
Sathya Sai Education in Human Values, UK

Newsletter October 2001

Welcome to the October 2001 issue.

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NEWS ITEMS

Playing is Fundamental to learning

Readers who are familiar with the use of games within the SSEHV Programme may be interested to learn of a recent report on BBC Education Online. BBC Online reported on a school in Lancashire, North England, which had received a grant to introduce traditional games.

The children at the primary school did not know how to play traditional games like skipping and marbles and it required a grant of £6000 from the New Opportunities Fund, supported by the National Lottery to help reintroduce these.

During playtimes children are being shown how to play with skipping ropes, bat and ball games, hula hoops and ludo.

The head teacher reported that these games were "teaching children to play in a way that is more constructive and sociable", and that "children's behaviour has improved since the games were introduced".

In this day and age of computer games which are often based on war and violence, it is reassuring to find that schools may return towards the benefits of more traditional games, which are fundamental to learning. It is a little surprising, however, to learn that it takes a sum of £6000 to reintroduce these into the playground and classroom.

The SSEHV Programme has long recognised the value of games in learning, as they form an intrinsic part of the programme's teaching components. Games based on a traditional theme devised by Deepak Fakey are available through our contact address, and there are of course many games in the lesson plans in the Teaching Workbooks.

Training feedback by Anne Krisman, B.Ed (Hons) M.A. Fellow of the Farmington Institute of Christian Studies, Oxford.

Anne Krisman reports on the SSEHV training held during August – September 2001 in London.

This was a very positive and revitalizing course. SSEHV states the teacher's role is the most important and that we can really make a difference to the pupil and to society. As someone who has been in the profession for 21 years, this has been a powerful and uplifting message. Participating in the course as an experienced teacher, I have felt renewed and part of a community that shares my vision for education.

I was drawn to the SSEHV programme because of my interest in the role of human values for pupils with special needs. The strong structure based around key values has helped to focus my thinking and has been a supportive voice. The course motivated me to make a strong stand in school about the negative values communicated in the choice of certain texts for the literacy hour.

This programme could make a strong contribution within RE and PSE lessons. SSEHV promotes wisdom, self-insight and practical ethical behaviour. It encourages children to reflect on their own beliefs, behaviour and attitude towards others within an organised framework. Inspectors point out that some RE lessons do not have enough 'learning from religion' and have too many dry facts. The SSEHV course enables children to look at the application of values in their own lives and is about self-knowledge and action, something that brings RE to life.

The elements of the course are well suited to pupils with special needs. The silent sitting could help promote a peaceful state of mind in children who may be hyperactive or troubled. Many pupils with special needs have a close affinity with music and the use of songs is an immediate way of communicating a theme. Children will internalise the messages in the songs and quotations and develop in their understanding. The stories offer opportunities for improving communication skills through discussion, group work and role-play. The games convey deep concepts (such as the search for truth and the importance of love) in a lively and accessible way. The programme is a rich resource for children with special needs and I am sure could be developed even further (e.g. putting Makaton hand signs to the songs).

I appreciate the strong stand SSEHV takes on society's values. A child can switch on a television and see images that imply that greed and selfishness is good, that physical attractiveness is more important than inner worth, and that only youth matters. I am sure that children who go through the SSEHV programme will help to transform society, walking the path of values into a better world.

Anne Krisman

LESSON PLANS

This month's lesson plans revolve around the theme of Dependability.

RELATED VALUES

LOVE:

Care, Consideration, Dedication, Devotion, Empathy, Friendship, Interdependence, Kindness, Sacrifice, Service, Sympathy, Thoughtfulness, Trust, Unselfishness.

TRUTH:

Fairness, Integrity, Justice, Trust. Unity of Thought, Word and Deed.

RIGHT CONDUCT:

Self-Help Skills - Self-reliance.

Social Skills - Good behaviour, Helpfulness, Relationships.

Ethical Skills - Code of Conduct, Courage, Dependability, Determination, Duty, Efficiency, Perseverance, Punctuality, Respect for all, Responsibility.

PEACE:

Attention, Dignity, Faithfulness, Focus, Self-Control, Self-Discipline, Self-Esteem, Surrender, Virtue.

NON-VIOLENCE:

Psychological - Benevolence, Compassion, Concern for others, Consideration, Co-operation, Loyalty.

