

Mentor's Energizer

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Welcome

In talking to mentors we have found that mentors are people with a different world view, a different consciousness, and through the Universal Human Values courses, they are able to promote their wider vision. Their courage and ability to keep up their enthusiasm — even often under not so easy circumstances—inspire us too. Still, words are very powerful. How we speak can open up or close down an opportunity, heal or hurt, create joy or sorrow, and determine our degree of happiness. Our words reflect our vision of 'one world family'. Mentors, however, know that words alone are not enough; through their encouragement and support, students are digging deep into their reservoirs of self-confidence and joy of serving and are reaching out to others with positive actions. Mentors know that compassion is not a relationship between giver and receiver, but a connection of equals. When we appreciate, honor and respect our own true selves, we're able to connect with and accept others for who they really are, not who we think they should be. We are able to encourage and empower others to continue walking the straight path and contribute to positive and meaningful change. Bringing about meaningful change is a process that is often overlooked in our fast-paced world. When a mentor promotes universal human values, a shift begins to occur, sometimes subtle, sometimes dramatic, but is always a catalyst for change.

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Reminders:

National Creativity Award Poster

Contest—enter now!

Encourage your students to participate in the quarterly National Creativity Award.

Entries to reach Academy by 7th April, 2014—only a few days left.

For details please logon www.bahaiacademy.org

First National Conference on Universal Human Values

There's still time to attend the first National Conference on Universal Human Values, a 2-day event on 5-6 April 2014.

For details please logon www.bahaiacademy.org

The Bahá'í Academy wishes to thank our mentor of the month, Prof. Swanand Shukla, for sharing his insights.

Please send your comments and pictures of your activities to: energizer@bahaiacademy.org

Meet The Mentors

Meet Prof. Swanand N. Shukla, Officiating Principal
Mentor since 2004--College Name: Motiwala Homeopathic Medical College, Nashik



How has the experience of taking the training affected you?

For the last 10 years I've had the opportunity to work as a mentor of education in universal human values. I found myself fortunate to play this role. As the teaching methodology uses cooperative and participatory, I was able to know my students' true nature. I was having some resistance from students during my didactic lectures. However I have come to know the essence of their personalities during conversation, communication and interactions. It has reduced the distance between the podium and the benches. Nowadays I am using the same methodology in my regular classes. I also learnt that students [youths] have the potential for great creativity, which can be channeled for good social causes. They have shown reflection during service learning activity.

What are some of your positive experiences about being a mentor?

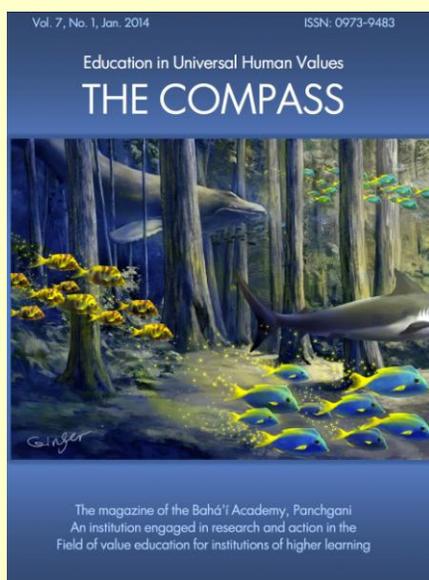
Service learning activity has great potential. In one village, students performed a Happy Hippo Show on Health and Hygiene. When we started asking questions, we were expecting answers from responsible adults, but to our great surprise, a child of around six years started giving answers. We were astonished to see his courage. He was really motivated and excited after watching the Show. The whole crowd was thrilled and clapped for him. Through his participation and answers the message percolated more strongly and influenced the sarpanch, panchayat samiti and the villagers who were attending the Show. Every one voluntarily accepted and promised to maintain hygiene and cleanliness in the village. Returning to the campus we carried a great sense of satisfaction of having taken the step to create a learner's community.

What kinds of transformations have you seen in your students?

