



Institute of Sathya Sai Education (ISSE) of Hong Kong

10th Floor, Blk. A1&2, Burlington Mansion

92-94 Nathan Road, Tsim Sha Tsui

Kowloon, Hong Kong

Email: info@ssehv.org

Website: www.ssehv.org

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

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

Through

EduCare

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

12

QUICK TIPS FOR BRINGING EDUCARE INTO YOUR TEACHING



Vol.3

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

“It is about seeing the glass half full rather than half empty”.

Steven Covey

This section is a work in progress to whet your appetite to reflect consciously on an ‘emerging pedagogy’ of the spoken word, which we shall call ‘values literacy’. It is a pedagogy, which enhances the power of talk to help transform the teacher’s and student’s thinking and to secure student engagement, learning and understanding of Values Literacy through the values inherent in it.

The topic itself is familiar enough, and we hope you will find ways of integrating Values Literacy within your lesson plans. In this section we also hope to create a Values genre **Dictionary** that will help educators to adopt positive vocabulary in their teacher talk.

For the educator, it is about teaching and addressing students’ strength and to help students see themselves in a framework of **‘I can do’** - helping them lift their ‘game’ of learning to a platform of hope.



students.

This pedagogy is ongoing developmental work on classroom talk. Hence we welcome your input of phrases and approaches that lift the spirits of your

In *Freireian* terminology, we would use as a starting point of reference, words that emerge from the cultural, social and economic worldview of our students and

develop a 'live cultural circle' wherein students feel inclusive with the vocabulary and find it familiar, comforting and transparent.

My teaching journey extends from New Zealand to Hong Kong. Observational research in classrooms across both the countries ignited my desire to discover whether the identified features of Values Literacy were universal, culturally safe and sensitive (in addition to being anti-biased and gender free). I find myself using words like: "Can you please ask your partner to tell you about one good thing Einstein did for the world?" One of my all time favorites is: "That's a possibility".

Another Values Literacy strategy is to start the lesson with a student sharing good news of themselves or anything else. Using the word of the day concept, selecting a word, which is also part of the day's lesson topic, seems to work well

Observations thus far are yielding some challenging and exciting findings about the 'character/values talk' through which both teacher and student engage through dialogue 'when minds meet minds cognitively and hearts meets hearts holistically.' Through values literacy, the intention is to create an open circle of learning and teaching where both teacher and students contribute to the learning process and students in particular engage and contribute as valued resources of knowledge, developing a values gaze perspective on the content of the lesson.

The Values Literacy perspective is summed up in the following words of the Founder of Educare, Sri Sathya Sai Baba:

"Learn the vocabulary of love and unlearn the grammar of hate."

In Vygotskian terms our learning and teacher talk should create a zone of proximal development (ZPD) which helps to scaffold our students to higher order thinking and learning taking place in a Zone of Possibility Thinking. (ZPT)

TIP 2: EDUCARE AND GROUP ACTIVITIES

My story-telling friend inspired me to re-look at group activities from an artistic, scientific, humanistic and well-structured perspective. Let me begin with the



scientific perspective. The common thread running through all subject disciplines is the relationship quotient. My friend went on to remind me that

every aspect of life is embedded in a relational perspective, or benchmarked with something. Nothing is a stand alone - even the smallest atom relates to the electron it is connected to. Hence this relational aspect needs to be considered in our planning of group activities. For example, when planning a science lesson on the Law of Gravity and Newton, the teacher could introduce a short synopsis about the life history of Newton. This will bring out the humane aspect of Newton as a scientist.

The teacher can include aspects about Newton's attitude towards his dog, which use to lie under his working desk. One afternoon the dog stood up suddenly and caused the burning candle to set alight his important research papers. Newton did not lose his temper although valuable information was lost in the process. Instead he light-heartedly remarked to his dog Diamond, "Diamond you will never know the mischief you caused today". This story about Newton will allow students to learn about the human side of a great scientist.

The relational features of the law of gravity need to be brought to the notice of the students. The law only exists because there is a relationship between objects in the air and centrifugal force. This aspect of relationship can be emphasised in the group work amongst their team-mates, the coherence and consistent attributes of the law of gravity. Well-structured group

activities involve variety, collaboration and differential placement of activities.

TIP 3: EDUCARE PERSPECTIVE OF DISCIPLINE

The founder of the Educare programme, Sathya Sai informs us that

“Secular knowledge is fairly good but spiritual knowledge is the one that needs to be improved today. Education is needed but it is not to be mistaken with mere learning. Educare is beyond the world. All the worldly traits that you see today are because of the education people received.”



