

Some research evidence of changes in students' character (China, August 2007 and 2008)

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).

	Excellent	High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Honest	Harmony of	Feels guilty if	Feels guilty if	Honest when	Behaves

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	head, heart and hands, ie always examines an act in own conscience before putting into practice	acts dishonestly and tries to atone for it in some way	acts dishonestly, but does nothing about it	being watched but acts dishonestly when no-one is watching	dishonestly whether being watched or not
Sense of duties and obligations of given position	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
Tells truth	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
Gives others their due	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

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Considerate to the weak	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)
Has principles and stands by them	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
Not too elated by good fortune and depressed by bad	Able to accept good and bad equally without being affected at all: unruffled by any loss or	Looks for the lesson in good and bad experiences and uses them to further personal	Knows that good and bad experiences help us to grow but makes no effort to learn the lesson or	Blames others for bad fortune and attributes good fortune to own doing	Becomes excessively elated or depressed; may take medication to suppress

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	gain of fortune	growth	do the work		feelings; dependent on material possessions and relationships for happiness; easily angered
Loyal	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
Trustworthy	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

In these two year-long studies of SSEHV participating teachers were asked to randomly select 10-15 children in their classes and to fill out the rubric for each of these children twice – at the beginning and at the end of the project. The teachers were asked to base their ratings on their own observations of the child and also to involve the children themselves in the discussion of their rating. Where their schools had parallel classes of the same grade level following the same curriculum but not involved in the SSEHV experiment, data were collected from control classes for comparison purposes. While some classes completed the rubric for 10-15 children, others did so for their whole classes.

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The following table looks just at the ratings of “excellent” and “high”. First it summarises the percentages of the sample fitting into each of these categories for the first and the second measurements. The table also shows the percentage increase in these two categories from the first to the second measuring (note that there may be some rounding errors in this table due to figures being reported rounded to one decimal place after calculation).

	% of sample in category						% increase in category					
	Control (n=209 from 22 classes)			EHV (n=238 from 38 classes)			Control			EHV		
	Excellent	High	Total	Excellent	High	Total	Excellent	High	Total	Excellent	High	Total
Tells truth												
Before EHV	45.6	22.1	67.8	34.3	19.9	54.2	2.7	2.3	4.9	8.4	5.3	13.7
After EHV	48.3	24.4	72.7	42.7	25.2	67.9						
Honest												
	41.8	18.8	60.6	25.4	26.7	52.1	2.8	1.4	3.4	9.1	3.6	12.7
	43.8	20.2	64.0	34.5	30.3	64.8						
Gives others their due												
	40.0	23.9	63.9	26.8	26.4	53.2	4.3	0.7	5.0	2.2	0.3	12.5
	44.3	24.6	68.9	39.0	26.7	65.7						
Trustworthy												
	40.1	21.3	61.4	30.0	25.7	55.7	3.6	3.5	7.1	12.2	-1.2	11.0
	43.7	24.8	68.5	42.2	24.5	66.7						
Sense of duties and obligations of given position												
	33.0	25.7	58.7	25.7	24.1	49.8	9.8	-2.0	7.8	7.1	2.0	9.1
	42.8	23.7	66.5	32.8	26.1	58.9						

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Has principles and stands by them	36.2	24.8	61.0	22.0	22.9	44.9	1.7	0.8	2.5	5.5	3.4	8.9
	37.9	25.6	63.5	27.5	26.3	53.8						
Considerate to the weak	42.2	23.8	66.0	21.2	29.7	50.9	2.9	1.0	3.9	9.0	-0.8	8.2
	45.1	24.8	69.9	30.2	28.9	59.1						
Loyal	36.9	26.6	63.5	28.0	30.1	58.1	3.6	1.7	5.3	7.0	1.7	7.9
	40.5	28.3	68.8	35.2	31.8	67.0						
Not too elated by good fortune and depressed by bad	40.0	26.2	66.2	20.7	27.8	48.5	3.8	-3.1	0.7	9.1	-5.2	3.9
	43.8	23.1	66.9	29.8	22.6	52.4						

Interpretation

- Of around 84 participating classes, only 38 responses were considered valid and able to be used in this analysis. This is disappointingly low, but can be explained by the fact that it was quite a demanding task to quantify and record the changes in the children's behaviours in the way specified in their briefing, and it was inevitable that errors in this recording would occur. Twenty-two teachers were able to provide valid corresponding data for control classes, that is the same subject and same grade level following the same curriculum and doing the same exams but not being taught by a teacher involved in the EHV project.
- The table is sorted from the construct that had the highest percentage increase in the experimental EHV classes (13.7% increase in children who were rated "excellent" or "high" for truth).

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- In both control and experimental classes there were consistent increases in the percentages of children scoring in the “excellent” and “high” categories.
- We can see that the control classes consistently had higher percentages of children in “excellent” and “high” classes both at the beginning of the experiment and at the end. Nevertheless, the percentage increases are larger in the experimental EHV classes for all constructs– this suggests that the EHV interventions may have had some impact on these figures.
- It must be noted that the rubrics were completed only for, on average, a randomly-selected 10-15 children per class (class sizes in the participating schools vary from 20 to 60), while some teachers recorded data for only 5 and some for their whole classes.
- To collect some additional data about children’s improvement the teachers were asked to indicate for the same sample of children how many categories they had improved in during the year of the project. Valid data for this were returned for 217 children in the EHV classes and 99 children in the control classes. On average the EHV children showed improvement in 7 of the 9 categories, which the control children showed improvement in 6.2.

