

Working on mental maps



Training a child to be an achiever need not be a mammoth task anymore for teachers and parents, thanks to the new ZENLP technique, discovers **DEEPIKA SAHU**

The effectiveness of teaching can be improved by intricately weaving stories relevant to the subjects taught in the class.

The best part of teaching through stories is that the mental software is upgraded permanently and the lessons are stored in the mind. Infact, the success of Non-Resident Indian (NRI) children in countries like USA, Canada, Germany, is being attributed to their vivid imagination fed on childhood tales of valour, enterprise and adventure.

ZENLP also teaches techniques to improve memory and concentration of children having problems with spelling, it helps them to learn techniques like breaking a word or a person's name into smaller parts with which they can identify.

As ZENLP believes in developing mind-power, both the teachers and students are taught meditation. Doing meditation for few minutes in the morning at the school can help a lot. Other ZENLP techniques like creative visualisation, auto-suggestion and ring of excellence can help children in building up confidence in their ability.

In an age of stiff competition, it has become imperative for children to develop the ability to cope up with stress. By upgrading mental power, ZENLP helps to deal with mental stress and develop a positive attitude in life. When a teacher develops tolerance, patience and communication skill, it improves the quality of teaching a lot. It also helps the children to imbibe certain values from the teachers.

ZENLP researchers strongly believe that each one of us is either a Pele or a Jimmy Connors. All that we have to do is to explore our hidden capabilities. Human mind is, without doubt, more powerful than the supercomputer. Still most of us use only 7 per cent of our mind power. ZENLP can be of help in upgrading our mental software and thereby creating meaningful changes in life.

A Japanese child goes to his mother and asks her who is the most knowledgeable person in the world. The mother replies "The Zen Master who lives on the top of the mountain for he has answers to all questions." The curious child wishes to test the knowledge of the master. He picks up a butterfly and says to himself "I will carry this butterfly in my hand and go to the Zen Master. I will ask him whether the thing in my hand is alive or dead. If the Master says it is alive, then I will crush it to death, if he says its dead then I will show him the living butterfly. Anyway, the Master would be wrong." Thinking so, he goes up to the Master and asks him the question. Looking softly into the eyes of the child, the Master replies " My son, the answer is in your hand." This is a simple Zen story but behind it lies a deeper, philosophical meaning.

Using simple Zen stories as part of training workshops in schools is just one dimension to the new technique for achievement called ZENLP (Zen Neuro Linguistic Programming). Neuro is derived from nerves which represents behaviour, linguistic is derived from language which means structure and programming is borrowed from computers which means recreating change.

ZENLP was created by psychotherapist John Grinder and mathematician and psychologist Richard Bandler, in association with Dr Erikson, a leading hypnotherapist. The concept originated in the research lab of University of California at Santa Cruz and evolved as late as 1990.

"ZENLP works on three kinds of programming depending on the predominant trait of an individual — visual, auditory and kinesthetic. All of us have one of these men-

tal maps in our unconscious mind," says M Anthure Menon, a ZENLP trainer. Researchers have discovered that all of us have one of these three maps in our subconscious minds. The important point about these mental maps are that these modes are the preferred modes of thinking.

For example, the Brazilian football player Pele is the most classic example of the visual trait. Pele could score spectacular goals on the soccerfield; he could spot the ball faster than his opponents and could visualise the ball's right path and trajectory more accurately than his team mates. On the other hand, tennis legend Jimmy Connors is an example of the auditory. So he got into position to return serves by hearing the way the ball sounded on the court. Knowing the child's mental map from an early age would help in building his overall growth based according to his aptitude. During an experiment in the United States, ZENLP research team of University of California put children in a room full of different kind of toys. It was observed that while children who were 'auditories' were attracted to toys making sound, the visuals were attracted to colourful toys and the kinesthetic ones got attracted to jigsaw puzzles. After analysing their subconscious mental maps, the auditories were given lessons in musical instruments, the visuals were trained in painting, and the kinesthetics were given lessons in clay modelling. The success rate among the young students was quite high.

To know the mental map, there is a separate questionnaire for both the children and the adults. ZENLP helps both teachers and children as it teaches to upgrade mind-power, develop communicac-

tion skills, understanding the body language of another person and creating a rapport.

Talking about it, Ms Shobha Rajiv, headmistress of HAL Public School says "Attending the ZENLP workshop was an eye-opener for me. It gave an opportunity to understand the other person's perspective. Managing a school is like a triangle, where you have to communicate with parents, teachers and children. The technique helps in development of the mind. After attending the workshop, the teachers are experimenting the techniques in their classroom teaching. It has been quite useful." Following the workshop, the ITI school has introduced clapping meditation (one of the techniques of ZENLP) in the school. "Everyday, after the lunch hour, all the students of the school gather in the hall and clap together. it has been of great help as it has created tremendous amount of trust and rapport. Moreover, clapping attracts the auditories, the visuals and the kinesthetics," says Ms Manjula Devi, principal of the school.

"The moot point is that why a child thinks the way he does? And why children of the same age think, read and write differently? For example, some children read aloud but some walk on the terrace with the book in their hands. This is where NLP comes to help. If one knows the child's subconscious mind, then he/she can be moulded in that particular way," says M A Menon.

As story-telling is an integral part of ZENLP, it helps a lot in delivering a particular message. Metaphors increase the efficiency and effectiveness of classroom teaching as they simplify complex ideas, are easy to recall and touch the emotion of young children.