



MULYAVARDHAN

SHANTILAL MUTTHA FOUNDATION

The Mulyavardhan Voice

March 2019 Issue

FROM THE EDITORS

Hello everyone! We hope that your exam period went well. We expect that you are all celebrating!

Last month's newsletter was heavy, but please do let us know if you found some helpful ideas from the links.

This month's issue is a continuation of the competencies. We are providing tools and resources for Responsible

Decision Making and Social Awareness. We also thought to provide resource pages for the remaining Mulyavardhan values of Responsibility and Active Contribution.

Our psychological counsellor from head office, Ratna Gosavi, has written an article about working with mentally challenged students in the classroom in this issue as well. So, let's begin, and we hope you enjoy this issue!

RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING - by Pallawi Singh

In the month of February, we did many observations in schools. During these observations we saw many things in the classrooms. I noticed one particular incidence in a school and I am going to tell you that in a story.

I recently met Rosie, a 11 years old girl in the 4th standard, after many years. She used to be very naughty, quick, talkative and full of energy. But now she is very quiet; she does not allow herself to mix-up with other children and often she sits alone.

I was shocked to see this 360 degree change in Rosie. I tried to talk with her but didn't get any answer. I also asked Rosie's parents about it and they were also clueless. I decided to visit Rosie's school and meet her teacher.

Her teacher told me that Rosie is a very hyperactive child. She often does mischievous things in the class, like throwing water on other children, tearing pages from books and disturbing other students and teachers during class. The teacher told me that she was very irritated with this behavior and gave Rosie many warnings, but there was no improvement. So now she does not allow her to sit with other children. Now Rosie sits alone in a corner of the class.

I was surprised and shocked to hear this from the teacher. I wondered if this is the only way to deal with Rosie. *Was this a responsible decision by the teacher? Is the teacher aware about the consequences of this decision on Rosie's life?*

The above story shows that the responsible decision making competency is important for teachers when dealing with children. Their decisions can have a lifelong impact on children. We will try to understand how teachers can develop this competency in themselves.

First we will see what "Responsible Decision Making" is and how we can develop this competency within ourselves.



RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING ...cont

For Teachers

In our Mulyavardhan training, we have seen following definition of responsible decision making:

The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

KEY SKILLS FOR THE TEACHER

UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION

Why Rosie is behaving in a particular manner?

DETERMINE THE PROBLEMS

What are emotional, personal, social and physical aspects of Rosie's problem?

FOCUS ON ACTIONS/ DECISIONS AS A TEACHER

What would be the right and wrong decisions for Rosie in that scenario?

ASSESSMENT

What kind of impact did the decision make in Rosie's life?

WHAT THE TEACHER COULD HAVE DONE IN ROSIE'S STORY

Now we will try to look at how the teacher could have taken a decision about Rosie's behavior in a much more responsible manner. Teachers can follow the following points to develop this competency in themselves.



OBSERVATION

Observation is a best way to identify the problem. The teacher can observe Rosie's behavior to understand her problems in a better way. Teachers should observe all the behavioral aspects of Rosie and things that make her mischievous and hyperactive. Through observations, the teacher can determine if Rosie just wants to seek teacher's attention, if she is not able to follow the lesson or if there is something else behind this behavior.

For this, it is important that the teacher has good observation skills. This observation should be meaningful and there should be some reason behind the observation.

TALK WITH THE CHILD

After observing and understanding the problem, the teacher can talk with Rosie about her daily routine, what she likes and doesn't like in the class and what she does at home. So, in this talk, the teacher can understand many aspects of Rosie life. This talk is great trust-building exercise as well. Rosie might share something which can give a clue about her behavior to the teacher.

Teachers need to have frequent and meaningful positive talks with children to understand their issues and difficulties in the classroom. This engagement with the child will help teachers determine what decisions to make.



