

Life Skill Education: Challenges And Role Of Teachers

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Abstract

Life Skills Education is a novel promotional program that teaches generic life skills through participatory learning methods. Conceptual understanding and practicing of the skills occur through experiential learning in a non-threatening setting. Such initiatives provide the individual with a wide range of alternative and creative ways of solving problems. Life have been defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as “abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. They represent the psycho-social skills that determine behaviour and include reflective skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking, to personal skills such as self-awareness, and to interpersonal skills. Education is seen as the main way of enabling individuals and nations alike to meet the ever increasing economic, technological, social and personal challenges. We expect education to prepare young people for the world of work and for economic independence; to enable them to live constructively in responsible communities; and to enable them to live in a tolerant, culturally diverse and rapidly changing society. Perhaps above all, we expect education to help young people to build lives that have meaning and purpose in a future we can scarcely predict.

Teaching is becoming a more and more complex task day by day. Teachers meet a large number of children and youth from a variety of backgrounds. Thus, teachers now hold more responsibilities. All these developments underline the questions related to the responsibilities and duties of teachers. So, role of teacher is a challenging now in today's life i.e. to develop life skill in children.

The present paper discusses the concept of life skills education, role of teachers inculcating life skills education, challenges & pressure on teacher respect to life skills education.

Key words: Life Skills Education, WHO, Skills, Learning.

Introduction

Everywhere, Education is seen as the main way of enabling individuals and nations alike to meet the ever increasing economic, technological, social and personal challenges. We expect education to prepare young people for the world of work and provide them economic independence; to enable them to live constructively in responsible communities; and to enable them to live in a tolerant, culturally diverse and rapidly changing society. Perhaps above all, we expect education to help young people to build lives that have meaning and purpose in a future we can scarcely predict.

UNICEF has a significant role in Life Skills Education (LSE) development and initiatives at both national and international levels. Over the past three decades LSE has come to be seen as integral to preparing young people to negotiate and mediate everyday challenges and risks and enable productive participation in society.

Teachers play an extremely important role as facilitators of learning; they are important mentors in the environment of young learners, as role models and to encourage and empower students. Teachers of LSE must therefore be equipped with (or able to develop) and demonstrate the same range of life skills as their students are intended to learn, they should be able to withhold judgment and listen to different opinions, gain the trust of their students so that they feel comfortable expressing themselves and know that what they discuss remains confidential. Teachers should also continue to re-examine their own attitudes and values, developing an awareness and objectivity of life issues in their socio-cultural contexts. Empathy with children, classroom management for collaborative learning, and understanding of children's psychology and development are all personal and professional attributes which are difficult to develop through existing systems of teacher selection and training.

Concept of Life Skills Education

“Abilities of adaptive and positive behavior enables individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”
– **WHO.**

Life skills mean those essential skills developed through a higher order thinking, that

Enable a person to perform effectively in his or her life, and thus become a socially

acceptable and successful person. It includes psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others, and cope with managing their lives in a healthy and productive manner.

Life skills develop higher order of thinking which enable a person to perform effectively in his life. It enables oneself to be an acceptable and successful person. It also accelerates the psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills which ultimately transforms the person into a well-informed, decision maker, problem solver person. Such type of individuals thinks critically but creatively, communicates effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others and handle their lives in a productive and healthy manner.

Challenges of Teachers

1. Huge Syllabus of School Curriculum: Curriculum of school is too lengthy. Different activities are included in school curriculum. Students are interested to participate in respective activities. Expectation of parents is high. Syllabus to be completed is vast. Each and every subject is important to study. So, to fulfill the curriculum as well as completing the syllabus with life skills education is challenging for teachers.

2. Classroom Management: Classroom management is closely linked to issues of motivation, discipline and respect. Methodologies remain a matter of passionate debate amongst teachers; approaches vary depending on the beliefs a teacher holds regarding educational psychology. A large part of traditional classroom management involves behavior modification, although many teachers see using behavioral approaches alone as overly

simplistic. Many teachers establish rules and procedures at the beginning of the school year. Classroom management is a challenging part of teacher's job. Most of students are not familiar with life skills education. They do not wish to listen more about behavior, discipline & moral value. So, to impart the life skills educations among the students are very difficult for teachers.

