

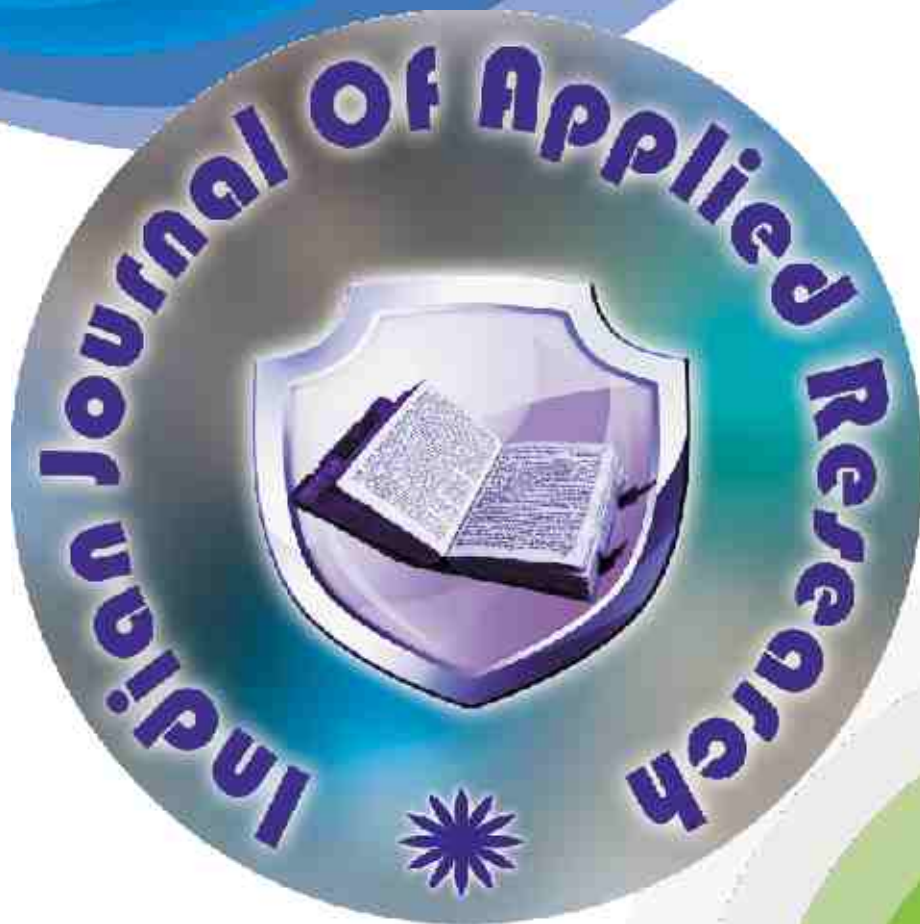
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Implementing Life Skill Education Strategies In Teaching Learning Process

* R. Kalaiselvi **Dr. A. Palanisamy
***Dr. A R. Saravanakumar

* Assistant Professor of Tamil Education, Govt. College of Education, Pudukkottai

** Assistant Professor in Physical Education, College of Physical Education, Alagappa University, Karaikudi

*** Assistant Professor in Education, DDE, Alagappa University, Karaikudi

ABSTRACT

Life skills can mean a lot of different things, and different people need a different set of skills to survive and to fulfil their needs. The most important skills in life are the survival skills that learners need to develop to meet their specific needs. Life skills are practical behaviours needed to meet the demands of everyday life, young people who are adopt at life skills are better equipped to make better choices in life and avoid risky behavior. We all have teachable movements when an event leads us right into a discussion about one or more of these skills. By using life skills in teaching students take ownership of them, and understand that these are the skills that will help them to be successful in live.

Keywords : Life Skills, Life Skills Education, Educational Strategies, Communication Skills

Introduction

Life skills are essentially those abilities that help promote mental well-being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life. Most development professionals agree that life skills are generally applied in the context of health and social events. They can be utilized in many content areas: prevention of drug use, sexual violence, teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS prevention and suicide prevention. The definition extends into consumer education, environmental education, peace education, developmental education, livelihood and income generation, among others. In short, life skills empower young people to take positive action to protect themselves and promote health and positive social relationship. Life skills can mean a lot of different things, and different people need a different set of skills to survive and to fulfil their needs. The most important skills in life are the survival skills that learners need to develop to meet their specific needs. Life skills are practical behaviours needed to meet the demands of everyday life, young people who are adopt at life skills are better equipped to make better choices in life and avoid risky behavior.

Life Skills

A skill is a learned ability to do something well. Life skills are abilities, individual can learn that will help them to live a fruitful life. Life skills are defined in the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) model (Hendriacs, 1996) as "Skills that help an individual be successful in living a productive and satisfying life. Life skills are defined as those abilities, attitudes, knowledge and behaviors that must be learned for success in society. Life skills from a psychological standpoint are those mental and emotional skills which enable us to better cope with and succeed in our lives.

