EDUCARE EVERYWHERE: EXPLORING CHARACTER EDUCATION

by

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Abstract

At times, today’s society seems dominated by negativity, disasters and a perceived decrease in humanity. The problems have slowly spread into schools, with education in danger of becoming a process of churning out workers rather than thinkers. Large-scale testing and its worth in educational lore seem to have replaced the need for discrimination and teachers may be becoming expendable in the Western world. The need for character education seems greater than ever in a world where intolerance has in some instances replaced morality. This project looks at the need for character education in today’s world, the possibility of integrating character into the curriculum, and personal experiences with character education. *Educare Everywhere* explores the benefits of a values education program and offers a vision of the future of education through the lens of character education.
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Chapter 1
Introducing Educare

*Education* is a noun that carries this definition:

The act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life (Retrieved from [http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/education](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/education)).

Dictionary definitions aside, education has a much deeper significance, for it is life itself for young children. If we look at schooling from an outsider’s perspective, young children spend 6 to 7 hours a day in school, which is close to half of their non-sleeping hours in the day. The time children are at school becomes a significant part of who they are, and the future “mature life” mentioned in the above definition begins to mould itself from the minute they set foot into school. The children of today will be the leaders of tomorrow. In a world of turmoil and trouble, with wars and natural disasters filling our news feeds, the need for empathic, confident and steadfast leaders seems overwhelmingly the reality. As the world shifts more and more into hyper-speed, as communication technology offers us a view of the world in one click, as instant messaging replaces the need for phone calls and as the whole world becomes one online global village, it is my perception that the very ideals of humanity and human relations are diminishing. The problem with the deterioration of humanity is that we cannot separate the human from the
being. Technology can never replace some of the realities of life. Human beings are emotional beings; communication and interaction with other humans is an essential part of a mature life. The opening definition of education mentions “general knowledge,” but the definition also speaks to the human behind the knowledge. Education has come a long way, from oral tradition to integrating breaking technology into the classrooms; however, as much as we move forward, we must be wary to not lose the essence of what it is all about: Educare.

The word education is derived from the Latin educere, which means to draw out or to bring out. The idea latent in the definition is to bring out what is within, the good. What educare means is to foster the positive that is within every child. Educare seeks to have students who are plentiful in character, and not just in factual knowledge. Educare strives for balanced individuals who can be leaders in their communities, with strong character and a strong moral code. Educare draws out the often underdeveloped qualities in students and provides a framework for these students to use their talents and qualities for a positive future. Educare on a very basic level asks of teachers to step away from teaching just academics and to focus their attention on the children and what kind of impact they can have in the world with strong character development.

Martin Luther King, Jr., famously said “Intelligence plus character: that is the goal of true education.” Intelligence can be assigned to the factual academia, learning to write, read, calculate, assess and present. Character, however, is not necessarily tangible or quantifiable. “Character” is defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as “The complex of mental and ethical traits marking and often individualizing a person, group, or nation” (retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/character).
In terms of this project, the character that is in question is that of the individual. To properly distinguish what Dr. King means, we must connect it to the individual and determine what qualifies an individual as one with “exemplary character.” In looking at the above definition, the operative word used by Merriam-Webster is ethical. Someone of “stellar character” can perhaps be understood as someone with a deep moral code which governs their thinking about ethical issues in an introspective empathic fashion. Although this description seems concrete, the underlying value is what ties it all together. What character education strives for is to develop children holistically, creating hybrid students who excel both academically and ethically, and, most importantly, to develop students to become compassionate, strong-minded, and competent leaders.

Educare has now become a familiar term and it is used by many different educational programs. The origins of educare trace back to the original Latin word, and the history of Educare as a viable program will be looked at in the following chapter; the following are some Educare philosophies from different organizations.

**Educare Children’s Centre, Mississauga, Ontario**

As the name "Educare" suggests, this Centre has always recognized the value in learning through play. In effect, play is a child's work. To this end, "Educare" offers a wide variety of activities providing opportunities of growth in all areas of development. Our goal is to offer interesting educational experiences in a warm caring atmosphere, thus enabling a child to develop feelings of self worth, and a sense of achievement.
Educare Early Intervention, Clearwater Public Education Centre, Fort McMurray, Alberta

Educare Early Intervention prepares children for personal and academic success by providing high quality programs that integrate language, literacy, family wellness, and early childhood development.

The Educare institute, Lexington, Kentucky

To inspire children to achieve their very best; to educate children in character and leadership by drawing out their hidden character traits and leadership qualities; to help them realize that their character is their real strength and that all other acquisitions like wealth and education are of no real value without character; to develop good leadership qualities among youth and make them understand that the labor of leadership is a character issue; and to encourage everyone to think about the well-being of our planet.

Purpose: Help children and youth to realize their true potential and that their Character is Power!®

EduCare Foundation, Thousand Oaks, California

To inspire and empower young people to become responsible citizens, compassionate leaders, and to live their dreams.

Our Values –

Children Are Our Future- Invest Wisely

Every Child is Valuable – Honour Our Uniqueness

Everyone Makes a Difference – Contribute Individually and In Partnership

Care for Yourself and Others – Demonstrate Compassion and Generosity
Trust and Be Trustworthy – *Be Honest and Respectful*

Use Everything for Upliftment, Growth and Learning – *Look for the Opportunity*

We Teach What We Live – *Live With Integrity*
(http://www.educarefoundation.com/mission.htm)

Although each of these programs has unique strategies and tendencies, it is important to see what it is that binds all these programs that fall under the banner of educare. The first similarity is the goal of a holistic approach when it comes to dealing with students. As indicated by *Educare Early Intervention*, which uses the phrase “prepares children for personal and academic success,” the students are viewed in both lights, academic and personal. The value of these educare programs resides in the fact that students are recognized as whole beings and that academia can only go as far as the person. In cut and dry terms, if the student is unwilling to work or unable to succeed due to a perceived personal limitation, then no matter how good teachers are at presenting academic material, it will not register. However, when a student is approached holistically, working on their own personal/emotional strength simultaneously with academic instruction, students may have a greater chance at success based on their own self-view and confidence, as expressed by *Educare Children’s Centre*, “enabling a child to develop feelings of self-worth, and a sense of achievement.”

Another strong current that travels through the different philosophies involves the values of compassion and leadership. From a distance, it is through a foggy lens that we see the connection between being a leader and academic success, but if we delve into the ideologies, we understand that leadership and compassion are what is needed alongside academic success, and, that they contribute to confidence and self-worth, thus making
academic success a stronger possibility. The Educare Institute stated that, “to help them realize that their character is their real strength and that all other acquisitions like wealth and education are of no real value without character.” This is a very bold statement with which this author completely agrees. What is it about character that separates it from the academic goals of education, yet is mandatory for any student who wants to be successful? If we look back at our original definition, character was defined as a “complex.” Complexity is what makes character so hard to define, yet so important when it comes to personal growth.

Character is comprised of many facets; however, in the instance of leadership it speaks to time management, attitude, self-control, and an ability to see beyond the facts. This final idea, seeing beyond what is right in front of the eye, is akin to “comprehensive understandings” in education. Education today stresses the need for children to be problem-solvers and to be able to find alternative ways to getting to a solution. To be able to see different pathways to a single solution is a skill that students can then translate to any subject matter. Whether it is algebraic solutions, or writing an essay and stressing a point through various examples, whether it is creating a story to remember dates in history or whether it is simply creating personal ditties to remember how to conjugate, all of these are made capable by seeing beyond the presented facts and approaching the “problem” holistically. What it asks of students is to see that there are many ways of dealing with a single problem, and often all it takes is a shift in perspective to see the alternative routes available in getting to a solution. This modification in perspective attests to values and leadership, for it calls for an unbiased approach, and asks that personal judgment/opinion be put aside and that alternatives be considered.
The latter paragraph is very heavy in content, it touches on certain attributes that can begot through character education, and it stresses that character education is a necessity in the field of education. The point of educare is not to create the next Barack Obama or Mahatma Gandhi in every student, but rather to foster a culture of confidence and competence when it comes to dealing with worldly issues. Included in the worldly issues are items such as academia, sociology, and politics, and educare calls for a deep understanding of ethics and values before diving headfirst into the issues that are a part of everyday life. This asks of students to look at each problem, situation or issue under the banner of compassion or empathy, seeing that there is always more to the situation than what is presented at face value, and trying to distinguish in which way they can work any situation constructively and positively, in accordance with human values.

All of these Educare programs have roots that are deep in human values and character education; however, it is imperative to note that these programs are not a part of the regular school programs. Some of the programs are after-school, others are just daycare centers for children up to age 5, and others are just courses offered on weekends, much like a weekend language class or karate. This is of utmost importance, for what these programs set out to do should be present in all aspects of student life, in my earnest opinion. The reason is quite simply that without a consensual approach, when students are offered education with differing values, they will be forced to choose. When all teachers are on the same page, the students have one set model to follow, and it eliminates confusion. There is an old African proverb that reads, “it takes a whole village to raise a child;” and this quite accurately sums up the need for all holders of authority,
teachers/administration/parents to be on equal footing when it comes to fostering values in the children.

This idiom, “it takes a whole village to raise a child,” is the basis of my work. I can boldly say this because I truly believe in the power of the collective, and I believe that students deserve to have a team working towards their success rather than an individual. What I propose in this work, as the title suggests, is that the philosophy of Educare, or rather the advent of Character Education be present in every curricular document. This work calls for there to be Educare, Everywhere. The following chapters will take you through a history of character education, a curricular document that was created as a supplement for the QEP (Quebec Education Program), and some personal accounts of the integration of character education in regular public school classrooms, and a chapter on how to integrate character education into the regular day-to-day curriculum, creating lesson plans which cover both academic and character education needs.

Educare Everywhere looks to be a guide book for teachers who want to invest in character education in their own classrooms, a guide for schools to take on the mantle of character/values education as a school-wide program, and an atlas for teachers, administrators and parents who are ready to reach the summit of true education, the combination of intelligence and character.
Chapter 2
The Need for Character Education

Character Education has been a part of education literature for many years now, dating back to the time of Dewey. Dewey (1934) stated that “the child’s moral character must develop in a natural, just and social atmosphere. The school should provide this environment for its part in the child’s development” (p. 85). Early research in the field of character education has “historically been a practice and not a science (Berkowitz, 2002).” The outcome of this is a lack of scientific-based research in the field of Character-Education, and thus a lack of research on its general effectiveness. However, in the last 35 years, research has begun to flourish in the field, and the results have been positive. The results are solely the tip of the iceberg, as this chapter looks as to why there is a need for Character Education to be present everywhere. Character education demands for students to become moral agents who act within the realms of confidence and determination. The need for competent, determined moral beings in our society is more glaring than at any other time.

Schumacher (1973), in discussing Western culture, wrote that “No civilization, I am sure, has ever devoted more energy and resources to organized education, and if we believe in nothing else, we certainly believe that education is, or should be, the key to everything” (p. 223). This statement alone can act as a thesis for why character education is needed. Clearly, it connotes that education is the key; hence, if the door we strive to open is that of a morally sound and ethical future, character or values education becomes
the key. Understanding character education to be the foundation of a moral future lies in understanding where exactly society is lacking. In one light, western civilization can be seen as an example of ingenuity and prosperity, with the U.S.A. being the world’s only remaining superpower. On the other hand, western civilization can be seen as a society that has become devoid of a sense of right and wrong, a sense of good or bad and lack a clear vision of tolerance and respect. This view stems from the news and media outlets which have given rise to the dehumanization of other races, the social networks and role playing games which have given rise to depersonalisation and, most importantly, in my opinion, the focus on academic success through the advent of standardized testing which has given education the perceived value of merely churning out field workers and so-called contributors to an economic society.

