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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. 6

### TIP 1: VALUES LITERACY – "LEARNING TALK, TEACHER TALK"

Connecting **Value Added Vocabulary (VAV)** with everyday communication is recommended for all levels of teachers and students. Teachers should take into consideration the "VAV Word Four corners" as follows:

- Words need to be personally inviting and adding value to one's self
- Words need to be personally inviting and adding value to others
- Words need to be professionally inviting and adding value to one's self
- Words need to be professionally inviting and adding value to others

Teachers and Students who are word conscious of VAV:

- 👍 Are aware of the words they use and around them (Words they read, hear, write and speak)
- 👍 Appreciate the power of words
- 👍 Understand why certain words are used instead of others
- 👍 Have a sense of the range of words that could be used in place of words that are not invitational and encouraging
- 👍 Use VAV as high frequency words in or outside the classroom
- 👍 Create opportunities for students to select these words

An invitational approach to the use of VAV develops the teachers 'values gaze' and introduces the students' to a journey of "Caring in learning and learning in caring" which is one of the theories of putting care back in to education – Educare. (Mogi Nayagar 2007).

**TIP 2: EDUCARE AND GROUP ACTIVITIES**

In structuring group activities Educare looks to foster wholeness of

- ↻ Patience
- ↻ Turn taking
- ↻ Pulling your weight in the group
- ↻ Unity amongst team members
- ↻ Integration of values

These features hopefully are the intended experience for group members.

One of the daunting tasks of group activities is how do teachers maintain orderliness and discipline, so that the lesson does not appear chaotic and relatively "too noisy". As teachers we need to strike a balance between orderliness and learning talk or learning dialogue that involves some level of learning noise. This will call for teachers to know their class level of learning talk noise and use their own discernment to bring the noise level within a learning perimeter.

In the past month my classes have been involved in project learning, which involves group activities. One of the activities conducted by my colleague is very interesting to try out. This group activity was tied in with silent thinking and higher order thinking principles.

**An example of a Group Activity in a Secondary 5 (Y11) class:**

**Materials needed:**

- large piece of A3/A2 paper
- marker pens (4 different colours for each student)

**Step 1**

Ask the students in groups of four to silently read the first paragraph of a short story (silent reading group activity)

**Step 2**

Divide a large sheet of paper into four squares and write the following questions in each square:

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| What is the story about?         | Who is the story about?                   |
| Where is the story taking place? | What is the main point of this paragraph? |

Each student writes their response to the question and shows it to their team mates. (Silent thinking and silent writing group activity) Remember still no talking aloud!!

**Step 3**

Continue with silent thinking and silent writing. Each student is asked to respond to the teammates' comments, adding, disagreeing or any other comments only though silent dialogue of writing on the A3 paper.

**Step 4**

Now ask the students to write their own ending to the story and their own version of the story.

To the teacher's surprise she received stories that exceeded the usual limit of 200 words, a delightful response of up to 1000 words story. *Thumbs Up!!!* for a group activity based on silent reading, silent thinking, silent dialogue and silent writing.

*Hope you will enjoy this experience as we did.*

**TIP 3: EDUCARE PERSPECTIVE OF DISCIPLINE**

According to the model proposed by Maslow we all need love and direction. The operative word in Discipline within the

Educare framework is direction with wholeness. It is a “wholeness” of approach that embraces justice, truth and love, tough love. I guess for most practitioners we are not too familiar with the “L “word” being bandied around the class in the context of discipline.

From my experiences of teaching across three continents of the world, I can reassure you that the discipline challenges we face in class can be addressed through loving direction. I cited an example of singing aloud and drumming on the desk while the teacher is teaching in a recent newsletter, which incidentally is an international disturbing adolescent behaviour in secondary schools. My loving direction response in a normal soft tone was “XX nice song, I love to listen to the song, actually we can go to the music room this afternoon or lunch time and we will listen to the song and you can play for us too! Just wait a little while longer!!!!” The instant response from XX was “sorry Miss”.

The important point is to separate the action from the person and address and direct the response towards the action rather than the student. This has always worked for me in many a tricky situation. ‘Discipline with loving direction’ - tough call for a teacher in trying circumstances, but it changes the dynamics of the lesson to a positive charge. Please try it and let us know your experience.

**TIP 4: MOTIVATE AND INSPIRE STUDENTS**

Motivational responses to students:

- “ Please be prepared to accept or make changes.
- “ Our mission is not to change the world, but to change ourselves.

- “ Once we have learned the lesson, we move on to the next one, life never runs out of lessons!
- “ Every event or action has a purpose.
- “ The only way to beat fear is to face it. Face your fears, you will grow in strength, courage and confidence

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



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 short-comings:**  
*‘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 your 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:**  
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).

