

Curriculum for teaching Responsible Behavior

Years ago, students learned self-control at home; today, most teachers recognize that they play a large role in developing students' social skills, sense of responsibility, cooperative learning skills, and organizational abilities. Today our classrooms act as the centre for socializing, mostly for children who have no one else at their home or neighborhood of their age. So in the class they learn social skills and self control. Developing those skills -- and many more -- has to be the focus of all educators now!

Teachers don't have to be concerned about whether teaching self-control is their job or not -- they are already doing it. Every time a teacher tells a student to stop goofing-off, raise a hand, sit up straight, or finish a task, that teacher is teaching self-control. Some call it discipline; others call it classroom management.

A curriculum for teaching students self-control would involve activities that help students to learn to control impulses, manage group situations, and adapt to school routines. Such a curriculum includes role-plays, simulations, learning center activities, and children's literature that can be used to teach those skills. Our age old 'panchatantra tales' are an excellent value education aid ,that are apt for teaching social skills as well as responsible behaviour emerging from right decision making. With young children concept of listening to your inner voice builds the base for introspection .and helps them to make right and wrong choices.

In order to learn responsible behavior, students need to have some control over their environment. They need to feel a sense of ownership for their own behavior. Teachers create this kind of classroom environment by discussing rules and sanctions, giving choices, listening to students, and caring about how students feel.

Most students with behavioural problems are handicapped by their lack of social-skill development. This disability is not obvious, as cerebral palsy or mental retardation is. What draws our attention to such youth is the symptoms of their disability -- refusing to finish a task, talking back, frequent fights and bullying. At a more basic level, those students are disabled by inadequacies in their emotional intelligence -- shortcomings in their abilities to anticipate consequences, control impulses, manage stress, and understand how their behavior affects others.

Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to deal with his or her own emotions and the emotions of others in a constructive manner, a manner that promotes teamwork and productivity rather than conflict .Such a curriculum would address following issues :-

- 1. Identify and label feelings
- 2. Expressing feelings
- 3. Assessing the intensity of feelings
- 4. Managing feelings
- 5. Delaying gratification
- 6. Controlling impulses
- 7. Reducing stress
- 8. Knowing the difference

Getting the measure of a situation and being able to act appropriately requires understanding the feelings of the others involved and being able to take their perspective. So the key to develop emotional and social skills is to be able to listen to the emotions without being carried away by

personal emotions. There's a need to be able to distinguish between what others do or say and personal reactions and judgments. Students need to be guided to identify emotions, express emotions positively and manage feelings .Delaying gratification and controlling impulses are the key to developing self control. Moreover those who teach youth have to keep a firm grip on their own emotions.

Grant time for active reflection, introspection and conversation--times where students are allowed to become reflective, and then have opportunities to share their introspective reflections with others. Introduce unfinished stories, scenarios, and problems that deal with moral and ethical actions, and the art of thinking of the human condition in metaphoric terms. These are all very powerful ways for students to begin to think about the ancient, affective side of humanity and the evolutionary state of human emotions and interactions . Teach the arts of social discourse, how to read body language, conflict resolution techniques, and stress reduction to youth and see how they becomes responsible for themselves and people around them.

Salony Priya , counselling psychologist & teacher educator

salony_priya@rediffmail.com