and you will be amazed at the way in which they are revealed to you.

## **The Interestalyzer**

(Joseph S. Renzulli, Creative Learning Press Inc., P.O.Box 320, Mansfield Center, Connecticut 06250)

This questionnaire was designed to help students to become more familiar with some of their interests and potential interests. They are asked to think about some of the things they would like to do if given the opportunity. They are invited to think about the questions for a few days before answering, and not to discuss their ideas with others in case others' influence might prevent them from exploring some of their own interests. Examples of the questions include:

1. Pretend that your class had decided to put on a play to raise money for charity. Each person has been asked to sign up for his or her first, second or third choice for one of the jobs below. Mark your first choice with a 1, second choice with a 2 and third choice with a 3:

*actor/actress; director; design costumes; make costumes; light/sound person; design scenery; build and paint scenery; announcer; playwright; musician; dancer; singer; business manager; design advertisements; photographer*

2. Pretend that someday you will be the famous author of a well-known book. What type of book will it be (History, Science, Poetry, Fiction, Fashion, etc.) and what will the book be about?
3. Pretend that you can invite any person in the world to be a teacher in your class for two weeks. Who would you invite?
4. Pretend that a new time machine has been invented that will allow famous people from the past to come back to life for a short period of time. If you could ask some of these people to give a talk to your class, who would you invite?
5. Are you a collector? Do you collect stamps, seashells, cards, or other things? List the things that you collect and the number of years you have been collecting.
6. What are some of the things you would like to collect if you had the time and money?
7. Pretend that your class is going to take a trip to a large city. After visiting the zoo, the historical sites and going to a sports event, each student can choose one place where he or she can spend an entire afternoon. Mark your first, second and third choices:  
*art museum; television studio; science museum; stage play; opera; newspaper office; fashion show; hospital; museum of natural history; ballet; parliament; symphony orchestra; stock market; computer center; court room; planetarium*
8. Newspapers often have special feature columns or sections such as the ones listed below. Pretend that you have just been given a job as a feature writer. Which of the following columns would you like to write?  
*gardening; movie reviews; science facts; political cartoons; crossword puzzles; local history; horoscope; outdoor life (camping, hunting, fishing); stock market analysis; advice on bridge; popular music; clothing fashions; advice to consumers; personal advice; business trends; humour; editorials; famous people; mathematics puzzles; furniture refinishing; games and activities for children; advice on chess; book reviews; travel; pet care*

### **Children identifying each others' talents**

Children themselves can be very perceptive in recognizing their classmates' gifts and potentials. This can be done as a game. For example, each child can have a piece of paper pinned on his/her back and every student in the class can be asked to write on every other child's piece of paper in response to the question, "What is my special gift and how can I use it?" Similarly, the children can be given a class list and asked to respond to the same question. The following inspirational story (source unknown) illustrates how effective this kind of activity can be.

*One day a teacher asked her students to list the names of the other students in the room on two sheets of paper, leaving a space between each name. Then she told them to think of the nicest thing they could say about each of their classmates and write it down. It took the remainder of the class period to finish their assignment and, as the students left the room, each one handed in the papers.*

*That Saturday, the teacher wrote down the name of each student on a separate sheet of paper, and listed what everyone else had said about that individual.*

*On Monday, she gave each student his or her list.*

*Before long, the entire class was smiling.*

*"Really?" she heard whispered. "I never knew that I meant anything to anyone!" and, "I didn't know others liked me so much." were some of the comments.*

*No one ever mentioned those papers in class again.*

*She never knew if they discussed them after class or with their parents, but it didn't matter. The exercise had accomplished its purpose. The students were happy with themselves and one another.*

*That group of students moved on. Several years later, one of the students was killed in Vietnam and his teacher attended the funeral of that special student. She had never seen a serviceman in a military coffin before. He looked so handsome, so mature. The church was packed with his friends. One by one, those who loved him took a last walk by the coffin. The teacher was the last one to bless the coffin. As she stood there, one of the soldiers, who acted as pallbearer, came up to her.*

*"Were you Mark's math teacher?" he asked. She nodded: "Yes."*

*Then he said: "Mark talked about you a lot."*

*After the funeral, most of Mark's former classmates went together to a luncheon. Mark's mother and father were there, obviously waiting to speak with his teacher.*

*"We want to show you something," his father said, taking a wallet out of his pocket. "They found this on Mark when he was killed. We thought you might recognize it." Opening the billfold, he carefully removed two worn pieces of notepaper that had obviously been taped, folded and refolded many times.*

*The teacher knew, without looking, that the papers were the ones on which she had listed all the good things each of Mark's classmates had said about him.*

*"Thank you so much for doing that," Mark's mother said. "As you can see, Mark treasured it."*

*All of Mark's former classmates started to gather around. Charlie smiled rather sheepishly and said, "I still have my list. It's in the top drawer of my desk at home."*