Let us look closely at traits such as being successful and what are the forms or attributes of the discipline of learning inherent in our education system. Our discipline of learning includes being successful, diligent, and working consistently, being on task and completing assignments and to acquire practical application knowledge.

Sathya Sai reminds us: *“Though you have all the knowledge, you need to understand your own selves.”* His pertinent question *“What then is the use of being so egoistic about this kind of second hand knowledge, which your teacher tells you, is not Educare. It only becomes knowledge when your heart, which is your true teacher, processes knowledge and you take ownership of information. You are your own true teacher and information imprints itself or is etched in your heart. Your drive to discipline yourself to learn becomes a ‘way of life for you’, gets you involved and disciplined in your knowledge of the Self.”*

This holistic approach helps you to nurture and develop a disciplined approach to learning and you avoid wasting a lot of time. He continues to encourage us and tell us that: *“Remember however scholarly*

you may be with respect to books, they all contain only 26 letters in the alphabet!”

In Shakespeare’s words the entire world is a stage of creation with its interactive drama between humanity and nature. There is nothing to be achieved only through worldly knowledge. The coin of knowledge has two faces one being spiritual and the other a disciplined balanced view of secular knowledge to be used to contribute to the serving of humanity and protection of nature.

“Knowledge is truth and It would be foolish to think that Truth is mere factual correctness. Truth is the fundamental changeless one.”

In conclusion some food for thought for you: our next article on “Discipline” will be about Society’s definition of success today which is largely hinged and benchmarked on material acquisition. Individuals are judged by the clothes they wear, the cars they drive and the jobs they hold and the style of house they own.

TIP 4: MOTIVATE AND INSPIRE STUDENTS

Here are more suggestions to create and maintain a motivational and inspirational classroom.

- ✓ **Encourage your students to care about their learning:**
Invite questions and allow other students to address the questions asked with positive feedback from you.
- ✓ **Give good instructions – precise and clear.**
Often students are not motivated if the instructions they receive are vague and not detailed enough.
- ✓ **Include student suggestions for homework and practice schedule and assignments.**
- ✓ **Remember to stop talking and start listening.**
- ✓ **Laugh with your students!**
Bring in stories, cartoon strips, pictures or anything that can add a

little humor into the classroom. It may have nothing to do with the lesson at hand, but adds to the eminent learning that follows.

✓ **Vary the format of lessons by changing the order around.**

Ask the students how they would like to begin the lesson. Ask the students what they most/least enjoyed in class during the past week.

Specially for younger students:

- ▶ When asking them to repeat over and over to correct difficult spots, use a crying face or smiling face to indicate results.
- ▶ Bulletin boards: Put students in the news.
- ▶ Use stuffed animals to show low and high for young students.

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

4 ways to boost your students' self-esteem

1. Praise your students when it is warranted.

When they show that they either worked hard for something or that they followed the rules, commend them for doing a good deed or doing well at school. Always be sincere and enthusiastic in your approval.



2. Catch your students doing something right!

Too many times we only catch our students doing something wrong. Try to "catch" your kids doing good things. When you see them picking up litter tell them that you think they are being helpful. Thank them for the kindness.

When you see them extending a hand in friendship to another student who doesn't have a lot of friends, applaud them. Tell them that you appreciate

their efforts. You are likely to see this kind of behavior again.

3. Encourage your students –

not only for their successes, but also their failures after working particularly hard for something.

By really paying attention when they show you their artwork, school papers, and other creative work, you will show them that you value them. So many teachers just give a quick, pat response and then quickly look away. If you just give them a quick compliment and only look for a second, the student can sense that you are not being sincere. Make your students aware of your approval and encouragement with your full attention.

4. Get Excited!

Always get excited when they accomplish something from a lot of hard work. Applaud your students' efforts to improve themselves in school and other areas. Perhaps Sally just brought her grade from a B or a C up to an astounding A. How should you react? We teachers should not only get very excited, but also perhaps give the child an unexpected reward. This is positive reinforcement.

Self-esteem is an important thing to instill in our children, but so is humility. Self-esteem is very important for a child, but there is a fine line that shouldn't be crossed. These kids must have a good self-image of themselves, but not at the expense of others. Too many times the children with the high self-image are the ones that make it very difficult for others in school. Many times these kids think that they are better than others. This is a lesson that we do not want to teach our students.

