

PROMOTING QUALITY EDUCATION THROUGH LIFE SKILLS TEACHING TECHNIQUES AT SCHOOL LEVEL

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Abstract: *Life Skills can help children understand themselves and the people in this world realising their own strengths and interests in their life. Life skills can help to develop knowledge, attitudes and skills required to take actions positively on cognitive and psychosocial abilities which will help students in solving problems, thinking critically, communicating effectively, coping with stress etc. Effective learning through life skills teaching techniques can be discussion, activity, debate, role play, story-telling, songs and dances, poetry, investigation, creativity, interaction, brain storming, project work, case study, worksheets, games etc. The diverse learning needs of school students can be fulfilled through equitable access to learning appropriately involving multimedia teaching Strategy in life skills education. Improvement in every aspect of quality education by ensuring their excellence to achieve recognizing and measurable learning outcomes mainly in numeracy, literacy and life skills is essential. In a sound education system student should be equipped to face the challenges of life to cherish goals of future. The methods of teaching life skills can be by stressing on student centred approach and participatory teaching learning practice with the opportunity to learn in classroom. Rote memorization or whole class teaching can be avoided in life skills teaching-learning techniques. The present paper focuses on the need and significance of life skills teaching and some important life skills teaching techniques which can pave way for quality learning among students.*

Key Words: Quality Education, Life Skills Teaching Techniques,

Introduction:

Pillars of education are personal abilities (learning to be) such as coping with stress, thinking abilities (learning to know) like critical thinking, Social abilities (learning to live together) such as empathy. Linking life skills with the studies in the classroom level are to be made operational with effective strategies and action plans. Two approaches in teaching learning of life skills are teacher centred approach and learner centred approach. For effective learning through life skills we can choose convenient teaching techniques and sequencing those techniques to ensure smooth flow of content between the teacher and learner. The methods of effective learning can be learner centred and can promote and sustain positive behavioural change using creativity and innovations in life skills techniques. The India National Curriculum Framework for School Education has included Life Skills related to health, consumer rights and legal literacy. Challenges to recruit and deploy teachers to provide them quality education on life skills and carrier or professional development are essential. The

methods relevant for teaching of life skills build upon the knowledge of students learning from their own experiences and also from the people in the society.

Life skills teaching techniques facilitate the progress of personal and social skills of students at school level. Life skills teaching techniques can include cognitive and behavioural aspects and proactive teaching for enhancing life skills by promoting competence in academics. Life skills teaching techniques are an important preventive approach for high risk behaviour among school students. The life skills teaching techniques such as discussion, role play, debate, games, brainstorming, audio-visual activities, simulations, Class discussions, brainstorming etc. can make the teaching learning process interesting and effective as it can develop motivation in studies. Flexible, adaptive, initiate, self-direct, accountable and responsible are the few abilities acquired by the learners in life skills teaching. Life skills teaching techniques mainly include learning by doing so that students are creative in thinking.

Proper assessment of life skills can be a chief input and revolutionize the practices of a classroom. Motivation and interest in the mind of students is the goal of life skills teaching approach. Teaching should have recreation that can impart creativity and innovations among teachers as well as students. Identifying the individual differences and talents of students is the motive of life skills teaching techniques. Teachers can easily analyse the nature, ability, intelligence, potential and needs of the students by life skills teaching techniques. Teaching, reading and arithmetic skills are given importance and also in the completion of syllabus instead we should focus on the overall development of students with the involvement of life skills. Schools can provide training to teachers following the guidelines necessary for teaching, learning and assessment processes in life skills. Life skills teachings can help students to learn basic academic and life skills to enhance their physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. Life skills such as thinking skills, social skills and emotional skills also attitude and values towards teachers, school mates and environment are essential in teaching of life skills. Components of participatory learning like practical activities and their application, feedback and reflections, consolidation and reinforcement can prove to be beneficial for the overall development of students.

