

BUBBLES

Love is an inbreath, an expansion. Your arms open wide and the cosmos becomes a little baby in your arms. You grow. Love is what must be happening to our school, it's growing in so many ways!

There is the obvious, tangible growth of the building structure - more walls, more roof, more rooms, more facilities, labs... then the more beautiful growth of our family. We have many more happy faces, happy, bright, blessed faces of children who'll absorb this place and its gifts and carry it in their cells as they grow here. With children come the adults, our family of teachers and staff has grown hand in hand, and of course, we mustn't forget the parents who've given us the gift of children. The after school ACE (Auro Centre for Excellence) has started off with its programmes and will gradually expand.

Yes, we are more and merrier now.

Yet the most precious growth is subtle and cannot always be measured (nevermind report cards!), nor can it be forced or driven from the outside. It's the movement of wings, in the caterpillar-mind. We hope all the outer effort serves its purpose and a blossoming happens in all of us. Within.

- Harvinder Kaur, Director, ICIE.



Integral Education Workshop, Part 1



BASIC COURSE IN INTEGRAL EDUCATION— THEORY & APPROACHES MAY 12-18, 2014

About half the teachers of AMIS were privileged to attend the INTEGRAL EDUCATION BASIC COURSE FOR TEACHERS in Pondicherry towards the end of May 2014. This was the first part of our training course of fifty hours duration, where our teachers were a part of an all India group.

Though it was hot and the course-hours stretched from early morning to evening, it did little to deter the enthusiasm and spirit of the participants. After all, it was an exploration onto a path less trodden, the discovery raising questions within oneself, pledging to pass on, all that has been absorbed and much more to the children, at the same time reveling in the growth happening in themselves.

All areas and subjects relevant to school were covered by richly experienced resource people, who held the audience in rapt attention. The practical sessions ensured that it was not all preaching and no practice.

To sum up, it was a fruitful experience for all those teachers who bravely left their family and precious vacation days behind, for every workshop is a new experience in itself, and opens a door to a deeper and different world.



