

A New Look At Methodology For SSEHV

Angela Loraine Burrows

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The Old Violin

by

Myra Brooks Welch

T'was battered and scarred, and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while,
To spend much time on the old violin
But he held it up with a smile.
"What am I bidden for this?" he cried.
"Who'll start the bidding for me?
A dollar - one dollar: then two - only two:
Two dollars are bidden" say three. "Three dollars once: Three dollars
twice:
Going for three!" But lo!
From the back of the crowd a grey-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow.
Then, wiping the dust from the old violin
And tight'ning the loosened strings,
He played a melody passing sweet,
The kind that haunts found clings.
The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
With a voice that was soft and low,
Said, "Now what is bid for the old violin?"
And he held it up with the bow. "A thousand dollars: Who'll make it
two?"
Two thousand: say three!
Three thousand once, three thousand twice,
Three thousand - gone!" said he.
The people cheered, but some exclaimed,
"We do not quite understand
What changed its worth? And the answer came:
"T'was the touch of the master's hand."
And many a man with a soul out of tune,
And battered and scarred by sin,
Is auctioned cheap by the thoughtless crowd,

Just like the old violin. But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul, and the change that is wrought
By the touch of the Master's hand.
O Master! I am the tuneless one:
Lay, lay Thy hand on me.
Transform me now, put a song in my heart
Of melody, Lord. To Thee.
“Why are we starting with this poem?”
What is the significance for each one of these verses?

Swami is the Master. He has to lay his hands on us. But when we go back to our schools, we have to become that Master. We have to have the Master's touch. Forget about methodologies, forget about techniques. The real methodology is each one of you who is sitting in this room. The real techniques are within you. We either make the child or we break the child. Many children come with many problems and difficulties. We have to have that Master's touch'.

Sathya Sai Educare

The ideal teacher is the ideal student. To take this a step further, the teacher actually learns from the students. We have to start with the children when they are very young. The children have the divinity within them. It is not for us to put it in there. It is for us to help them draw out the divinity that lies within them. That is really the whole concept of Educare.

Educare has two aspects, the worldly and the spiritual. Worldly education brings out the latent knowledge pertaining to the physical world. Spiritual knowledge brings out the inherent divinity in man.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba – Divine Discourse, 26 July 1999

In the Sathya Schools, the spiritual aspect is what we emphasize. It is to bring out the inherent divinity within a child. This is the great task before all of us as principals, as teachers, and as trainers. If we look at the education system today, this is what Swami says:

Teaching and learning have both become mechanical routines. They have lost their freshness and joy which vitality alone can give. The value of the teaching process lies in raising the level of consciousness of the learner, in heightening the sense of wonder and awe and in emphasizing the unity of one and all.

Sathya Sai Speaks XV

Where is this wonder today? Do our children have wonder? Children from the age of two are watching television, playing with computers and video games. There is no wonder. There is no awe. The inherent divinity is being covered very quickly.

New Direction

It is time to go deeper, to really use our own inner divinity, our own creativity to modify our SSEHV programme in the context of Educare. The way we saw SSEHV was the five human values and the five teaching techniques. **Swami is not static.** We have to go deeper, rather than being stuck with the curriculum. Everywhere that we go in the world, teachers complain about the same thing - Curriculum. We have so many boundaries. If we look at SSEHV, we have created the curriculum and we are limiting ourselves. The following are some ideas. It is not a package to restrict us. It is simply letting us think a little bit further, be a little bit more expansive, think a little bit more creatively, think a little bit more of the goals rather than just the five values and five techniques.

Do not treat “Human Values” as a separate curricular assignment. Then, it will become dry and uninspiring. It must transform the way of life and should not stop with imparting information. It must be imparted more through example and practice than by books and formal teaching.

Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. XVI, p.196

It is not necessary to make it a curricular subject. Values have to be integrated into everything we teach. It doesn't mean that we don't have an EHV class. We have to address the questions: How are we going to teach it? How are we going to draw out the values?

THREE GOALS

Following are three main goals that we are trying to achieve with our children:

□ **First Goal - To draw out the latent divinity from within the child.**

Our school systems are driven by academic and athletic excellence. However, we need to balance these by helping our children to develop good hearts and strive for spiritual excellence.

□ **Second Goal - To develop discrimination between right and wrong.**

The child should be taught to think, to study and then to act. Swami says "The essence of education is concentration". When the child finds peace through concentration, he can listen to his conscience and exercise discrimination. 3HV stands for Heart, Head and Hands. When the idea comes, it is taken to the heart. If the heart approves the action, it will be acted upon. If the heart disapproves the action, the idea will be abandoned.