3. High Expectation of Society: Level of the students is different in the school. Their interests are not similar but expectations of parents are mostly common. Parents cannot differentiate between levels of children. They do not think about the interest of their children they just want to keep their views only. So, establishing coordination between parent & student is challenging, as well as a source of pressure for the teacher.

4. Challenges to deal with differently able Children: As per rule of government differently able children can study with normal children. Different mechanism is needed to provide life skills education to these students. But teachers have to handle all types of students with the equal resources available to them. So, adjustment of different categories of students is a challenging job for teachers.

5. Lack of incentives: We know that money is an important part required to run a better life. Proper salary and other facilities are not provided by Government. Environment to develop their own skill and to do some research works are not being provided. So to maintain their lifestyle properly with the pace of the world is a big challenge for teachers.

6. Poor management of Government schools: Management is an important factor to run a better school. Lack of proper infrastructure especially in Government's school is another cause of worry. Proper management and co-ordination between the staff and administration is not there.

7. Lack of proper training: Proper workshop, seminar, study tour, practical study are some of the main requirements of students for their overall development. But government's school, colleges and other educational institutes have no such facilities which ultimately affect the student's future.

8. Develop the Major Skills and sub skills- The students should develop different major skills like Communication skills,

information gathering skills, critical thinking, creativity and empathy. Sub skills are effective speaking, active listening, observation, understanding body language, giving and receiving feedback, assertion skills, emotional control, self-awareness, analysis, synthesis, challenging facts, assessing information and consequences of actions, awareness about one's strengths and weaknesses, developing cause and effect relationship, anti-stereotyping, imagination, positive thinking skills, conflict management skills, managing peer pressure, tolerance, identification, and acting on rights, justice and responsibilities, generating alternatives, asking questions, reading, memory. All major skills and sub skills are to be developed in children is already lengthy. So, to develop all these major skills and sub skills with life skills education are challenging for teachers.

Role of Teachers inculcating Life Skills Education

- Promote a conducive learner empowering environment.
- Recognize individuals as unique and yet social beings.
- Relate strengths and weaknesses to self-awareness.
- Encourage social cohesion by engaging students from different tribes / clans to mix in class.
- Relate life skills to learner's familiar life experiences.
- Avoid too much knowledge and be more practical.
- Encourage small group discussions – free space for their voices.
- Use learner discussion stimulation – debates, talk shows.
- Encourage storytelling, poetry and drama.

Conclusion

Life skills education has become an amorphous concept that suffers not having a clear, shared understanding of what it entails and how it should be delivered or assessed. Part of this is to do with the difficulties inherent in the behavioural change and psycho-social skills that lie at the core of the LSE concept. However, much more work is required to develop understandings of what LSE involves, ensuring that wider psycho-social skills are not lost within content-specific approaches, and including clearer articulation of learning outcomes and intended impacts for LSE. Many of the challenges facing LSE replicate those in the education sector as a whole, particularly around resource constraints in the

delivery of participatory and child-centric learning methodologies which have become intricately linked to the development of psycho-social skills. Planning for LSE needs to assess and acknowledge these constraints, and set realistic, sustainable objectives; LSE cannot be an island of practice within the school and as such needs to be considered integral to a whole school approach to children's development. Maximising linkages with other education initiatives (CFS, whole school approaches and quality reforms) will help to meet this challenge.

More focus is required on teachers as a central element of the process: teachers have the power to significantly strengthen or undermine LSE content, delivery and the environment that can constrain or support students' attempts to convert knowledge and skills into attitudes and behaviours. Where there are systemic shortcomings in teacher management, qualification and professionalism, LSE is making huge demands. The selection, preparation and deployment of suitable teachers is a challenge for all systems, but the impact on LSE, which seeks to establish new teaching paradigms around new (often sensitive) content, is particularly acute and risks the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of LSE interventions if left unaddressed.

Being a teacher, we face a lot of challenges when it comes to teaching children about developing the skills. We know that challenges strain a lot on teachers. So as a teacher we have to face all types of challenges despite the pressure and finally reach the goal.

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