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

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

Through

EduCare

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

12

QUICK TIPS FOR BRINGING EDUCARE INTO YOUR TEACHING



The Teacher's Toolbox

Vol.4

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

I invite you to continue with our journey in the landscape of teacher talk and learning talk. I listened to some of the persuasive language used in the advertisements. Amazingly this industry lures the consumer through such overtly convincing language, making perfect consumers of us and influencing our decisions to ‘buy or not buy’. Words of encouragement include “Do Try It”; “It won’t happen overnight but it will happen”.

Let us pause a minute and focus on the emerging principles of the language used and the creative manner of knitting carefully selected words together to give us the consumer-product understanding and description.

However as teachers we can take stock of this principle of ‘catchy phrases’ with a sense of humour where possible and develop a set of our own phrases which will allow for the class to get very familiar with its contextual understanding. Kindergarten teachers do it so naturally and students respond almost instantly to phrases like; “good listening, wonderful reading, good strong voice”; and “I am looking for good manners and the most helpful person in the class”.

I have often used phrases like “are you listening”; “are you thinking”; “Tell us your moment of learning”; “Tell us one word you remember from the lesson”. Consistent use of these phrases has become the ‘wakeup call’ for students to focus and reflect on their own learning for the day.

Until next time... .. **“Do Try It”**



TIP 2: EDUCARE AND GROUP ACTIVITIES

[Adapted from "Strengths in Teams" (p.7), St. Luke's Innovative Resources, www.innovativeresources.org]

Questions for reflection on a group activity:

- Can you list the strengths of each team member?
- What would your teammates say are your greatest strengths?
- Why is everyone in the team highly valued?



people feel pushed around or humiliated or put down, and what can the team do to ensure this doesn't happen?

- What can the team do to build a feeling that everyone is important?
- Are there times when

- Perhaps even stop talking or
- Have a drink of water (carry a bottle of water to class to keep your throat hydrated)
- It's better not to react emotionally almost instantly to the 'disturbance', so STOP, THINK and then RESPOND
- The response should address only the action of discord and not the personality of the student
- Do not make any personal reference whereby the student feels a personal attack has been made
- Conscious effort must be made to use vocabulary that is lined with care and softness towards the student and simultaneously redirecting the student to focus.
- Where possible change style of delivery, say something contextually lighthearted.

A student in my class used to drum or sing constantly during the lesson. My response, "I like singing, someone's got a lovely voice". At the end of the period, I called the student out and talked to him about the music he liked. I reminded him of the right place, right time, right action and that we would make time for him to use his love of music as a resource to teach the class. He brought some appropriate music to class and we used the lyrics as a poetry lesson in our English module

- Always create a live cultural circle of learning wherein all students are made to feel safe and
- Create space and time for students to feel inclusive of the learning environment and take ownership of their learning.

TIP 3: EDUCARE PERSPECTIVE OF DISCIPLINE

The focus of discipline in Educare is love and peace, without the need to establish the image of "who's Boss in the classroom."

The hallmark of an Educare style of Discipline is using the principles of truth and speech with compassion, firstly understanding the student and then making the necessary adjustment. Challenging situations including student distraction, not being on task etc in the classroom can be addressed using some of the following strategies which have been tried and found to be quite effective:

- Keep a calm, confident controlled voice
- Avoid raising your voice too high
- Consciously take a deep breath, think quietly, go to your inner reserve of strength

TIP 4: MOTIVATE AND INSPIRE STUDENTS

The school year has started and you're faced with a list of new names and the yearly challenge of putting new names with faces and getting to know your group of students. To be able to motivate and inspire them, you must get a clear

understanding of who they are and what is important to them. This will give you the background to understand some of their academic strengths and weaknesses. It might also help you to appreciate a bit of their home life in advance and to nip potential problems in the bud.

Here's an activity you can do on the first day or the first week of school or you



could set it as the first homework assignment.

The Crystal ball

You can use the "crystal ball" to not only see what's on your students' minds but also to get an overview of their writing and drawing skills, their dexterity, and their ability to follow simple directions.

Give students a drawing with a diagram of a large circle that has an elaborate pedestal base. Title the drawing "The Crystal Ball." This one-dimensional crystal ball can have a lead paragraph such as:

- *What are you eager to do during the coming school year?*
- *Do you want to learn to play soccer?*
- *Do you want to learn to write in cursive?*
- *In the crystal ball below, draw or write what you're looking forward to for this school year.*

One of the great things about this activity is that it gives each of your writers and artists a chance to feel comfortable and even to **shine** through their crystal ball predictions. Encourage your students to use labels, colored pencils, and descriptive sentences to fill the ball with everything that's on their minds.

Collect everyone's crystal ball drawings, and keep them until the end of the year. Redistribute them to the students at that time and have a discussion with them to see whether or not they have met some of their goals.

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

More ways to boost your students' self-esteem:

Maintain Eye Contact

Look at your student when he or she addresses you. So many of us don't maintain eye contact. This is a gesture that gives the students the impression that they are not worthy of the attention.

Keep on Listening

Listen to your student when he or she speaks to you. Really listen! Paraphrase so they know you are listening.

Question Time

Ask your students' questions. This will open up a myriad of topics and interests. Interaction also encourages students to develop their verbal skills.

Let's hear it from you now

Make your students aware that you want to hear their input. They will know that their ideas and views are important to you.