The World Health Organization has defined life skills as, "the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life". UNICEF defines life skills as "a behavior change Or behavior development approach

designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude and skills". The UNICEF definition is based on research evidence that suggests that shifts in risk behavior are unlikely if knowledge, attitudinal and skill-based competency are not addressed. Life skills are essentially those abilities that help promote mental well-being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life (Aishath m Nasheeda, 2005). Life skills enable us to learn and use knowledge, to develop reasoning and analytical strengths, to manage emotions and to live with and relate to others (Anna Maria Hoffmann, 2006). With life skills, one is able to explore alternatives, weigh pros and cons and make rational decisions in solving each problem or issue as it arises. It also entails being able to establish productive interpersonal relationships with others.

Meaning of Life Skill

The abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individual to deal effectively with demands and challenges every day life (WHO). It further encompasses thinking skills, social skill and negotiation skill. It also helps the young people to develop and grow into well behaved adults. Life skill education aims to provide students with strategies to make healthy choices that contribute to a meaningful life. Life skills are the abilities that help to promote mental well being and competence in young people as they face the realities of life. It helps the young people to take positive actions to protect themselves and to promote health and meaningful social relationship. Life skill facilitates a complete and integrated development of individual to function effectively as social beings.

Life skill education is a value addition programme for the youth to understand self and able to assess then skill, abilities and areas of development, which also enable them to analyse their capacity to enhance the function in a most productive way. Life skill education allows the youth get along with other people, able to adjust with their environment and making responsible decision which also incorporate to build up their value and to communicate effectively.

In many circles, reproductive health education, population education and family welfare education are interchangeably used to convey the same meaning. The main objective of life skill education is to enable the learner to develop a concept of oneself as a person of worth and dignity. It should help one to understand oneself and lead to growth in personal responsibility.

Life skill education is a basic learning need for all young people. It will help the young people to empower in challenging situations. Various skills like leadership, responsibility, communication, intellectual capacity, self-esteem, interpersonal skills etc. extends its maximum level, if it is practicing effectively among the youth. We need to create life skill education as the corner stone of various youth programme. An effective implementation strategy will help the youth to practice it in their life. Specific activities like leadership training, communication, interaction, understanding self, making decisions, working with groups, socialization etc. added the quality of youth.

Life Skills Education

Now a days a large number of youth engaged in antisocial activities which create a lot of social problems take alcoholism, drug abuse, sexual abuse, smoking etc. These habits deteriorate their physical and intellectual capabilities and also seem to be a burden to the society. Youths are engaged in many antisocial activities and which adversely affecting other members of the society. These high risk behavior affecting society in a large extent. This new challenge require immediate and effective responses from a socially responsible system of education. In this connection, life skills education plays a very vital role to increase the awareness among the youth about all social problems and to alleviate social evils from the society. Life skill education helps the individual to improve the decision making skill, ability to take every thing in the right sense and also improve their contribution to the society.

Developing Life Skills

Developing life skills helps the adolescents to translate knowledge attitude and their health behavior such as acquiring the ability to reduce specific risk behavior and adopt healthy behavior that improve their lives in general. Life skills have produced the following effects: lessened violent behavior, increased pro-social behavior and decreased negative, self-destructive behavior; increased the ability to plan ahead and choose effective solutions to problems; improved self-image, self-awareness, social and emotional adjustment; increased acquisition of knowledge, improved classroom behavior; gains in self control and sociability; better handling of interpersonal problems and coping with anxiety and improved constructive conflict resolution with peers, impulse control and popularity.

Skill based approach in life skill education follows well established mentoring techniques to develop students innate quality and also motivating them to adopt socially acceptable pattern of life style's particularly, strategy consisting of a group of people combined together to help themselves by identifying their talents and directing them to chose an appropriate steps to enhance their skill and abilities as a part of development. Proper feed back are necessary from the train as well as the peer groups to an individual to improve their confidence. Through the experimental learning process youth internalize the knowledge and gain the ability to apply the skills appropriately.

Life Skills Education Strategies

In order to have an effective implementation of life skill education there is a need for professionally trained and skilled personal from within the country. Professional training requires a purposely planned programme of study prepared by experts which has the approval of a competent authority. There is an urgent need to train and prepare a large contingent of "Trainers of Trainers (ToTs). The ToTs will require adequate training on all aspects of the subject. They have to be expert in

this field of study in order to be effective in performing their force. A life skill programme could include content about friendship, bullying, sexual relationships anger management, perceptions about drug use. The key basic categories of life skills including communication, negotiation, refusal skills, affectiveness, cooperation, empathy, cognitive skills including problem solving skills, understanding consequences, decision making, critical thinking, self evaluation. Emotional coping skills including managing feelings, self-management and self-monitoring.

Life skills enable effective communication, for example being able to differentiate between hearing and listening and ensuring that messages are transmitted accurately to avoid miscommunication and misinterpretations with life skills, one is able to explore alternatives, weigh pros and cons and make rational decisions in solving each problem as it arises. It also entails being able to establish productive interpersonal relationship with others.