*Chuck's wife said, "Chuck asked me to put his in our wedding album."*

*"I have mine too," Marilyn said. "It's in my diary."*

*Then Vickie, another classmate, reached into her pocketbook, took out her wallet and showed her worn and frazzled list to the group. "I carry this with me at all times," Vickie said, and without batting an eyelash, she continued: "I think we all saved our lists."*

*That's when the teacher finally sat down and cried.*

*She cried for Mark and for all his friends who would never see him again.*

### **After finding the talents, it's important to put them to good use.**

This article has argued a case for making specific efforts to help children to recognize, from as early an age as possible, what their unique gifts and potentials are. The quotations from spiritual and educational leaders have suggested that it is only through getting in touch with these gifts and setting in train strategies for realizing their potential that fulfillment can be achieved. Certainly the comments from the young musicians indicate the powerfully fulfilling impact of their musical participation. But, as is suggested in this final set of



quotations, recognizing and realizing the potential in every individual is the starting point – to achieve real fulfillment there is a further step that needs to be taken, which is to encourage them to find ways in which they can use their gifts to make some contribution for the good of others.

*Traditional forms of education have all the accent on how much one can take from parents, teachers, books, life – but the Future Education will have its accent on first educating knowledge from within, finding the individual potential, then making that a contribution to life. This alone can be the fulfillment of the human being in an evolving universe....establish the whole being, both inner and outer, and for the whole of life.*

Dowsett (1996)

*Up to now our educational systems have only fitted man to take, to make demands, to expect his so-called 'rights' from society. But any educated incompetent can take. It requires a man, a true individual, a mature being, to contribute something which is uniquely his. For this, man is loved, is truly recognized, is accepted into the heart of the community, the soul of the nation, the evolutionary movement of the world.'*

Dowsett (1996)

*Happiness consists only in helping others.*

Sathya Sai Baba

*He who dedicates his time, skill and strength to service can never meet defeat, distress or disappointment. He will have no foe, no fear.*

Sathya Sai Baba

*Students should regard service to the community as their main objective.*

Sathya Sai Baba

*The educated man should be delighted to serve and not desire to dominate, for service is divine, service makes life worthwhile, service is the best way to use one's skills, intelligence, strength and resources.*

Sathya Sai Baba



## References

Adler, A. (1996). 'Goal-forming activity of the child', In Dowsett, N., Jayaswal, S. & Srinivasan, M. (Eds.). *Education of the Future* (pp.46-57). Pondicherry, India: Sri Auribindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences.

Dowsett, N. (1996a), 'Realities of spiritual education' In Dowsett, N., Jayaswal, S. & Srinivasan, M. (Eds.). *Dimensions of Spiritual Education* (pp.51-57). Pondicherry, India: Sri Auribindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences.

Dowsett, N. (1996b). , 'Academy of the future', In Dowsett, N., Jayaswal, S. & Srinivasan, M. (Eds.). *Education of the Future* (pp.71-77). Pondicherry, India: Sri Auribindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences.

Dowsett, N. (1997). 'Education and yoga' In Dowsett, N., Jayaswal, S. & Srinivasan, M. (Eds.). *Yoga and Education* (pp,58-64). Pondicherry, India: Sri Auribindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences.

Gardner, H. (1985). *Frames of Mind*. London: Paladin.

Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence Reformed*. New York: Basic Books.

Jayaswal, S. (1996). 'The spirit of education',. Dowsett, N., Jayaswal, S. & Srinivasan, M. (Eds.). *Dimensions of Spiritual Education* (pp. 58-66). Pondicherry, India: Sri Auribindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences.

The Mother (1996). 'Teaching children', In Dowsett, N., Jayaswal, S. & Srinivasan, M. (Eds.). *Education and the Growing Child* (pp.10-21). Pondicherry, India: Sri Auribindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences.

## Chapter 23.A Rubric for Assessing Education in Human Values

Recently I have been asked by several teachers how the outcomes of education in human values can be assessed. My standard reply has been that this is very difficult to assess for two main reasons. One is the objectivity of assessing an internal attribute such as an individual's values – especially if the assessor finds it difficult to avoid imposing his/her own values on the assessment. The other reason is that, as many teachers have indicated, very often the fruits of values education in the early years will not manifest until some much later stage of the person's life, even well into adulthood. Some teachers have reported anecdotal feedback that has filtered back to them, mostly from former students who have contacted them at some time after having left school to let them know how their values education had impacted on a certain event in their adult lives. Other teachers may see feedback as the children move through the school – for example a group of Grade 6 girls who voluntarily helped to clean up after a class party and who told their Grade 4 teacher they were doing it because she had always reminded them of the importance of helping others. But very often, teachers will never get to see the outcomes of the values education they carry out in their classes.

There are some instruments that have been developed to measure aspects of values education, for example James Rest's *Defining Issues Test* (1986) and Georg Lind's *Moral Judgment Test* (1978). However, these have some limitations as they 'merely rate individuals according to Kohlberg's stages of moral development and are not capable of assessing specific value-educational objectives' (Phillips, 2003). Furthermore these instruments measure only how students perceive they should behave, not how they actually behave in social settings. Teachers of civics and moral education have reported that their students will often give the answers and demonstrate the behaviours required to pass the assessment but that there is no carry-over of these behaviours into their lives outside that particular class.