Too many kids today are much too quick to tease others without regard to just how that damages the other person. We want kids who hold their heads up, but not kids who have no concept of reality. Some heartfelt attention can go a long way. Make sure that you do not cross that very

fine line when helping your students to have a good self-image.

TIP 6: TEACH ABOUT CHARACTER THROUGH LESSON CONTENT

This month we share with you experiences from a classroom of the impact of teaching character through content. The experience cited here is that of students in a primary school in New Zealand. A group of volunteers taught the EduCare programme to 5-9 year old students weekly. As part of the EduCare programme, a story about helping friends was shared and role played with the students and the quotation following the story was "Help ever hurt never". The class teacher related the following incident which took place during the week after the EduCare lesson.

Two students were having a disagreement over sharing coloured felt tip pens which became a tug of war struggle between the two students wanting to use the same pen. As the teacher was about to intervene, one of the students let go of the pen and said to the other student holding tightly on to it, "You can have it, help ever hurt never". To the teacher's amazement, the student making the comment looked at her and the rest of the class and continued by remarking, "that's what the teachers told us to do with our friends", and then looking at the other student with the pen " you can give it to me after you finish."

Dear Teachers this incident continues to motivate me as a teacher of EduCare in my school's national curriculum. These are moments of learning that we as educators will relive to inspire other teachers to go forth into the classroom with confidence to teach character through content. You may not see results overnight, but you are a *Michelangelo* helping to shape the lives of the many students entrusted in your care. Do write to us and share your teaching and learning moments with us to inspire practitioners throughout the world.

TIP 7: USING STORY TELLING TO ENHANCE LESSONS

Story telling has a place even in mathematics classes. Students need to hear about the "human" side of famous mathematicians.

Maria Agnesi (famous for her contributions to Calculus):

- Use of silent sitting: Sometimes she would have trouble with a problem. But her mind went on working even in her sleep; she would sleep walk to her study and back to bed. In the morning, she would find the answer to the problem waiting for her on the desk. She was one of many famous mathematicians who would leave her work and allow her subconscious mind to continue working on a problem with which she had become stuck. This is why we can use silent sitting effectively for the same purpose in our own mathematics.
- Serving others: She had always worked with the poor people in her area, and she asked her father for separate rooms and turned them into a private hospital. She worked at the hospital until she died at the age of eighty-one.

TIP 8: MUSIC AND SONGS IN THE CLASSROOM



Using music in the classroom can make the entire learning process more enjoyable whether it is a Language, History or even Science lesson! Music stimulates 'right' brain learning. Researchers report that students score better on IQ tests if they complete their tests with Mozart playing in the background.

Listening to music is clearly a form of relaxation and if used with learning can definitely take away the stress of having to remember dates, formulas, etc. Just think of all the times you have used music to help you study for tests or relax from daily stress. Using music in the classroom is a logical thing to do considering how helpful it can be to the learning process. So, set the scene musically.

Here are some suggestions:

- ♪ Play music while introducing an exercise to activate vocabulary and get students thinking in the right direction.
- ♪ Take a piece of music or song which you associate with a certain activity or place. (e.g. Country road, take me home...) and play the first 30 seconds of the piece. You will be surprised at how quickly associations come to students' minds especially if you introduced the lesson by saying, "Today we are going to talk about home – where's your home?"
- ♪ Remember to use a piece of music or a song that will aid the learning and not be a distraction. For example, if your class is doing a grammar exercise and you want to use some music in the background to help students concentrate, choose music which employs regular periods (repeated phrases and patterns) - something like Mozart or Bach. Do not choose abrasive, heavy music that will distract students because the brain will immediately try to make sense of the disharmony. When you choose something melodic with musical patterns it will not distract and in fact will help to underline the repetitive patterns of grammar.
- ♪ If you're working with the students on descriptive exercises in which they need to use their imaginations, you can set the scene musically which will help stimulate their imaginations. For example if they have to describe their

lives as young children, Ravel's "Mother Goose Suite" playing softly in the background will help them return to those simpler times through its sweet harmonies and simple structures. Listening to Shostakovitch, on the other hand, would put them right off!