WHY

HOW



FOCUS ON WHY AND HOW

Teacher might come up with following causes of Rosie's problems after the talk.

- Rosie is behaving in this way because she does not have friends in the classroom
- She does not understand things in the class because of language
- She does not have good environment at home.

Often, teachers do not try to find out root and cause of the problem or situation (like in Rosie's actual case) and because of this, we are not able to take responsible decision many times. To avoid these situations teachers, need to find out why and how this problem arose. What are the factors responsible for these problems? What can be done in this situation?

LIST DOWN ALL CHOICES-

According to the cause of the problem, the teacher can list down all the possible choices/decisions she can make for Rosie. The teacher can come up with the following choices like:

- I will send Rosie to the counsellor.
- I will talk to her parents.
- I will make her sit separately (Rosie's teacher took this decision for her in the real case).
- I will not concentrate on her behavior at all.
- I will punish her.

Like this, Rosie's teacher listed out all the possible choices for her. There are multiple ways to solve one problem and each has its own consequences on the children. So, teachers must be very careful about the decisions that they make. Try to understand what kind of impact each choice is going to make in a child's life. Rosie's teacher has not thought about the consequences of her decision. She did not even think about other ways of handling this situation.



CARRY OUT THE BEST CHOICE

After listing down all the choices/decisions, the teacher can make the correct and responsible decision for Rosie. She can decide to send her to a counselor and talk with her parents. She also can decide to take such activities in which Rosie can mix-up with other children in the class. These decisions will bring out a positive consequence in Rosie's life.

During my observation, I noticed that the teacher's decision brought up negative consequences and because of that Rosie stopped mingling with other students. She started keeping to herself.

Hence, you can see how Rosie's teacher could have taken a much better and responsible decision for Rosie, if she had simply spoken to her.

For Students

Once we enhance the responsible decision making competency within ourselves, we can support children more effectively in developing this competency.

If children learn to make responsible decisions from childhood, they will grow up to become responsible citizens. This competency helps children to find solutions in situations of conflict. When children

make responsible decisions, they feel good and also can avoid dangerous situations.

It sounds a bit difficult to teach small children responsible decision making but it can be done using many techniques. I'm sure that you are already doing this through the Mulyavardhan activities! In this section we will find more ways to develop this competency in children.

HOW TO DO THIS

GIVE STUDENTS THE FREEDOM TO MAKE DECISIONS

First, we need to provide children the environment in which they can make some decisions. We should give them enough time and space for this. Most of the time, we do not allow children to make decisions. We make all the decisions, thinking that the child is very small or he/she will take lots of time. But this is not a good approach if we really want to develop this competency in students. But this freedom should be a guided freedom; teachers should monitor the kinds of choices students are making. When they will get this freedom, gradually they will understand what responsible decision making is.



ALLOW MISTAKES

At first children will not make appropriate decisions. They might make mistakes. Please do not shield them from the possible consequences. Every mistake will give them opportunity to learn and reflect about their decisions. Often we tell children "Do not make mistakes." We have to minimize this attitude. Please let them make some mistakes. We all have made mistakes and that is how we learn in life!