Introduction to Education at the Centre of Education (SAICE) – by Dilipbhai



Session with Sampad: Power of Sanskrit



Sessions with Uttama-di: Awareness



Session with Sushanto-da: Art and the Child



Session with Krishna-di: Language & Story Telling



Sessions with Shivakumar: Exploring Integral Education



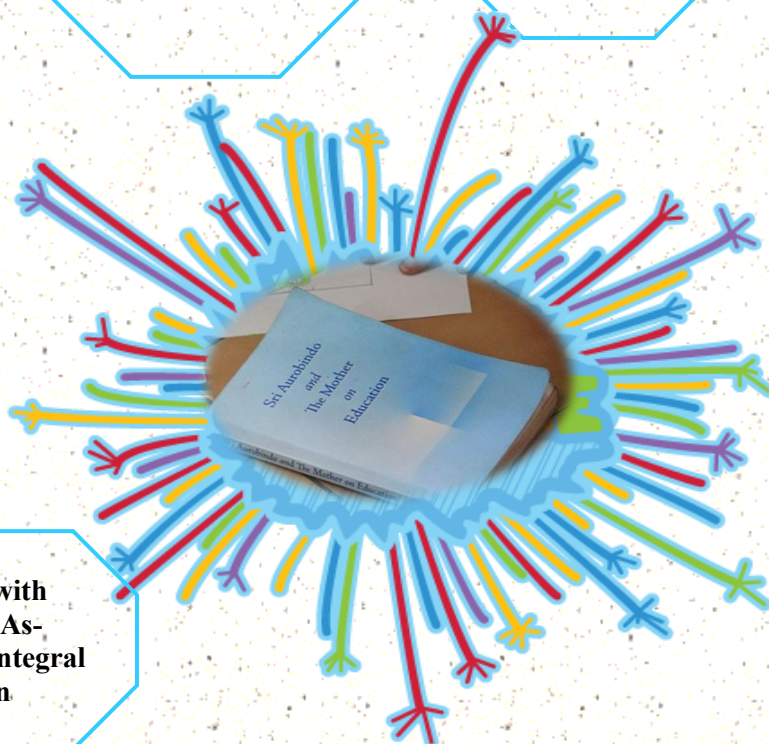
Sessions with Shanker: Teaching at KG



Sessions with Harvinder: Integral Project



Sessions with Nandita: Aspects of Integral Education



Session with Simmyben: Understanding the Child

Integral Education Workshop,

Part 2

POWERS WITHIN

In AMIS a child's day begins with fun and games. Similarly, during the workshop, the didis' day too began with fun, activities and team building games. Keeping in mind the theme of the workshop as well as the first working month of the school, each activity or game, very carefully chosen by the didis were centred around "Co-operation" and the aim was to focus on various aspects of an individual. Through these games and activities, example was set as to how holistic development can be brought about in the children. Core values like trust, concentration, strategic planning, dexterity, alertness, attitude of sharing, etc. can be developed through the games played during these sessions. All the didis were left wanting for more, after the end of each of these sessions!

Contributors: Priya and Shwetal



ASSEMBLY



Sessions were held on how through the daily "Assembly", each morning can start with enlivening the mind, body and spirit of the children, as well as the

teachers. The songs, the prayers, the skits based on the stories of the rainbow, the harvest of turnip, the game of cricket, the real life example of the network of dabbawalas, all echoed the message of "co-operation", which was the pulse of the workshop. The theme of co-operation was not just preached but practiced in all aspects and continued to linger on with us, throughout all the sessions.

Contributors: Jubailene and Geetha

MATHEMATICS



Monica didi conducted the Mathematics workshop, who introduced us to new ways of teaching Mathematics. Various techniques and methods of making the

subject interesting for the children were discussed. The focus was on co-relating Mathematics to real life situations, so that the children find the complex concepts, easy to



grasp and comprehend. "Project Method" of teaching Mathematics was introduced. For example, teachers were divided into various groups. Some of the groups were asked to interview workers, watch-

men, house-maid etc., to find out, how Mathematics was involved in their lives. We were reminded that Mathematics is involved in every aspect of our day to day life; for example in paying or receiving salary, doing our daily/ weekly/ monthly grocery, or even in cooking wherein all ingredients need to be put in correct proportions. Many activities were conducted and strategies discussed, which could be applied in classroom teaching. Monica didi showed interesting videos which made us realise that learning Mathematics can be made entertaining for the children. Overall, the Mathematics session was an eye-opener to most of us, and it compelled us to break out from our mundane thinking and think of ways in which we could make the subject come alive.

Contributors: Sachi and Daman

SCIENCE

The Science sessions were mentored by Veera di from Mumbai, associated with Aurobindo Society with a rich teaching experi-



we discovered the child in us, while learning the theories and laws of science and great scientists. We learnt Newton's third law of motion, the parts of a flower, the concepts



of mass, weight and buoyancy through experiments, activities and hands on experience. We were reminded that Science is integrated with every aspect of our lives. We learnt how as facilitators, we can make learning, fun and memorable at the same time, for children. We are thankful to Veera di for enriching us with her knowledge and experience. These sessions will continue periodically throughout the year.

Contributors: Janaki and Parveen

PROJECT

The project sessions were conducted by Harvinder didi, the director of ICIE and a known person to most of us through her workshops, sessions and articles. Through discussion, debate and brainstorming, she showed us how we can take up just any topic or subject from our surroundings and slowly find our way to all the core subjects, a first hand example of the principle of "Near to Far". We were divided into two groups based on the topics that we believed could be laterally linked to majority of the subjects. The two topics that were finally selected were "Salt" and "Paper". Once the topics were decided, we started off with brain storming, mind-mapping, followed by



collection of information and thinking of creative and interesting ways of presenting the information that we had gathered. We enjoyed ourselves thoroughly through this entire journey, under the able guidance of Harvinder didi and of course look forward to experiment the same and much more with children.

