

# Changing the Evaluation System

Serious thought is being given to change the system of evaluation these days. A very important need since our entire approach to education is presently determined by the evaluation at the end. What we evaluate and how we evaluate reflects what we expect out of education. Therefore, the aims of education and the evaluation system are reflective of each other. But in reality this is not always so. Hence, the tremendous confusion, chaos and disillusionment in education that prevails today. The education policies, guidelines, educational prospectuses - all talk of very noble, high sounding, student-friendly aims. Then why is it that the ground reality is just the opposite?

The answer lies in the evaluation system. Even a cursory look at the present modes and aims of evaluation tells us that the real educational aims are quite different to those written on paper. Hence, if one wishes to create a change for the better in the education system, writing out of educational aims is not sufficient - the stick at the end - the evaluation system must work to make those aims real.

The following is an insight into how the educational aims are translated into reality through the help of an individualised and person-friendly evaluation system at the Gnostic Centre's experimental play school L'avenir (the future).\*

## THE FOCUS AREAS OF EDUCATION AT L'AVENIR

### Development & Training of the Mind

- Training of the Mental Faculties of Concentration, Observation, Reasoning, Imagination, Judgment, Memory
- Information & Concepts

### Development & Training of the Vital

- Development of Character
- Socialisation & Group Skills
- Refinement of the Senses

### Development & Training of the Physical

- Physical Culture: Strength, Stamina, Balance, Agility, Beauty
- Care of Oneself, the Materials & the Environment

### Development of the Psychic

- Movement towards Progress
- Sense of Inner Unease

## EVALUATION RELATED TO THE AIMS OF EDUCATION

A detailed individual report for each child is prepared by the teachers each semester and sent to the parents along with a group report listing out the aims and activities of that semester. This is followed by an individual 15-20 minute meeting with the parents for each child. The focus

here is to share ideas for progress of the child and how the school and the parents can work together.

The following are extracts from the report of a 3yr old. The report contains many more areas. The following will give you an idea of how the evaluation is related to the educational aims and how the aims are evaluated in detail.

### **Aim: Development & Training of the Mind**

- Training of the Mental Faculties of Concentration, Observation, Reasoning, Imagination, Judgment, Memory



## EVALUATION

**Reasoning:** She cannot accept anything unless her reasoning is satisfied. For everything she has a question to ask. For any activity that we do it is very important for her to know why we are doing it. When she is disturbed and is carried away by her emotions then it is very difficult for her to follow any reason. Once she is calm and through with her tantrums it is very important for us to help her reflect on what makes her

\* The material presented here has been extracted from an audiovisual presentation on Evaluation, made to a group of Army school heads and senior teachers by the Gnostic Centre. All extracts are from an actual individual report of a L'avenir student by the L'avenir team, sent to the parents at the end of the last term.

go into that state and how she can avoid it the next time.

**Aim: Development & Training of the Mind**

- Information & Concepts



**EVALUATION**

- **Pre Writing Skills:** She can also identify and draw different strokes:
  - Standing
  - Sleeping
  - Zigzag (on dot book)
  - Capital letters A, B, C, D, E and F (on dot book)
- She can tell the **opposites** of
  - Tall and short
  - Day and night
  - Laugh and cry
  - Big and small
  - Loud and soft

**Aim: Development & Training of the Vital**

- Development of Character



**EVALUATION**

**Character (Courage, Will Power, Determination and Perseverance):** She comes across as a very strong and candid person. She has no hesitation or fear in saying what she wants to say. Though she is a very enthusiastic child, her energy level fluctuates from activity to activity depending on her moods. As she is a very strong willed person it becomes very difficult for her to give up anything, especially if she wants it badly. Though she comes across as a strong willed person, at times she can be seen giving up an activity if it's difficult for her. Thus it is important to help her develop endurance and perseverance to be able to finish her task with perfection.