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

## TIP 6: TEACH ABOUT CHARACTER THROUGH LESSON CONTENT

### Sample questions for selected English texts:

Examples of values-based questions that can be used to enhance character development while doing school-based assessment

(The following extracts have been taken from Taplin, M. & Yu, K. (2006) *The Road to Success in English SBA*. Hong Kong: Child Learning Centre)

**Book:** Daddy-Long-Legs (1912) Jean Webster

**Genre:** Fiction, Romance

**Sample multiple choice question that creates opportunities to talk about values and good character:**

### What is the main message in this book?

- That every girl should try to find a rich husband
- That no matter how unlucky a start somebody may have in life they still have the chance to become successful
- That it is not very nice to live in an orphanage
- that poor people should do whatever they can to become rich

### Sample open-ended questions that create opportunities to talk about values and good character:

#### Task 1

What are some of the important messages about life that we can learn from Judy? Share these messages with your classmates.

#### Sample answer

- There is enough happiness available in the world for everyone to share, as long as we learn to be happy with what we have.
- It is important to be interested in life and to want to learn about new things (books, people etc.)
- Imagination is important, especially when we are going through difficult times.
- Everybody, even the poorest orphan, can succeed if they are prepared to work hard and accept opportunities.
- There are some very generous people in the world who, like Daddy-Long legs, do a lot to help the less fortunate.

#### Task 2

**Q.** Some people say that the book *Daddy-Long-Legs* has survived for so long because it has inspired so many young women.

**Work with your group to decide what this means – whether you are a girl or a boy, what are the ways in which Judy has inspired you?**

### Sample answer

- *She keeps happy and looks for the best in situations, even when she is in very bad situations.*
- *She studies hard and does well with her studies – she even receives a scholarship.*
- *Through a mixture of good luck, hard work and being a good person she is able to move upwards in the world.*
- *She reminds me that it is important to help others.*

**N.B.** Please note that these activities have been designed to encourage students to reflect on their own feelings and values. Consequently there are potentially as many correct answers as there are students in the class. The sample answers are guidelines only as an example of some of the answers some students might give.

### TIP 7: USING STORY TELLING TO ENHANCE LESSONS

We continue the story from our last newsletter (Vol. 5)

*As she worked with him, his mind seemed to come alive. The more she encouraged him, the faster he responded. By the end of the year, Teddy had become one of the smartest children in the class and, despite her lie that she would love all the children the same, Teddy became "teacher's pets."*

*A year later, she found a note under her door, from Teddy, telling her that she was the best teacher he ever had in his whole life.*

*Six years went by before she got another note from Teddy. He then wrote that he had finished high school, third in his class, and she was still the best teacher he ever had in life.*

*Four years after that, she got another letter, saying that while things had been tough at times, he'd stayed in school, had*

*stuck with it, and would soon graduate from college with the highest of honors. He assured Mrs. Thompson that she was still the best and favorite teacher he had ever had in his whole life.*

*Then four more years passed and yet another letter came. This time he explained that after he got his bachelor's degree, he decided to go a little further. The letter explained that she was still the best and favorite teacher he ever had. But now his name was a little longer.... The letter was signed, Theodore F. Stoddard, MD.*

*The story does not end there. You see there was yet another letter that spring. Teddy said he had met this girl and was going to be married. He explained that his father had died a couple of years ago and he was wondering if Mrs. Thompson might agree to sit at the wedding in the place that was usually reserved for the mother of the groom. Of course, Mrs. Thompson did. And guess what? She wore that bracelet, the one with several rhinestones missing. Moreover, she made sure she was wearing the perfume that Teddy remembered his mother wearing on their last Christmas together.*

*They hugged each other, and Dr. Stoddard whispered in Mrs. Thompson's ear, "Thank you Mrs. Thompson for believing in me. Thank you so much for making me feel important and showing me that I could make a difference."*

*Mrs. Thompson, with tears in her eyes, whispered back. She said, "Teddy, you have it all wrong. You were the one who taught me that I could make a difference. I didn't know how to teach until I met you." (For those of you that don't know, Teddy Stoddard is the Dr. at Iowa Methodist in Des Moines that has the Stoddard Cancer Wing.)*

### TIP 8: MUSIC AND SONGS IN THE CLASSROOM

Everyone identifies with music in some way. Children hear lullabies; learn songs and melodies from television shows and computer games. Include a song as part of your classroom routine. If you start by teaching something familiar, your class will respond. At lower grade levels, it could be “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” or “The Alphabet Song” (which happens to be the same melody and you can point that out.) At higher levels, “Baby Bumblebee” is fun. You can use “The Wheels on The Bus” or “The Ants Go Marching.” Silliness works!

Any song with repetition will be easier for you and the class. Songs with too many words don't work unless you want to be the soloist. Echo songs such as “Are You Sleeping” work well. You can even get creative and change the words. For example, if it is close to snack or lunchtime, you could sing “I am hungry!” and have the children suggest the foods that should be in the song. There will be so much participation that the song may never end. Even the quietest child will suggest a food or maybe a “silly” food. Have fun with it!