This interaction also keeps the line of



communication open between a teacher and a student, which is very important to the students' development.

Students are much more willing to come and talk to a teacher about their problems if they know that the teacher will really listen to what they have to say.

TIP 6: TEACH ABOUT CHARACTER THROUGH LESSON CONTENT

We can use opportunities to talk to children about values and character while teaching regular topics in the curriculum. The following is an example of how this can be linked to a mathematics lesson in

which the pupils practice their number facts/number bonds.

Circle Pass

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 2×4 . The next child answers 8, then continues with a new fact, eg $(... \times 2 = 16$ – 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 (love and support/listening)

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).

TIP 7: USING STORY TELLING TO ENHANCE LESSONS

Using stories is one of the best ways to bring a point home and facilitate learning. That's why all great teachers throughout history have used stories to make their points. The parables used by Jesus Christ are perhaps among the most famous examples of how stories influence learning.

The best stories to use are those you find in everyday encounters. The ones you experience while going about your work, interacting with colleagues, talking in meetings, or playing with children.

Here's a story that you could retell to your students:

The Bucket Boy

In the playground there were big sprinklers that sprayed out water. Kids liked to go up to them, put their hand over the jet of water and fill buckets. To do so and not get totally soaked, you have to move quickly, put your hand firmly over the jet at a certain angle and shoot the water into your bucket.



One little boy wanted to fill his bucket, but couldn't get himself to get through the spray – approaching ... pausing ... backing up and trying again, but never moving in enough. He got wetter than others who had filled their buckets, without getting anything in his.

What lesson do we learn or what can we teach through this story? The boy's behavior is a metaphor for our willingness to push into an uncomfortable situation. If you hesitate you'll get nothing, but will get wet. If you push through you may still get nothing and may get wet, but at least you had the chance to get something in your bucket! Link this message into classroom learning.

As you prepare to teach, ask yourself, which of the stories that happened to me can I bring to the classroom to make a point? Students especially relate more to real life stories that happened to people they know rather than to concepts or ideas. If you want to touch the hearts of your students, tell a story.

TIP 8: MUSIC AND SONGS IN THE CLASSROOM

I felt challenged to use songs in the classroom and read about this wonderful game and tried it. The idea is simple and the only preparation you need is to make enough copies of the lyrics of one song for every two students. Put the students in

pairs. One is the secretary and the other is the runner.

Line all the secretaries up so that they are



seated, facing a wall at a distance of about 10 feet. On the opposite wall pin up copies of the lyrics. The runner's job is to race to the lyric sheet, memorize the first line, run back to the team's secretary and repeat the line. The secretary writes down what the runner repeats while the runner runs up to memorize another line. They continue this way until all the lyrics are completed.

This game is usually quite rowdy and, if you have competitive students, can be hilarious. It enables the students to have reading writing, listening and speaking practice all at the same time. I try to vary the game by having runners and secretaries swap roles every few lines. It's a lot of fun and I'm sure it's been around for ages... .. Enjoy.

You can vary this by using the top-down and bottom-up approach to analyze the message of the song or to focus on another aspect of the song and lyrics.

TIP 9: HOW TO BE A GOOD EDUCARE TEACHER

- Communicate from your heart to the students' hearts.
- Imagine that you are sending positive feelings from your heart to theirs.
- If it helps, picture these feelings as pink bubbles (or an image of your own choice)

It can make you feel better and will help you to get a better response from the kinds of pupils who often make your heart sink:

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 practical lesson coming, 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 'positive thoughts 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 positive thoughts. 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 positivity 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. (Teacher's story)

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

Ever tried therapeutic writing?
Therapeutic writing can:

- be very nurturing for a stressed teacher

- help you to put the situation in perspective
- help you decide how you can support yourself or seek support from others.

Some guide for therapeutic writing:

- Write about an incident (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, 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?

- What action can you take to get this kind of support?

**TIP 11: SILENT REFLECTION/
VISUALIZATION TO CORRECT A
SPECIFIC BEHAVIOR PROBLEM**

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. This will enhance what you learn and it will also enhance your consideration for your teacher 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.

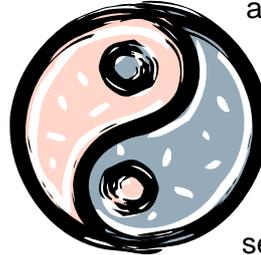
Some children's comments about this visualization:

- At first I found it funny – it was difficult to concentrate, but after several times I found it easier to concentrate my mind.
- I found it easier than before to listen to the teacher and other discussions, now I am more interested in my lessons
- I find that silent sitting makes me more likely to concentrate my mind and makes me more serious about studying.
- It is very useful for me because I have always found it difficult to concentrate.

**TIP 12: HERE'S ANOTHER HINT
ON EDUCARE**

BALANCE

What is the use of acquiring any amount of knowledge available in the world, if one does not have character? This is the reason for the loss of balance in the case



of modern people in general and the educated people in particular. If you lose your balance when riding a bicycle, you are liable to meet with accidents. Similarly if there is a lack of balance between knowledge and character in your life's journey you are surely exposing yourself to serious accidents.

DOES EDUCARE WORK?

After participating in the values education I changed optimistically upward. I say frequently to myself that others must feel happy and joyful because of my existence.

(An EduCare Teacher)

Further resources available from the ISSE (Hong Kong)

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

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

Educare posters and support materials

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