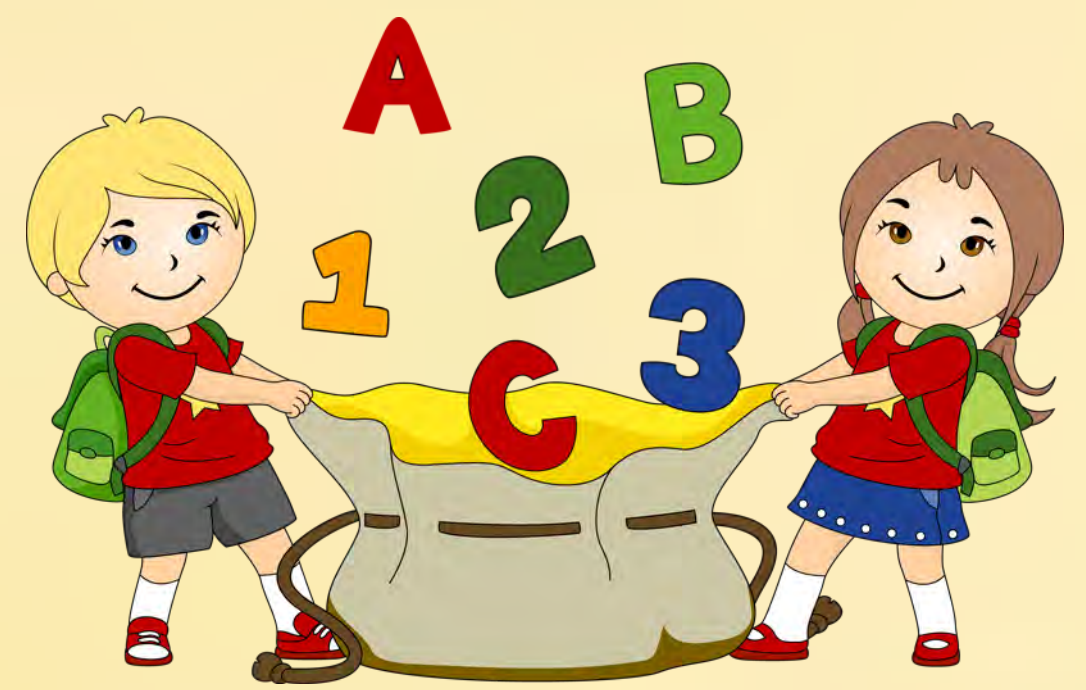
RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING...cont'd

For Students

DECISION MAKING ACTIVITIES IN THE CLASSROOM

Teachers can conduct various activities based on decision making in class, like role plays and debates. Teachers are already using role plays in Mulyavardhan activities. In role plays, children imagine themselves as superheroes, actors, magicians, cricketers, doctors, teachers, cooks, etc. Role play provides an opportunity for children to put themselves in different people's shoes and imagine the decisions they would take accordingly.

Debate is also a very nice way to make decisions. When children are given the freedom to disagree with one another, it encourages decision making. Children can be asked to express their opinion on any particular subject, like "What is your opinion on eating fast food all day?" Or ask about their opinions on having class rules, for example.



MAKE THEM AWARE ABOUT CONSEQUENCES

Many times children make decisions during an activity and as teachers we do not make them aware about the consequences of that decision. So we need to create a platform through discussion, group work and pair work where they can explore the various consequences of their decision. We can ask questions such as "If you decide to copy on a test, what will happen?" Ask them to discuss all the possible consequences. Tell them that before making any decisions, they need to think about all the possible consequences.

SOCIAL AWARENESS by Kanan Gole

For Teachers

Social awareness is defined as:

- The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
- The ability to understand social and ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

This is a very heavy competency. In order to understand the people of our community and society, we must be self-aware, have a grasp of relationship skills with others, and be able to manage ourselves. I consider social awareness to be "the ultimate competency", as it requires a good understanding of the other competencies.

So let's try to simplify this huge topic!

1. What is empathy? We always say that it is "putting ourselves in another's shoes". It is simple in theory, but difficult to practice. I personally believe, however, empathy is the solution to many of the world's problems!

Remember that "empathy" does not mean "sympathy".

Empathy is understanding another person's emotions/actions while **sympathy** is feeling sorry for someone.

There's a practice that I follow when I'm trying to be empathetic. Let's call it "Ask Why". Here are a few examples:

- a. I look at the person that I'm trying to empathize with. It is always important to read the emotions that s/he is communicating. Then, instead of judging that emotion, ask yourself, "Why is this person feeling this way?" If a student is angry, take a minute to understand why before reacting.
- b. If a person is dressed differently than you, look at the way this person is dressed. Instead of passing judgment, ask yourself "Why is s/he dressed in this manner?"
- c. Listen to what the person says. Take a minute, before responding, to think "Why is s/he saying this?"

d. Look at what a person is doing. Let's say a teacher is behaving rudely with you. Instead of behaving rudely in return, stop for a minute and think, "Why is s/he behaving like this?" Pondering over the question "why" allows us to consider the reality of another person. We all perceive the world in different ways and have diverse experiences.