Now that you have them singing, you are on your way to include other songs. You can teach the class your favorite song. Then ask the students to sing their special songs. You will be amazed and amused at the results. I have had students make up songs on the spot or sing very “interesting” rock songs that their siblings have taught them. No matter what, you must applaud and don't laugh!

If you alter activities so that the class never knows what comes next, you will keep them excited. The students need to move. Teaching a very simple dance or just having the students jump or clap in rhythm with a song will avoid any discipline problems. Even tapping a table in time with the music is fun as long as you teach them a sign for starting and stopping.

Some very young children might jump up and move while you are singing. This is a happy and natural reaction to the beat. If you stop them, they might be afraid to

respond in the future, so just encourage the rest of the class move to the music and then everyone will be able to sit quietly for the next activity. Remember, since music can be a very personal part of a student, it is very easy to turn them on and extremely easy to turn them off. Always be complimentary in your reactions.

**TIP 9: HOW TO BE A GOOD EDUCARE TEACHER**

**Which of the following do I model to my students through my own behaviour?**

- a) Respect for others
- b) Respect for the environment
- c) Honesty
- d) Sincerity
- e) Team spirit and co-operation
- f) Compassion
- g) Kindness
- h) Trustworthiness
- i) Willing to admit to mistakes and learn from them
- j) Self-discipline
- k) Love for all
- l) Patience
- m) Self-confidence
- n) Inner peace/calmness
- o) Standing strongly for what is right even if ostracized by others
- p) Selfless service
- q) Unity of thought, word and deed (harmony of head, heart and hands)
- r) Perseverance
- s) Faith and determination to face challenges of life
- t) Acceptance
- u) Ability to accept good and bad equally without being affected at all

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

- Look for the positive aspects of the situation
- Forgive yourself and your students for not being perfect

- Rediscover the joys of teaching
- Reflect on your personal values
- Look after yourself

**One teacher's reflection:**

Guilt – knocks confidence a lot – e.g. if feeling guilty because you know the children aren't getting as much of you as they should be– then you feel you're not coping – especially if you have a personality where it's hard to stand up for yourself – I have got better at being assertive – I am now more empowered, calmer, can shrug things off – I have done a lot of work on that.

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

This is a valuable exercise to do with students on a regular, preferably, daily basis. The light is very important because it is a metaphor for knowledge, wisdom, power and warmth - it literally dispels "darkness" such as sadness, anger, conflicts and the effects of stress.

*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.*

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

Love all beings, that is enough. Love with no expectation of return. Love because your very nature is Love. When others are happy, be happy likewise. When others are in misery, try to alleviate their lot to the best of your ability. Practice Love through selfless service. By this means you will realize Unity and get rid of the ego that harms.

## 5 MINUTE FILLER ACTIVITY



Use any spare time at the end of a lesson to do some filler activities. Here's one you can try:

Make a list of good qualities. (Some examples are shown below.)

Students can be encouraged to develop their own lists of good qualities for this game. The teacher throws a ball/beanbag to the student who fits the first description on the list the most closely. That student then throws the ball to the one who matches the second description, and so on. The rule is that the same person cannot receive the ball more than once.

If the same lists are used repeatedly it may encourage some students to work on themselves - if the teacher notices an improvement in a particular student, s/he can start the game off by throwing to that student.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ↻ CALM AND NOT AFFECTED BY WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND HIM/HER | ↻ A GOOD LISTENER   |
| ↻ HAS A LOVING HEART  | ↻ GOOD AT SOLVING PROBLEMS                                |
| ↻ HAS A WARM SMILE  | ↻ HAPPY WITH WHATEVER HE HAS AND NOT WISHING TO HAVE MORE |
| ↻ SPEAKS TRUTHFULLY, KINDLY AND LOVINGLY                    | ↻ COURAGEOUS IN DIFFICULT TIMES                           |
| ↻ IS A GOOD TEAM MEMBER                                     | ↻ MAKES ME FEEL GOOD WHEN I AM AROUND HIM/HER             |
| ↻ IS CARING TO OTHERS                                       | ↻ HELPS OTHERS  |

## DOES EDUCARE WORK?

After a year-long Educare project in 44 classes in 11 schools in Mainland China, we used criterion-referenced assessment to measure the improvement in students' characters on nine criteria:

- |   |                           |   |
|---|---------------------------|---|
| • Trustworthy                                       | • Honest                  | • Not too elated by good fortune and depressed by bad |
| • Sense of duties and obligations of given position | • Tells truth             | • Loyal   |
| • Has principles and stands by them                 | • Gives others their due  |   |
|   | • Considerate to the weak |   |

There was a clear pattern of more students showing high levels of behaviours on these constructs at the end of the project than at the beginning, and more showing high levels of these behaviours in the experimental classes than in the non-Educare control classes.

## FURTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM THE ISSE (HONG KONG)

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

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

Educare posters and support materials

*We welcome comments, suggestions, and contributions.  
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