Nevertheless, the current popularity of assessment rubrics has inspired to me to try to describe some criteria that might be useful not only for assessing the extent to which students are exhibiting the kinds of desirable behaviours that we aim to elicit through values education, but also to help teachers and students understand more about the nature of these behaviours.

A rubric is a scoring guide that seeks to evaluate a student's performance based on the sum of a full range of criteria rather than a single numerical score (<http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-4521.html>). It utilizes real-life criteria that are the same for experts and novices alike – although expectations vary according to the assessee's level of expertise. A rubric can be used by both students and teachers as a guide to learning, and is often give to the students before an assignment commences to encourage them to think about the criteria on which they will be judged and to know the outcomes that are expected (<http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-4521.html>). Clearly values education is concerned with a process of growth, and rubrics are very useful tools for measuring growth (<http://netsquirrel.com/pepperdine/edc665/rubric.html>)

*“The end of education is character.”*

Sathya Sai Baba

There are so many ways of defining ‘values education’ that to come up with a single list of criteria is quite challenging. However, as suggested in the quotation above, one of the fundamental reasons for values education is to develop character. Therefore, for this example, I have selected ‘character’ as the desired outcome, and have adopted the criteria of a person of character suggested by Anoo (2001, p.122):

- an honest person (truth),
- a person with a sense of duties and obligations of the position, whatever it may be (right action),
- a person who tells the truth (truth),
- a person who gives others their due (love),
- a person considerate to the weak (nonviolence, compassion),
- a person who has principles and stands by them (right action),
- a person not too elated by good fortune and not too depressed by bad (peace),
- a person who is loyal (surrender),
- a person who can be trusted (unity of thought, word and deed).

These criteria are consistent with the philosophy of Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV), which aims to elicit human excellence at all levels: character, academic, and ‘being’, through the all-round development of the child (the heart as well as the head and the hands); helping children to know who they are; helping them to realise their full potential; and developing attitudes of selfless service. Anoo equates the elements of a person with character with the five universal human values that are the foundation of SSEHV: truth, right action, peace, love and non-violence. The definers of these criteria have been drawn from the teachings of the founder of SSEHV, Sathya Sai Baba (Woodward and Farmer, 1997).

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Very Low</b>
<b>Honest</b>	Harmony of head, heart and hands, ie always examines an act in own conscience before putting into practice	Feels guilty if acts dishonestly and tries to atone for it in some way	Feels guilty if acts dishonestly, but does nothing about it	Honest when being watched but acts dishonestly when no-one is watching	Behaves dishonestly whether being watched or not
<b>Sense of duties and obligations of given position</b>	Puts duties and obligations before own needs; finds extra things to do; strives for welfare of all, not to harm/injure another	Carries out duties willingly but likes to feel good or be praised for it	Carries out duties and obligations without being reminded but does so out of sense of guilt or with other negative feelings	Carries out duties if reminded but not if left to own initiative	Puts own needs first and deliberately shirks duties and obligations

<b>Tells truth</b>	Says what is true and necessary for the welfare of others, says it with love, and remains silent at other times	Speaks the truth all the time, but does not distinguish between 'necessary' and 'not necessary'	Tells 'white lies' to save another person's feelings or to please others	Tells 'white lies' to save self from trouble	Lies frequently without any concern for consequences
<b>Gives others their due</b>	Enjoys others' successes as much as s/he enjoys his/her own; bears no ill-will towards anyone	Gives others their due recognition but doesn't really <u>feel</u> it from the heart	Genuinely gives others their due as long as s/he feels equal or better	Makes excuses about why s/he is not as successful	Feels jealous and puts others down or indulges in talk that puts others down
<b>Considerate to the weak</b>	Gives selflessly without expectation of anything in return; actually <u>feels</u> the other's joy/pain and heals it to the best of his/her ability as if healing his/her own pain  'Loves all, serves all.'	Will stand up for the weak if necessary but not consistently	Doesn't actively help others but avoids doing them harm or causing pain	Watches while others bully the weak (physically, mentally or emotionally), ie participates passively	Bullies the weak (physically, mentally or emotionally)
<b>Has principles and stands by them</b>	Stands strongly even if ostracized by others, but is not affected by it; faith and determination to face challenges of life	Believes in principles and will not go against them but will not stand by them if in the company of others who do not agree with them	Tells the crowd it's wrong but goes with them anyway (ie participates passively)	Goes with the crowd but feels uncomfortable if it goes against his/her principles	Goes with the crowd with no sense that it's wrong; adheres to own likes and dislikes
<b>Not too elated by good fortune and depressed by bad</b>	Able to accept good and bad equally without being affected at all: unruffled by any loss or gain of fortune	Looks for the lesson in good and bad experiences and uses them to further personal growth	Knows that good and bad experiences help us to grow but makes no effort to learn the lesson or do the work	Blames others for bad fortune and attributes good fortune to own doing	Becomes excessively elated or depressed; may take medication to suppress feelings; dependent on material possessions and relationships for happiness; easily