2. What's the best way to strengthen your ability to empathize? Two steps:

a. Keep your mind open – Also, very easy in theory, but very difficult to practice. We tend to hold tight to our opinions. Keeping an open mind means understanding that there are many possibilities and perspectives. If a child, for example, is giving very unique examples and responses to your question, don't think that they are wrong answers. Appreciate the diverse answers that your student has given.

The child was raised in a unique environment and has a unique world view that we can learn from.

b. Have a conversation – If there is a child in your classroom that you cannot connect with, have a conversation with that student. Why does s/he behave in a certain way? What is his/her home life like?

In the same way, if you don't understand your HM's reason for taking a certain decision, take a minute to have an open conversation. Use "I feel..." to begin your statements. Of course, if the other person is not willing to have an open conversation, don't push. This requires empathy as well! Take a second to think "Why is this person not willing to speak to me?" Then, move forward accordingly.

3. Something that I was sad to notice in my observations is that many teachers are not paying enough attention to the differently abled children in the classroom. Instead of being empathetic to their needs, they are given more sympathy and are ignored when their abilities do not fit in the lesson plan. So, I reached out to the psychologist at our head office, Ratna Gosavi. She has written to you about how to empathize with students with mental challenges and how to include them in your daily lessons.

For Students

1. Primary students understand that their peers look, sound, and behave differently than them. At this age, the idea that we are all "different" sits comfortably in their minds. However, stereotypes, discrimination, gender roles, and society's views towards certain groups of people plague students' minds as they grow older and listen to what the older people/media say. When we are born, we do not put a hierarchy on people or sort them into classes and castes. This is something we do when we get older. Be mindful of what kinds of things you say in the classroom. What do I mean by this?

a. Break gender stereotypes: If you show a picture of a doctor, show a female doctor. If talking about cooking/cleaning, the person doing it could be a man.

b. Mix up the languages: If you have an especially diverse classroom, students speaking different languages can be grouped together. They will find a way to communicate with each other. They should not be made to sit separately, or according to their own languages.

2. I would like to comment on the 4th standard activity – "Respecting Women". This is a very difficult activity to conduct. At the 4th standard age, students see that their mothers are doing certain types of work and their fathers are focusing on other tasks. Students are possibly aware of the biological differences between the men and women. But, they have not yet been introduced to the thought that men and women are "unequal". I often noticed teachers saying to students that "men and women are equal". The students were not processing this message because they weren't able to connect to it. By saying that men and women are not equal, we are putting the idea that there is inequality in our students' minds. So, focus on ensuring that preexisting gender roles are not reinforced, using the "Break Gender Stereotypes" technique indicated in the previous resource.

3. Children can learn to be empathetic as well. I'll refer again to the differently abled students. I noticed many students saying "Uskonahiaata" in reference to the slow learners. These students

understood that they were being ridiculed and looked at their group mates very sadly. I also noticed that it was ignored by the teachers. Teachers, when you notice a group of students who are bullying a child with special needs, this must be addressed immediately. "Punishing" the bullies is not the right way to end it. Rather, they should understand why their bullying is wrong. After school, ask these students to stay back for some time. Ask them the following questions:

- Why are you making fun of this student?
- How do you feel when you make fun of this student?
- How would you feel if you were that student?
- How do you think your comments are making him/her feel?