FREE WRITE



"Free write", when we saw this in our schedule, every day at the end of all the sessions, we wondered what it really meant. Most of us were quite sure that it meant that we would have to write what we had assimilated throughout the

day. All our speculations were put to rest, in the form of a very pleasant surprise. All we had to do was to surrender ourselves to Harvinder didi and she took us through a beautiful and somewhat intriguing journey, which led some of us to self exploration, while for some it transported us to a vast space of nothingness. The main essence of these sessions were to completely empty our minds and detach ourselves from the surroundings in which we were physically present, for a short span of time and then begin to write, without the fear of being assessed. This was indeed an unique session that had initially raised a wave of questions within us, but at the same time, at the end of session most of us were left with a feeling of tranquillity. This was an inexplicable journey which one needs to experience to understand.

orientation day 2014

With the construction of a major portion of the new building being completed, this year's Orientation Day was an eagerly awaited event by all at Aurro Mirra. Finally when the parents were ushered in and comfortably seated, on May 30, 2014, Priya didi welcomed them all and keeping up with the tradition at AMIS, the day began with a few minutes of silence. Following this, Harvinder didi, briefed the parents about the main essence of Integral Education and broadly explained to them the principles and policies that are practiced at AMIS, in her address. Harvinder didi posed questions at parents from time to time and requested parents to share why they had chosen to put their children in AMIS. Amongst many eager parents who shared their thoughts, most of them said that they were lured by the open, spacious and green campus and they wished that they could themselves take admission in AMIS!

Harvinder didi's address was followed by Yamini didi's briefing on the school regulations, importance of time-keeping, co-operation of the parents and some practical aspects of everyday functioning of the school. The new parents were then introduced to all the "Diyas" and "Aunties". Priya didi kept the audience alert by throwing a riddle or two at them, from time to time.

In an attempt to help parents interact with each other, they were roughly divided into groups of 20 and given a puzzle to solve. The puzzle comprised of lines from a beautiful quotation by The Mother, on "The Flower". At the end of the activity one of the parents read out the quotation and everyone soaked in the beauty of the wonderful lines.

With this, the formal session ended for the day. In order to acclimatise the parents with the events that are held throughout the year in AMIS, a walk-in presentation of photos of last year's events were arranged in the new building. Post refreshments, parents were invited to take a look at the presentation. This also gave them an opportunity to take a quick glimpse of the new building.



Today during the day I when I was walking around the school, one of the children from the top kutir (wall-less class) waved to me and started chatting through the balcony grill from there (this was grade 2 I learnt later). She was on the first floor, I was on the ground.

"Hi didi! We are waiting for our English didi but I think she's absent!"

"Oh! You are free and don't have a teacher? Shall I come and tell you a story?"

"Yeahhhh!" (I'm generally thought to be the story-teller or photographer by the kids!)

When I went up, after a few warm hugs of greeting they showered on me, I sat on the floor ready to cook up a story, when I noticed all of them had their books open and were

writing something. Before my imagination yawned even a little to awaken a story, they started bombarding me with questions...

"How do you spell your name?" I spelt it for him, then for another and another, till I got bored and said, "you take the spelling from him!"

"What's your favourite food?"

"A-l-o-o parantha!" Again I had to spell it out for them - individually - they like it like that!

That's when I realised, that these children who must be six or seven at the most were ALL working - totally sincere, totally absorbed, totally enthused, independent, without any immediate supervision (the teacher, whoever and whenever must have set them the task of collecting data - name of person - favourite food - favourite drink).

"What's your favourite drink?"

I spelled out T-E-A happily several times!

"What's Yamini didi's favourite food?"

"I don't know!"

"Manoj bhaiya's?"

When they realised how ignorant I was, they'd quickly go down ask their questions to whom so ever they wanted, fill their blanks and come back in a few minutes happily chiming, "I finished!"

In my whole life and long teaching career I've rarely experienced this degree of sincerity, absorption and independence in a class/school, where a teacher's presence is not needed at all even for such small children. Moreover, they were not doing different things and pursuing their individual activity, but all were totally involved and interested in a class/book-based exercise, that many people may regard cumbersome or boring. I noted that barring the spelling mistakes (that's they made me spell things again and again) they were all very successful independent learners!

I really don't know why adults get jittery and keep forcing things down! I guess we've never been taught to be self-driven learners as children... but these children are better than us, and luckier too!

I have to add, my friend, Maharishi decided to write my favourite food as 'milk parantha', even though I protested, "But I don't like milk parantha!" In fact, I don't know if such a thing exists!! I wonder if it was because he didn't like the 'aloo' (potato) or it's spelling, or what!

Did I mention, the theme of the month was 'responsibility'?

- Harvinder



Theme of the Month

August

September

Sharing

Courage