Gardner (1985) portrayed the decline of society through the lens of discipline in schools:

In 1940, the top reported offences in the public schools were talking, chewing gum, making noise, running in the halls, wearing improper clothing, and not putting paper in wastebaskets. By 1984, the offences had progressed to rape, robbery, assault, burglary, arsons, bombings, murder, suicide, absenteeism, vandalism, extortion, drug abuse, alcohol, gang warfare, pregnancies, abortions, and venereal disease (cited in Sankar, 2004, p. 128)

This grim portrait is painted on the canvas where schools now have more to “offer” than ever before. Ground-breaking technology is appearing in many classrooms, children have computers in every corner, and handheld devices are becoming more and more apparent in the hands of children. Answers are at their fingertips as sites such as Google and
Yahoo provide the most comprehensive search engines available. Students need to do nothing more than type in a question, and a hundred answers pop-up almost instantly. With this information readily available, students can fill their heads with answers at a hypersonic speed, however, the counter to that is the answers are no more than rote fact. This is perpetuated by the advent of Standardized testing and the need for teachers to validate the students’ knowledge of fact and their ability to memorize. Bass & Good (2004) writes:

Standardized testing has further institutionalized the basics as the inviolable principle in deciding what to teach and how to teach it. When teachers’ pay and continued employment are dependent on how students perform on standardized tests, teachers will teach in the way they think is most likely to produce satisfactory scores. Teachers most often see memorization and drill on the basics as the most effective way to teach. As a result, the function of the educational system changes from providing students with a well-rounded education to preparing them to pass the all-important test. In effect, what were intended to be minimum standards rapidly become maximum standards. (p. 162)

In this understanding, students are no longer in a position where they need to construct their own knowledge, or if we look back at the meaning of Educare, the students are in no position where they need to elicit the knowledge from within. The need to connect the knowledge with the personal and to formulate opinions and understandings is slowly becoming a lost art in certain instances as standardized testing stakes its claim as the testament to teacher assessment. Take for example President Obama’s Education Reform which states:
“He will push to end the use of ineffective, "off-the-shelf" tests, and support new, state-of-the-art assessment and accountability systems that provide timely and useful information about the learning and progress of individual students. Teachers are the single most important resource to a child’s learning. President Obama will ensure that teachers are supported as professionals in the classroom, while also holding them more accountable. He will invest in innovative strategies to help teachers to improve student outcomes, and use rewards and incentives to keep talented teachers in the schools that need them the most. President Obama will invest in a national effort to prepare and reward outstanding teachers, while recruiting the best and brightest to the field of teaching. And he will challenge State and school districts to remove ineffective teachers from the classroom” (retrieved from http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education, April 27th, 2011).

What can be understood of this statement is that there will be an “innovative” although standard way of assessing all students, and teachers merit will be based on the students’ achievements in these areas. This could potentially cause more teachers to teach to the test in an attempt at either being rewarded, or to avoid being dismissed as an “ineffective teacher.”

All this rapid information sharing, and focus on just answers to academic problems removes the person from the education. Students are treated as mere machines; being filled with information, and then being expected to regurgitate mechanically, in a capacity that is accepted in the workforce. The ideas of thinking and personality are thrown out the window to make room for simple number crunching and memorization. Albert Einstein (1973) wrote that
It is not enough to teach a person a specialty. Through it he may become a kind of useful machine but not a harmoniously developed personality. It is essential that the student acquires an understanding of and a lively feeling for values. He must acquire a vivid sense of the beautiful and of the morally good. (p. 26).

Furthermore, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated:

The function of Education is to teach one to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man or woman gifted with reason, but with no morals. We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character is the goal of true Education (1985, p. 37).

Dewey (1976) expanded on this idea, posing the following question:

What avail is it to win prescribed amounts of information about geography and history, to win ability to read and write, if in the process, the individual loses his own soul; loses his appreciation of things worthwhile, of the value to which these are relative; if he loses desire to apply what he has learned, and above all, loses the ability to extract meaning from his future experiences as they occur? (p. 75)

A prominent figure in the promotion of character and values Education is Sathya Sai Baba, a spiritual Master from India who has initiated many schools under the banner of character education. Sathya Sai Schools, which are discussed in a later chapter, advocate both the spiritual and academic knowledge needed to be moral contributors to society. All Sathya Sai Schools promote Educare as outlined by Shri Sathya Sai Baba. In a discourse, Sathya Sai Baba (2000) stated that “character is the most precious gift of education. Politics without principles, education without character, science without
humanity, and commerce without morality are not only useless but positively dangerous. Present day education develops the intellect and skills but does little to develop good qualities. Of what avail is all the knowledge in the world, if one has no good character?"

If we return to the quote by Gardner (19985), disciplinary problems have gone from chewing gum to death threats, from running in the hallways, to running from the police. Sankar (2004, p. 129) quotes Lickona (1996) in pointing out the most troubling trends among youth, they are as follows:

1. Rising youth violence
2. Increasing dishonesty (lying, cheating and stealing)
3. Greater disrespect for parents, teachers, and other legitimate authority figures
4. Increasing peer cruelty
5. A rise in bigotry and hate crime
6. The deterioration of language
7. A decline in the work ethic
8. Increasing self-centeredness, accompanied by declining personal and civic responsibility
9. A surge of self-destructive behaviour such as premature sexual activity, substance abuse, and suicide
10. Growing ethical illiteracy, including ignorance of moral knowledge as basic as the Golden Rule, and the tendency to engage in behaviours injurious to self or others without thinking it is wrong.

Expanding on this, Sankar (2004) states that:
Our children know the price of everything but the value of nothing – the values of truth, caring, love, compassion, trust, duty, civic responsibility, respect for law, pride in work, justice, respect for human dignity, standards of right and wrong, are all marginalized in the curriculum: Computer literacy is more critical than moral literacy so our students make choices with no moral content. The ground rules for their choices are devoid of any moral judgement. The dominant impulse that drive their choices are self interest, pleasure, greed, malice, arrogance, aggression, power, glamour, envy, pride, and other pathological values (p. 129).

Outside of trends and research on child behaviour and discipline we need only to look at the statistics regarding violence in schools over the last decade. The infamous Columbine Shooting of 1999 may be the easiest to recall, and numerous people have tried to understand the motives that propelled these young people to act so heinously. In a generalized summary, the shooters were tormented by their peers, decided that their only course of action was to resort to the most violent of crimes, and in the end take their own life along with those of others. This incident could be generalized to the effects of bullying or the lack of parental influence and in some cases it’s been relegated to the effect the media and video games have on the psyche of the child. Henry (2009) in a paper titled “School Violence Beyond Columbine,” wrote that

Explanations about the causes of school violence tended toward psychological and developmental explanations about why school-age children become violent and social control theory about the lack of attachment and involvement by youth in conventional culture. Corresponding policies to deal with the problem focused on better detection, pre-emptive intervention, closer supervision, zero tolerance,
and peer mediation. This narrow microanalytical framing of the issue failed to consider the multiple causal components of this complex problem, which includes the interrelated role of teachers, school administrators, educational practices and effective pedagogy, school district policy, cultural framing, gendered educational expectations, and the changing state of family and community relations in a postmodern “heartless” society. (p. 1246)

What is portrayed in this statement is that problems in schools cannot be generalized to behavioural disorders or media influence rather that it is a complex web which moulds and shapes a child right from birth. Character and values education play a big role in this development, for they take knowledge and information and connect it to the core of the students, creating understanding as students learn about who they are, and understand themselves in relation to others. The academic base is inextricably linked to the character and the personality of the student; knowledge and compassion, information and empathy are construed within the same confines, the student themselves. This call for character and moral development must be heeded by the school and the parents. As the students expand their worldly knowledge, they need to expand their knowledge of self, and their relation to the world. Sanchez (2005) summed up the joint responsibility in stating:

In our own time, the teaching of values has been considered the foundation for effective citizenship and the perpetuation of the democratic society. Perhaps the most important revelation on values is that they are not innate, but must be taught, learned, and honed through practice and a conducive environment. The various
social institutions that transmit culture must naturally assume this responsibility, with some being more influential than others. Following this line of thinking, the family and school are at the forefront, based upon the principle of most frequent contact. (p. 106)

This is Educare; when students can connect their world to the external world and in that connection find meaning. It is in this understanding that I propose a return to an educational curriculum based on human values. Sankar (2004) states:

A pedagogy of enrichment is not to be associated with academic subjects only, but also with the content of character of our students. Moral literacy is as critical as computer literacy. The search for excellence begins with a curriculum based on moral literacy. (p. 131)

Educare or Character Education needs to be present everywhere, as it holds within it the key to a morally sounds future. Shri Sathya Sai Baba states that:

The word Educare has its origin in the Latin word, ‘Educare’, which means “to elicit.” Educare has two aspects, the worldly and the spiritual. Worldly education brings out the latent knowledge pertaining to the physical world. Spiritual education brings out the inherent divinity in man. So, both worldly and spiritual education are essential, without which the human life has no value (SSE, p. 5).

The vision of a moral future is furthered by Shri Sathya Sai Baba in his (2000) discourse entitled Education and Transformation. Sathya Sai Baba calls out for students to be educated in a way that they carry with them high standards of integrity, righteousness and morality. Sai Baba (2000) states:
Students! The educational world today is immersed in multifarious problems which are baffling the authorities concerned. The educational system is responsible for the collapse of human values in society. Educational institutions, which ought to give a lead in promoting the nation’s all round welfare, are leading the country astray. Human values like sacrifice, integrity, fairness, and morality have almost disappeared. Reverence and respect (for elders) are totally absent. What we need today is not a good deal of speculation about how to bring about a new social order. All these are exercises in futility. What we need today are noble and high minded men and women. The nation will be prosperous in proportion to the presence of persons with noble minds and hearts. Such persons will emerge in society only when there is purity of mind and morality in society. Only a society with a moral foundation can foster such nobler persons. Morality and integrity are based upon spiritual consciousness. (p. 204)

Sai Baba (2000) continues:

Consider what is happening now: in the name of progress, art is degraded into immoral and sensuous entertainment; educational advance results, not in advance of humility and reverence, but in rampant indiscipline, arrogance, and irreverence. The emphasis long placed on the development of character and the promotion of virtue through education has now been dropped. In their place is enthroned as ideals worldly success, self-aggrandizement, and high living. Laws, rules and regulations are multiplying fast; but, there is no sign of unrighteousness and injustice being diminished. Greed is growing beyond control; the advance of science is marked, NOT by a proportionate advance in peace and happiness, but,
by a phenomenal increase in terror, unrest and anxiety. With his thousand-faced curiosity, man is analyzing and utilizing the outer world; but the inner world which is basic is ignored and forgotten. (p. 217)

In this light, the goal is to create hybrids of character and intelligence. This transformation in the educational system would begin with the recognition that the future is inevitably in the hands of the children. The educational system, however, holds the key; students that are developed in the light of inner and outer consciousness can then lead through the lens of morality and fairness. It is in this need that I propose a values-based curriculum, a curriculum that speaks to Educare, a harmonious balance between academia and character education. Gardner (1996) writes that “man seeks conceptions of the universe that give dignity, love, purpose and sense to one’s own existence. At the same time a productive period of existence is spent in education so it must also give dignity, purpose, and meaning to life.” Sankar (2004) speaks to values in education:

Teachers using a value-based design do more than transmit meanings – they enact the role of social and moral agents of change; they uncover, reproduce, and produce forms of learning and social relations based on those often repressed memories, stories, dreams, and ideals that allow us to analyze and embrace schooling as part of a wider human horizon with a glimpse of caring, solidarity, justice, and joy. (p. 134)

The following chapter looks into the possibility of adding a value-based character education addendum to the Quebec Education Program (QEP). Although not all schools can be character education schools, adding character education to the curriculum could inspire the next generation to be moral, determined and self-respecting persons of society.
Chapter 3

The Quebec Education Program Curriculum Document

Values and education are always going to be inextricably linked together. Whether it is in the classroom dynamics, teaching style, or academic material, the promotion of values will be underlying throughout. Veugelers (2000) found that “although teachers may propose differing views and never explicitly state their preferences, the values which they internally promote come through in their teaching practice… (and) the process which students go through to determine which values they find important is labelled as “the process of signification,” and it is noted that teachers always have an influence on this process for all students.” Echoing this sentiment, Shinn (1979) wrote, “Whether we are thinking of schools or other agencies, there is no conceivable way to isolate education from its acculturating and exploratory work in relation to values” (p. 514). As Bass and Good (2004) wrote:

Children in primitive societies received education by participating in adult activities. Not only did they see the tried and true practiced daily, but they also saw adults’ attempts to solve problems in new ways. They actually got a dose of educere to go with their educare. (p. 163)

Values Education is a sensitive subject in the education realm due to the variety of non-complying ideologies that surround it. Over the years many studies have been done on the subject, with the overriding idea that values education is highly misguided, improvised and often unplanned (Veugelers, 2000; Thornberg, 2008). On the positive
side, studies have also shown the value in values education, with findings showing that a values education program can lead to greater academic achievement, self-efficacy, and less disciplinary problems (Larsen & Martin, 2005). Furthering this Berkowitz & Bier (2004) found that:

Character education has been demonstrated to be associated with academic motivation and aspirations, academic achievement, prosocial behavior, bonding to school, prosocial and democratic values, conflict-resolution skills, moral-reasoning maturity, responsibility, respect, self-efficacy, self-control, self-esteem, social skills, and trust in and respect for teachers. Furthermore, effective character education has been demonstrated to reduce absenteeism, discipline referrals, pregnancy, school failure, suspensions, school anxiety, and substance use. (p. 75)

Furthermore, Sankar (2004) states that “Values form the core of our individuality and at the same time they seek expression through the building of bridges of human understanding in every network in which human beings participate, particularly social networks in our schools” (p. 137). Shri Sathya Sai Baba (1986) said the following:

We are today concerned with education in Human Values. In my view the cultivation of Human Values alone is education. Whoever tries to understand the human values of Truth, Righteous Conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence properly, who practises these values and propagates them with zeal and sincerity can alone be described as a truly educated person. It is when you experience another’s suffering as your own that your human values are manifested...

Together with worldly education, you have to cultivate the human values and undertake spiritual discipline. In cultivating human values, emphasis should also
be placed on avoiding wastage of money, food and time. Even teachers have to be trained in this respect.

What proves to be difficult at this junction is the idea of “universal human values.” Stepanyants (2008) stated that “globality as a new dimension of human existence cannot be achieved if it is not based on universally shared values” (p. 13). It is this concept of universally shared values which causes so many discrepancies as values tend to be based on perspective. Stepenyants, however, goes on to quote Daya Krishna (1988), an Indian philosopher who says “if philosophy is an enterprise of the human reason, it is bound to show similarities across cultures to some extent and, similarly, as a human enterprise it is bound to be concerned with what man, in a particular culture, regards as the summum bonum for mankind” (Stepenyants, 2004, p. 14).

**Universal Values**

Universal Values are defined as values that are accepted by all people, the overwhelming majority and by the whole human race (Nikandrov, 1999). Although this very bland definition does not connote any particular values, it is a basis in exploring universally accepted values, or at least values accepted by the majority of the population. Lovat and Clement (2008) spoke to the many forms in which values education is represented, stating: “These include moral, character, civics or citizenship education in response to the need to discover new ways of dealing with the persistent problems of racism, drug abuse, domestic violence, sexual abuse, AIDS and new terrorisms inspired by the most explicit of values-based beliefs” (p. 1). This variance in definition causes concern in the development of a values curriculum, the argument resting on the idea that
there are no universally accepted values, and that the transmission of values will be biased to those who develop the curriculum.

Shri Sathya Sai Baba speaks to five human values which within them contain the myriad of different values that are valued by society. The five values are love, truth, right-action, peace and non-violence. Shri Sathya Sai Baba says that “Truth is man’s nature; to be untrue is to be false to one’s nature. Right Action is the practical application in real life of the ideal of truth. Peace is the result of Right-Action and Love is the effulgence of Peace.” In another discourse, Sai Baba furthered his thought on the five principal human values, stating:

The values a man must cherish as his life-breath are: Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non violence. Of these five vital principles, Love is the foremost. It is Love that flows as the under-current for the other four values. How does it flow this way? When Love is associated with our thoughts, it manifests itself as Truth. When Love is associated with feelings, it produces Peace. When Love animates actions, it results in Right Action. When Love is combined with understanding it becomes Non-violence. Therefore whenever you feel angry, think of love, develop thoughts of love in your heart. You will have peace.

Love being the basis of all the values is an easy notion to sell for it is commonly found. If there were to be one value that is found in all religions it is that of Love:

The Chandogya Upanishad, considered one of the primary Upanishads (sacred scriptures of Hinduism), speaks “Bright but hidden, the self dwells in the heart. Everything that moves, breathes, opens, and closes lives in the Self. He is the source of
love and may be known through love but not through thought He is the goal of life. Attain this goal! (112, 113)”

Christianity, which ranks as the second largest religious population in the world is another proponent of the need to love. Corinthians 13: 1-3 states:

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world today. The Koran, believed to be God’s (Allah’s) words to the Prophet Mohammad, says this about love:

It is not righteousness that you turn your faces towards East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in God and the Last Day and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for your kin, for orphans for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask; and for the freeing of captives; to be steadfast in prayers, and practice regular charity; to fulfill the contracts which you made; and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering) and adversity and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-conscious. (2: 177)

The Great Buddha’s words have been found in Dhammapada, a versified transcript of Buddhism which is accredited to Buddha himself. In Dhammpada, Buddha states:
In this world  
Hate never yet dispelled hate.  
Only love dispels hate.  
This is the law,  
Ancient and inexhaustible.  
**Buddha**  
*Dhammapada.*

Although religious education has been replaced by moral or ethics education, it is important to note the similar undertones in each religion as they are tantamount to the values that society holds near and dear. Outside of religious ideals and values, societal values can also be grouped and sorted under specific headings. In Sathya Sai education, the five human values of love, truth, peace, non-violence and right-conduct break themselves down into sub-values as demonstrated in the table below (taken from the Global Overview of Sathya Sai Education document, 2007):

Table 1. Sathya Sai Education- Five Universal Human Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Truth</strong></th>
<th><strong>Right-Conduct</strong></th>
<th><strong>Peace</strong></th>
<th><strong>Love</strong></th>
<th><strong>Non-Violence</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Cleanliness</td>
<td>Calmness</td>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Awareness of responsibility of citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination Intuition</td>
<td>Courage Determination</td>
<td>Concentration Endurance</td>
<td>Devotion Empathy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quest for Knowledge</td>
<td>Duty</td>
<td>Purity</td>
<td>Forbearance</td>
<td>Compassion Consideration for others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit of Honesty</td>
<td>Self-discipline</td>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truthfulness</td>
<td>Service to Self-respect</td>
<td>Selflessness</td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a 1994 study, Kidder interviewed 24 “men and women of conscience” from around the globe, in the hopes of determining, a fundamental list of accepted human values. These men and women of conscience were determined based on their worldly status, and included dignitaries such as James K. Baker, the former president of the U.S
Chamber of Commerce, Derek Bok, President of Harvard University from 1971-1991, Jeane Kirkpatrick, former U.S ambassador to the United Nations, Graça Machel, former First Lady of Mozambique and Oscar Arias, the former President of Costa Rica and winner of the 1987 Nobel Peace Prize. Kidder (1994) wrote “Each of the interviews began with a common question: If you could help create a global code of ethics, what would be on it?” (p. 8). The values presented, as backed by the voices of his interviewees, all have a niche in the major religions of the world, and are a sturdy base for my paper and curricular unit. The list, as taken from Kidder (1994), is as follows:

**Love:** “Love, yes! This is the main word for what we need – love on all stages and with all people”- Astrid Lindgren (Children’s Author, Stockholm)

**Truthfulness:** “You should not obtain your ends through lying and deceitful practices…and you have a responsibility to keep (your) promises” – Derek Bok (Harvard University Ex-President)

**Fairness:** “I relate fairness to treating people as I would like to be treated. I think that (rule) serves humanity well. It ought to be a part of an ethic for the future” – James. A Joseph (Former Under Secretary of the U.S Department of the Interior)

**Freedom:** “Freedom of expression plus accountability plus equal opportunity” - Salim El Hoss (Former Prime Minister of Lebanon)

**Unity:** “God wants us to be one people. That is what is demanded of us now: putting our community first, meaning the earth first, and all living things” – Varindra Tarzie Vittachi (assistant secretary general of the United Nations)

**Tolerance:** “If you’re serious about values, then you have to add tolerance very early, very early.” - John Gardner (Philosopher)

**Responsibility:** “We’ve gotten to a point where everybody’s got a right and nobody’s got a responsibility,” – Newton Minow (Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission)

**Respect For Life:** “Thou Shalt Not Kill”- The Ten Commandments. (pp. 9-12)

Along with this list, there were other notable “common values” that were discussed, most importantly, courage, wisdom and peace (Kidder, 1994). Within the goal of creating a curricular document that can be added to the QEP, three main competencies were to be determined. Although the five human values were demonstrated to encompass the sub-values, for the sake of a curricular document that was potentially devoid of any
bias, three headings were chosen that could be assessed tangibly through the actions, thoughts and words of the students. These three headings are the offspring of the values presented in Table 1, and of the list provided by Kidder (1994). They were developed in an attempt at creating curricular goals that could be monitored. For example, although love is an underlying need in society, there is no way of monitoring how much “love” one may have. The three competencies within which I grouped the values and sub-values are 1- Empathy, 2- Self-Respect and 3- Respect for others. Each of these values can be monitored as per the students growth as morally conscious beings. Self-respect can be akin to the way a student comports themselves in the classroom and schoolyard. Respect for others is measurable as per the students’ interactions with others and their respect towards the school/classroom environment. Through storytelling and personal situations, one can gauge the empathic response of students as per their reactions to the situation. For example, in discussing a moral laden story, teachers can ask poignant questions aimed at eliciting an empathic response. Students who understand empathy could then be expected to express a greater understanding of the view points of others, show compassion to fellow students and be quick to pick up on the sentiments of others, in other words, be more responsible as to who they are, and how they are with others. Table 2 on the next pagae demonstrates the values and sub-values associated with each competency.

The document that follows is written in the style of the QEP for each of the three competencies of Responsibility, Self-Respect and Respect for others. The competencies all progress from level 1 to level 3, level 3 being a deep understanding and application of fact. As a part of the curriculum, students, by the end of primary school (grade 6) will be
expected to reach level 3 understanding in their development as moral and ethically conscious beings.