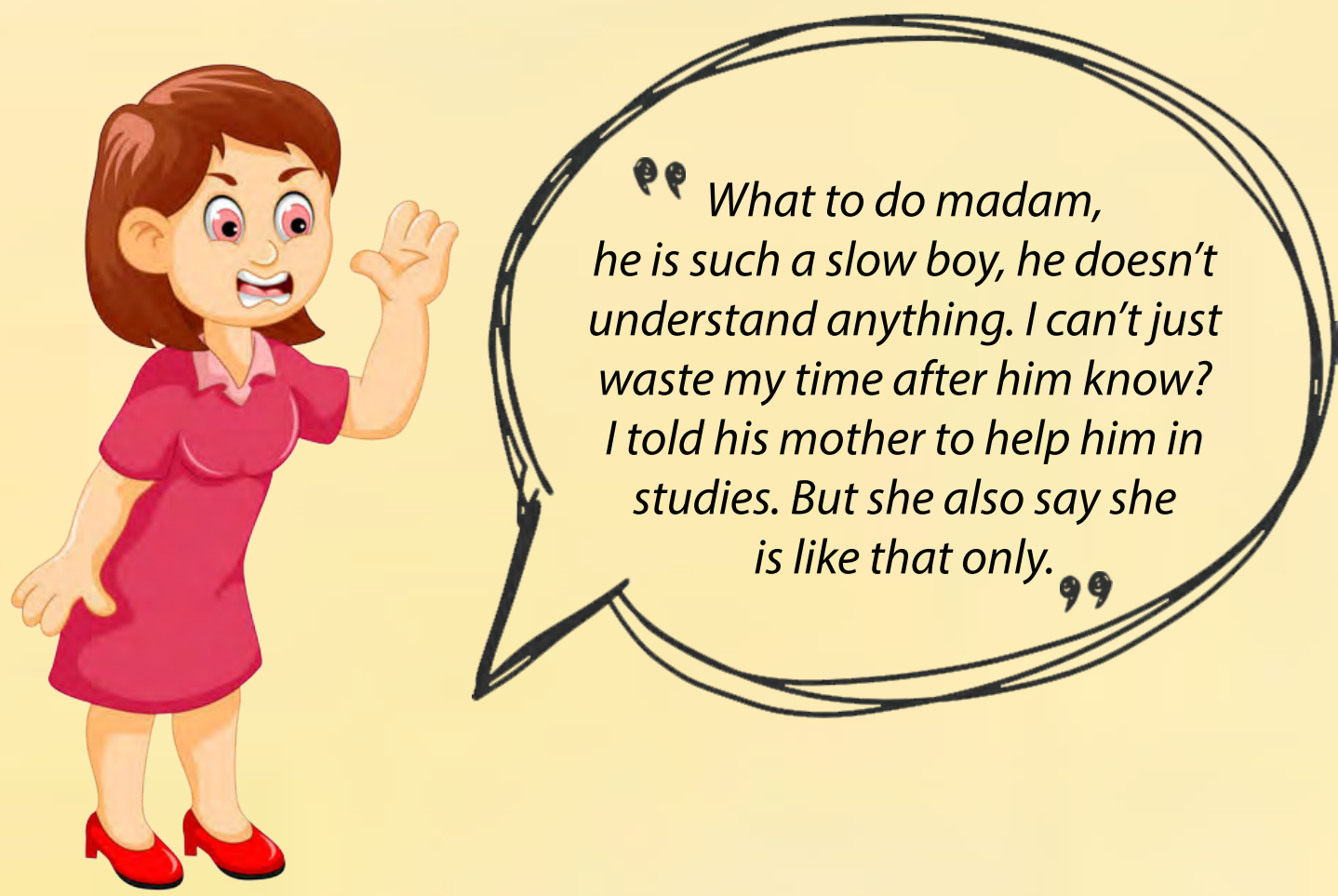
If the bullying persists, go ahead and take the matter to their parents. Bullying of any type should not be tolerated in the classroom and must be addressed immediately.