Quality Education:

Quality education is a combination of the components such as life skills, knowledge, literacy skills and social skills. These components are interrelated and inculcating altogether is an important aspect in building the society and development of an individual. Quality education provides the learner to maintain livelihoods, efficiently productive, contribute to democratic society, and boost individual wellbeing. Quality education determines the extent of learning to achieve personal and social benefits. Quality education is pedagogical and sounds developmental to educate the students to become active and valuable member of society. Quality education is the need of the present society which can be provided by involving four components i.e. life skills, knowledge, literacy skills and social skills. The following diagram gives an explanation of the interpretation of the components of quality education:

Education



Successful person/Developed Society



Life skills	Knowledge (subject knowledge and concepts)	Literacy skills (reading, writing, numeracy)	Social skills
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Life skills:

The WHO (2003) defines “Life skills as abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. The Delphi method is a structured communication technique or method, originally developed as a systemic, interactive forecasting method which relies on a panel of experts. The experts answer questionnaires in two or more rounds. Some of the important life skills recognized by WHO through Delphi Method are as follows: Decision making skills, problem solving skills, creative thinking skills, critical thinking skills, effective communication skills, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness skills, Assertiveness skills, Empathy skills, equanimity skills, coping with stress, trauma and loss skills and resilience skills. The main way of enabling individuals and nations alike to meet the ever increasing economic, technological, social and personal challenges is through life skills.

Life Skills Teaching Techniques for Effective Learning:

School environment and teachers are crucial in implementing life skills teaching techniques successfully. It can be a challenge to get life skills teaching techniques implemented in India with small resources for effective learning at school level. Teachers require a distinct approach of training to teach life skills where pre-service and in-service training are sufficient to achieve the desired goal. Life skills teaching techniques plays a major role in effective learning as it depends on the style of presentation in the classroom. Life skills teaching techniques can be implemented in life skills teaching learning process which is of three forms i.e. telling such as discussion, showing like visual aids, and doing like role play. Life skills teaching techniques can act as a tool for modifying the behaviour of students in terms of knowledge, attitude, skills and values. Knowledge can be gained in the regular classroom but attitude, skills and values can be enhanced through life skills teaching techniques. Some of the life skills teaching techniques are as follows:

1. **Discussion:** The conversation in large or small group with specific objective involving exchange or sharing of ideas on any given topic can be said as discussion. At the end of discussion emphasis can be on acquiring life skills. Discussions can provide opportunities to gain knowledge from each other. It can enable students to understand any topic deeply and also connect to other field. It can develop life skills such as coping with stress and effective communication.

2. **Debate:** The discussion in large or small groups of an issue that takes place in depth in two opposing groups who express views on any given topic. Constructive arguments among students during debate are a common practice. Both the groups are competitive and try their level best to win using life skills teaching techniques. Students can defend themselves as it provides a chance of high thinking.
3. **Role plays:** Short informal drama where the participants experience a person's feelings as his own in a suggested situation. Time for preparation may be required but should be unplanned by identifying situations in learning process. Role play provides to practice skills and handle any situation in real life. Role play develops life skills such as empathy for oneself and for others.
4. **Situation analysis/Case Studies:** Situation analysis allows students to analyse the situations that they come across. Students explore problems and find out solutions working together. Individual differences help in knowing that people think differently so each student can learn from others. Case studies are real life stories related to community, family, individual, school etc. It is true or imaginary and powerful mechanism that describes a character or situation. It is the study where participants have to find out healthy responses or options to resolve any conflict or evaluating any consequences. Life skills developed through case studies is decision making.
5. **Brainstorming:** Exploring new ideas or concepts by involving maximum participation in a given problem that are respected or accepted. Brain storming can help the students to come up with new ideas and innovations spontaneously also they would be able to evaluate the pros and cons of those ideas. Students enhance in creativity and have imagination to develop life skills such as critical thinking.
6. **Games and Simulations:** Students play games related to teaching content to review and reinforce students. Real experiences are felt by the students through the structured activities called as simulations. The aim of games and simulations are to promote fun, creativity, etc. The students become active learners and rich conversation takes place as the students try their best to prove themselves. Critical thinking and decision making life skills are developed through games and simulations.
7. **Story telling:** Any of the students tell a story to the group. Visual aids such as filmstrips, slides, photo novels etc. are used while telling a story. Students are free to discuss important matters or points after the completion of story. So students develop critical thinking life skills through maximum interaction. Story telling helps to compare and draw resemblance to discover solutions in healthy manner.
8. **Small group/Buzz group:** Large group of students in a class can be divided into small groups where six members or less than six in each group can be included. These

groups are given less time to complete their assignment or discuss a particular topic or problem. Small group/Buzz group are functional when large group and time is limited. It also maximises contribution of students that helps to listen to others views and gain knowledge.