Life skill covering the areas like leadership ethics, accountability, adaptability, personal productivity, personal responsibility, people skill and self-direction. Leadership skill enables the person to solve problems attain his/her life goal and the ability to motivate others and also achieve a common goal. Person will meet the high standard of accomplishments by following the ethics in his/her personal as well as professional life. He/she will be able to adopt different roles and responsibilities. They are able to tolerate ambiguity and willing to change their priorities as per the requirements. Thus they will be committed to their work by utilizing the time more effectively. Life skill education will be effective only when people are able to act upon the skill which they have learned. In mental health and other areas, there is a considerable improvement in behavior with the help of life skill education. Life skill education lays the foundation for learning skill, which is greater demand in job market. Life skill education enhances self direction of the individual. He / she will be able to monitor has or her own understanding of learning needs and the commitment to learning as a long long process. Though life skill education one can move towards a more positive and holistic approaches in order to educate the new generations and through them the future generations.

Essential Life Skills

The following are the essential life skills in teaching learning process

Interpersonal communication skills

- Verbal / non-verbal communication
- Active listening
- Expressing feelings, giving feedback and receiving feedback

Negotiation / refusal skills

- Negotiation and conflict management
- Assentiveness skills
- Refusal skills

Empathy

- Ability to listen and understand another's needs and circumstances and express that understanding
- Co-operation and team work
- Expressing respect for others' contributions and different styles
- Assessing one's own abilities and contributing to the group

Advocacy skills

- Influencing skills & persuasion
- Networking are motivation skills

Decision making / problems solving skills

- Information gathering skills
- Evaluating future consequences of present actions for self and others
- Determining alternative solutions to problems

- Analysis skills regarding the influence of values and attitudes of self and others on motivation

Critical thinking skills

- Analyzing peer and media influences
- Analyzing attitudes, values, social, normal and beliefs and factors affecting them
- Identifying relevant information and information sources

Coping and self management skills

Skills for increasing internal locus of control

- Self esteem / confidence building skills
- Self awareness skills including awareness of rights, influences, values, attitudes, strength and weaknesses
- Goal setting skills
- Self evaluation / self assessment / self monitoring skills

Skills for managing feelings

- Anger management
- Dealing with grief and anxiety
- Coping skills for dealing with loss, abuse trauma

Skills for managing stress

- Time management
- Positive thinking
- Relaxation techniques

Around the world, life skills based education (LSBE) is being adopted as a means to empower young people in challenging situations. LSBE refers to an interactive process of teaching and learning which enables learners to acquire knowledge and to develop attitude and skills which support the adoption of healthy behaviour.

LSBE strengthens educational processes by insisting on participatory and gender sensitive teaching and learning methods. Participatory methods allows all participants equal opportunities to listen to and learn from each other and can appeal to different learning styles. They include self-guided and experimental learning and are based on the natural process by which children acquire knowledge, attitude, skill and ultimately behaviours.

Components of Life Skills

The World Health Organisation (WHO) categories life skills into the following three components:

a) Decision making skills / critical thinking skills

It includes decision making / problem solving skills and information gathering skills. The individual must also be skilled at evaluating the future consequences of their present actions and the actions of others.

b) Communication / Interpersonal Skills

It includes verbal and non-verbal communication, active

listening and the ability to express feelings and give feedback. Development of this skill set enables the learners to be accepted in society. These skills result in the acceptance of social norms that provide the foundation for adult social behavior.

c) Coping and Self-management Skills

It refers to skills to increase the internal locus of control. So that the individual believes that they can make a difference in the world and affect change.

List of Life Skills

Integrity : To act according to what is right and wrong

Initiative : To do something because it needs to be done

Flexibility : The ability to alter plans when necessary

Perseverance : To keep as it

Organization : To work in an orderly way

Sense of Humour : To laugh and be playful without hurting others

Effort : To do very best

Common sense : To think everything through

Problem solving : To seek solutions

Responsibility : To do what is right

Patience : To wait calmly

Friendship : To make and keep a friend through mutual trust and carrying

Curiosity : To investigate and seek understanding

Co-operations : To work together toward a common goal

Caring : To show / feel concern

Conclusion

Life skill based education enhance the quality of content by addressing issues relevant to the lives of learners, both boys and girls. At present, LSBE is often applied to pertinent health and social issues which are not traditionally included in the academic curriculum and which demand and adaptation of positive behaviours by young people. However, skill based content and methods can also enhance the quality of traditional subjects like literacy and numeracy by making them relevant and engaging for the learners. When implemented with high quality, life skills based education can result in quality learners achieving quality educational outcomes.

A vital part of the classroom today is the teaching of life skills to our students. These skills should be posted in the classroom and should be taught as situations arise. We all have teachable moments when an event leads us right into a discussion about one or more of these skills. By using life skills in teaching students take ownership of them, and understand that these are the skills that will help them to be successful in life.

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