					angered
<b>Loyal</b>	Unwavering	Reasonably loyal but still puts own needs ahead of the other's	Cools off if desires not fulfilled	Loyal to those who are loyal in return or have something to offer	Fickle
<b>Trustworthy</b>	Keeps word and never goes back on it, even if it involves personal sacrifice	Makes an alternative arrangement if has to back out	Feels guilty if breaks a promise rather than make some personal sacrifice	Keeps word unless it will cause some personal sacrifice, then convinces self it is OK to back out	Sees nothing wrong with breaking a promise

## Conclusion

The sample rubric shown here is just one example of a measure of education in human values, in which the outcome is the development of a person of excellent character. This rubric could be used in many different combinations: student and teacher discussing the student's position together, students doing self-assessment, peers assessing each others' behaviours and children, teachers and parents discussing together. Another potentially useful approach could be to have students create their own rubrics to monitor their values. In other areas of the school programme, this has been shown to have the effect of improving their motivation, interest, and performance in the project (<http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-4521.html>), so it is to be hoped that in designing their own rubrics about developing desirable human values, they will be motivated to try to develop these behaviours.

## References

- Anoos, S. (2001). *Sai Baba's Teachings on 'The Direct Flight to Divinity'*. Prasanthi Nilayam, India: Sri Sathya Sai Books and Publications Trust.
- Phillips, J. (2003). *Teaching and Assessing Values Education* Clarion University of Pennsylvania, February 19, 2003
- Woodward, R. & Farmer, R. (1997). *Study Circles for Divinity*. Prasanthi Nilayam, India: Sai Towers Publishing

## Chapter 24. Parent-teacher partnerships: a values-oriented approach

Sometimes it is necessary, or even inevitable, for a teacher to initiate a meeting with a parent or vice versa. This might arise because a child is having difficulty with some aspect of his/her work, an emotional or social problem such as being bullied by other children, or a behavioural problem. Cartoonists and television sitcoms have often played on the stereotypical dread that parents experience when they hear that the teacher wants to see them - and of course the other side of the picture is that many teachers also experience trepidation about meeting with an angry or upset parent. However, handled properly, the teacher-parent partnership can be a very powerful one that can ultimately benefit the welfare of the child. There is no shortage of articles suggesting ways in which these interactions between parents and teachers can be made productive and worthwhile for both parties- not to mention the important third party, the child. However, in this article I am attempting to approach this subject from a slightly different point of view, that is to relate it to a framework for promoting values education through the direct and indirect interactions that take place in the classroom. Why do I consider it worthwhile to do this? As renowned psychologist Deepak Chopra (1993) has said:

Without values, there is confusion and chaos. When values disintegrate everything disintegrates. Health disintegrates, poverty attains dominance over affluence, societies and civilizations crumble. When we pay attention to these values that society has already held sacred, then order emerges out of chaos, and the field of pure potentiality inside us becomes all-powerful, creating anything it desires (p.55).

This is a compelling argument for teachers and parents alike to be aware of promoting values education not only through direct teaching of appropriate values, but also in the way they model these same values to children - and what more appropriate way of doing this than through their interactions with each other.

For the purpose of this article, I have attempted to utilise the framework of the Sathya Sai model of values education, which is a religious-free and culture-free model encompassing five values and five teaching methodologies. The five "basic human values" identified are Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-Violence. They are called basic because they are pursued by people of all cultures and religions and they are timeless. They include the profound moral insights of the great civilisations; and they are derived from the universal order which upholds harmony in society. The values are called human because their practice makes one "human" in the true sense of the word.

In the following sections I will suggest some ways in which some of these values and methodologies can consciously be taken into account in parent-teacher interactions, and to share some examples from my own experiences.

### Truth

The value of 'truth' encompasses accuracy, curiosity, discrimination, honesty, human understanding, integrity, self-reflection and sincerity. Following are some ways in which these values can be utilised to enhance the parent-teacher conference.

- Don't avoid the truth or the conflict - speak your worries or concerns truthfully, but in a way that doesn't make the teacher/parent/child feel he/she is being blamed.

- Help the other party to present their point of view - do not speak from anger but after you have spoken, calmly wait for the other to present his/her point of view.
- If you don't know a solution to the problem, rather than pretending you know the answers, admit that you don't know and discuss how you can find a solution together or by calling in a third party.