**Aim: Development & Training of the Vital**

- Socialisation & Group Skills



**EVALUATION**

**Relationships (dealing with others):** She comes across as a friendly child but she prefers to be in the company of a few. In the beginning of the session she preferred to be alone and collect

seeds. Now she enjoys playing with Sreeja, Kapil, Amit, Tanvi and Namita. By nature she is a leader and wants others to follow her. Normally she is very sensitive with younger children and she seems to be very fond of Anila. She shows a great improvement and has become less possessive about things.

**Aim: Development & Training of the Vital**

- Refinement of the Senses



**EVALUATION**

**Sense-development:** She can identify and differentiate between different sounds, tastes, smells, textures and can observe things in detail. She can identify sweet, sour, salty and bitter tastes. She can also identify different textures such as rough, smooth, hard and soft. She likes the feel of soft and thus she is often found cuddling soft toys. She has a developed listening power; a soft whisper can also catch her attention. She can recognize and identify different sounds from the cassette of animals like - lion, cow, monkey, elephant, cat, dog, birds, goat, sheep etc. and of transportation like - train, bus, bike, steamer and airplanes while taking off, in the air and while landing. She can also identify sounds of musical instruments like drum, guitar, sitar etc. She also shows a good ability to observe. One of her favourite activities happens to be collecting different types of leaves and seeds. If shown one leaf, she can go and collect the same leaf from the surroundings. She takes a keen interest in observing pictures and details of things - for e.g. - she likes observing flowers, their colours, shapes and their feel etc.

**Aim: Development & Training of the Physical**

- Physical Culture: Strength, Stamina, Balance, Agility, Beauty



**EVALUATION**

**Concentration & Dispersion of Energy:** She is a bundle of never ending energy. She shows good energy to participate in the physical activities for a long time without getting tired. May be not consciously but she knows how to spend and acquire energy from her surroundings (nature).

**Fine Motor skill:** She shows a good control over fine motor movements. She can efficiently hold, pour, mix, and lift things. She has a good grip over crayons and the pencil. She likes colouring and making patterns using sketch pens and pencils.

**Aim: Development & Training of the Physical**

- Care of Oneself, the Materials & the Environment



**EVALUATION**

**Health & Hygiene:** She shows a good health and is quite particular about cleanliness.

**Affinity to Nature:** Though she is very sensitive to nature and creatures around her, at times she can become very insensitive and start plucking leaves and flowers from the garden.

**Aim: Development of the Psychic**

- Movement towards Progress



**EVALUATION**

**Urge for Progress:** She has a lot of craving for knowledge; she wants to know about everyone and everything. She shows a keen interest and an opening towards physical activities. She loves reading books. She has a lot of urge to grow and progress, to go to a new school.

**Aim: Development of the Psychic**

- Sense of Inner Unease



**EVALUATION**

**Listening to the / response to the inner uneasiness:** She is sensitive and knows when she

does something wrong or which is not in harmony with her inner self, but it is very difficult for her not to react or react in a positive way without hurting the other person especially when her ego is hurt.

**WHAT CAN WE DO**

**TO HELP THE CHILD PROGRESS?**

The evaluation is but a means for the teachers and the parents to gauge their own success and fidelity to the growth of the child under their care. It is a means to gain clarity about the further work that needs to be done, the support structures that need to be provided so that the child can develop to the best of her/his ability. Therefore, each report ends by highlighting the key areas that need to be focused upon both by the parents and the teachers - and these are discussed in detail at the individual meeting.

**The Road Ahead**

- To help her become emotionally stable.
- To help her become less assertive and overcome her stubbornness.
- To inculcate the habit of self-giving.

The evaluation reflects the consistency of approach - synchronising the educational aims, the teachers' focus as they work with the children and their reflection and observations based on which further inputs can be given.

The key factor is that the educational aims determine the mode of evaluation and not the other way around. And this ensures that everyone remains focused, on track, as well as accountable. The onus is on the adults - not on the child.

- Anuradha