

Life Skills in Prospective Teachers

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Abstract

The intellectual community is seriously sceptical about the direction that our society is taking. Prospective teachers undergoing teacher education become the citizens who will shape our society and make contributions as educators too. Because teacher education significantly enhances prospective teachers' skill development, it has a critical potential to impact our society's future. This paper focuses on the significance of life skill-based education in improving the quality of teacher education programme. The researcher has explored the status of life skill development in 256 prospective teachers through an online form derived from the life skill assessment scale developed by Pearson and Kennedy. The life skills approach emphasises more than just knowledge acquisition. Through the use of life skills, students and teachers can better understand and know themselves, live more purposefully and consciously, find personal fulfilment, and meet both their academic and personal objectives.

Keywords: life skills, teacher education, prospective teachers, life skill assessment

Introduction

To have an impact on behaviour, information-based approaches need to be combined with attitudinal and interpersonal skills, known as 'life skills' that should aid to improve the changing of behaviour. (UNICEF) The development of life skills emphasises more than just knowledge attainment. Information-based techniques must be used in conjunction with interpersonal and attitude-based competencies, sometimes referred to as life skills to effectively influence behaviour. Through the use of life skills, students can better understand and know themselves, live a more purposeful life consciously. They can find personal, academic and professional fulfilment in their life. The abilities they need to maximise their lives are referred to as 'life skills'. These abilities are typically linked to better life management and quality of life. They support us in realising our potential and achieving our goals.

'The abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with demands and challenges of everyday life' is how the World Health Organisation (WHO) defined life skills in 1993. UNICEF defines life skills as a behaviour change or behaviour development approach designed to address a balance of three areas: knowledge, attitude, and

skills. Thus, life skills encompass a wide range of psycho-social and interpersonal abilities that can support individuals in making well-informed decisions, communicating effectively, and developing coping and self-management skills that may contribute to a productive and healthy lifestyle. Life Skills create a nurturing environment for learning.

Therefore, it is now imperative to improve the skill development of young people attending education, especially in professional courses. The future and applicability of teacher education in India, are closely tied to skill development; the sooner teacher education recognises this and takes appropriate action, the better off the nation and its development will be. Skills development cannot be introduced as a separate course or part of the curriculum of teacher education; rather, it must be incorporated into the education and training of young prospective teachers who will need to be capable of managing the day-to-day challenges in the field of education.

A young prospective teacher looking for a teaching job is expected to have notable soft and life skills, which he or she is mostly unaware of before getting real job experience. The talents of a young teacher eager to enter the teaching profession and leave their mark, needs are not well met by teacher education. Mainly, there are two kinds of skills.

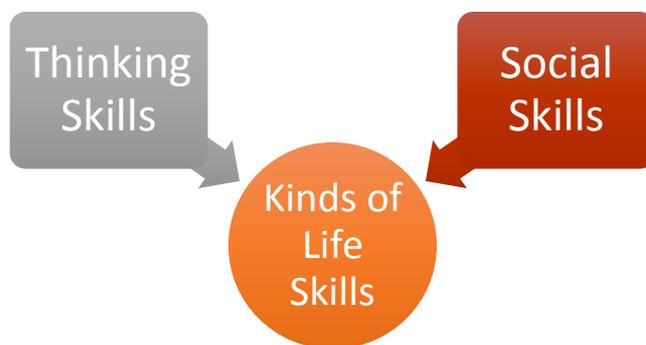


Figure 1. To Show Classification of Life Skills

Social skills encompass interpersonal abilities and are not always dependent on logical reasoning, thinking skills are related to introspection on a personal level. The ability to combine these two skill sets is necessary to become forceful in behaviour and negotiate successfully. Emotion relates to the ability to persuade people to share one's viewpoint in addition to making logical conclusions. It's crucial to first make peace with oneself in order to accomplish that. As a result, self-management is a crucial ability that includes controlling one's feelings, emotions, stress, and resistance to pressure from family and friends. As advocates, young prospective teachers require critical thinking as well as social skills to foster unity and advance important causes.