□ **Third Goal – To know who we are.**

"Although young people are filled with questions about themselves, much of modern life keeps them from the search to understand and care for themselves."

The Soul of Education, Rachel Kessler

One of the greatest problems that adolescents are facing today is they do not know their true selves. Teachers must first search within for the answers to these questions: Who am I? Why am I here? What is the purpose of life? It is only then that they can help the child to draw out the answers from within himself.

Education should inculcate in the students the spirit of self-reliance and self-confidence. The first thing in life is self-reliance. Second is self-confidence. Third is self-sacrifice. Fourth is self-realization. With self-realization, life finds its final fulfillment.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba Sanathana Sarathi, December 1994

Teachers should start with teaching the children to be self reliant.

How do children learn?

Children learn by discovering their own resources, stimulating their own creativity, discovering the joy of learning, making mistakes, doing their own research and being challenged to think for themselves. The child can only experience the SELF through direct experiences. We have to gear our classes to be “child-centered”.

Thematic Value Education

The enumeration of the human values as five: Right Conduct, Truth, Love, Peace and Non-Violence is incorrect.

They are all facets of the foundational humanness. They grow together: they are inter-dependent, they are not separable. Rather than just concentrating on just one value for each lesson, we draw out the values in everything we do. One example of a theme for the lessons which span over a period of time could be “From I to we”. The journey to discover the relationship between the self and the universe. This theme will have sub-themes on the self, my family, society, the environment etc. The sub-themes can be broken up further. Get the children to come up with their own ideas. Continue to expand the theme until you have explored all the values. Draw out the values from everything that we are doing.

Experiential Learning

Children can learn through silent sitting, story telling, service projects, prayers, art and creative work, poetry and quotes, games, music and singing, and drama and role play. In every lesson, we should include silent sitting and prayer. These are basics. The rest is up to the discrimination of the teacher to decide what she wants to do. We have to do whatever will help the child in this transformation process. To have set lesson plans is quite limiting. Every teacher should create his or her own lesson plans. Every teacher should have the creativity and sensitivity to know what the children need.

All teachers must prepare themselves beforehand in the following areas:

❑ **Create an Atmosphere**

What is the atmosphere that we would like to create in a class? Teachers have to ensure that atmosphere in the classroom is radiating with values.

❑ **Build Trust and Co-operation**

We need to build trust and co-operation with the students. With this in place, the learning process will become automatic.

❑ **Be clear of the multiple roles of a Teacher**

Teachers have to be clear of their multi-faceted roles. They play the roles of facilitator, teacher, mother, father, policeman, doctor etc. They have to realize that it is a tremendous sacrifice to be a teacher.

❑ **Always hold your Goal in Mind**

They have to always hold their goal in their mind. Draw out the divinity within the child.

Teachers as Role Model

“If we want our children to possess the traits of character we most admire, we need to teach them what those traits are.”

Speech of Former secretary of Education for USA ~ William J. Bennet.

To be exact, the children learn from what we are, not from what we teach or what we say.

The following is a checklist that teachers may use as a guideline before preparing their classes and afterwards, as an evaluation:-

Checklist for effectiveness

Does it touch the heart of a child?
Does it have practical application?
Does it help the child to transform?

Water Project in English and SSEHV classes (Thailand)

The children were showed the book "Messages from Water" by a Japanese scientist who had frozen water and did many experiments, by observing the water crystals, to show how the environment and people affect water. This had a very profound effect on the children. Water from the Osaka River and Tokyo River had different crystal formations. Pure water had very beautiful crystal formations while polluted water had dark and distorted crystals.

Water was put into bottles and labeled with different words. One bottle was labeled "Thank You" while another labeled "You make me sick. I will kill you." This experiment showed that these words have a direct effect on crystals.

This next experiment had the greatest influence on the children. Water from a dam, before and after prayer, was crystallized. Crystals of water before the prayer were dark and distorted. One child who never saw the importance in prayer and meditation told me, "Today, for the first time, I really understand how important it is to pray and meditate. Our body is so filled with water. What a great influence our thoughts are having on our body." She had noticed the figure of someone praying had taken shape in the crystal.

The children did an art project that showed the connection between the water crystal that they would like to have in their bodies and their thoughts.

In another project, children were divided into groups. They explored waters of dams, rivers, sea etc. They drew and wrote about these waters and came up with the real values of water.

They sang the following song:

<p>Water is more precious than silver. Water is more valued than gold. Water is more beautiful than diamonds. We cannot exist without water.</p>
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The theme on Water expanded to water conservation. The children came up with the uses of water and how to help conserve water.

The Secret of Teaching

From Heart to Heart and Not Head to Head

END OF EXTRACT