Here are some other suggestions for appropriate music for different activities:

- 📖 Grammar - Mozart, Bach, Vivaldi
- 📖 Imagination exercises - Ravel, Debussy
- 📖 World News, current situations – Rap, ethnic music from the discussed countries
- 📖 Making Plans - Upbeat jazz
- 📖 Discussing "Serious" issues – (environmental issues) Beethoven, Brahms

Use your imagination and you will quickly find that your students will be using their imaginations to improve their learning without even being aware of it.

TIP 9: HOW TO BE A GOOD EDUCARE TEACHER

Love your students (even if you don't necessarily LIKE them!)

How to do this:

- ♥ **Acceptance:** If we are able to accept others in spite of their faults and weaknesses, rather than putting them down for not meeting our expectations, we are able to do much to make them feel loved.
- ♥ **Beauty:** look beyond the exterior and 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.
- ♥ **Brotherliness:** 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:

♥ **Compassion:** 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.

♥ **Forbearance and tolerance:** 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.

♥ **Forgiveness:** 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.

♥ **Giving, selflessness and service:** 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, 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 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.

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

Recently I was working with a very special teacher who appeared to be totally calm and relaxed, and unfazed by whatever happened in her classroom. At the end of one day, there was an incident with a particularly disruptive girl. The teacher handled it in her usually calm way. However, when she arrived at school the next day she was looking exhausted. She said that she had been lying awake all night worrying about how to follow up the situation. So even she, for all her calmness, was suffering on the inside because of work-related problems. I would like to suggest that she could have saved herself a sleepless night and found a solution more quickly and easily if she had really gone inside herself and listened to her own inner voice.



Take a deep breath and as you breathe in, draw the light into your head. As you breathe out release your stress and tension. Draw the light in a line from your head to your heart and let it settle there for a few moments, opening your heart like a flower bud. Now let the light pass through your feet and your hands so they will lead you to meet with good people and do good things. Next take the light to surround your mouth and tongue so you can speak wisely and with compassion your eyes. Then take it to your eyes and

let it fill your eyes so that you can see only the good qualities in your students. Let it fill your ears so you will hear the truth in what they are saying. Now bring the light to the top of your head and allow it to fill your mind with peaceful thoughts, then imagine that you are sending it to your pupils – particularly the ones who make your life difficult – your colleagues and then to the whole Universe. Say to yourself, “I am in the light. The light is in me. I am the light”. As you say this, hold your problem in the light for a few moments and trust that the illumination will bring a successful solution and then release the problem.

**TIP 11: SILENT REFLECTION/
CREATIVE VISUALISATION THAT
HAS WORKED WITH STUDENTS**

One of the most important aims of EduCare is to help pupils to find their own unique strengths/talents and to explore how these can be used to benefit themselves and others.

What are my special strengths?

Imagine that you are inside a golden bubble. You are floating around in the bubble, very safe and happy. The other students are in their bubbles too. Sometimes you bump gently against each other but you are inside your own bubble and nobody else can come in. Your golden bubble is your own special space where you can go whenever you like.

Next imagine that you are very, very tiny and you are walking inside your own brain. It looks like a library, with lots of shelves and books. Inside the books are all the things you have ever learned. You walk along the shelves until suddenly you find what you are looking for. It is a big book on a very high shelf. You take it off the shelf and look at the cover. On the cover it has your name and it is called “My Book of Special Strengths”. Imagine that you open the book. On the first page there is a list of all the special strengths that you have, and all the things that you are good at. It might be words, or it might be a picture, or it might be like a movie. If you can’t see anything don’t worry because it will pop into your mind later. Have a good look at what is on the page and make sure you take careful notice of the information that is given to you. When you are ready, close the book and put it back on the shelf.

N.B. Psychologists recommend that the use of a golden bubble or golden circle is particularly effective for hyperactive children, as it gives them a defined boundary and helps them to keep themselves more self-contained.

**TIP 12: A QUOTATION ABOUT
EDUCARE FROM THE FOUNDER**

“ Education is not to be taken as a process of filling an empty sack and pouring out its contents, making the sack empty again. It is not the head that has to be filled through education, it is the heart that has to be cleansed, expanded and illumined. Education is for life, and not merely for making a living. ”

Further resources available from the ISSE (Hong Kong)

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

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

Educare posters and support materials

DOES EDUCARE WORK?