Table 2. Character Education Curriculum Values Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Self-Respect</th>
<th>Respect for Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>The golden rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Respect for life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Respect for the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td>Humility</td>
<td>Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for the environment</td>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>Caring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selflessness</td>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>Non-violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forbearance</td>
<td>Right-Conduct</td>
<td>Citizenship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It must be noted that the QEP is not devoid of moral education. As per the reform there was a curriculum labelled as Personal Development, and within this came Moral Education. The QEP has taken strides in fostering a moral based section of the curriculum, and the efforts are being taken in implementing moral education as a mainstay in all schools. I simply offer my vision of a character education curriculum as it would fit into the structure of the Quebec Education Program.

The following chapter looks into how character education can be integrated into the curriculum and also how it can find its way into the various subject areas. Character education is a promotion of the individual, and the following chapter considers how students can become morally aware through a variety of subject areas and teaching techniques. The focus is not on creating separate learning units for character education, but rather weaving values into everyday teaching circumstances, and using a variety of techniques in promoting morality in the classroom. The chapter goes through character education in fields such as Mathematics, English, Music, History etc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency 1: To understand the value of Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student understands the notion of responsibility as it relates to themselves and their peers. Student learns to listen to the ideas of others. Student is able to participate in group discussion. Student understands his/her place in the group, and is responsible for individual work. Student is conscious of others feelings and emotions. Student is able to distinguish between right and wrong.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
classroom as a whole.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student understands the notion of self-respect as it relates to them. Student understands what it means to be truthful in regards to themselves. Student is able to understand the broader notion of love (for family, friends). Student understands the value of humility (doesn’t boast, learns from mistakes). Student develops skills in self-regulation and self-efficacy for school work. Student recognizes their own good work, and recognizes areas for improvement.</td>
<td>Student understands the notion of self-respect as it relates to them and to their peers. Student understands what it means to be truthful in regards to themselves, to their peers and to their friends. Student is able to understand the broader notion of love (for family, friends, animals, and mankind). Student understands the value of humility (doesn’t boast, learns from mistakes, knows when they’ve crossed a limit). Student develops skills in self-regulation and self-efficacy for school work, behaviour, homework and conduct in school. Student recognizes their own good work and behaviour, and recognizes areas for improvement.</td>
<td>Student understands the notion of self-respect as it relates to them and to their peers, and to the school community (honesty, integrity, no cheating). Student understands what it means to be truthful in regards to themselves, to their peers, to their friends and to the community at large. Student is able to understand the broader notion of love (for family, friends, animals, and mankind) and its connotations (care, compassion, friendliness). Student understands the value of humility (doesn’t boast, learns from mistakes, knows when they’ve crossed a limit) and how it affects others (sense of pride, over-indulgence). Student develops skills in self-regulation and self-efficacy for school work, behaviour, homework and conduct in school (self-awareness, awareness of consequences of their actions). Student recognizes their own good work and behaviour, and recognizes areas for improvement (building better peer relations, doing work on time, abstaining from violent conduct).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Competency 3: To understand the value of Respect for Others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student</strong> demonstrates an understanding of respect for others. <strong>Student</strong> uses appropriate language in the classroom. <strong>Student</strong> understands the consequences of his/her behaviours in respect to their peers. <strong>Student</strong> understands that his/her actions can be reciprocated by others. <strong>Student</strong> develops a sense of compassion for their peers. <strong>Student</strong> respects the classroom environment. <strong>Student</strong> exhibits self-control and behaves according to the classroom guidelines. <strong>Student</strong> is aware of the golden rule.</td>
<td><strong>Student</strong> demonstrates an understanding of respect for others. <strong>Student</strong> uses appropriate language in the classroom. <strong>Student</strong> understands the consequences of his/her behaviours in respect to their peers, their teachers and the school community. <strong>Student</strong> understands that his/her actions (both positive and negative) can be reciprocated by others. <strong>Student</strong> understands the value in helping others and finds satisfaction in doing so. <strong>Student</strong> develops a sense of compassion for their peers, their teacher and their school community. <strong>Student</strong> respects the classroom environment, the personal space of their classmates. <strong>Student</strong> exhibits self-control, and behaves according to the classroom guidelines, and school rules. <strong>Student</strong> understands the golden rule.</td>
<td><strong>Student</strong> demonstrates an understanding of respect for others. <strong>Student</strong> uses appropriate language in the classroom and in classroom interactions (peers). <strong>Student</strong> understands the consequences of his/her behaviours in respect to their peers, their teachers and the school community. <strong>Student</strong> understands that his/her actions (both positive and negative) can be reciprocated by others. <strong>Student</strong> understands the value in helping others, finds satisfaction in doing so, and makes efforts in helping others. <strong>Student</strong> develops a sense of compassion for their peers, their teacher and their school community. <strong>Student</strong> respects the classroom environment, the personal space of their classmates, school property, and the school environment. <strong>Student</strong> exhibits self-control, and behaves according to the classroom guidelines, and school rules. <strong>Student</strong> exhibits an understanding of the golden rule, and is conscious of his/her actions in day-to-day activities and the implications of such actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4

Integrating into the Curriculum

The goal of education is a harmonious blend of both intelligence and character, and it is in this understanding that I look at promoting character education through the lens of academia. The following two chapters are an in-depth personal account of my integration of character education in the regular classroom setting. Although there was no character education curriculum, I focused my energy on the person behind the student with activities that complimented both the curriculum demands and the personal needs of the students. This chapter looks at different ways of integrating character-education into the classroom without sacrificing the need to honour the curriculum as presented by the ministry of education.

Considering the amount of academic material already a part of the regular curriculum, finding a viable way and time to teach these values may become an extra burden on the teacher. Many teachers already feel like they have too much to do with too little time. Blase (1986) performed a qualitative study of teacher-stress and its relation to teacher performance and reached the following conclusion:

The foregoing analysis of teacher stress has revealed the problematic nature of time and the wide range of individual stressors associated with time. Stressors were perceived to interfere with time intended for instructional activities. In contrast to other research, the present data emphasize that time cannot be understood as independent of other sources of stress. Although any given source of stress may affect teacher time in several ways, certain patterns are apparent for specific stress categories. First, sources of stress were perceived as directly
interfering with the instructional time of teachers. Examples are student discipline, student apathy, student absences, inappropriate scheduling, large classes, athletic events, interruptions (e.g., intercom announcements, requests to appear at the office), and problems with the physical plant (e.g., heating, cooling).

Character education does not need to be another stress contributor, nor does it need to take away from the instruction time of teachers. Character education needs to be woven into the daily activities of a classroom to ensure that students are consistently being forced to reason through a moral and ethical lens, to develop a stronger sense of self, and to look introspectively at their relation and connection to the world. This chapter looks into how character education can weave itself into the curriculum and at the same time it looks at different strategies teachers can use in promoting the development of self.

**Role-Play**

Role-play can be used in a number of situations, including, language arts (poetry, reading), drama, and the social sciences (history, geography). The idea of role-play is for students to understand the inner feelings associated with their characters. By placing the student in the “shoes” of a character, the idea is that they can connect to the personality of their character, and better understand the character by portraying them. Sankar (2004) states that:

Creativity is not an exotic and mysterious quality but rather an inevitable and inherent aspect of human experience. All people constantly create: we create meaning; we create our responses to nature and culture; we create culture. It is our images that we use to make sense out of the world, and it is our imagination that
enables us to give moral and religious significance to life. It is through play and imagination that we encounter our world and give shape to it. (p. 134)

Let us take, for example, the story “Love you forever” by Robert Munsch. The main character in the story is the mother whose love for her child is unwavering throughout the different stages of his life. Students may already connect with the character of the child who has a mother who has so much love; however, putting them in the shoes of the mother may offer them the opportunity to see the affection from a different point of view. This role-playing exercise can help the students understand what their parents go through in raising them, understand love in the context of a caretaker, understand their own actions and their effects on either their parents/teachers or relatives, and also understand the effect that their mother’s love has on them.

To follow-up the activity group discussions can be held on the important role the values played in the story/poem and students can discuss their personal opinion on the matters. This exercise allows the students to connect what new information or understanding they have created and connect it with their previous understandings or sentiments. Academically, students can work on their speaking skills, writing (journal), presentation, and teamwork/cooperation and not to mention summarizing their thoughts coherently.

To further this, teachers can choose one value from the story/poem and make it the central value of the week. Having it in visible areas and going back to it in different situations not only strengthens the understanding of the students, but it also demonstrates how values are interlaced in many facets of everyday life. For example, a teacher can take the word unconditional love, and write it on the blackboard under the heading “value
of the week.” Journal writing for that week can be for students to write one incident they felt in their life where they experienced “unconditional love.” This exercise connects the new understandings and knowledge to something more intrinsic, assuring the transfer of this knowledge to the long-term memory, and most importantly the parlaying of this new understanding into their future actions.

**Writing**

Writing is an essential part of any language arts program, in which universal values can easily be integrated. Writing, in its essence is taking ideas, formulating thoughts and putting them down in one’s own words. Other domains included in writing are spelling, grammar, syntax, sentence construction and readability; however, in this context we are looking at integrating values into a writing curriculum. In no way am I expressing that grammar and spelling are not important; I am stating that along with the grammar and the spelling, character and values education can become an important aspect of writing.

Values in Writing can be expressed in many forms:

- **Written responses**— Whether the students saw a movie, listened to a guest speaker, read a story or simply just took notes for a lesson, the benefit of writing is that it can be introduced anywhere. As homework or class work, students can be asked to express the sentiments they felt as the information poured in. Students can be asked to express what they felt was the moral of the story, or how they felt the story should have ended etc. There are endless possibilities, for all that is being done is simply asking the student to connect that which comes from the external, to that which they already have within.

Value writing can include:
- Creating a one line “moral to the story”
- Creating their own ethical ending
- Expressing their sentiments in a few lines to a paragraph.
- Expanding a single thought into a paragraph or a composition
- Explaining the story in their own words
- Writing a paper/composition on the moral or the theme of the story

- Poetry. Based on a singular value, or many, poetry is an expressive art form. In looking at the goals of character education, students should be able to not only learn and understand, but to outwardly express their moral understandings in their words, their actions and in their thoughts. Poetry can be used in developing powers of reasoning (through interpretation), creating similes, creating deeper understanding and in re-writing in their own words. Giving the task of expressing an idea through an art-form speaks to the creative side of the students, giving them more of a personal investment in the work. Gardner (1996) wrote as quoted by Sankar (2004):

  Creativity... is possible in most of human activity. In some activities the possibility is greatly limited by the nature of the task. The highest levels can be expected where performance is not severely constricted by the nature of the task to be accomplished and in those lines of endeavour that involve emotions, judgment, symbolizing powers, aesthetic perceptions and spiritual impulses. (p. 134)

Spirituality aside, what poetry does is opens avenues where the student can express their understanding in different forms. The great American poet Robert
Frost once said, “Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words.” Educare is eliciting the knowledge from within, connecting the head and the heart, and then expressing the thoughts in action. Poetry is a creative domain where students can put into practice the tenets of Character Education and at the same time satisfy the curricular goals set for writing and communication.

- **Narratives.** Narratives are, in this instance, first-person accounts by the students in expressing their understanding. The goal of the narrative is for students to express candidly exactly what they’re feeling. Narratives can be presented as “free-writes.” This concept first came to me through an art class. In the class, we began by “free-drawing,” in which we were given between 15-30 seconds to draw what we were being shown. The philosophy behind this was that we would stop using our minds so much, and just draw through emotion. In the same vein, asking students to write in the first-person their initial thoughts on a subject, a quote or an ideology for example, students are not given a chance to formulate a thought-out opinion, but rather write their first thoughts.