As a young teacher of 12-year-olds, I was once visited by an upset mother of one of the girls in my class, who complained that her daughter and the daughter's friend were being bullied by one of the boys in the class. It wasn't too serious - more like irritating teasing- but the two girls were becoming upset by this unwanted attention. At first the mother was quite angry with me as she felt that it was a reflection on my classroom discipline. I had to admit that I didn't know what to do, as this particular child had a long-standing reputation of being a discipline problem, and like all of the other teachers in the school, my work was cut out trying to keep him under control and away from annoying his classmates. However, as we talked more about the problem and what it was that he was doing, it gradually became clear to us that he was seeking the girls' attention because he had a crush on them. When they reacted with distaste, he felt happy to be receiving attention of any kind, even negative, and this fueled his annoying behaviour. Having realised this, we were able to talk to the two girls truthfully as well, and explain the reason for the behaviour, and to suggest that they in turn be truthful to the boy. We suggested that they tell him they did not like his teasing behaviour and that in future they were going to ignore him if he behaved that way, whereas they were prepared to be his friend if he behaved in a more civilised way towards them. Lo and behold, this approach worked! In fact, these two girls would even volunteer to have the boy - a slow learner - in their groups for group activities, and they were able to keep him working on task far more effectively than I could! Through being truthful and forthright with all parties concerned, we were able to resolve the situation in a way that removed the original tension between the mother and me, and to find a practical solution

### **Right Action**

Right action includes the values of courage, dependability, determination, efficiency, endurance, healthy living, independence, initiative, perseverance and respect. It is important for teachers and parents both to show respect for each other, especially in conversations in front of children. When my friend's daughter first started kindergarten, she was very excited about having a teacher of her own, and almost every remark she made was prefaced with, "My teacher says...." At the time, my friend was in fact a senior colleague of the child's teacher and found some of the things that "my teacher" had said to be quite outlandish. It would have been easy for her to have said so, but luckily she recognised the need to be respectful about the teacher in front of her daughter - although she did quietly mention some of mistakes directly to the teacher herself. I know that as a teacher I must have made many mistakes and unwittingly passed on misinformation to my pupils. On several occasions I did have parents contact me to point out these mistakes - although I felt embarrassed, I was grateful that they did so in a courteous, respectful way, acknowledging that I had also done some good things for the child and that nobody can be expected to be completely mistake-free. On the other hand, it was equally important for me to learn to accept criticism from parents graciously and in the spirit with which it was intended, rather than feeling threatened or upset by their corrections.

Similarly, a teacher can show respect towards parents by keeping them informed about what is happening in the classroom. For example, a once-per-term newsletter or meeting can be



used to keep them informed about the approaches you are using and your reasons for doing so. Another way of showing respect of parents' skills and abilities can be to invite them into the classroom to help in various ways. Some parents like to help in small group activities or to read stories or listen to children read. I once had a very artistically-talented parent who was not confident to work directly with children, but who spent many long hours creating beautiful displays of the children's work. Any of these activities can do a lot to build up the mutual respect between teacher and parent, and also to allow the children to see this respect in action.

## **Peace**

Peace incorporates values such as calmness, concentration, contentment, equanimity, optimism, self-acceptance, self-discipline and self-esteem. Creative conflict resolution is an important component of the value of peace. Just as we need to create opportunities for children to learn how to see conflict as a vehicle to positive change if it is handled in a creative way, we also need to practise and hence model this in our own interactions. We consciously need to practise:

- tolerance of each other's points of view,
- making open-minded judgements,
- withdrawing from the conflict if necessary,
- co-operation and presenting a united front.

The ultimate aim is to create a sense of unity and inner peace within each other and hence within the child. Don't make it a time of threatening and challenging each other, but rather a way of supporting each other to support the child's growth. One way in which the values associated with peace can be enhanced in the teacher-parent interaction is by not waiting until there is a problem, but by taking the time and trouble to say thank you if something has been done well. I once taught a child who was academically gifted but socially immature and unable to fit in with his classmates. Because at that time I had a special interest in gifted children, I was experimenting with programmes to cater for them in the regular classroom, and this child was a perfect candidate for my experiments. I appreciated it very much when his mother took the time and effort to come to see me to thank me for making the effort with her son. Of course, it is a teacher's responsibility to make an effort to meet the students' needs, but these days when a teacher's self-esteem often comes under threat, it is good to have some encouragement from parents when we do something they appreciate. By the same token, parents also have a difficult job to do, and it can give them a boost if the teacher takes the trouble to comment on something good they have done.

## **Love**

When we talk about the value of 'love' we are referring to values such as compassion, consideration, forgiveness, humaneness, interdependence, selflessness, tolerance.

If a parent initiates a conference with the teacher, it is often because the parent is acting out of love/concern for the child. It is important, therefore, for the teacher to recognise and respect this love and aspire to help find a solution that will make the child feel valued by both of you.

Often simply by focusing on the feeling of compassion it is possible to defuse a situation of



conflict and to enable the participants to find a way to work together constructively on a solution. It can be very helpful for both the parent and the teacher to approach the conference having previously established a frame of mind of respect and concern for the other person's point of view. It is not difficult to try to put the other party at ease by using warmth or humour. This will make it easier to see the situation from both sides - or all three sides, including that of the child

### **Co-operative Teamwork**

One form of co-operation that can be particularly useful is for the parent and the teacher to present a united front to the child, that is to show that you are both concerned with the child's welfare or development and that you have jointly developed a strategy to help bring this about.