Social - Brotherhood/Sisterhood.

Background to the theme by Zita Starkie, Primary School teacher

Like all values, dependability is best taught to children through example. Parents, carers and teachers need to show consistency in their behaviour so that the child, or young person, can feel secure in the knowledge that, as far as possible, the adult will always try to offer their support. Being there for someone is not only important in physical terms, it also means giving time: time to listen with full attention, time to help, and time to show compassion, caring and unconditional love. Such unconditional love should not be mistaken for lack of discipline or correction; a child with no clearly drawn boundaries to behaviour, will not only grow up with a limited understanding of Human Values, but also will feel insecure and unloved. The child may grow up not valuing good behaviour because he/she may believe that nobody really cares what he/she does. Lack of discipline at home causes behavioural problems in school because the child/young person will not have learnt to observe a basic social code of behaviour from a young age.

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In my experience of being a parent and also a teacher I have found that giving a child/young person responsibility is often a way to encourage dependability and I have found this to be especially true whilst working with children who have severe behavioural problems. A wonderful illustration of this was narrated to me as I was being towed back home recently after having attempted to attend the Rugby SSEHV Conference! The driver told me how he would always be worried when he went to certain housing estates in Cardiff because “kids would throw bricks and stones at his vehicle, try to let the tyres down” and generally harass him as he was trying to load the trailer. After trying many approaches to deal with this problem he decided to try giving the ring-leaders some responsibility. He told them that he needed their help and gave them a simple and safe task to perform. He asked them if he could depend on their help and co-operation and they readily agreed. The result of this action was that he received no more bother from the gang; in fact they all competed with themselves to help the driver. This pattern of behaviour became the norm from them onwards. The driver told me that the police were astounded when they observed the young people’s complete change of behaviour. This story illustrates not only great wisdom on the part of the driver, but also an ability to look for the good in everyone and to try to draw it out. It also reminds us to learn to trust others and to give them another chance to demonstrate good values.

QUOTE

“A friend in need is a friend indeed.”

STORY

“B”

by Kay Challenor

“Incoming bees keep to the left,” commanded a male General bee buzzing his wings to attract attention. “Those leaving the hive keep to the right.”

The bees landed with a thud, clouds of yellow pollen falling around them. Laden with nectar and pollen, they looked more like alien spacecraft than bees.

“That’s right, keep to the left,” repeated the General.

The workers clumsily filed one behind the other and slowly waddled into the hive to off-load their cargo.

“Every day is the same,” thought Beatie as she followed the line of bees towards the hive entrance. “Come and go, out and in, empty and full, always the same.”

She got to the edge, outside the hive and took off. This was the bit that she loved. Flying around light and empty, feeling the early sun on her body and the morning freshness within her wings. She followed the line of the garden path towards the field beyond. It was current news within the hive that the field of Oil Seed Rape was in flower and full of nectar. Sure enough, the bright yellow of the flowers leapt into her vision, seeming much brighter than the dull muted tones around. Beatie could not help but be drawn towards them.

She landed delicately onto one flower and immediately felt her feet sink into pollen. She pushed her head deep into the flower and began to gather the nectar.

“Umm,” she could smell and taste the sticky liquid. It was delicious and sweet. Emptying the flower, Beatie flew to another and then another. Each time becoming increasingly larger as pollen stuck to her body, until she was almost twice her usual size and heavy with the golden powder. Soon she was unable to collect any more nectar. Any further weight and she would be unable to fly. Buzzing her wings as hard as she could, Beatie left the field and once again followed the garden path back towards the hive. This time the flight was much more difficult. Her load was heavy and she had to buzz her wings twice as hard to keep her body in the air. Finally she landed with a thud on the ledge of the hive.

“Keep to the left. Keep to the left,” came the command.

“Yes, I know,” she buzzed in annoyance, hot and bothered by her efforts.

She waddled past the stern look of the General and entered the hive. The drone of the bees immediately surrounded her. A thousand voices all speaking at once, news of the weather, where the best nectar could be found, the number of new cells needed in the nursery, the number of new cells needed within the honey comb...a constant buzz of information transmitted by wing beats and clicking antennae.

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“Sometimes,” thought Beatie, “it would be so lovely to come back to some peace and quiet.”

She made her way to the nursery and off-loaded her cargo.