4. Students can conduct activities alongside differently abled students. We would like to acknowledge Vedika Gadgil Joshi of Our Lady of Rosary School for her Christmas celebration. She shared this photo on the 2018 WhatsApp group and it serves as a good example of collaboration and social awareness.



Students performing a dance together

"And the Christmas celebration continues. Today students of Peace Haven School for differently abled children were invited. Students of Our Lady of the Rosary Primary school performed cultural program and organised games for them."



disabled children. The most important thing that we need to remember as educators is *“The Constitution of India ensures equality, freedom, justice and dignity of all individuals and implicitly mandates an inclusive society for all including the persons with disabilities.”*

As per the provisions of the Persons With Disabilities Act, 1995, seven categories of disabilities have been identified. This article will focus on working with students with different mental abilities than other students. The scientific definition of this is: *“A condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind of a person which is specially characterized by sub-normality of intelligence i.e. cognitive, language, motor and social abilities.”*

All people with different mental abilities are eligible for concessions, benefits, facilities provided by central and state governments under various programs and schemes. Giving opportunities and support is not the responsibility of the government only. Even we, as teachers have a responsibility to identify differently abled children and have positive and supportive attitude for them. The following checklist will help teachers to identify and take necessary action to provide support to the child, if required.

1. Oral - language difficulties, listening problem - needs repetition
2. Reading difficulties, writing difficulties - spelling problems, repeated use of words/letters, slow and laborious handwriting
3. Difficulty in calculation, concepts, logical thinking, reasoning
4. Gross/fine motor coordination problems (e.g. holding a pencil), balance issues
5. Social and communication difficulties
6. Distractibility, impulsivity, hyperactivity, Unable to follow multiple instructions and many more

Parents and teachers need to develop the following:

- Awareness of the problem
- Recognition of the problem
- Acceptance of the child.

For proper identification and diagnosis of the problem, teachers should motivate the parents to consult doctors, psychologists, social workers and other educational experts.

First step towards changing our approach:

One common classroom occurrence is negative comments directed to individual student. Often times, negative comments are given in the form of labeling based on physical appearance, habits, behavior and mental ability. This affects student’s self-esteem and, in turn, his/her learning. This initiates a vicious circle of failure. Instead of labeling or showing sympathy in front of others, teachers can use some strategies for raising the student’s self-esteem.

- Show that you care – Talk to the child in normal voice and check whether s/he is comfortable in the school.
- Arrange opportunities for success and strengthen the ‘can do’ factor – For example, give them simple tasks and then increase the difficulty level graduation. Appreciate them even for small things they do successfully.
- Have patience and explaining about your expectations in simple, clear and soft language. Giving realistic feedback without hurting the student.
- Utilize peer support and cooperative learning.
- Be a good role model while working with the differently abled child. Other students and teachers are going to follow the way you speak to and teach him/her.

Just remember that every person possesses some or other qualities and skills. It’s you who can give them opportunity and motivation to discover them and feel worthwhile.

HERE ARE A FEW RESOURCES THAT YOU MAY FIND USEFUL

CONTACT PERSONS IN THE STATE-
SOCIAL WELFARE, GOA
The Director of Social Welfare
Directorate of Social Welfare
18th June Road, Panaji, Goa – 403 001

CONTACT PERSONS IN THE STATE -
EDUCATION, GOA
Secretary, Department of Education
Government of Goa, Panaji – 403 001.

Reference:

- A HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, PLANNING COMMISSION (Education Division)
- Towards Inclusive Education (Manual for Special Teachers), SCERT, Delhi, 2010
- Differently Abled, National Portal of India https://archive.india.gov.in/citizen/differently_abled/differently_abled.php

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS, GOA
• CARITAS, Altinho, Panjim-403001.
• 136. LakvishwasPratisthan’s School for Handicapped Kids, Shantadurga Krupa Ashram, Opp. Mathruchaya, Dhavali, Ponda.