John Updike, an American novelist, once wrote, “A narrative is like a room on whose walls a number of false doors have been painted; while within the narrative, we have many apparent choices of exit, but when the author leads us to one particular door, we know it is the right one because it opens” (retrieved from: [http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/j/john_updike.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/j/john_updike.html), April 27th, 2011). In the realm of values education, this can be understood as the students focusing their thoughts and creating a clear and concise picture of their understanding.
To take this exercise further, students should be asked to go over their free-writes and find a few lines that they can use as either a thesis statement or as an opening to a composition. What this asks is that students now reflect and expand on their thoughts that “spilled” onto the page. This again is an exercise in connecting the inner with the outer as students take their innermost feelings and thoughts and connect with the knowledge that they have acquired through lessons, readings or any other medium.

**Art**

Art is a subject or class activity often used as an escape from regular classroom activity or as a “break” for students. In my experience I have seen teachers use “art” simply as a reward for students having completed their other work. Attaching character education to art serves a double purpose for it asks of the teacher to be more prepared, and it asks of the students to be accountable for the work they do. By doing art pertaining to a value, the art then takes on more meaning for the individual and, in turn, students may be more inspired.

Art lessons that connect to values education can include giving students a quote and asking them to draw what they feel the quote means, asking them to create a symbol to represent a value (i.e. love is represented by a heart), creating symbols using words (i.e. word mosaics), drawing/painting a picture that represents a value etc.

A Chinese proverb states “A picture is worth a thousand words.” With this in mind, art becomes a form of expression which asks students to rely less on the brain and its mechanical capacities of sorting thoughts and feelings, and asking them to portray their inner understandings and feelings through an expression of the heart. An extension
of art can be to have students interpret art pieces that are value-laden. A picture of two hands of different races connecting over a heart can be interpreted in so many different ways. Having the students interpret art pieces and then express their interpretation either through speech or writing can offer all members of the class an opportunity in understanding different perspectives and seeing the world through different lenses.

**History**

History is essentially “his story,” and can be viewed from any perspective. In terms of values education, history can be viewed through the lenses of a “philosopher” and the empirical value connotations that were engraved in the historical event. Not only is the historical event revised, but students can also attach personal meaning to it, thus making it more easily retrievable from their memory. History need not be a simple accumulation of facts and dates, it should be a learning tool, from which students can understand the mistakes or triumphs of the past, and learn from them through a values paradigm. Voltaire, a 17th century French writer, once said, “History should be written as philosophy.” What is asked here is that history not be relegated to mere date and fact, but rather be used as a tool to create understandings of why things happened, how they happened, and, most importantly, how the mistakes can be avoided in the future or, in the same tenor, a tool in which that which was inspiring can be recreated in the present day.

For example, in speaking of the history of Quebec and Canada, students can go over the initial encounter between Jacques Cartier and the indigenous North Americans in 1534. Although the history books will look at the facts and the technical details, character education can look at the encounter through the lens of empathy and compassion. The indigenous North Americans took care of the European settlers due to their inability to
contend with the harsh realities of winter. It was not until much later that the European settlers took away the very livelihood that the natives held. Students can use role-play and discussions to experience how the First Nations may have felt when the Europeans first came over, having never had contact from other humans previous to that time.

Understanding that the European population eventually destroyed the way of life of the First Nations is tantamount in understanding the effects of globalization on nations which are not necessarily industrialized. Students can study the past to create an understanding of their present. By looking at the events though empathetic lenses, students may be inspired to fight against the globalization of multinational corporations or the wars being waged for commodities such as oil. Students can develop their civic consciousness by putting themselves in the shoes of the oppressed or defeated. Connecting values education to history can inspire students to be morally aware of the effects of change and the vices of domination and supreme rule.

Mathematics

Mathematics in IQ tests is grouped under Logic. With this understanding, teachers can use values education either as a precursor or a follow-up to mathematical problem solving. Teachers can introduce value dilemmas (moral dilemmas) and, much like mathematical problem solving, teach students how to choose which information is pertinent, which is erroneous, and how to solve the problem (dilemma) in a systematic way which takes into account all the different variables that are important. Teachers can use the formulas that they are teaching and extend them into real life.

George Polya (1945) broke problem-solving down into four steps: (1) understand the problem, (2) devise a plan, (3) carry out the plan, and (4) look back. Although this
seems highly simplistic, it is in this simplicity where the beauty is resides. Problem solving is nothing more than a simple 4 step process. If students are given a chance to look at problem solving through the lens of personal problems, or moral dilemmas, they could perhaps translate that approach and look to simplifying the mathematical problems into smaller steps. Carpenter (1989) summed up the importance of problem solving as follows:

One of the aims of teaching through problem solving is to encourage students to refine and build onto their own processes over a period of time as their experiences allow them to discard some ideas and become aware of further possibilities. As well as developing knowledge, the students are also developing an understanding of when it is appropriate to use particular strategies. Through using this approach the emphasis is on making the students more responsible for their own learning rather than letting them feel that the algorithms they use are the inventions of some external and unknown “expert”. (p. 194)

This framework, when translated into values education, offers students a chance to look at each experience in life as multi-dimensional. The ideology inspires students to keep an open-mind and understand that there are different sides to any one thing, and these different sides are based on perception. Developing their understanding though a myriad of different perceptions, students are expanding their consciousness and awareness of differences. Being aware of different approaches can translate into being aware of different ideologies and perceptions, and being open and respectful to the expressions of others.

Science
Similar to mathematics, the idea here is to use the scientific approach in dealing with moral dilemmas or values literature. Transference goes a long way in promoting a healthy long-term memory. This implies that students who are able to understand a concept through a variety of examples have the best chance at retaining the methodology for future reference. Furthermore, as students see the same method being used in different contexts, they begin to see beyond the stated facts of the problem, and see the entire dimension of the problem. The scientific approach can be understood through Figure 1:


Connecting this approach to character education is simple, as students are given a step-by-step guide to dealing with moral or ethical dilemmas. For example, students can read the beginning of a story which encompasses universal values, and stemming from their understanding and knowledge of the values and their connotations, can use a scientific method approach to form a hypothesis about what will happen (prediction).
Further, they can link the “materials” as the information from the text and then test their hypothesis by reading the rest of the story. This can be taken further by asking the students to write their own ending based on what they knew about the story, which can be considered their hypothesis. Furthering this, students can then “report results” in terms of presenting their understandings and connections to the problem that was presented to them. Going through the scientific method, students can learn how to properly break down scientific inquiry, and in the same measure, break down a moral inquiry into small, tangible steps.

**Music**

Music is inspired by life itself; music is the poetry of the soul; music is what feelings sound like. These are just a few of the many praises that are regularly given to music. What music can offer to man is a book in itself. In the context of character and value education, music is a beautiful tool to be used in the expression of life. Many songs are interlaced with the universal values of love, truthfulness, compassion and courage. Aldous Huxley once described music as, “After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music” (retrieved from http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/aldoushuxley106874.html, April 27th, 2011).

In character education, a fundamental goal is for students to be able to express their understandings and innermost feelings on any given subject. The expression should be a hybrid of their external understandings as they link to their personal understandings. Music is the perfect tool in helping students express their feelings, as it can be used in different ways.
Firstly, music can be used as an external material that is brought into the classroom. Teachers just need to find songs that are laden with values and bring them to the attention of the students. Students can then read the lyrics of the songs and identify the values that are present. In choosing songs, if the teacher is able to find songs that are from popular culture, the students may invest in the lesson that much more due to the connection it already has with them. For example, in today’s popular culture, no one is as big or as well-known as Justin Bieber. For the remake of the “Karate Kid,” Bieber released a song called “Never Say Never.” A small excerpt from the lyrics:

I never thought I could feel this power.
I never thought that I could feel this free.
I'm strong enough to climb the highest tower.
And I'm fast enough to run across the sea.

And there's just no turning back,
When your hearts under attack,
Gonna give everything I have,
Cause this is my destiny.

I will never say never! (I will fight)
I will fight till forever! (make it right)
Whenever you knock me down,
I will not stay on the ground.
Pick it up (x4)
And never say never.

(Retrieved from

The values in this song are self-confidence and determination. Other values that can be identified are courage and perseverance. Once students identify the values, they can be asked to express in which instances in their lives that they were courageous or determined. Furthering this, students can then write their own verses to the song and then present their version of “Never Say Never.”
Another strategy can be for students to create their own song about values or create a music video for one of the value-laden songs they have learned. This expression can be tied into the curricular goals of presentation skills, speaking, and teamwork/cooperation. Students can work in teams to create the “next big pop song,” or work in tandem to make a video that expresses the values in the song. This exercise of creating a video can be extended to technology education in the classroom, asking students to create video using software such as Windows Movie Maker. Using these strategies, teachers can create synthesis between different curricular competencies while asking of students to be aware of the message in music.

As music is and always will be, indubitably, all around us, teachers should use it as a positive force in the transmission of character education. Music has the capacity to uplift, to motivate and to inspire. Teachers need just to harness the power of music and parlay that to the students. If music is used properly, teachers can extend the influence to other curricular domains such as language and arts.

This chapter looked at a myriad of ways in which teachers can integrate and assimilate character education into everyday teaching practices. What should be noted is that teachers must first make a commitment to promote values in their everyday classroom practices. As noted earlier, the values that teachers hold onto will come through in their teaching. With this understanding, teachers must first go deep within themselves and understand the values that they themselves hold onto. Once this has been implicitly understood, teachers must make a conscious effort to promote these values. If teachers believe inherently in character education, then and only then can they work on integrating it into their daily classroom practices. It must be noted that what was noted
above is in no way the be all and end all when it comes to the integration of character education in the classroom. Character education can be a focus entirely on its own just as soon as it can be woven into the everyday curriculum.

In whichever fashion character education is brought into the classroom, primarily, the goals of character education are the most important. In all aspects, students should be encouraged and given the venues in which they can create their own knowledge, elicit what knowledge they have from within, and finally parlay their understandings into actions. Within this context, students should be encouraged to become morally conscious beings, with a deep sense of empathy, self-respect and respect for tohers. As a result of adherence to these principles, the true goal of education, that glorious hybrid of intelligence and character can definitely be attained by all students.
Chapter 5

Les Héros de Mr. Teep

In November of 2007, I took over a grade 5 classroom under grave circumstances. Their classroom teacher began her second bout with breast cancer and took tentative leave of the class with the intention of returning after treatments. The class of 52 was split into two classes of 26 that alternated weekly between English and French. Being the French teacher, I was responsible for teaching French, geography, history, science and art. When I took over the class, I was immediately warned about some of the students, and their “attitudes.” Having come from a spiritual education background, and having adopted the educational philosophy that all students need is a guide rather than an authoritative force, I dismissed the warnings, and went headfirst into the class. Immediately, I understood what was irking these other teachers/administrators as there were students who seemed to have complete disregard for schooling in general. I made a decision then and there that the only way I was to get through to these students was through embodying the values of truth, and love that I held deep within myself.

From November through December, until the holiday break, I worked tirelessly to get all these students on board with schooling, and the importance it would mark in their lives. I pandered to their emotional needs but continued the same academic curricula they had been following. I wanted to stick with the plans from their original teacher in the opinion that she was going to regain control when she was fit. Although the handful of students who had been relegated to the status of “misfits” were still not working in the
classroom, I had at least gained their trust, and confidence. As the holidays were coming to an end, I was informed that I was to teach the class for the rest of the year.

This announcement, although a huge honour, caused a tremendous headache, and also took all the progress I had made with the students and dropped it back to worse than before. The problem was that I was still a student, and my university would not allow me to get out of my final semester of classes, which meant that I could not be in the classroom until early March. In the time I was back at University, two more teachers were brought in to teach the class, and both found it too difficult and challenging and walked away from the job. Finally, with persuasion from professors and the school board, I was back in the classroom full time at the end of February. This is where I had to begin some heavy damage control, and try and get back the students that were so close to being lost for good.