“Thanks, Beatie,” buzzed a nursery bee carrying an egg in her mouth. “We need that. The Queen has laid another fifty-two eggs. This lucky one is a new Queen! Must go, no time to talk.”

“Humm,” thought Beatie watching the disappearing bee. “Was it so lucky to be a Queen? You may have every need met and have the entire hive at your beck and call, but never to be able to fly and gather nectar! Humm, quite a restrictive life,” she thought. “Not one for me.”

Empty of her cargo, Beatie began to make her way back to the entrance of the hive. She was passing the huge walls of the honeycomb when a movement caught her attention.

“Beena?”

“Shhh! Keep it down.”

“What are you doing?”

Beatie could see that Beena was working at one of the lower cells of the comb, but something was wrong. All these cells were full and had been sealed with wax, but the one Beena was near was open and thick golden honey was oozing out. The young bee was in the process of storing as much in her body as possible.

“Stealing! But why Beena?”

“I’m out. I’ve had enough. Enough of the noise, enough of the routine, enough of this regimented life. I’m out, I am going to survive on my own, make my own honey and lay my own eggs.”

Beatie had her doubts. “It does get frustrating sometimes, but you will learn to love your life. We are all important you know. It is good to work together.”

“Huh, no-one even knows that I exist. Call this good? I don’t see any benefit in being a number.”

No matter what Beatie said, she could not change the mind of the young bee. Beena had her mind set on freedom. She resealed the cell of the comb and made her way to the entrance.

“They will know that it was you,” warned Beatie. “They will smell you and when you are gone...”

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“I don’t care.” Beena scuttled past the watchful eye of the General and flew off into the air.

The days passed and Beena had not returned. Beatie began to wonder how the young bee was fairing and decided to try to find her. The following morning rather than flying to the field, Beatie began to hunt around the garden looking for Beena. She found the bee sitting huddled up near a small crack in the stone wall.



“Beena! What happened to you?”

The bee looked up startled, unable to see properly through her bruised eyes. She tried to stand up ready to fight, but her legs gave way beneath her.

“Take it easy. It’s me, Beatie.”

Beena said nothing but sank back down towards the ground. Beatie looked at Beena more closely, her eyes were swollen and sore, her legs were badly bitten and her body looked thin and scrawny. It was obvious that she hadn’t groomed or eaten for days.

“You need some food,” said Beatie. “What happened to the honey that you took?”

“It’s gone.”

“Well, you must have been able to gather some nectar to make some more. The weather has been glorious for flying.”

“No.” Beena looked very sad and a bee tear rolled from her eye and splashed to the ground.

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“Tell me what happened?” Beatie felt very sad for the young bee. When she left the hive Beena had looked bright and full of energy, now she looked worn out and barely alive.

“I found this hole to make a nest,” began Beena. “I made a few cells to put the honey in that I had taken. I was doing really well, then everything went wrong.”

“What?”

“Ants.” Beena began to shudder in fear. “So many ants, Beatie. It was horrible.”

“You poor dear.” Beatie looked at Beena’s wounds now realising how they had been made. She must have fought hard, the wounds were deep and inflamed. A young worker bee was not designed to withstand attack from ants. “You are very brave. I guess they took everything.”

“Everything, they destroyed all my hard work. I’ve no energy left to gather nectar and make more cells, let alone make honey. Winter will come and I will have no food to keep me alive. I am going to die, Beatie. What is more, the ants are on the attack. They want more honey and are planning to invade the hive.”

“I will not let you die. You are coming back to the hive with me,” said Beatie in a determined voice.

“They will never take me back. I won’t smell right anymore. I’ve been away too long.”

“We will sort that out. Can you fly?”

“Kind of.”

Beatie rubbed pollen and nectar all over Beena's body and helped her on to her feet. Then slowly the two made their way back to the hive. The General glanced in their direction, but made no comment as they entered the hive. The drone of the hive immediately surrounded them.

“I never thought that I would miss this noise,” whispered Beena. “It used to irritate me, but now I find it soothing.”

“News travels fast here. It is time to use your wings again Beena,” said Beatie, “Put out on the network that you are back. Say that you are sorry and then explain about the ants and their plans to invade.”

Beena began to click and buzz her wings and circled her antennae, transmitting her message to the hive. As she did this something amazing happened. The entire hive fell silent. Never in her life had she heard silence in the hive. It was eerie and made her feel odd. Beena shivered.