Let us start by understanding the definition of active contribution.

Active contribution means making conscious efforts to work for the well-being of others, namely the family, school and local community.

The goal of Mulyavardhan has always been to develop the next generation of democratic citizens. One of the most important aspects of a good citizen is his/her ability to contribute to the development of the nation, i.e, be productive. Internalizing the value of active contribution is a step in that direction. It is related to the constitutional value of fraternity and is closely linked to the competencies of self management, social awareness and relationship skills.

Before we get into “how can we get students to actively contribute to the well-being of others”, let us try to understand what well-being means. Well being essentially refers to the feeling of satisfaction and positivity one feels in and about their own life. It has many facets such as social, emotional, physical, psychological and the list goes on. While it might be difficult to touch upon all aspects of well-being, it is fairly easy to focus on one and contribute towards improving that aspect of well-being.

The values and competencies we have been focusing on throughout this year in the newsletters are seamlessly weaved into the activities in the MV books. The last two units of the books especially focuses on the competencies of social awareness and the value of active contribution. The first and easiest step to developing this value in students would be for you to conduct some of the activities in unit 3 and 4. Let us look at the learning outcomes of a few activities for you to understand how students will start developing the value of active contribution through these activities

After the exams are done for the academic year, you may find time with your students to conduct some of these activities. While year-end parties are fun, Mulyavardhan activities will be fun, learning and meaningful for the students and the teachers alike. Time permitting we encourage you to take these on.

Grade	1	2	3	4
Activity name and number	Unit 4 - Activity no. 9 - Our water slogan	Unit 3 - Activity no. 6 - Let’s make a “Thank you” card	Unit 3 - Activity no. 9 - A story on caring	Unit 4 - Activity no. 9 - Let’s re-use waste
Scope	Identifying ways of conserving water	Recognizing how people in the family take care of us	Recognizing ways of caring	Recognizing ways to re-use waste
Brief description of the activity	Students help each other understand how best to use water so that there is no wastage	Students identify the ways in which family members take care of them and make thank you cards for them to appreciate them	Students create a story involving three main characters wherein the students come up with ways to take care of each other	Students realize that some waste materials can be re-used and make something useful from waste (Wealth from waste)
Impact	This activity makes students conscientious to the issue of water wastage. It then encourages them to do their bit to ensure they are not contributing to the wastage	With such a simple gesture students are able to contribute to the emotional and mental well-being of their own family members.	This activity helps students identify that there are a different ways (big and small) in which one can actively contribute to the well being of others	This activity helps students understand that they can actively contribute to eliminating the larger issues like garbage (rampant in Goa) in small ways

Another way to instill this value of active contribution is to facilitate a service project for your students.

A service project is a project taken on by a group of people for the benefit of others. It is normally done in and around the community that the group of people belongs to. Service projects are a great way to teach kids about concern for others (compassion), encourage them to take responsibility and for themto experience the joy of positively impacting the lives of the people around them and making a difference

The step-wise guidelines of how to conduct a service project are given in the 3rd and 4th grade activity books. Additionally you can watch these videos to get a better understanding of how to facilitate a service project

- Feel - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkRcTeJI0Yk>
- Imagine - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNqABXOBrMI>
- Do - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_4gAjDJafxo
- Share- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewmD_6-Vhhk)

Teachers who conduct Mulyavardhan in grades 1 and 2 will also benefit from reading these activities and conducting service projects more suitable for those grade. Below is a list of some service projects you can facilitate for your students

Clean the litter around your school - It’s a simple act that makes a big difference

Make thank you cards for the people who serve us - These cards can be made for the helpers in the school, people

who serve the country, the local social worker etc

Collect and donate toys to a local orphanage - Each student parts with one toy and brings joy to another child

Spend a day at an old age home - Students organize a “day of fun” for the elderly at an old-age home

Visit an animal shelter and help raise funds - Students can organize events around their school to raise awareness about animal issues



Example of a “Let’s Re-Use Waste”

RESPONSIBILITY

-by Kanan Gole

Responsibility, one of our final Mulyavardhan values, indicates
“Taking responsibility for one’s actions; being truthful, fair, loyal and considerate towards the well-being of others; making choices and rights within the framework of rules and laws.”