I found this teacher-parent teamwork to be helpful in instances where a child was having difficulty understanding some aspect of classwork. For example, Darren was having difficulty understanding the concept of subtraction. His mother was upset because she did not feel that she was able to help him, not understanding the 'new' methods of teaching mathematics. The three of us - Darren, his mother and I - sat together one day after school and went through the process of developing the subtraction algorithm using concrete materials such as MAB Blocks. She was unable to understand the process that we were following and agreed to spend some time with Darren at home, allowing him to talk with her about what he was doing, to help him to consolidate his understanding. In a very short time, Darren's skills and confidence improved dramatically - without his mother's participation as part of the team, I am sure this would not have happened.

Another occasion when I found it valuable to work with a parent in a co-operative partnership was with Bradley, who was a discipline problem at school and at home. Both his mother and I were almost at our wits end about what to do, but it was only when she came to see me and we talked about it together that we realised it was a problem we both shared. She told me about the strategies that she had found to work the best at home and I shared those that I had tried in the classroom. We identified the rewards and punishments that had the best effects on him. Then, together, we confronted Bradley and offered him a deal - if he met certain criteria set by us and agreed to by him, then we would be prepared to give him certain privileges, including being allowed to stay late after school to use the computer by himself. To make Bradley feel that he was also a partner in the process, we drew up a contract outlining the terms of the agreement, which we all signed. Each week the three of us would meet to discuss whether or not all parties had honoured their part in the agreement. It was an effective exercise in co-operation that made life easier for all of us than it had been when we were each struggling with Bradley's behaviour by yourselves.

### **Silent sitting/creative visualisation**

In [an earlier article on this Website](#)

(<http://members.iteachnet.com/~webzine/article.php?story=20001122173853306>) I wrote about the positive benefits of utilising techniques such as sitting in silence for a few minutes or visualising an outcome. Both of these techniques have been used effectively not only in the classroom but in all walks of life to find solutions to problems. Just by allowing the mind to be still for a few minutes, it is often possible for a creative solution to arise. To utilise this strategy during a parent-teacher conference, if both parties are agreeable to try it, and particularly if it is a strategy that the teacher is already using in the classroom with the pupils,

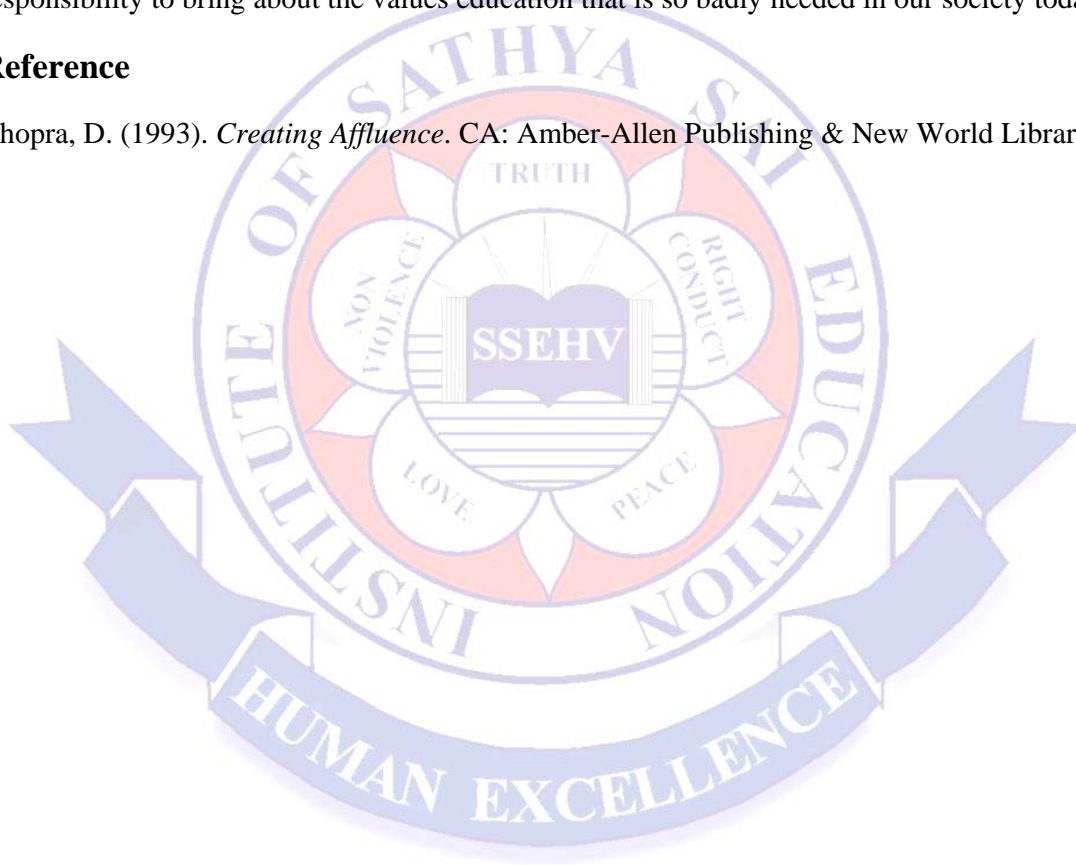
could lead to some creative solutions of the problems being discussed, and is therefore an idea worth trying. For example, take two minutes to sit in silence and let your mind focus on your breathing. Ask your subconscious minds to help you to work together to find a mutually convenient solution to the problem that you are going to discuss. Visualise that you are both/all sitting inside a gold circle that has been drawn around you, and that you are united in bringing together your separate wisdom to find a solution to the problem.