Multimedia-A Powerful Teaching Strategy in Life Skill Education

The arrival of multimedia technology in education has enabled everyone in applying knowledge of life skills from theoretical framework also by compensating the deficiencies of traditional teaching methods. Multimedia is the dynamic form of communication in the virtual world of education combined by all the elements of technology such as image, sound, video, audio, recordings, drawing, graphics, animation, still pictures, text etc. leading to infinite applications of computer technologies through interactive environment. Students get more chances to express their opinions and enjoyment during the life skills classroom teaching-learning process. Seats of the students can be modified as per the situation demands in the multimedia classrooms. Using internet for the purpose of teaching and learning life skills gives teachers and students the opportunity of gathering information which will encourage them to imagine, develop interest and become expert in life skills contents. Benefits of multimedia teaching and learning life skills are time and space flexibility, impartial, personalized teaching, concrete experiences, diversified teaching resources, hyperlinked learning method, comfortable environment, repetitive and cooperative learning, immediate feedback etc.

Relevance of life skills teaching at School Level for Quality Education:

School is the platform to learn and build a fruitful generation for future society. The teachers dealing with life skills teaching techniques focuses on the overall progress of the students. The teachers in the schools are determined to train students for scoring high marks in their respective subjects. The transformation of educational system from traditional teaching to life skills teaching is creating more impact in the life of students as their psychosocial needs are satisfied. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 has emphasised on constructive learning experiences, and on the development of an inquiry-based approach, work-related knowledge and broader life skills. In this constantly changing world, life skills are essential for fulfilling the needs and challenges of day to day life. Students need life skills to cope up with stress or frustrations Life Skills in schools aims at preparing students with self-esteem, courage, power and competence in all path and issues of their life. Life skills promote abilities for well-being and competence of students. Life skills provide scope and opportunity to an individual for gaining wisdom. Social, cultural and environmental factors allow the students to behave in a positive way. Integrating life skills with teaching can become central thread in the field of education for students at school level.

Reasons for life skills teaching in schools are as follows:

1. The role of schools in the socialization of young people.
2. Access to children and adolescents on a large scale.
3. Economic efficiencies (using existing infrastructure).
4. Highly experienced and well efficient teachers already in place.

5. High credibility with parents and community members.
6. Great Possibilities for short and long term evaluation.

Students would help themselves and others to make informed decisions, to build healthy relationship by communicating effectively, to solve problems, to think creatively and critically, to cope with stress etc. Many of the teachers are aware of the significance of life skills teaching techniques to deal with the issues faced by students. Life skills teaching techniques can improve mental health and in adjustment of both teachers and students improving their confidence to take right decisions. Time constraint or lack of support from parents and management at school level does not allow the teachers to use appropriate strategy in life skills teaching. So we need to familiarize the need of life skills in society for benefitting the school students from primary to higher level. Life skills teaching is a non-academic activity but of more importance and accepting to change from the approach of teacher centred to learner centred approach and participatory learning approach. Students develop life skills at home, school or in society by gradually learning a particular life skill adequately in diverse circumstances. Parents, teachers and other people around the students play a role model and develop those life skills to deal with the challenges in life.

CONCLUSION:

The most valuable aspect of a teacher is to guide students to explore in curricular and non-curricular part. Rote memorisation and the old traditional method of teaching have to be substituted by relevance of life skills teaching and learning in the 21st century. Reading, writing, listening, thinking and remembering skills are developed through life skills teaching techniques which results to effective learning. Ten core life skills developed by Delphi method recognized WHO are important to be enhanced among students through life skills teaching techniques. Learning can be effective by motivation and proper teaching learning strategies. Study skills are learning skills that helps to acquire knowledge by students which can be collaborated with life skills for effectiveness. Ensuring the learners need by teachers is essential for life skills teaching techniques through equitable access to learn effectively with the support of management at school level. Effective learning through life skills teaching techniques enhances cognitive, psychosocial and emotional development. The aim of this paper is to provide a clarification of life skills teaching techniques needed for students at school level.

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