Let’s look at this definition point by point

Let’s first start with what it means to be responsible for our actions.

WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:



how we handle
our emotions



the way we take
care of our body,
mind, and spirit



the thoughts
we say aloud
and act upon

One of the most difficult yet honorable things to do is taking responsibility for our actions. This is something that we should expect from our children as well, even for something as small as blaming someone else for a small incident that happens on the playground.

Teaching students to take responsibility for their actions can be done through the class rules activity! We have been emphasizing setting consequences when the rules aren’t followed. However, there is an implicit step in between breaking the rules and facing the consequences. Let’s look at this incident.

“Keep our classroom clean” is one of your class rules. At the end of the day, a specific area of the classroom is littered with papers. No one is taking responsibility for leaving the papers on the floor. You tell all the students to clean up.

At the end of the next day, there is a mess of papers on the floor again. What do you do?

You have two options, to tell all the students to clean up, or to identify the student(s) who left the papers on the floor. I find that the latter is a more effective option. Refer to the class rules chart and ask “Who would like to claim responsibility for these papers on the floor?” The goal is to teach the students that if they have broken the “rules”, they should take the responsibility of their actions.

The students who admit to leaving the papers on the floor should face the consequence; however, this is a good opportunity for the teacher to praise them for taking ownership. Tell them that taking responsibility of our actions the right thing to do.

The opposite is also true. Let’s say a student did extraordinary work, it’s good to appreciate that student as well, in front of the class.

Then, we have a responsibility for the wellbeing of others. I’ve found that Goans are such helpful and kind people! It’s one of my favorite things about Goa.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE WELLBEING OF OTHERS?



Ensuring our family
is well taken care of



Our students
are safe in school



That strangers who are
in a difficult situations
are helped

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aeWWqnPU2F4-show> this video of “The Ant and The Dove” to your students:

Then ask the students these questions:

1. Can you think of a situation when you were like the ant in the water and a dove came to help you?
2. The ant bit the hunter when he was trying to shoot the dove. What do you think about this?



FEBRUARY TEACHER FORUMS

Lastly, let's look at the part of definition that discusses making choices according to the rules and laws.

The “rules” here indicate the unsaid social understanding that we have with each other in a society. For example, if we see someone drops their wallet, it is our responsibility to return it to them instead of keeping it.

This is an incident in a Mulyavardhan activity, by the way! Many of our Mulyavardhan stories are fables that can teach students how to make the right choice. They encourage students to not steal or fight, because they have a responsibility to society and their peers to behave in a certain way and to take certain decisions for the greater good.

Here is another incident that you could tell your 3rd and 4th standard students.

“How many of you go to the store with your mother or father? Just imagine that one day you went to the store with your mother. You bought milk, eggs, and bread. The total was 100 rupees. Your mother gave a five hundred rupee note to the storekeeper. The storekeeper gave five 100 rupee notes to you instead of four! You realize his mistake.”


Then ask the students: “What would you do in this situation?” and have them discuss with their peers. The learning outcome of this activity is to ensure that students understand that we have certain societal obligations and cannot think selfishly.



Next month is going to be all about how far we've come this year in Mulyavardhan. It's almost the end of the year! If you have any thoughts about how to change up the newsletter, or what to cover in the next academic year, please do let us know. We love to hear your thoughts!



SHANTILAL MUTTHA FOUNDATION

P: (+91) 20 6605 0000 @ Info@mutthafoundation.org  www.mutthafoundation.org

*Design and layout
by Mayuri Kamble*

*Content Collation and Edits
by Kanan Gole*