## **Conclusion**

In this article, I have suggested just a few ways in which both parents and teachers can consciously focus on modelling appropriate values in their interactions - something which is particularly important if the child is to witness these interactions either directly or indirectly. Through doing so, it is possible to bring about yet another way of fulfilling our joint responsibility to bring about the values education that is so badly needed in our society today.

## **Reference**

Chopra, D. (1993). *Creating Affluence*. CA: Amber-Allen Publishing & New World Library.



## Chapter 25. Knitting Love: A Service Project in a Primary School.

*Love all, serve all*

*It is a call and a challenge for you to provide comfort and consolation to those in need; to seek out means and methods to increase the ways in which you can help others and contribute to their joy.*

Sathya Sai Baba

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 from the commercial programmes the school was utilizing. 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 and supplemented the donated supplies with purchases from the City Mission store. 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.

*Unfortunately there is no feeling of unity today in the world. All the problems bedeviling mankind are due to the absence of unity.*

*Service brings human beings closer to each other and promotes affection and friendship.*

Sathya Sai Baba

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.

*It [service] should be done with humility and sincerity... The spirit of service eradicates egoism and selfishness... Through service, you gain good character.*

*Sathya Sai Baba*

*Hard it is to understand: By giving away our food, we get more strength; by bestowing clothing on others, we gain more beauty...*

*Buddha*

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**

*If you do not allow your heart to melt with compassion your life will be a sheer waste. All practices have to be directed towards softening your heart so that it will flow with kindness and love. Develop this feeling of compassion and allow it to flow fully and spread among all the peoples of the world. Render service with a pure and selfless heart.*

*Sathya Sai Baba*

The key element to this project was love. First, the project was offered by a teacher who felt genuine love for the pupils, and this love came through to them via the very fact that she had offered them the opportunity to join the project. The knitting group 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. And underpinning all of this was the sense of compassion being developed in the children for the “less fortunate” people who would be the recipients of the rugs. Interestingly, not one child asked Maureen who the rugs were being knitted for – they simply rallied to the task of helping the needy.



## Service

*All beings in creation are living by rendering mutual service and no one can be considered superior to another.*

Sathya Sai Baba

In this case, 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. Children would take a partly-knitted square home and it would come back with clear evidence that one of the parents had also done some. One child started knitting a scarf, so she would bring that and her square to the knitting club. She and the Assistant Principal would take turns to work on each piece, sometimes Maureen working on the scarf and then handing it back to the child, sometimes the child working on the square and handing it over to Maureen. The children and Maureen willingly volunteered two lunch hours per week for the project, without any sense that one was a more important group member than any other and without any thought of "what's in it for me".

## Creativity

*Students must be encouraged to engage themselves in work programmes in order to discover their skills, promote them and enjoy them. The vocational engagement must lead to creative activity, not necessarily to commercially productive application.... After all the real aim of education is to enable one to be and not to do.*

Swami Vivekananda, p.29

Creative activity is an essential component of character development: as a means of expression, for relaxation and enjoyment, to build self-confidence and co-operation, to teach discrimination, to encourage responsibility, to strengthen concentration, to develop co-ordination, to bring out inner talents, to encourage discipline, patience and perseverance; and to develop skills (Jumsai and Burrows, 1991). One of the reasons why the knitting project became so popular was because it was creating an opportunity for children – and in many cases their parents – to learn a skill that had been forgotten by many of their generation in their community. When enough squares had been completed to make the first rug, one of the mothers offered to sew them together. It came back not only beautifully stitched but also with a skillfully crocheted edge. The mother's 93-year-old aunt had been visiting while she was sewing the rug, and had taught her how to crochet. Another mother sent her daughter along with some brand new needles and balls of wool, because she herself wanted to learn how to knit and she wanted her daughter to learn so she could teach her.

## Silent Sitting

*In rendering service there should be unity of heart, head and hands.*

Sathya Sai Baba

Clearly the knitting that took place in this project engaged all three: the head, as the children concentrated on the new skill they had learned; the heart, as the ultimate goal was to provide something to help the needy; and the hands, as these were busily occupied with carrying out the task. The following story illustrates the importance of keeping the “monkey mind” occupied so it cannot get into mischief (Jumsai and Burrows, 1991, pp.84-85) – and suggests why even the children with behavioural problems were so differently behaved in the knitting club.