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“You are forgiven, dear one,” came a sweet but strong voice from deep within the hive.

Beena trembled again, but this time in surprise. The voice belonged to the Queen and she was speaking directly to her!

“You are a very brave bee. It is good to have you back. Know that you are an important part of our hive. Stay now, rest and be at peace.”

Beena felt wonderful. She had never felt such a sense of belonging. She turned to Beatie smiling.

“Thank you for helping me.”

Beatie returned the smile. “That is what friends are for. We all are one big family here and have to look after one another. SEE!”

Beena followed Beatie's gaze and could just make out the line of soldier bees marching to the entrance of the hive. Their bodies were large and strong.

“The ants will never make it past them. We are safe now. Let's get you some honey.”

Beena buzzed a contented sigh. It was good to be home.

Talking Points: Dependability, Working together and Honesty.

1. What did Beatie like about being a worker bee?
 2. What was special about the egg that the bee was carrying?
 3. Why was Beena leaving the hive?
 4. What happened to her?
 5. Why was she unable to survive on her own?
 6. How did she feel when she returned to the hive?
 7. How was Beena honest?
 8. What happened when Beena owned up to the hive?
 9. How did you feel when you read/heard the story?
 10. What does it remind you of in your own life?
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POEM

This poem is aimed at children of junior level.

I CAN DEPEND ON HARRY! by Zita Starkie

My little dog Harry
He's always there for me.
Doesn't matter if I've told him off
He loves me still, you see.

When he sees a stranger coming
He'll rush to our front door.
He'll be the perfect bodyguard
'Till I say, "Stop! No more."

There's no one quite like Harry.
He never lets me down.
When I'm feeling really sad
He'll paw my leg and frown.

He hates it if I hurt myself
He'll begin to wail.
But when I'm really happy
He'll jump and wag his tail.

He's there for me in winter
In the puddles and the snow
And even when he's really hot
He'll never miss a throw.

While friendships come and grow
And sometimes friendships end.
But my little dog Harry...
On him I can depend.

POEM

This poem is aimed at older children.

CAN I DEPEND ON YOU? by Zita Starkie

I waited ages in the square
The wind was chill,
The trees were bare.
Frost nipped my fingers to the bone.
You didn't care.
'Cos if you had
You'd have been there.

I waited until eight.
And got myself
In quite a state
As I stood there so alone.
Why were you late?
What! You forgot!
You said you were my mate!

They laughed at me at school.
You watched them.
Take me for a fool.
Never called out, "Stop it!"
Don't be cruel!"
You forgot...
Friends stick together as a rule.

Where were you when I cried aloud?
I needed you.
Your head was bowed.
You looked away
And joined the crowd
While I walked off.
So were you proud?

Is friendship out on lend
A thing on which
We can't depend?
To work just for while
And dump us in the end.
Can you look at me and say
You really are my friend?

WHOLE SCHOOL ACTIVITY: CURRICULUM SUGGESTIONS

WHOLE SCHOOL: A day could be set aside as a DEPENDABILITY DAY. The school could prepare for the day by inviting suggestions from pupils and staff as to how the day could be marked. A suggestion box could be left in a prominent place. The children could be inspired by a short brief at assembly or by their class teacher.

The interdependence of pupils, staff, carers and others involved in the school could be explained to the students to encourage them to see themselves as part of a group. The students can be shown that each group of people has responsibilities within the school. Teachers for education and care, parents to support the student behind the scenes, dining room and playground staff to feed, care for and lend a caring ear!

The students can be encouraged to understand and value the part that they themselves play by showing them that, just as the students are dependent on others to help them, so are staff, carers and even their own peers dependent on them. The teacher, for example, depends on students acting in a courteous and responsible manner in order to be able to teach effectively. The canteen staff depend upon pupils observing certain basic rules in order to manage the canteen. Students depend on each other for their own safety, peace of mind and happiness at school.

To mark DEPENDABILITY DAY each class could be allocated a task within the school for which it was totally responsible. The older students, for example, could help with the serving of food and patrolling the playground during lunch break. Younger children could be given litter duty, simple garden management jobs or the task of tidying up within the school.

