



## YOGA IN EDUCATION

The Children Of Light Educare (COLT) is an institution at which yoga forms the foundation of education. To understand why COLT takes this approach it is important to understand the meaning of the words 'yoga' and 'education'.

The dictionary definition of 'education' is given as: "The process of receiving or giving systematic instruction"<sup>1</sup>. However, the root meaning of education, according to the Lexico dictionary, is "educer"<sup>2</sup> which means: "Bring out or develop (something latent or potential)"<sup>3</sup>.

It is interesting to note that although the root meaning is 'to bring out' the modern method of education is 'to give' or to put in. Hence the focus is on giving children/learners information and skills. However, at COLT we focus on the root meaning, which is 'to bring out'.

### Potential

What COLT aims to do then, is to facilitate a process of 'bringing out' and 'developing' the latent capacities of the child/learner. COLT's understanding is that every child/learner has latent potential that is innate and which is of a physical, emotional, social, mental and spiritual nature. The process of education then is to assist the child/learner to manifest these. However, the latent capacities are not merely restricted to skills in the field of work but also include those that make one a complete human being. Hence education is seen as a process of developing the whole person. Education should include secular and spiritual development.

Yoga provides the foundation for this process. Yoga is an ancient practical and universal philosophy and science that aims at drawing out the latent potential of a human being on all levels. The word yoga means union or integration. This integration happens on two levels: within the person and between the person and society. These two processes of integration should be facilitated simultaneously as they also feed one another.

### Integration

The various dimensions that make up a human being are: physical, energetic, psychological (i.e. mental and emotional), intellectual and spiritual. Thus, the inward integration needs to be facilitated between these various dimensions by "educing" the potential in each one. To facilitate this, various forms of yoga have been prescribed: Hatha Yoga develops the physical and energetic dimensions and educes health. Raja Yoga and Bhakti Yoga develop the psychological dimensions and educe a sound mind, clear thought process and perception, emotional balance and love.



Jnana Yoga develops the intellectual dimension and educes a bright intellect, the capacity of discernment and the ability to learn. Karma Yoga develops the social dimension and educes the spirit of selfless service as well as ethical and moral values.

All the Yoga philosophies working in harmony with each other develop the spiritual dimension and educe self-knowledge and a feeling of interconnectedness.

Education needs to take all the human dimensions into account. This is also recognised by the Four Pillars of Education as enunciated by UNESCO. The Four Pillars are: Learning to Know, Learning to Do, Learning to Live Together, Learning to Be. These Four Pillars are fulfilled by an education based on Yoga.

The logo of COLT reflects the yogas mentioned above: Serve refers to Karma Yoga; Love refers to Bhakti Yoga, Focus refers to Raja Yoga; and Learn refers to Jnana Yoga. These form the core values of COLT.

#### Value based

Education needs to be value-based. Education should not be limited to imparting knowledge and skills, only in order to prepare the child/learner for a vocation. When this is the only focus, the human dimension is lost sight of, and important aspects such as ethics and morals are ignored. This is the reason for the increase of corruption in the workplace. Educators need to remember that each worker is a human being first and that the moral and ethical qualities of the person determines how he/she does his/her work. In order to create a society that operates on ethics and morals, it is imperative that education is value-based. This is why a discipline such as yoga is required: the development of the physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions are the foundation for the developing of skills.

When education is based on the principle of 'educing', then it also becomes evident to the teachers what the innate interests and skills of a child/learner are. Once these innate capacities are recognised, they should be developed with the help of appropriate further education where the necessary skills and knowledge are shared with the child/learner.

#### Universal

One of the obstacles in introducing value-based education as well as yoga into the curriculum is the fear of religious conversion. It is important to understand that yoga is not a religion. The



practice of yoga does not require anyone to change their religion or to adopt a religion. Yoga is universal and adaptable in its principles and can, therefore, be practiced by anyone. Value-based education need not be aligned to a particular religion. There are values that are universal and these can be found and extracted from the country's constitution.

### Observation

For the education of a child/learner to be successful the spirit of yoga needs to be brought into all aspects of education. Yoga should be the foundation of all subjects and activities. Then education is truly holistic.

Since observation forms a significant part of learning, children/learners will learn from the examples in their lives, especially from their teachers. Therefore the spirit of yoga needs to run throughout the entire Educare. Teachers as well as school administrators need to be open and willing to embrace yoga into their lives and work. This explains the importance of ongoing staff training in yoga.

By adopting appropriate methods to introduce yoga to children the above vision can be realised. This may also include the incorporation of other methodologies that are akin to yoga, such as Waldorf Education. And this is why The Children Of Light Educare (COLT) is an institution at which yoga forms the foundation of education.

### REFERENCES

1. Lexico,UK Dictionary. January 2021. <https://www.lexico.com/definition/education>
2. Lexico,UK Dictionary. January 2021. <https://www.lexico.com/definition/educate>
3. Lexico,UK Dictionary. January 2021. <https://www.lexico.com/definition/educ>

