

# **An All-Win approach to teaching in general**

The all-win perspective involves a three-pronged approach:

1. All-win with regard to a student's balanced personal and educational development.

Honouring a child's development stages

In the same way that the physical body of a human being develops in a certain natural order, so too do a child's physical, social and creative skills and its mental and emotional development. For example,

An infant does not yet distinguish between mine and thine. Its world consists of whatever it perceives at a certain moment. If mother is there, she is an extension of the baby and will not be missed until its needs require her presence. An infant will become frustrated if something which it sees in its world and which is fulfilling a need is withdrawn and often cry in protest. The aspect of reality at this early stage which is being mastered is how the outside world works. A child at this phase of development will tend to repeat a certain action again and again until it is fully mastered and then move on to another activity. For instance it will build a structure of blocks and destroy the structure and then begin over and over again. Of course, it is necessary to discipline a child at this phase in order for its environment to be able to function, but if the child is not encouraged to complete this phase there will be a low frustration level in later life when attempting to master new skills.

When the child has completed this phase of learning, it enters a phase of social experimentation when it will suddenly become aware of other children as separate from themselves and want to interact with them. If the infant is able to complete the previous phase, the next phase will follow naturally.

Lex, can you help us with the other phases?

An imbalance is produced in a child's abilities when a win/lose situation is forced to enter a next phase pre-maturely, before previous phases have been completed. For instance, when children are forced to begin their mental development or to practice a musical skill or sport prematurely.

11. In later schooling encouraging the development of a child's unique potential.

In addition to the general development of the human psyche and skills, each person has a unique potential. When this is allowed to fully develop, the young person experiences itself as a uniquely valuable person and feels empowered.

Which potential is developed and how, is unique to each individual and can only be determined by students individually, not the curriculum. A student centred approach (as developed by Maria Montessori, or A.S. Neil's Summerhill, the Union of Experimenting Colleges and Universities) caters to this learning. So does teaching by giving students problems to solve in groups, for these allow each student to take on the aspects of the problem which most interest them. Thus following the spark of their individual interest, they develop their specific potential. Here, too, each student feels appreciated, empowered and tends to be appreciated

by the group. This approach encourages students to develop into adults, who feel fulfilled, empowered and appreciated. This in turn nurtures benevolence and the desire to empower others.

Such a student centred approach is all-win:

- \* It produces fulfilled, empowered, benevolent adults and parents
- \* The benevolence makes for socially responsible and wise citizens and a humane, caring, law-abiding society.

Such a person-centred approach is in keeping with traditional world law (which applies to all people in the world) and conventional international law (which is a part of the national body of law of almost all nations on Earth). Where this law is breached, individuals can turn to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, which has the mandate to research such complaints and where legitimate to take these up with the relevant government.

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

12. An all-win approach to student leadership in schools and universities

Where students are forced to learn by rote and adhere to stifling discipline, their intelligence and initiative is suppressed, and so is their creativity and fulfilment. In the end this is a lose/lose approach, and when applied to a whole population will

stifle the creativity, initiative and intelligence of its citizenry. In the end such suppression is likely to result in revolt.

On the other hand, students who are given responsibility for their own behaviour and their places of learning tend to grow up to become more responsible citizens.

Some learning establishments, in addition to grades for academic performance give merit points for conduct. And so a student who is weak academically can become a leader in school affairs and achieve recognition in that way. This is an all-win approach because it allows each person to be appreciated for her or his contribution even if they are not strong academically, it encourages personal initiative, alertness and responsibility.

Some learning establishments have suggestion boxes in which students can pass on ideas for improvement to staff and faculty.

Sometimes learning establishments have a student Council in which each class has one or more representatives.

These solutions are all-win. The input by the recipients of the education is important to keep it relevant and effective. Besides improving the quality of education and its delivery, it makes for more contented, responsible students, it keeps teachers and faculty on their toes and creates an enlivened learning environment for all parties. Students mature into empowered, socially aware and responsible adults.

An all-win perspective in the curriculum

Peaceful Conflict Resolution for 6-8 year-olds

In several schools in Berkeley, California, 6-8 year-olds are taught peaceful conflict resolution. When a conflict arises among two students, these are requested to each choose a class mate and together these sit outside the door on a peace carpet, especially for that purpose, and discuss the problem, using the learned techniques, until the conflict has been resolved from an all-win perspective. This is an all-win solution:

Conflicts inevitably arise in life and can be a means to finding better solutions to problems, which otherwise would simmer under the surface. Young people who learn to embrace conflicts and transform them into positive experiences have a head start in life.