ENGLISH: At junior level SSEHV activities can be used as a basis for discussion activities and work. Lessons can be based on the following sections: BOOK 1, Lessons 1.19, 1.20, 1.21, and BOOK 2, Lessons 2.3, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.25.

The above poem, "I Can Depend On Harry", can also be used as stimulus. Children can be asked to write stories to encourage them to think about the theme of dependability. Titles of stories could include

- Looking after a pet;
- I can depend on my family/friend/teacher
- My favourite dinner lady/lollipop lady; and
- Our Post person.

Letters/cards of thanks can be written to carers/teachers and others outlining the ways in which the children are dependent on them. The best pieces of work can be read out on DEPENDABILITY DAY to the rest of the school. At lower Secondary level, teachers can use sections of SSEHV book 3, to help them; in particular Lessons 3.20, (P12-13) 3.25, (P.217-221).

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The above poem, "Can I depend on You?" can be used a stimulus for the children to write their own poem or story, concerning a time when they felt let down. Students could be encouraged to explore emotions involved when one is feeling let down and to look at the various possible reactions to that feeling. Students can also be guided towards developing an understanding of possible reasons behind someone behaving in an irresponsible or uncaring manner by encouraging them to talk about times when they themselves have let someone down.

At **G.C.S.E** level many set texts can be used to explore the theme of **DEPENDABILITY**:

- In of **Mice and Men**, by John Steinbeck, the central characters of George and Lennie depend on each other for support in different ways. Lennie can depend on George to guide him and to act as a father figure, giving him direction, emotional support and correction. George, despite his protestations that without Lennie he could "live so easy and maybe have a girl" depends on Lennie for unswerving friendship, loyalty and love. In the same book the old man, Candy, depended on his old dog for companionship and was devastated when the dog was shot.
- In **A View From the Bridge**, by Arthur Miller, the central character Eddie is shunned by the Italian community of the Brooklyn shipyards, where he lives, because he has broken the code of behaviour on which they are all dependent.
- In **Silas Marner**, by George Elliot, Eppie depends on the central character Silas Marner to look after her after her mother's sudden death. At the same time Marner's life also changes for the better as he learns to trust and depend on Eppie's love.
- In **An Inspector calls**, by J.B. Priestly, we gradually learn that the girl, whose suicide is being investigated, killed herself because she felt that she could not depend on anybody.
- In **To Kill a Mockingbird**, by Harper Lee, the central character, Atticus, can be admired for his dependability. Not only is he a very responsible and caring parent, but he also can be depended on by his clients for his honesty and integrity when he is working on their behalf as a lawyer. He shows no racial prejudice and defends all his clients impartially despite pressure from the deeply prejudiced community where he lives and works.

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- In **Macbeth**, by William Shakespeare, King Duncan cannot rely on his “loyal kinsman” Macbeth after the witches have poisoned his mind.
- In **The Merchant of Venice**, by Shakespeare, the central character, Antonio, puts his own life at risk to demonstrate his love for his best friend. In the end he himself is dependent on the help of Portia in preventing him losing a “pound of flesh” to Shylock.

At **A/S levels** the theme of **DEPENDABILITY** can also be explored through the medium of set texts and poems:

- In **Othello**, by William Shakespeare, Othello’s downfall comes about after he is tricked into believing that he can no longer depend on his wife’s faithfulness.
- In **Hamlet**, Shakespeare shows how Hamlet becomes increasingly deranged in his behaviour after he discovers that he can no longer depend on his mother’s loyalty towards his dead father.
- In **King Lear**, the same author depicts the character of Edmund as someone who seems to value passion above marriage because he trusts no one due to past experiences of being let down.
- In **Pride and Prejudice**, by Jane Austen, Elizabeth develops prejudice against her future suitor, Darcy, because of his seeming lack of dependability in terms of what Elizabeth considered to be appropriate behaviour towards her sister, Jane. By the end of the novel he redeems himself because he can be depended on to give sensitive assistance to another of her sister’s, Lydia.

RELIGION: At junior level children can be asked to draw pictures, listen to stories and talk about their experiences concerning the theme of **DEPENDABILITY**. SSEHV books 1 and 2 (see references under section on English) can be used as stimulus as well as the above poem, “I Can depend on Harry”.

