

Mentor's Energizer

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Welcome

Welcome to the first issue of the Mentor's Energizer. We value our mentors and want to inspire you each month to rise to new levels of awareness and service.

In an age consumed by self-interest, in which everything is weighed on the scales of reward and personal satisfaction, it is heartening to encounter high-minded individuals who are galvanized by the vision of Universal Human Values and are ready to put the needs of others before their own. Your contribution to the transformation of society has not gone unnoticed and we delight in hearing your stories of improving attitudes amongst your students, the openness and willingness of extended family members to listen and try something new, and the cumulative changes occurring in the communities affected by the Service Learning Activities that your students undertake.

As mentors, we come from diverse circumstances, yet we all share the same aim—the desire to bring about constructive change through developing the capacity for meaningful service.

To follow a path of service requires tenacity and the benefit of walking this path in the company of others is immense. For this reason, the Energizer hopes to foster a sense of loving fellowship, mutual encouragement and willingness to learn together.

Where so much of society invites passivity and apathy, a conspicuous contrast is offered by our mentors, whose energies are being channeled towards a higher, united goal, that of cultivating and sustaining a new, enriching pattern of community life.

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National Creativity Award Poster Contest

Light the fire of creativity in your students. Encourage them to participate in the quarterly National Creativity Award. **The deadline is 31 March, 2014.**

For details please logon www.bahaiacademy.org

National Conference on Universal Human Values

In accordance with the Academy's mission, we have the pleasure to announce organizing the first National Conference on Universal Human Values, a 2-day event on 5-6 April 2014.

For details please logon www.bahaiacademy.org

Meet the Mentors

We want to hear from you!

This area is reserved for wonderful stories from our wonderful mentors. Your wisdom is important to us and to your fellow mentors working diligently in the field of endeavor. We want you to send photos of yourself, your students and the activities going on both inside and outside your classrooms. We all benefit from shared experiences and resources. Below, you'll find quotes from some of our mentors as they reflect on what they've learned.

"At the end of the training, we felt like family." "I never thought about values in this way. Taking the Bahá'í Academy course has changed my life."

"I love my students. They tell me of their problems at home and I am humbled by their desire to serve despite difficulties."

"The Universal Human Values courses have taught me how important our extended family is. We can practice our new attitudes and new beliefs there. Then, we can take them out into the world. Such simple things make such incredible changes. My students report the conversations they have with family that make such a difference in the way women are treated, for instance. It's amazing!" "Every student needs this course. Every teacher needs to teach it. It changes hearts and minds."

"At first I thought it would just be more work for me. I already have so much to do. But it has made my life easier, because the students have a much better attitude. They're truthful. They value cleanliness. They come to class on time and do the work."

"The teachers have become true friends after the course. We still stay in touch, even though we live in different cities. We encourage each other and support each other."

There is no self-centeredness or self-righteousness. We all help each other." Please send your comments and pictures to: energizer@bahaiacademy.org



Students enjoy their studies and Cooperative Games at Surabhi Computers.



Students of Surabhi College, Wai, took to the streets to ask locals what they thought the most urgent needs of the community were. Rubbish cleanup was one of the top concerns.

The Universal Human Values Classroom

Reading, writing, games, songs drama, art, discussion, group work, presentation—the UHV classrooms address all the learning styles.

Encouragement and Acceptance—key practices

This programme is not asking students to simply memorize lists of words or concepts to pass a test. It is encouraging them to develop their latent powers and capacities and to build their moral capabilities based on universal human values in order to contribute to social progress and make a better world. Your role as a mentor who encourages them to be their best, and who accepts their efforts, while continuing to exert them to greater awareness and service is the most important component in the success of the Universal Human Values classroom. The importance you give to the transformational value of the course and how you show your own personal growth is the most effective method for encouraging student participation.

Deep Discussion

One cannot underestimate the power of forming groups to discuss and better understand matters of meaning. Guiding the students in the process of consultation leads to better understanding.

Cooperative Games

Cooperative games are a big part of our courses. Whether students are trying to keep seven balls in the air or attempting to multi-task by drawing a star and a circle at the same time, the underlying meaning is the same: working in unity produces results.

Creative expression

Our students have different learning styles. The components of the Universal Human Values program are designed to address the needs of visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners. Art, music, drama, presentation, practicals, home activities and service learning are all ways to internalize the concepts through action.

Essential Tips for Practicals

Nurturing habits of mind and patterns of thought are important for internal change. Outwardly we must face everyday tests, difficulties, setbacks and misunderstandings that seem insurmountable. Rising to the challenge practicing what we have learned starts the process of transformation in our extended families, our communities and society at large.

Role playing is a safe way to practice what a student might say to a parent or other elder in his/her extended family. The class can watch and then give suggestions. The role play can be done again. Though it will still be difficult to actually tackle a problem at home, rehearsal takes the edge off. Also, writing down what one is to say is helpful, because reading a paper takes away the nervous worry that you'll forget what you wanted to say. When we ask teachers to share their difficulties, the first topic that comes up is getting students to do their practicals and home activities. They will read the materials and discuss them in class, but asserting their new learning in the extended family is often more difficult than it seems. A mentor has some semblance of control in the classroom, but home activities require the commitment of the student.

Accompaniment is the answer. To accompany means to go along with someone, to join them in a task, and this might mean actually visiting the home and physically being there with the student when s/he approaches the elder member of the family with her/his request.

Accompaniment can also mean rehearsing what the student will say, role-playing the conversation about to take place in the safety of the classroom, evaluating what was said and offering suggestions, calling the student on the phone to encourage her/him to do the task and perhaps again afterward to ask how it went and think about ways it could have gone better.

Each action should be followed by reflection so as to improve the next time.

Next month: How do I encourage my student to do their Service Learning Activities?