Gaining life skills helps us become more aware of the world around us, provide ourselves with the resources we need to lead more fruitful and satisfying lives, and find solutions to the problems that life will undoubtedly present. Life skills are frequently acquired indirectly via practise and experience rather than being taught explicitly. Life skill-based learning ought to begin early in the educational process and continue until the student has earned his diploma. It would be far more beneficial if life skill-based education could be started earlier, before harmful patterns of behaviour and interaction have taken root (WHO, 1997). WHO has defined the following life skills for well-being.



Figure 2. 10 Life Skills Defined by WHO

The prospective teachers in education programmes today are already overburdened, and they even have to rush through assignments to complete the course (Personal communication, teachers, 2012) . In this situation, it might not be possible to regularly practice the most efficient ways to in-still these abilities in them. However, this cannot be used as a justification for not giving them life skills training, which is crucial for both their personal and professional lives. Given the constraints of today's Indian classrooms, teacher educators must come up with innovative ways to impart these skills to the next generation of prospective teachers.

Objectives

- To examine the significance of life skill-based education in teacher education programme.
- To explore the status of life skill development in prospective teachers.

Hypothesis

The study is exploratory in nature, hence there is no hypothesis framed.

Methodology

Research Tool

The researcher has prepared a google form which derived from the **Life Skills Assessment Scale (LSAS)**. This LSAS scale consists of items to assess five life skills:

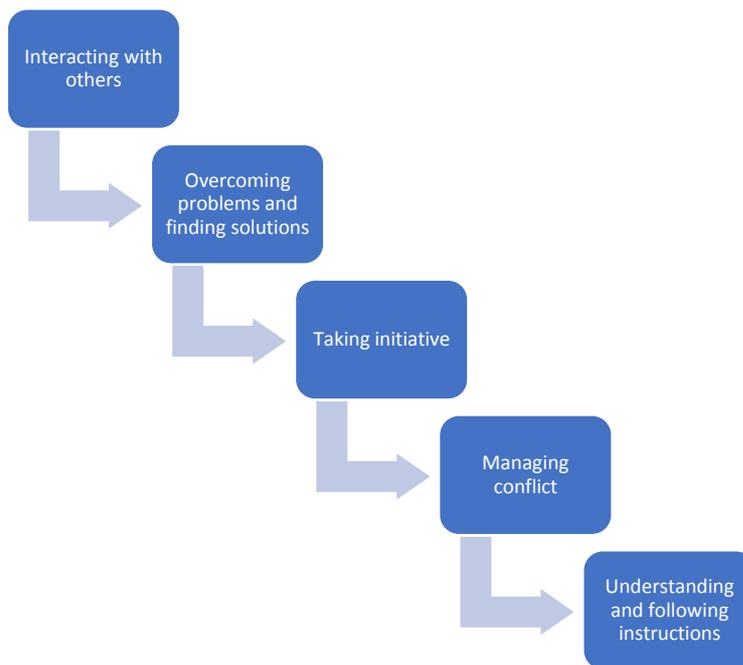


Figure 3. Life Skills Assessed in the Study

Sample

The prospective teachers of D. El. Ed. of District Institute of Education(DIET), Lucknow and B.Ed. students of Lucknow University were selected as the participants. The form was shared online and the responses were assessed afterwards. Total 256 prospective teachers participated in the survey.

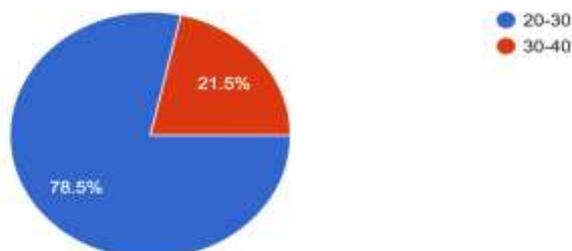
Delimitation of the Study

The survey was limited to the prospective teachers of DIET, Lucknow and Lucknow University and the data was collected through an online survey.

Result and Discussion

After an initial review of the data, the researcher analysed the data.

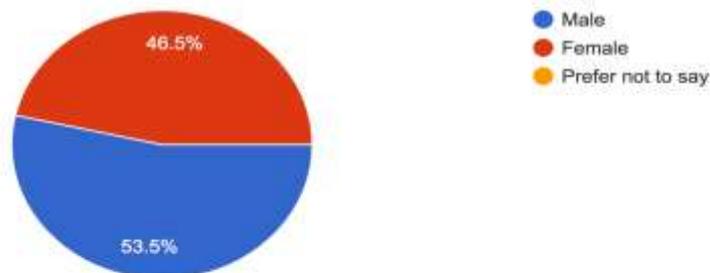
Age (in Years)
256 responses



Total 256 participants participated in the online survey. Out of them 201 participants (78.5%) were in the age group of 20-23 years and 55 participants (21.5%) were from the age group of 30-40 years.