Students become more conscious about the values in their lives. Their active participation in various activities becomes obvious. Silent or apparently silent students also start showing their latent talent. The Parogramme boosts students' confidence to speak in public. They improve their vocabulary. They get to know many new terminologies and the course helps them explore their creative minds. They learn how to cooperate and coordinate with each other and a sense of unity develops among them. They try to apply and implement things in their lives. Being doctor of the future, they have to shoulder many tasks; this becomes easier when they walk this illuminated path of knowledge.

Do you have any advice for other mentors?

As a mentor I learnt we are the keys to exploring the precious mines of human potentials. We should get involved to our best to obtain the maximum from each session. Our students are reflections of our selves. Appreciation for others is a divine quality of man; it builds confidence. Thus don't forget to appreciate. For shy, timid, and aloof participants, sit with them and develop their sense of belonging. Rely on universal participation as every individual is special and full of hidden powers in need of an appropriate stimulus. Small group dynamics are stronger than large size groups.



The February issue of *The Compass* is now available in electronic format as well as in print. The issue focuses on creativity. You may download it from the Articles and Talks section at: <http://www.bahaiacademy.org/bahaiacademy/showknowledge.php?id=3>

In addition, back issues of the *Mentor's Energizer* are available on the website. If you've missed an issue, please feel free to download it at www.bahaiacademy.org

Record Keeping and Research

As we document the positive impacts of Education in Universal Human Values programme on the personal and professional lives of participants, we all need data. Complete submissions of reports are essential for both the mentors and the Academy. Here're a few tips for simplifying the process. Let's share our learning!

In Class

Time in class is essential for introducing concepts, promoting cooperative learning, forming opinions and listening to the views of others. During this time, mentors have easy access to students and can evaluate their participation levels as well as get quick feedback on their understanding of the subject matter. When trying to assess students' learning and progress, personal contact is critical. We would appreciate what you have found as each course progresses. Please share your insights with us.

Home Activities

Time in class is short, however, and many of you are working with students in distance education models which only allow for limited face-to-face time, so the home activities suggested at the end of each session are helpful not only for solidifying concepts, but building practical skills that are needed in life. Sometimes, insights occur during this extension of learning that can't happen in class where the information seems theoretical. Documenting these activities helps us see students' growth along the way.

Practicals

Beyond the home activities, the practicals allow students to practice what they're learning at a deeper level. In order for us to see the trends and patterns in students' learning, complete reporting of these is needed. Please encourage the students to go beyond the "surface" and the "minimum" to do these activities in ways which will effect change. We'd really like to hear the details of their choices, the reasons why they chose, the full narrative of the actions they took and the depth of their learning. Crucial to the research we are conducting, these reports assist all of us to see how the curriculum and its activities are creating positive change.

Service Learning Activities

Following and documenting the Service Learning Activities is very important for a successful outcome of any SLA. This will allow us to see and reflect on the patterns that emerge from successful activities. Your support in this process and the timely return of reports makes the learning more effective and knowledge transfer possible.

How can we measure moral capabilities? Climb the ladder.

As mentors, we always wonder how to measure the immeasurable—in other words, how to know if developing moral capabilities actually happen. Imagine rungs on a ladder of moral excellence.

Step 1-Will: At first, when we want to grow a virtue, it takes will. We have to force ourselves to be truthful or healthy or self-disciplined. At this stage we may be doing it out of fear of punishment or desire for a reward. We may not like it, but we are doing it anyway.

Step 2-Reason: At this stage, we no longer have to force ourselves to do what is right, because we understand the reasons behind it. Being perseverant or friendly or cooperating with others is logical. It makes sense. We still may not completely agree or like what we're doing, but we understand why it's necessary.

Step 3-Love: Once we reach this level of development, we no longer need will or reason, because we act through love. We love ourselves, our family members, our community and our world. Of course we'll be kind, trustworthy and honorable. It's for the good of all concerned and the world to become a better place that we act this way.

Step 4—Manifesting: Finally, acting according to the moral capabilities becomes spontaneous, our second nature! We no longer have to think about it or decide to do it. We genuinely become courageous, curious and courteous. We are automatically loving, honest, trustworthy, generous and open-minded; they become part of our personality. They are us and we are them. Virtuous living is inseparable from who we are.