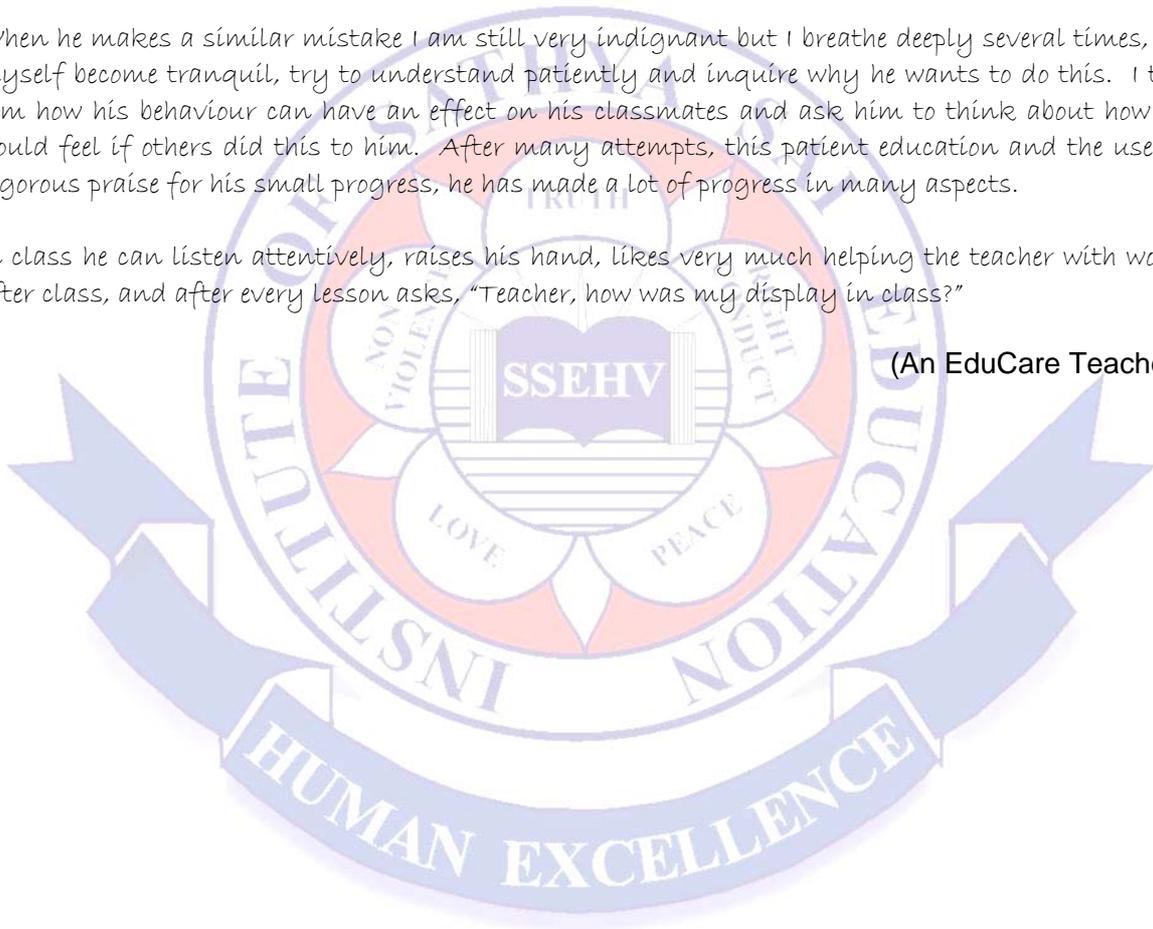
In my class I had a student who was active, mischievous and had a tendency to violence. In class he often did not pay attention, left his seat to take his classmates' study apparatus, and either whipped his classmates' hands or punctured them with a pencil when he was sharing a table. He seriously affected his classmates' study and was a very repugnant student.

Before, I would roughly pull him to the office, scold him for his malicious behaviour or ask his parents to give a written guarantee that he would no longer behave like this. But this was not effective and he refused to mend his ways despite repeated admonition. After I learned some ideas about human values education (for example the EduCare quotation about only letting children be able to learn love through love), I changed my approach to him.

When he makes a similar mistake I am still very indignant but I breathe deeply several times, let myself become tranquil, try to understand patiently and inquire why he wants to do this. I tell him how his behaviour can have an effect on his classmates and ask him to think about how he would feel if others did this to him. After many attempts, this patient education and the use of vigorous praise for his small progress, he has made a lot of progress in many aspects.

In class he can listen attentively, raises his hand, likes very much helping the teacher with work after class, and after every lesson asks, "Teacher, how was my display in class?"

(An EduCare Teacher)



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