Gender

256 responses



137 male (53.7%) and 119 females (46.3%) participated in the survey. All the participants were prospective teachers. There were 5 sections each belonging to a life skill.

1. Interaction with Others

The first life skill was related to interaction with others. There were three questions.

Questions	Options to Choose		
	Yes	No	Not Sure
Do you interact appropriately with peers, teachers, family members, staff, opposite gender?	92.6%	5.6%	1.9%
Do you communicate effectively?	75.9%	11.1%	13%
Do you show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings?	79.6%	9.3%	11.1%

A higher percentage of prospective teachers was comfortable in interaction with others. This is an important life skill for all the teachers personally or professionally, so this needs to be practised more. The activities and opportunities should be provided to the prospective teachers to enhance this skill during their teacher education programme.

2. Overcoming Difficulties and Solving Problems

The second life skill under observation was related to overcoming difficulties and solving problems. Three questions were there in this section.

Questions	Options to Choose		
	Yes	No	Not Sure
Do you find a way around obstacles that arise?	77.8%	14.8%	7.4%
Do you ask for help appropriately?	64.8%	20.4%	14.8%
Do you solve problems successfully?	63%	14.8%	22.2%

There is a significant percentage of prospective teachers responding negatively or not sure in overcoming difficulties and solving problems. The experience, knowledge and confidence may be the reasons.

3. Taking initiative

The third life skill was related to taking initiatives. There were two questions in this section.

Questions	Options to Choose		
	Yes	No	Not Sure
Do you carry out tasks without being told?	48.1%	35.2%	16.7%
Do you show age appropriate leadership?	59.3%	25.9%	14.8%

The skill to take initiative is essential for not for a teacher but any individual. A well trained teacher having sufficient knowledge and practice can take the initiative in his or her professional life more frequently and easily.

4. Understanding and Following Instructions

The fourth life skill observed in the survey was related to understanding and following instructions. This section has three questions, each one related to the study.

Questions	Options to Choose		
	Yes	No	Not Sure
Do you understand appropriate instructions when given?	77.8%	11.1%	11.1%
Do you comply with instructions?	79.6%	11.1%	9.3%
Do you ask for clarification when needed?	79.6%	7.4%	13%

A fair percentage of prospective teachers have given ‘yes’ response. It shows that are at ease to understand the situations or directions given to them and easily follow the given instructions. Still more than 22% prospective teachers are not comfortable in this life skill.

5. Managing Conflicts

The fifth life skill of the survey was related to the skill of managing conflict. This section has three questions.

Questions	Options to Choose		
	Yes	No	Not Sure
Do you accept appropriate discipline?	77.8%	13%	9.3%
Do you show appropriate assertiveness?	75.9%	16.7%	7.4%
Do you resolve disagreements appropriately?	74.1%	9.3%	16.7%

Nearly 25% of the prospective teachers who participated in the survey showed assertiveness with the fact that they find difficulties in managing conflicts. It’s a significantly clear that the prospective teachers realise the lack of life skills in their personality which should be improved by guidance and supervision of their teacher educators.

Conclusion

The survey showed assertiveness with the fact that the a greater percentage of prospective teachers is capable in managing life skills but a fair percentage is still finding difficulties in few life skills like taking initiatives and managing conflicts. Life skills are crucial and a fundamental component of every educational system globally. Research and skills for productivity and innovation could come from a good teacher education programme. It’s critical to keep in mind that life skills education in a teacher education programme humanises education rather than seeing it as just another subject. It facilitates the achievement of goals

by organising thought and effort. A good teacher education programme can be expanded spirally in both depth and breadth after it has been created, particularly in the curriculum. How to incorporate life skills education in a wider sense into the regular teacher education curriculum needs careful consideration. Our curriculum frameworks and educational strategies have begun to emphasize the importance of life skills in teacher education of prospective teachers.

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