I chose to place character education in the forefront, and relegate the other academic subjects to the background. I discussed it with the school principal and got her blessing. I explained that there was potential for these students in the future, only if we work on their emotional/social beings now, rather than try and force academia onto them. With her blessings, I began “Mr. Teep’s heroes,” a comprehensive unit that included art, French language (writing, reading and speaking), and history.

The rationale for this unit was to inspire the self-confidence needed by students to acquire the mental strength to be self-regulated learners. Much of their dismissal of the educational system was their lack of confidence in their abilities and also their perceived lack of attention to any form of authority. My students did not believe in themselves or in anyone for that matter, choosing to let slip away whatever time they spent in school in an
outward (often negative) expression designed to garner some attention their way. More than a handful of students were mired in the belief that the teachers did not care for them; this notion perpetuated by the quitting of two teachers who, in their words, “couldn’t handle them,” and their perception of an English teacher who “hated them.” The handful of students who began to believe this inherently were also the rebellious “cool” kids, and were able to quickly convince many of their fickle-minded 10-year-old peers to believe the same.

My belief was that when they learned to trust themselves, only then can they trust others; know thyself to know the world. Introducing the topic was easy, but getting them to buy into what I wanted to do was the hard part. Although I had a good rapport with the students, change itself is difficult. The students had gotten into a routine of doing minimal work, with minimal expectations from their teachers. As a whole, the class had fallen into a spiral of inefficiency, doing very little work on a daily basis, and with way too much down time. The students had associated French week with slack week, and nothing, regardless of how beneficial it may have been to them, should get in their way of doing nothing. In sum, the students were not ready to accept any kind of work and initiating a culture of work was the first initial obstacle.

What I had hoped to accomplish with the students rested on them being equal partners in the development of a new classroom culture. They had to completely change the way they perceived French class, school work, authority and the “future.” For this they needed first and foremost to know what I expected from them, and why I expected it. I firmly believe that students and children in general are a lot more intelligent than we credit them for. There are instances where some parents and teachers often omit things in
talking to children with a notion that they will not understand, or that they are not “at level.” This thought alone can cause division because, on one hand, we expect certain things from them, and on the other we don’t trust their ability to be successful or to understand the reasons that underlie the decision or notion.

Starting on a Monday, I told the class that this week would be labelled as a “construction zone.” We discussed what a construction zone meant, and they determined that it was where something new was built. We then decided that we needed to build new attitudes and that began with them telling me why they didn’t like to work. Aside from the obvious answers of “it’s stupid,” or “I just don’t get it, so what’s the point,” a few students really began to verbally express their insecurities. One answer received which really gave me a fresh perspective on these children was, “who cares about what WE do anyways?” The answer itself came from one of the higher achievers in the class and it struck a nerve, prompting me to investigate further as to how these children were so removed from the notion of schoolwork. What I determined was that these students, many of whom were not getting strong reinforcements from home, had little or no confidence in themselves, and their way of avoiding that feeling of incapability came from doing nothing. By avoiding the work to be done, and by creating a classroom culture that didn’t require any effort, they believed that their emotional health would remain unvaried through the elimination of any potential disappointment.

The decision was a difficult one, but I settled on the extrinsic-reward-to-intrinsic-reward method. I created a culture in the classroom that rewarded hard work with small windows of fun. The days ended at 2:30, and the students were told that if the work was done well all week, then Friday afternoons could be spent outdoors until the final bell.
Those 20 minutes of free time outdoors were a huge motivating factor for the children, because it gave them something tangible to work towards. I truly believed that I could wean them away from those 20 minutes outdoors as the intrinsic rewards began to bear fruit. The intrinsic reward I aimed for was confidence in relying on themselves and believing that they were capable of accomplishing whatever it was they put their minds too. It was in this hope that Mr. Teep’s heroes began, and got in full swing.

The unit was broken down to go from the extrinsic to the intrinsic in all aspects. The first part of the unit was to identify what it meant to be a hero, and to begin we started with superheroes. As a class, each student had to give the characteristic of their favourite superhero that they liked the most. All the responses were written on the board, and the students copied them all down. Their work subsequent to the discussion was to pick 4-5 of these qualities, and write a one page paper on their “ultimate” superhero that had all these qualities. The superhero was to be named, and a logo was to be created. Spanning across French language and Arts, this first assignment was completed within three days, given the need to still cover topics such as social sciences, science etc. The logos were displayed with their ultimate superhero write up alongside, for the school to see.

Many students wanted to continue on the superhero theme, but we progressed from the impersonal to the personal, by discussing what it meant to be a hero in general. We diverted ourselves from the superheroes and focused on personal heroes by highlighting the impact that any non super-powered person can have. We discussed what it meant to be a hero in real life, and how some people are considered heroes based on their heroic acts, their courage and their attitudes. I asked them to look at celebrities and
people they had heard about who were heroes in their eyes. The children used their computer class to find pictures of “heroes” and they were given permission to print them out and bring them to class. Please note that I had already contacted the computer teacher and asked her to be on board with what I was doing. I explained to her the philosophy behind it and assured her that what I asked from her was nothing more than a 5 minute interlude in her lesson plan. Having the computer teacher on board proved doubly beneficial, for the students were seeing that other teachers were on the same wavelength as I, and this gave what I was doing some sense of credibility in their eyes. Seeing the computer teacher using her time to support my project gave them the understanding that there was a deeper importance in what was being done.

With the pictures in hand, the students’ homework assignments were to research a little about their hero and to explain to the class through an arts collage how they are heroic. This art/written assignment was a lot of fun as students had to use magazines and their imaginations to try and explain heroism through pictures. These collages were then explained as an oral presentation to the class, and some of the symbolism used by the students was quite surprising and inspiring. For example, one of the students chose hockey goaltender Roberto Luongo as their hero, and used the picture of a wall to describe his heroics. The explanation of the wall was that not only did he not let any pucks in the goal, but he was also resilient to the negative comments made about him by hockey commentators. This student understood that being confident is akin to being a hero. The students had now gone from superhero to celebrated hero, and then came “Les héroes méconnues.”
Les heroes méconnues translates into English as my non-famous hero. The idea was for students to narrow down who was a hero to them in their own personal lives. Many answers varied between mom, dad, siblings, relatives and sometimes friends. Many students chose teachers who had impacted them, and some chose from the school administration. The students were asked to create an acrostic poem about their personal hero, which describes how they go above and beyond normalcy to be “heroic.” The students were again given time in computers to write their poems out in fancy computer print, and bring them into class. Once again, the stress here is on having other teachers on board with what you are doing. For this, it requires open and honest communication with the other staff members, truly expressing why you’re doing what you are doing, and what you want as an outcome from both the students and yourself. In my experience, not all the teachers agreed with my methods, and there were a few who wanted me to “leave the students to their own vices.” Believing in what I was doing was what kept me going, and of course seeing results in the students’ attitudes pushed me to keep at it.

The final step was to bring the external hero and connect it within. The last discussion held was a very quiet, intimate class discussion. For this, we moved all the tables to the perimeter of the class, and I brought in some straw mats from home. I also brought in a few table lamps and set a very soft mood in the class. We began that discussion with some breathing exercises, really setting a mood of calm, relaxing introspection. With the kids all in the “sharing circle,” we began a discussion on what makes each and every individual a hero. The students spoke about confidence and strength, determination and perseverance. They discussed how, at times, they felt heroic, and at other times they couldn’t feel that inner power. The discussion was controlled with
the hero stick (a broken part of my hockey stick) and students were asked to respect their peers. The discussion ended with the students sent away to create their own “jerseys.” As it was playoff time in the NHL, the students were all caught up in the frenzy that is the NHL Playoffs. Stemming from that excitement, I created a template of a jersey, and the kids were asked to write their name, their number and decorate the jersey with the words that define them as heroes. Under the jersey was attached a pledge that the students made to be heroes in the school. Some statements ranged from “making sure no one fights on the playground,” to “picking up the trash and keeping the earth beautiful.” These jerseys and pledges (which were written on template hockey sticks), were placed on the corkboard outside of my class. A huge banner was created with the words “Mr. Teep’s Heroes,” and their work was displayed for all to see. The closing discussion we had touched on the importance of sticking to their pledge now that they were on display for the whole school to see. The students discussed how their actions, however small they may think they are, have an effect on others. We discussed how even a smile can make others smile, and how a small kind gesture can mean the world to someone else. The last message given to these kids as part of the unit was to be confident in their actions, to be determined to make a difference and to never think they are not capable.

Although the unit ended, the work on the students’ self-esteem and confidence continued. There was significant improvement, notably from some of the students who were originally “ousted” from the classroom. It must be noted that some of the students slipped back into the culture of “not working.” Mr. Teep’s Heroes ended in April, with approximately two months left in the school year. Although the bulk of the students worked diligently until the end of the year, there were a few who couldn’t get past the
barriers that had previously been created. Although I couldn’t get through to all the students in my limited timeframe, some defining moments attested to the validity of teaching the person behind the brain.

Of the seven students who were originally not even part of the class in February, one student in particular (we can call him George) made headlines in the school for his project work. Being known as the student who never did anything to claiming the “best project” in grade five affirmed the work that was done through the character development. As a final big project, the students of grade 5 were educated in the importance of recycling and the impact of recycling on the earth. The students’ project, after having gone through some readings and writings on recycling, was to make something useful out of recycled materials. This student in particular, who, as previously mentioned, was notorious for being a “slacker” took his project to heart, and created a lantern out of an old lamp and some old coke cans. He then decorated the lantern with the words “spreading the light.” As there were three grade 5 classes, the teachers all judged a different class, with no names attached to the projects. Projects were judged on creativity, usefulness and overall presentation.

In the end, George claimed the award for best recycling project. When I revealed to the other cycle 3 teachers (grades 5/6) the name of the winner, the shock on their faces was heart-warming. They truly didn’t believe that “George” was capable of such work based on his past. When I explained to them that “George” had given up his recess and after-schools to work on the project because he understood that he couldn’t work on it at home, one of the teachers expressed that I had “done a good job.” This was a testament to the work that was put in. Although it was just one small project, I was able to prove that
through determination and an open-mind to the possibilities that are endless when it comes to children, change is possible. Apart from the few who slid back into their unwilling to work attitude, and subsequently spent more time with the behaviour technician, the majority of my students worked throughout the rest of the year, and finished their grade 5 on a strong note. The development of character helped create a work-ethic in the students and helped them to shed the feeling of inadequacy when it came to their own possibilities.
Teaching secondary 3 in Quebec came with its challenges. In Quebec, high school is 5 years, from grade 7 to 11. Grades 7 and 8 are considered the junior side, and 9 to 11 is designated as senior. Juniors are generally more sheltered, with stricter discipline codes and tougher regulations for students. Grade 9 marks the beginning of being a senior, and this brings with it a sense of freedom and, in many cases, rebellion. Early in the school year, it was apparent that I had a group of students who were good kids but were also quick to allow reason to slip away and act impulsively. Of my four classes, two groups were underachievers and the other two were average. Many students came from broken families, with previous discipline problems and, most importantly, a lack of self-esteem in their daily interactions. Not only were they always looking for a way out of their work, but also they were quick to be influenced negatively. Using this naïveté and their propensity to be easily influenced, I chose to be the positive influence.