At Secondary level the first year could base activities round Book 3 (see references under the section on English.) Older classes could discuss the saying, “A friend in need is a friend in deed.” They could look for examples, in spiritual texts, as to how world religions have contributed towards the promotion of the theme of dependability as an important spiritual practice. Essays could be written on the subject and the best be read out in assembly.

DRAMA: At junior level children could be divided into small groups and helped to work out a small sketch to illustrate the theme of **DEPENDABILITY**.

At secondary level students could be asked to write and perform their own play based on the theme. They could, for example, depict two contrasting situations to illustrate the topic. The best plays could be performed in front of the whole school.

P.S.H.E.: Discussion could be initiated along the lines outlined in the lines that have been suggested in the English section above.

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GEOGRAPHY: At junior and lower secondary levels, children could look at different countries and examine how they are, or have been, dependent in some way on other countries for some of their food and other consumer products, income and technology. At G.C.S.E. and A/S levels, students can investigate this inter-relationship in greater detail by looking at the significance of the theme of DEPENDABILITY in economic, social and political terms.

HISTORY: At junior and lower secondary levels children can be shown how our country has been dependent for its survival on the good will of other countries. At older levels students can study the nature of alliances through history and the penalties that countries have had to pay when these alliances have been broken. They can also investigate the basis of these alliances, for example, in terms of economic, social, political, religious or ethnic factors. Suitable topics could include the Ottoman Empire, Catholic Alliance against England, The British in India, World Wars 1 and 2, The Arab Israeli Conflict, Vietnam War and the Nato Alliance.

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY: Deepak Fakey's games (available through SSEHV Promotions Ltd.) could be used as stimulus for students to devise, design and make a game based on the theme of dependability. Copies of these games could be sold on DEPENDABILITY day to raise funds for the school or charity.

MATHS: Surveys could be conducted through the schools, in the form of questionnaires, to ascertain how far people judge themselves and others to be dependable. Suitable questions could be posed, such as 'How often do you : give your homework in on time / do jobs when asked / remember to bring appropriate materials to each lesson / keep promises / show yourself to be trustworthy / help friends in need where possible / tend to family pets / honour your responsibilities at home or in school?'
Students could be asked to tick the appropriate box : Always / if possible / mostly / sometimes / rarely.

The data could then be correlated in graph form and then displayed in classrooms and in a prominent place on DEPENDIBILITY day. This activity would be suitable for both junior and secondary levels; younger children could use simple bar graphs and older students could use more sophisticated methods.

BIOLOGY: At Junior and lower secondary levels children could look at the interdependence of body parts; how the whole body depends on the various parts, such as muscles and bones for movement and cells functioning properly. Children could be asked to draw and annotate body parts to be stuck on a large display poster. The teacher could emphasize the importance of each child's contribution. The posters from each class could be displayed on DEPENDIBILITY day. At secondary level students could focus on topics such as the Digestive system, Blood and the Circulatory system, Central and Autonomic Nervous system and the Endocrine system. Diagrams from their work could also be displayed in a similar way.

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CHEMISTRY: Younger children could be shown how lab cleanliness is vital for the success of experiments and how they are all an important part of the class team in this context. Students could look how certain conditions and agents are needed in conjunction with each other in order to produce certain effects; for example sodium chloride (NaCl) can only be formed when sodium reacts with chlorine. At GCSE level students could investigate the positive and negative ions involved in the process and explain the nature of this type of bonding. Wall charts could be constructed for display with each students or small group of students concentrating on a particular topic.

PHYSICS: At Junior level children could be encouraged to understand their interdependence when doing teamwork on a particular topic. At lower secondary level suitable topics could include for example the electric circuit. The teacher could show how the flow of electricity is dependent on all the contacts clean, in place, and connected properly. At GCSE suitable topics could include how the loudness of a bell is dependent on the electromagnetic strength and the efficiency of a crane in lifting a crate.

MUSIC: Students at all levels can be encouraged to understand that the success of any joint musical performance is dependent on each individual performer acting in a responsible way. Teachers could, for example stress that all performers need to learn their parts well, regularly attend group practice, concentrate well whilst playing, be attentive to other players and the conductor, and work as part of a team rather than try to dominate. Orchestral and Jazz musicians can be watched on video so that students can learn by positive example.

ICT: Students can be encouraged to understand that they are dependent on the good will of others when using the computer, for example when waiting to use the computers.