“There was once a young man digging in his garden. Suddenly he came across something hard buried in the ground. He dug it out and, being curious to find out what it was, he quickly cleaned off the earth and started to wipe it with a cloth. It turned out to be an old oil lamp. As he wiped it, smoke appeared which took the form of a genie. The genie spoke to the young man. “Thank you for freeing me. In return I will serve you. You can ask me to do anything, but there is only one condition: if you stop using me at any time, I will eat you up!” The young man thought about this and very quickly decided that it was a good idea to have a servant and he was certain he could keep the genie occupied all the time, so he agreed. The genie then said, “Master, tell me what you want but remember, if you don’t use me I will eat you up.” The young man replied, “I want a castle to live in.” Immediately, the genie materialized a castle. The young man was shocked; he had imagined that the genie would take a year or so to build the castle. So he had to think quickly what to ask the genie. “Build me a wide road to the castle.” Immediately it was done. “I want a beautiful garden surrounding the castle.” Again his wish was granted. “I want...” So the young man continued, but he was getting very worried that he would soon run out of things to ask for; also he knew he would not be able to live in his castle as he had to keep the genie busy all the time. Finally the young man thought of a solution. He asked for a very tall pillar which immediately materialized. He told the genie to climb slowly to the top and told him, “When you get to the top, climb slowly down again. When you get to the bottom climb up again...and continue doing this.” The genie had to climb slowly up and down all the time. The young man sighed with relief; he was now safe. The genie was kept busy so the young man was able to live in his castle and live happily ever after.”

Jumsai and Burrows tell us the message in this story is that the mind is a very powerful and useful tool that is capable of achieving wonders but that is equally capable of running wild and, like the genie, can become ready to “eat us up” at any moment. It appears that one of the benefits of the knitting activity is that it has provided a “pillar” for some of these children whose learning difficulties and other problems have made it difficult for them to concentrate their attention on classroom and other activities – but in focusing on the rhythm of the knitting it is like the genie focusing on climbing up and down the pole, and the mind is not able to get sidetracked into other inappropriate behaviours.

### **Teachers modeling the values**

*Human values cannot be learnt from lectures or text books. Those who seek to impart values to students must first practise them themselves and set an example.*

Sathya Sai Baba

As the above quotation suggests, an essential component of character education is for the teachers to become living examples and models of the values they are trying to elicit from their students. In the case of this project, 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.

*One should be prepared to serve others rather than choose to be served by them.... Service should be rendered to those who are worse off than ourselves and who are neglected by the world.*

Sathya Sai Baba

At the end of the project, a special assembly will be held to present the rugs to residents of a nearby nursing home. The decision was made to bring the recipients to the assembly rather than taking the knitters to the nursing home for a number of reasons – to continue to promote the sense of community spirit that enabled the rugs to be made, to enable the knitters to meet the recipients of their hard work, and to enable other members of the school community who had not participated to see and share in the outcomes.

*Every person should render service according to his capacity and the sphere of his activities.... Their capacities and aptitudes may vary. But each should take part in service activity according to his ability, equipment and field of work.*

*Service brings out all that is great in man. It broadens the heart and widens one's vision. It fills one with joy. It promotes unity.*

Sathya Sai Baba

The following comments from some of the children indicate the joy they derived from participating in the project. It is particularly interesting to note the first one, by Jarrod, a child with learning difficulties, who indicated his pleasure in being able to contribute something that did fit his ability.

“It was fun because I love helping others. When I made a mistake it was easy to fix.” (Jarrod, 9 years, a child with very special learning needs who experienced success through the knitting project)

“I taught Trent and Kael (other boys) to knit and I brought a lot of wool. I liked teaching people to knit. It gave me something to do. I wasn't getting into trouble. I loved helping people.” (Jesse, 10 years, a boy who has had difficult times in the playground and has sometimes been involved in bullying)

“We got lots of experience knitting. I didn't know how to knit before. We had lots of fun making the rugs. It will keep the old people warm.” (Tamara, 10 years)

“The knitting taught me to be patient. I made a scarf. I liked helping people. I taught my brother.” (Sarah, 10 years, a girl who had been getting into lots of trouble in the playground)

“I think I got more patient ‘cause it was easy to lose a stitch.” (Ruby, 10 years)

“It makes you feel warm and fuzzy inside to do something for others.” (Georgie, 10 years)

The real miracle was in the fact that, as Maureen said, “Those squares were knitted with love.”

*Purity must express itself in loving service....Let them continue this practice of doing unselfish work which will purify the mind.*

Sathya Sai Baba

## References

Jumsai, A. & Burrows, L. (1991). Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Handbook for Teachers, Bangkok: Sathya Sai Foundation of Thailand.

Swami Vivekananda, “Man-making education”. In Dowsett, N., Jayaswal, S. & Srinivasan, M. (1996). A New Approach to Education, pp. 9-17. Pondicherry, India: Sri Auribindo Institute of Research in Social Sciences.