Gaining their trust was easy, but gaining their trust without diminishing their respect for other teachers was difficult. Students, children and people generally seem prone to draw comparisons between the people in their lives. It starts at an early age, dividing parents into either “nice” or “mean” categories, and it continues on throughout life. At times, many of us are guilty of being content with the person who can do “more” for us, for s/he who seems to give us exactly what we want and not necessarily what we need. Some teachers who pander to the wants and desires of their students end up getting
the “cool” label, but in my observations, at times the productivity is low in these classrooms. I experienced it myself as a beginning student teacher, where my status as a cool, friendly teacher inhibited my desire to give more work, or homework.

In the case of my grade 9 classes, my students worked a lot more in my classroom than they even realized, for I made everything in the class a learning situation. The free-writes at the start of every class were read weekly, the work they did on grammar was used as an on-going assessment tool, and the in-class discussions all counted towards their speaking grade. In Quebec, French language is assessed in three categories: reading, writing and speaking. Grammar, spelling, verbs and syntax are all integral in teaching the French language, however, they are not assessed as individual components, and they are part and parcel within the three categories. Although my students did a lot of work, my focus was on the basics, and I refrained from getting into subject matter that was well beyond their scope. Although this may draw criticism from some educators, my methods were based on the need for my students to develop a habit of working, rather than them pushing “beyond their capabilities.” My philosophy was to start the year developing a working attitude and then stretch the intellectual web once they had become self-regulated learners.

Much of my time in the first few months was dedicated to just getting them to work, by choosing projects and units that stemmed from their own interests. Although there was a ban of IPOD/MP3 players in the classrooms, I often saw my students scurrying to hide them away as class began. Seeing this rampant love of music in the majority of students, I created projects that both infused the three French categories (writing, reading and speaking) and allowed them the freedom to choose, a proponent to
student motivation. The musical unit, which lasted 3 months, opened the doors to many things, but, namely, I had instilled a culture of work and also had accomplished having the students on my side.

When January rolled around, the classroom culture was nowhere near perfect; however, the majority of the students were willing and eager to work on my terms. Having the students on my terms meant that character building was to follow, to be done in conjunction with the academic requirements. I chose Valentine Day’s general connotation of love to introduce the students to the story of Tristan and Isolde. Trintan and Isolde is a classic love story which pits love versus duty as its overall theme seeing that the lovers come from battling kingdoms in a time of war. Much like Romeo and Juliet, the lovers do not end up together, but this is due to the fact that Tristan chose his duty to the king (and his adopted father at that) over his chance at love with Isolde. Although Tristan was given the chance to leave and start anew with Isolde at his side, he chose to go back and fight with his king and ends up being killed in the process.

After having read the story and gone through the various themes and components of the story (characters, setting, antagonist/protagonist etc) we watched the film version of the story. Upon completion of the movie the character education part of the unit began as the students were asked simply, “Would you choose duty or love?” Answers started flying out faster than hands were raised, and I seized the opportunity to make an even greater lesson out of this seemingly simple question. I had the students raise their hands based on which they would choose, and the ratio was approximately 65/45 in favour of love. This ratio was favourable, and I split the class into two “teams,” Duty and Love. The first assignment was to go and find quotes on their respective team name. Students
were allowed to plunge into song lyrics, famous quotes, poetry and any other sources to find the best description/definition of love or duty. Quotes were used to give students perspective that they may not have developed on their own, forcing them to think from a different viewpoint and create a more holistic understanding.

The students came back with their quotes, and each team was asked to write 5 quotes which they decided on as a group on the class blackboard. All 10 quotes were then broken down in a global class discussion, looking beyond the words to the deeper significance, breaking down the quotes to see how it related to their personal lives, and then the students were given their homework. Students were asked to pick any of the 10 quotes and write one page about how it related to their own thinking. The reason for the assignment was simply to keep their minds engaged on the idea that whatever we do in the class is relatable to their own lives and that everything serves a purpose.

The next class marked the first part of the final assignment on “Love vs. Duty.” The students were asked to go back into their respective groups and set up notes for a debate. The debate idea stemmed from the fact there was no debate team at the school, and I believed the skill of making our thoughts succinct and presenting them with confidence is a skill that is tantamount to being better communicators in any subject/situation. The students were asked to pick three people from their group who would be the debaters, and I chose a few students who didn’t seem fully engaged to be the moderator, time keeper and score-keepers. I understood that they may not be as excited as the others in regards to the subject, and tried to find a way to keep them involved, and also teach them different skills in the meantime.
The role of the moderator is to be firm about time limits and content matter. They have to be fully attentive to the arguments being made, and make sure that the arguments are within context and reason. The time-keeper, although a more menial task, is imperative to a good debate, for they are the ones who keep the debaters on track with their time cues. They aide the debaters in prioritizing what needs to be said in keeping them aware of the time limits. Finally, the scorers must be fully attentive for they score the arguments based on quality and relativity. Their scores were then matched with mine and a winner was named. The score keepers were asked to mark down the reasons for the points they gave to avoid any favouritism and when the students were given some quiet grammar work, I had a roundtable with the score keepers about the scores they had given.

The roundtable served two purposes. The first was to make sure that the scorers had given their due attention to the assignment, and had scored the arguments with fairness and equality. Secondly, throughout the roundtable, I asked open-ended questions to the scorers on the subject matter of love and duty, to see how they understood the concepts. I believe that by them being engaged, although in a different capacity, they still developed their own perspectives, and the roundtable gave them a less public forum to speak of their comprehension.

Finally, once the scores had been tallied, we had one final class discussion. The students were asked a simple question to answer before they were given the results of the debate. The questions now bridged the two values and asked: “What are the similar qualities of the values of love and duty?” After extensive debate as to which one is greater and how they differ, I asked them to look at how they are similar, and how they are both important in regards to the context they are in. We spoke about relativity and
context, and prioritizing, and how sometimes there is a choice between two rights, not necessarily a right and a wrong. The students’ final assignment was a written one that asked them to compare love and duty in terms of their comprehension of the two. The assignment was open as to how they wanted to write it. They were free to write a poem or a song or an essay.

Some students wrote a newspaper article, others as a simple essay, and a few tried their hand at poetry. The final assignments were overall quite formidable. Of course there were a few students who did not do the assignment, some others who scribbled whatever they could last minute, but on the most part, the papers were well thought out and in many instances, the students wrote of their own personal experiences with choosing one over the other.

In retrospect, we always feel that we could have done more, but in the moment, it was enough. The students were taken out of their usual student zone where they just do “meaningless” work and acquire a grade. They were asked to think of matters that relate to the person, rather than simply a subject, and most importantly, they were asked to look within for the answers. The definition of Educare is to elicit the knowledge from within. It asks teachers to step away from the delivering/regurgitation of information, and develop students who can think, and relate, and create connections to their own selves. The students of my class looked deeply at two values, right-conduct (duty) and Love, and created a bridge to their own inner understandings, connecting the head to the heart and in doing so, this teacher hopes that their actions will follow suit as they move on in their lives.
Chapter 7

Sathya Sai Education

Of all the professions, the teacher's profession has to adhere utmost to the ideal of truth. When teachers stray from truth, society meets with disaster. Thousands of tender children, unacquainted with the ways of the world, pass through their hands. The impact of their teachings and personality will be great and lasting. Therefore, the teacher has to be free from bad habits, for children automatically adopt the habits and manners of elders. This is an ever-present danger. When the evil influence is directed towards the thousands who receive the impact, society gets polluted (Baba, 2002, p. 3).

To speak of Character Education is one thing but to experience it is another. Character and values education has long been a part of my life as Sathya Sai Education (SSE). Shri Sathya Sai Baba, a spiritual master residing in India, initiated the Sathya Sai Education program back in 1969, originally under the name of “Bal Vikas,” a Sanskrit word meaning the “blossoming of a child.” The name changed to SSEHV (Sathya Sai Education in Human Values) for Sathya Sai centres that were established outside of India, and in 1995, the name officially became SSE, and has held true since.

Sathya Sai Education has its roots in the five human values of Love; Truth; Peace; Non-Violence; and Right-Conduct. In the SSE global overview document (2007), the committee states:
Sathya Sai Education has its roots in the teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, the revered spiritual leader who resides in India, but who has followers in virtually every country of the world. Very early in his life, Sri Sathya Sai Baba declared that his mission was to impress upon mankind the crucial importance of leading moral lives by the practice of universal human values: *Sathya* (Truth); *Dharma* (Righteousness); *Shanthi* (Peace); *Prema* (Love); *Ahimsa* (Nonviolence). He says education should bring out human values. “To bring out” means to translate these values into action. Since then, he has remained a constant motivator and guide in the development of Sathya Sai Education (p. 4).

Although the fundamental ideology is based on five values, Sathya Sai Education goes much deeper, beyond the values, and verily looks to develop morally conscious beings. Sai Baba states “‘real education is that which promotes unity, equality and peaceful co-existence with fellow human beings.’” It flows from the heart, and is termed as “Educare.” Therefore, Educare should be pursued along with what has usually been meant by education.” Furthering this idea, Sankar (2004) wrote that

> Education should not be denied its powerful role in shaping one’s character. Values are the foundation of one’s character. Values provides an individual with standards or criteria for taking action, for justifying one’s own and others’ actions and for comparing oneself with others. Over time at work, a person develops a set of rules that become his or her value system for making choices at work. (p. 145)

From its humble beginnings as an education program, SSE has now spread throughout the world and has established schools under the banner of Sathya Sai Education. The first school was established in India as a Girls College in 1968, and since
then more than 150 schools have been established worldwide as Sathya Sai Schools. SSE, as mentioned, stems from the five human values, and began as education in human values (EHV). EHV, as described by Sathya Sai Baba is actually 3HV, which refers to the Head, the Heart and the Hands. The philosophy summarized explains; that which comes into the head, must be examined by the heart before being translated into the hands as action. The value of love is seen as the undercurrent of all the values, explained by Shri Sathya Sai Baba as; “Love in speech is Truth. Love in action is Right Conduct. Love in thought is Peace. Love in understanding is Nonviolence.”

Sathya Sai Education has been an inspiration to who I am as a teacher. SSE goes beyond the mere world of knowledge and transcends into the inner reality that is the human being. Although I had been to SSE classes from a young age, I saw the true value of SSE or character education in my first long-term teaching assignment. At the time I was in my 3rd year of my Bachelors of Education, and I was assigned to a grade 6 classroom in a bilingual school. Before beginning I was warned by the staff about some of the students. A few of the disorders that I had to look forward to were autism, ADHD and RAD (reactive attachment disorder). Along with these behavioural disorders, there were students who came from lower SES (socio-economic status) and many students who came from broken homes. Although the specs of the classes I were to teach were grave enough to send any teacher packing, I was blessed to work with a teacher who I believe embodied the spirit of sacrifice, and who without having heard of SSE, was a firm believer in character education.

My cooperating teacher’s first words to me were, “get to know your students, and let them get to know you.” This lesson never left me for it shaped my own personal
educational philosophy. What my cooperating teacher was asking me to do was to see that the children in the class were verily humans as well as students. My cooperating teacher believed that academia needed to be balanced with the building of the individual. She was always readily available for the students who needed to talk, for the students who needed more time on assignments and for the students who just needed someone to lean on. She would often take 5 to 10 minutes to get the kids to get up and move around in class, just to give them a chance to stretch their legs and revitalize their bodies a little. She modified work for those students who were behind the class in such a way that they never felt like they were any lesser. Most importantly, she showed me the harmonious balance between being a teacher and a person of authority, and being that friend and that person that the students can trust.