Students who encounter conflicts are left in their dignity and their sense of personal power, ability to empathise and to deal with life's challenges are increased.

Teachers and class are unaffected by the conflicting students and the lesson can continue.

Students understanding how to resolve conflicts in an all-win way will be able to support their parents and family's when conflicts arise to resolve these in an all-win way and do so in such a way that their input is heard. Peaceful conflict resolution spreads through society from the bottom up.

Looking at various subjects from an All-Win Western perspective

## History

History tends to be taught from the perspective of power structures, instead of all-win. In our interdependent world, this does not provide the sort of knowledge which students will require to keep enable their part of the human community to function (be it their families, their businesses, their countries, etc) It is possible to look at what happened from the perspective of who won, who lost as well as which positive developments issued from a historic event, say which activities flourished, how was human knowledge and know-how impacted, how did values change.

## Geography

Geography tends to look at human activity with regard to place and the earth and less at its impact. Faced by a breaking down of natural systems, it is vital that the student should understand what the impact of human activities is and what can be done to minimise them and allow natural systems to remain in tact. We can affect natural systems to a point whereby our own habitat and with it our quality of life is so minimised that life as we know it can not survive. In the end natural systems will win. Humanity risks becoming extinct.

For instance, if we look at resources of a country, we seldom take into account the perspective of Mother Earth. To introduce the all-win perspective, this would be necessary. If a country has natural resources from mining or forestry, the all-win perspective might prompt questions such as, in how far does a country have a program of consistent reforestation? Or how does the mining affect the Earth, does one attempt to bring it back to its natural state? Does the mining pollute?

(Boris, could you add something to this section?)

## Biology and Nature Studies

Biology tends to be anthropocentric. It avoids looking at animals and plants from their perspective and so species are becoming extinct at the rate of 150 a day. Animal and plant species, including human beings, are interdependent, therefore if one species dies out so do other species. For instance, the Panda bear lives on bamboo. As bamboo forests disappear, so do the pandas. Plants are essential for the survival of humans and other animal species. They convert CO<sub>2</sub> to oxygen so that we can breathe, they hold water in the air and through their root systems, provide food and habitat. Where people and their livestock denude an area of greenery and deserts develop, human and animal life becomes increasingly difficult. People die of hunger and thirst.

## Arithmetic/Math

This field is used to get insights in other fields. The examples to which math and arithmetic is applied can help to illustrate and illumine the all-win perspective.

## English and other languages

Look at various epochs in literary history from the all-win perspective, who wins? Who loses?

For instance, from the beginning of German and Romance Literature, until around the 1970's, nature was barely a part of the equation. For that reason, the values and

norms tended to be win/lose or at best win/win. Here are some examples to give the teacher some ideas on how to proceed.

\*In the Old High German period, very few literary works remain. We therefore are unable to reliably determine dominant values and norms.

In Germany in the Middle Ages, there were the Morality Plays. These taught a moral code, which consolidated the power of the church. The code consisted of a set of rules, imposed from the outside at the expense of the individual. A win/lose approach to life. In the courtly epic, the values safeguarded the position of the King (King Arthur, Parzival, etc.). Here, too, only limited behaviours and feelings are permitted. Both literary expressions are win/lose, because they suppress natural aspects of human expression and inhibit their full creativity.

In the late Middle Ages, the hold of the Church and the King became less central in literature. The emphasis was less on the outwardly imposed code of conduct, what not to do, as on earthly pleasures enjoyed by knights as they frolicked with rural maidens. This is more of a win/win perspective. During the Renaissance, the emphasis was on the exploration of the Universe in its totality. Within the bounds of what people were aware of, the perspective began to move in an all-win direction.

\* During the Enlightenment, the emphasis was placed on reason as opposed to other faculties, such as emotion and intuition. From this perspective the emphasis was a win/lose one, since the importance of parts of our full functioning were considered less desirable.

\* During the German Sturm und Drang, the emphasis was shifted to the emotions at the expense of intuition and reason.

\* During the Romantic Period, the emphasis was placed on the quest for the non-specified fulfilment, for instance, Novalis *Blau Blume*. There was a fascination with the intuitive quest, rather than on what not to do. This can be seen as heading more toward a win/win perspective.