

WHAT YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT...

# Self Esteem

BY NANETTE LORENZO-SANTOS

## "Now I've said my ABCs Won't you say you're proud of me?"

As soon as children master the alphabet song, they learn to sing it over and over to the delight their parents, who reward them with hugs, smiles, and much praise. An event as simple as this is one of the building blocks of self-esteem. When a child is proud of herself, she develops positive self-esteem, which in turn influences how a child behaves, makes choices, and takes risks.

### WHAT IS SELF ESTEEM?

Self-esteem is the value an individual places on himself. This is built slowly through his experiences with different people and activities. Learning to like oneself starts during the early childhood years, with parents as the primary influence.

### SELF ESTEEM IN SCHOOL

Educators play a pivotal role in making the child feel accepted when she reaches school age. Many of us know that a child's feeling of self-worth is linked with her success. However, we may be unaware of how easy it is to damage a child's self-esteem.

As teachers who interact with our young students on a daily basis, we must review our teaching style to see if we're helping or hurting our students' confidence and sense of achievement. Here are some simple guidelines to follow.

## 10 Do's

**1 Celebrate each student's success**, no matter how small. If the results are less-than-perfect, remain encouraging and simply ask, "What do you think about your project? What did you learn even if it didn't turn out the way you hoped?"

**2 Use non-verbal communication** such as a wink or a thumbs-up sign across the room. It tells the student, "I have confidence in you! I know you can do it!"

**3 Be forgiving of mistakes.** These are wonderful learning opportunities. When a student feels bad about a mistake, say, "That's okay. Let's see what we can learn from this." Send the message that you'd like improvement, not perfection.

**4 Focus on the positive.** Identify and point out what your student is good at, whether it's polite behavior, an extra-curricular activity, or a perfect attendance record.

**5 Display students' artwork, schoolwork, and projects.** This shows them that you value the work they do and think that they're special.

**6 Be sensitive to students** with learning difficulties. Instead of responding to their mistakes with "You don't use your brain!" say "Let's try again."

**7 Allow students to take a chance on an answer** or an idea without the fear of looking foolish. If a student doesn't know the answer, give clues and lead him to the correct response. Avoid saying flat out, "you're wrong!"



*Give your students a precious gift: nurture their self-esteem. In the course of a semester, a quarter, a few weeks, or even chance encounters, it's possible for you to make a difference in how a child sees herself.*

**8 Provide opportunities to apply problem-solving and decision-making skills.** Invite students to think of their own solutions to certain issues instead of providing one right away.

**9 Allow your class to make choices**, such as which Math problem to begin with, or which book to read during Reading Time.

**10 Reinforce responsibility** by getting students involved in activities of social interest. Peer tutoring, decorating the bulletin board, cleaning and other service projects allow students to feel good about making a positive difference.

## 5 Don't's

**1 Don't overemphasize** test scores or other measures of academic achievement. Discover other strengths and areas of intelligence.

**2 When a student misbehaves, don't make him write out a hundred "I will not" promises.** Ask instead, "What happened?" "What caused

it?" "How do you feel?" "What did you learn from this?"

**3 When scolding, don't focus on the student personally.** Instead, point out the particular behavior that needs correcting. Rather than labeling a student "lazy," for example, you could say, "You failed to submit your homework again." Find out her reasons and get to the root of the problem.

**4 When checking papers, don't put red X's beside incorrect answers.** Mark instead the correct answers with large check marks, shifting the

focus on how many items a student answers rather than how many mistakes he made.

**5 Avoid comparisons between students.** Value the individuality of each student and respect unique strengths, needs, talents, and interests.

### A FINAL REMINDER

While creating a life-affirming learning environment for students, teachers should also nurture their own self-esteem. If you are plagued by self-critical thoughts or unfairly harsh on yourself, your students may eventually pick up your pessimism. Think well of yourself, and your students will have an inspiring role model in you. ★

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** NANETTE LORENZO-SANTOS, a Poveda alumna, is now the Level Coordinator of Poveda Learning Centre, Grade School. She handles Grade 6 and 7 students and teachers.

# SAN FERNANDO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Sets a reading record

**S**a Aklat Sisikat Foundation (SAS) had never had to work with such a big school before. For schoolyear 2003–2004, the foundation's biggest challenge was implementing the SAS Reading Program at the San Fernando Elementary School in the City of San Fernando, Pampanga. It was mind-boggling to imagine how students could even manage to learn in lahar-damaged classrooms, with desks and chairs submerged in stagnant water, hordes of mosquitoes flying around, and a student population that can be a barrio in itself. And yet San Fernando Elementary has been recognized as an exemplary and effective school.

SAS donated a total of 1,560 Filipino children's books to 26 Grade Four sections, and for 31 days—together with the dedicated educators of the school—encouraged about 1,500 students to read. Part of the SAS Reading Program is an Ibong Adarna Mural, to which students tape a paper feather whenever they finish reading a book until the mural becomes filled. Normally, one mural is enough for a school, but SAS had to order two extra-large murals for San Fernando Elementary. By the end of the Reading Program, the students had taped almost 100,000 paper feathers to the murals!

## TEACHER TRAINING

During the Teacher Training Workshop held in April 2003, SAS grew quite impressed with the big group of teachers they worked with from San Fernando (27 all in all, plus their principal, Dr. Elena Herrera) who actively participated in the training sessions. Teamwork was highly apparent in their performance during the two-day workshop. Creativity and curiosity were also among their stronger points. They asked a lot of relevant questions and also had many stories to share about their experiences in teaching reading. Their excitement and



The teachers of San Fernando Elementary School prove by example that learning is fun!

## 26 Grade Four sections with 1,500 students read 100,000 times in 31 days! How did this school do it?

BY MARGE M. BARRO

eagerness to learn easily infected all the other teachers present in the workshop.

## READING MARATHON

It promised to be an exciting 31-day Read-a-Thon at San Fernando Elementary School. When the Read-a-Thon began, SAS observed that the usual start-up challenges were no different from those in the other participating schools. "Initially, the students had a bit of difficulty in keeping their Reading Progress charts as legible and clean as possible," shares class adviser Mrs. Nida Patio. In their excitement, the kids also scrambled for the best books to read and were careless in their use of Read-a-Thon materials, rattling their teachers a bit.

Mrs. Merly Pineda, teacher of the Grade 4 SPED section that boasted of the school's best and brightest students, was met with a different kind of problem. Her students were voracious readers, and she actually had a fourth grader who breezed through 21 storybooks in just two days!

## CELEBRATE READING!

"We teachers saw the SAS Reading Program as one that has long been needed in the curriculum. It was a fun and most creative way for us to instill the love and habit of reading among our students," explains Mrs. Patio. "And we made sure that as teachers, we had a lot of fun too." The teachers weren't afraid to try out-of-the-box ideas and teaching styles—even reading aloud with costumes and props—and were rewarded with success. Self-discovery through reading stories was a valuable lesson learned, not only by the students but by their teachers as well.

## HOW DID THEY DO IT?

The Reading Program wouldn't have flourished without the efforts of the teachers. "Teamwork is key. We teachers helped out each other in making the workload much lighter," Ms. Patio says proudly. "In cases where resources were lacking, we did not hesitate to pitch in and pool together whatever resources we had to ensure the Reading Program's success." In fact, the teachers voluntarily contributed P25 each just to be able to buy a rolling whiteboard for the Ibong Adarna mural!

Today, San Fernando Elementary School and its teachers remain in a class of their own, an inspiring example of how challenges can be turned into beautiful learning opportunities for students, as well as educators, too. ★