I got hooked into character education through this experience, as I noticed the sheer lack of certain values in many of the students. The biggest value that I saw lacking in the classroom was the value of the self. The students (and I am generalizing) lacked confidence in much that they did. Not only did they lack confidence, they were easily dismissive of the fact that their actions can hurt others. In essence, they not only lacked confidence, but they lacked compassion. They did not believe that their actions had any effect on the people around them, and, in this view, they were able to dehumanize the people around them as well as themselves. What I noticed was that the students in grade 6 were living life through the lens of negativity. They acted brashly, hardly hesitating to hit a peer or to insult another student. The students were so disenchanted with life that they couldn’t recognize the pain they caused others nor could they recognize their own worth.
Personally, as the teacher, I realized that the only thing of value that I could give these students was a sense of self. I focused on developing my relationship with the students who had little or no relations at home. These students were forced to “make it on their own,” meaning they were often left to their own vices. In one instance, I had a student who told me that he had gone downtown the night before to have a few drinks with his friends. The shocking thing was that this student was 12 years old and took public transportation (approximately an hour both ways) on a weeknight (Wednesday). Furthering that, he engaged in underage drinking and came home all without the knowledge of his mother. He came to school the next day proud of his accomplishment and shared it with me in the hopes that I too will be proud of him. This was the state of affairs of which I was witness to. Intelligence aside (the student was the lowest achiever in the class) this student had no self-worth, so much so that he looked for praise in negative situations. It was after this day that I began to do my own inner reflection to determine what it is that I can do as a teacher. The only answer that came to me was character education, and the only thing I knew about character education was SSE. The following is my understanding of what SSE is and my vision of SSE as an integral part of all education programs.

SSE is in itself character education. At the beginning of this chapter, I mentioned the 3HV principle. This principle sums up the goals that I previously spoke of for character education. Character education seeks for the hybrid of external materials and internal connections; that which comes in as knowledge through any medium (reading, writing, mathematics, science) should be interpreted with a strong sense of self and understood implicitly. What this asks is that the information that comes in is not simply
regurgitated, but rather it is understood and is able to be translated into any situation. In Chapter 4 we looked at integrating values in mathematics education. By using problem solving, we demonstrated how moral dilemmas can be looked at through the same lens as mathematical problem solving. The only way that this can be translated however, is if the student has understood the methodology inherently and not only within the initial context. The whole process needs to be understood as a general means to an end, rather than a specific one. What 3HV asks for is exactly this; the input of information is deeply understood not only in the head, but also in the heart, the deep connection is made and then it is translated to the hands as action.

In moral terms, the resulting action should be that which is beneficial to society. Sathya Sai Education asks of students to be moral and ethical beings, contributors to society in a positive fashion and deeply conscious of the impact of good character. The five teaching techniques as expounded by SSE are: storytelling, prayer or quotations, silent-sitting, group singing and group activities. Within all five techniques, we see the 3HV principle and the end goal of sound character. Consider quotations as exemplars.

The use of quotations is first and foremost a means to inspire. The quotations that are selected should hope to resonate with something within the student. For example, let’s take a quote from Mother Teresa who said “We cannot do great things on this Earth, only small things with great love.” As per the 3HV principle, students need to first understand what this quote means. This can be done through class discussion, or write-ups. Secondly, they must connect it deeply with their heart. This stage may be done by asking the students to write their own quotes with the same message or creating a drawing that represents what this quote is saying. Finally, the hands must be used to bring
this quote full circle. What students will now be asked to do is contemplate on how they can do “small things with great love.” Ideas may come up like tidying their room without being asked to, or helping with the dishes after dinner. Whatever the outcome, the idea is that students are aware that love should be the undercurrent in all their actions. For this to occur, then they must always be aware that what they are doing is of no harm to anyone. With this idea always on their mind, students can be expected to be ethically responsible beings as they make a conscious effort of having love as the undercurrent of all their actions. Realistically, it must be noted that although it is easy to say, it is very hard for anyone to have this notion of causing no harm foremost in their minds. The process is definitely a constant work in progress, and cannot be expected to happen instantly.

Sathya Sai Education also expounds the notion of service to all students and teachers. Students are expected to develop nine qualities through SSE. Sai Baba says “Students have to imbibe the nine important qualities, which are as precious as nine gems. These are: spirit of sacrifice, humility, the spirit of selfless service to society, friendliness, discipline, commitment to integrity, truth, love, nonviolence, and faith in God.” The spirit of selfless service is verily the transition of head to heart to hands. Let’s look, for example at the Sathya Sai School of Toronto. Students of SSS Toronto regularly participate in a cause called “Children for Charity” where students go to a homeless shelter and make sandwiches to be distributed to the homeless. Sathya Sai Baba has said that:

True education should make a person compassionate and humane. It should not make him self-centered and narrow-minded. Spontaneous sympathy and regard for all beings should flow from the heart of one who is properly educated. He
should be keen to serve society rather than be preoccupied with his own acquisitive aspirations. … A person should strive to use every talent and skill they have, not only for their own benefit, but for the benefit of the whole world. Understand that society is the source of whatever pleasure one derives and whatever wealth one achieves in life. We owe everything to society and should be grateful to society for all that we receive from it. We have to repay this debt by helping at least as many people as we can. (retrieved from http://www.saibabaofindia.com/the_sathya_sai_school_in_toronto.htm)

This approach of developing in students a spirit of service is tantamount to students being socially responsible as they develop into contributing citizens of society. In my experience, working in public schools, the spirit of sacrifice and service was developed through recycling projects and school cleaning projects. The grade 6 class of Mr. Teep were the organizers and also the first group of participants in the school campaign “Cleaning the school to clean our hearts.” The students went around to other classrooms and gave a short speech on recycling and cleanliness, and then had to ask if the class wanted to sign up for the school cleaning project. Once all the participants were determined, the students created a schedule that had one class per day cleaning the school yard and collecting the recycling from each classroom. Many students furthered this by beginning their own “can collection,” and then converting the cans into money to give to the school garden beautification project that was sponsored by the Home and School committee. What was clearly visible in the students was not a yearning for money, nor recognition of their efforts, but a clear desire for their school to be clean and green. The students, once inspired became those who inspire. The head, heart and hands worked in
unison to beautify the school, and in the same token, beautify the hearts of many students and teachers.

Sathya Sai Education can serve as a model for what is needed in society today. Some students may pass their days remembering facts and dates with little sense of responsibility or purpose and a limited sense of self. The character of a student is of utmost importance, with knowledge being the product of the external connecting with the internal. Students should be inspired to be exemplary citizens, should have confidence in moving forward and should always seek what is good. Sathya Sai Education inspires both teachers and students alike in letting love be the tree, and having truth, peace, non-violence and right-conduct be the fruits of that labour.

This finished product, where personality is character and character is personality, this is integral education — Sathya Sai Education. (Gokak, 1981 in Global Overview of SSE, p. 10)
Chapter 8

Conclusion

I am an eleven year old girl. And I am learning about the world around me, and yes, inside of me too. Every morning I look forward to coming to school as there is a warm environment welcoming me. It was like that on my first day of school and seven years later, it still is.

My training ground is extraordinary; every wall, ceiling and door is made up of love and sacrifice. I feel it every day. This is something that can never be recreated. We’re all one big family.

And to tell you the truth, this school is my motivation, because it fuels me to only do what I know is right. Here, I am taught to respect everyone, because each of us is special and unique and no one can ever change that. I have learnt to be understanding of the differences around me, and most importantly I am learning to accept who I am. I can say that we are trees that stand strong in the garden of life.

Another wonderful aspect is that here every student, just like me, has a close relationship with their teacher. We have the freedom to express ourselves and feel the love and respect that vibrates in the environment. It is this sublime milieu that has made me achieve so many goals and dreams. I am truly, truly grateful. I know God has created this entire universe for a reason, and we all are on this earth to find our purpose in life. (Confessions of a Grade 6 North American student,
I stumbled across this page in my search for information on Sathya Sai Schools, and it struck me so deeply. The student, no older than 13 years of age, was able to understand the principles of empathy, self-respect and respect for others. She so eloquently spoke of the benefits she garnered from an education that spoke to the character of the individual. Although I do not expect each and every 12-year-old to have a deep philosophic outlook on life, the above quote in an inspiration as to what can be achieved through character education.

Whether it is labelled under character education, values education or Sathya Sai Education, the goal should be the harmonious blend of intelligence and character. When students are able to connect themselves to the knowledge, and then translate that into a connection with others, there leaves little room for vices such as hate, envy, anger or violence. When students understand the impact that their good character can have on the world, then they can serve as examples for others. It is only through our actions that we can inspire change. Mahatma Gandhi famously said “be the change you want to see in this world.” If we are to expect exemplary character in the world, then we must begin with the children. The students are the leaders of tomorrow, the makers of that unforeseeable future, and teachers must take the responsibility in developing morally sound, confident citizens. Bass and Good (2004) wrote:

As schooling has become more universal and longer in duration, the relative shortage of educere has become more important in our society. When students spend more of their time in institutions that don’t teach in educere-friendly ways,
and even condemn initiative and creativity, they have less opportunity elsewhere to learn to question and create. Correcting this problem is not a simple undertaking. A culture has been established that is remarkably resistant to change. When new teachers or administrators enter this culture, they are pressured from every side to conform to the cultural norm. If the culture cannot change them, it attempts to drive them out. Generally, it is successful in one or the other of these endeavours. (p. 164)

Although the road ahead is not easy, the steps to be taken are apparent. Teachers and parents alike, administrators and communities must make the conscious effort to promote morally good values to the children, to the policy-makers of tomorrow. Education in itself is an institution that has gone through change before, and there is nothing that is holding it back from changing once more. What is needed is for everyone to recognize the value in character education. Once the recognition is there, policy-makers, teachers, parents and administrators must deeply understand the values that they are passing onto the students. Finally, the action that follows should be the transmission of character education; students should be awarded the opportunity to expand their consciousness beyond mere facts and ideas, and connect it to the person who they are.

Sankar (2004) writes:

Education affects the whole spectrum of human values: creative, experiential, aesthetic, material, instrumental, ethical, social, and spiritual. A student whose educational experience involves this portfolio of human values will emerge with an integrated personality. The search for human excellence via education can only be realized if education is value-based. Education must impart the basic human
values that lend meaning to our work and life. When internalized through a variety of curriculum experiences these values will drive our judgements regarding choices in all fields of life. (p. 149)

Sathya Sai Baba, in his book *Vidya Vahini*, says:

Teachers who teach with the salary paid to them in their minds, and students who learn with the jobs they may procure as their focus are both pursuing wrong paths. In fact, the task of the teacher is to discharge his duty of instructing and inspiring the students so that they develop their latent talents and advance in the perfection of their skills. The task of the student is to unfold the Divine in him and equip himself for serving society with his skill and knowledge (2002, p. 96).

Character education, in my opinion, is what we as a society need to go beyond the wars, beyond the genocides, beyond the pain and suffering, in order to get to a society of value that excels on the character of its citizens rather than the materialistic merits of name and fame. My call is not for every teacher to redo teacher training, but rather for every teacher to take on the responsibility of inspiring students to become characters of good morals, good ethics and good heart. My call is not for every school to become a Sathya Sai School, but rather for every school to make character as desirable an outcome as intelligence; to make good deeds as desirable as good marks. My call is for teachers to not only see the human behind the student, but the humanness that is inherent in all. When that humanness is triggered, when students become denizens of good moral code, when graduates are balanced with both intelligence and character, then, and only then, can we understand education to have fulfilled its role in society; the development of students of exemplary character.
Some say knowledge is power, but that is not true. Character is power; the end of education is character.

Shri Sathya Sai Baba
References


