



Higher Order Thinking Skills: Demand Pedagogical Strategies for Life Skill Education

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Abstract

In a world faced with challenges and changes, it is important to equip the students with necessary skills to adopt to the demands of knowledge society. Life skill education can contribute to developing competencies and capabilities of the youth. Further, it is decisive for the development of human resources and encourages social harmony, tolerance, multiculturalism and scientific humanism among the learners in India. It empowers learners so that they can make right decisions, manage issues and enhance the quality of lives. Life skills help the adolescents to understand their strength and weakness. It improves their abilities to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Life skill education, if incorporated in pedagogical practices through different strategies can improve students' capability and enhance higher order thinking skills contribute to quality in education. This paper is intended to highlight the importance of life skill in pedagogical practices for developing higher order thinking skills.

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Introduction

Skill development is a lifelong process. It is a process that helps individuals to grow and mature, learn to have confidence in one's on decisions and discover sources of strength within and outside one selves. The concept of 'skill' has been used in education since long with a much broader meaning. In fact, skill has been an important term in education. It has been indiscriminately applied and referred in all academic endeavours. It is hard to imagine a teacher or school leader who is not aware of the importance of teaching higher-order thinking skills to prepare young men and women to live in the 21st Century. However, the extent to which higher-order thinking skills are taught and assessed continues to be an area of debate, with many teachers and employers expressing concern that young people 'cannot think'. Teachers are good at writing and asking literal questions (e.g., "Name the parts of a body"), but we tend to do this far too often. Students must be taught to find the information they need, judge its worth, and think at higher levels. There is simply too much information in the world for us to waste students' time with regurgitations of basic facts (Bellanca, 1997). Life Skill, though in existence from the period when man started living in the society, there was only natural development of the skill, that too only in few people. The effort to increase the skill of the people through the literacy programme was a turning point that focused the importance of life skills.

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There was a general feeling that education does not equip girls and boys to meet real life challenges. Though all the people will come under the purview of life skill development and all should practice Life Skill for their betterment. Thus, life skill has emerged as the basic skill for the holistic development of the individual.

Higher order thinking skills

Higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) is a concept popular in American education. It distinguishes critical thinking skills from low-order learning outcomes, such as those attained by rote memorization. HOTS include synthesizing, analysing, reasoning, comprehending, application, and evaluation. High-order thinking skills are thought to be harder to teach and learn than mere facts but are ultimately more important for developing critical thinking and analytical faculties. Though essential at the university and college level, high-order thinking skills are thought to be increasingly important in early education. This is possible through life skill education.

Life skill education is a very powerful tool for developing higher order thinking skills of students. HOTS is based on various taxonomies of learning, particularly the one created by [Benjamin Bloom](#) in his 1956 book, "[Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals.](#)" [Higher-order thinking skills](#) are reflected by the top three levels in Bloom's Taxonomy: analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Life Skills

Life skills have been defined as "*the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life*" – (WHO). Life skills include psychosocial

competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, solve problems, think critically, creatively, and communicate effectively. It also helps to build healthy relationships with others, and cope with managing stress and emotions to a healthy and productive life. Essentially, there are two kinds of skills, those related to thinking termed as “*thinking skills*”; and skills related to dealing with others termed as “*social skills*”. *The Core Life Skills advocated by WHO are the following:*

Self-Awareness includes recognition of ‘self’, our character, our strengths and weakness, desires and dislikes. Developing self-awareness can help us in recognizing when we are stressed or feel under pressure. It is often pre-requisite to effective communication and interpersonal relations as well as for developing empathy for others.

Empathy is the ability to imagine what life is like for another person. Empathy can help us to accept others, who may be very different from ourselves. This can improve social interactions, especially, in situations of ethnic or cultural diversity. Empathy can also help to encourage nurturing behaviour towards people in need of care and assistance.

Critical thinking is an ability to analyse information and experiences in an objective manner. Critical thinking can contribute to recognize and assess the factor that influence attitudes and behaviours, such as values, peer pressure and the media.

Creative thinking is a novel way of seeing or doing things that is characteristics of four components- fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration.

Decision making helps us to deal constructively with important issues in our lives and take appropriate action. It teaches us how to be proactive in making decisions about our life in relation to a healthy assessment of the different options available and in determining what effects these different decisions are likely to have.

Problem solving helps us to deal constructively with problems in our lives. Significant problems that are left unresolved can cause mental stress and give rise to accompanying physical strain.

Interpersonal relationship skills help us to relate in positive ways with the people we interact with. This means being able to maintain friendly relations with family, friends and colleagues, which can be of great important source of social support. It also means being able to end relationships constructively without bitterness and anger.

Effective communication means that we are able to express ourselves, both verbally and non-verbally in ways that are appropriate to our cultures and situations. This means being able to express our opinions and desires, and also our needs and fear. It means being able ask for advice and help in times of need.

Coping with stress means recognizing the sources of stress in our lives, recognizing how this affects us, and acting in ways that help us control our levels of stress, by

changing our environment or lifestyle and learning how to relax.

Coping with emotions means involving recognizing with emotions with us and others. Intense emotions like anger or sadness can have negative effects on health and has to respond appropriately.

From the above discussion we can understand that all higher order thinking skill especially critical thinking skills, creative thinking skills, decision making skill, problem solving skill etc, are come under life skills which are described by WHO and also agree that Life skills are a group of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that help people make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-management skills to lead a healthy and productive life. Which will definitely make the seeds for cultivating higher order thinking skills in later life of children who completed the life skill education in their pedagogical practices.

Why Higher Order Thinking Skills

Higher order thinking is imperative to progress. No explorer ever discovered anything new by following in the footsteps of those who had been there before. Exposes further fields of knowledge and know-how which may again, be transferred, reapplied and collated to create a new and improved version

If you are committed to learning, growing and have constant evaluation then it is vital that you commit yourself to improve your Higher Order Thinking Skills. Thinking is the heart of all learning. Thinking makes things that have yet to be perceived possible, thinking facilitates and enhances our ability to perform and produce and pass on such vital information to others who would then do the same.

Learning and knowledge is organic. If we give the right climate, it will grow and thrive. When given how many problems our planet faces today, the need for more people capable of thinking at Higher Order levels is more important now than ever.

How life skill develops higher order thinking skills

Life skills are imparted in a supportive learning environment. The Life Skills-based Education refers to an interactive process of teaching and learning which enables the learners to acquire knowledge and to develop attitudes for a healthy way of life. Life skills are not a substitute but are complementary. These skills can be inculcated among students through various learning strategies. Mainly

1. **Discussion:** It is a purposeful conversation proceeding towards a certain objective. Discussion involves exchange and sharing of ideas, experiences, facts and opinion on given topics. The conversation can be used in large or small groups
2. **Cognitive Apprenticeship:** It consists of six methods of teaching – modelling, coaching, scaffolding, articulation, reflection, and exploration and aimed at encouraging learner

- autonomy in carrying out expert problem-solving processes.
3. **Brain Storming:** Brain storm is the free, uninhabited generation of ideas about a particular topic or question in a given period of time. In brain storming, the students are given theme and are encouraged to freely express their ideas without hesitation. The evaluation of ideas, was deferred to occur at the end. The students are benefited to generate and list the ideas. Greater acceptance is given to those ideas which were more creative.
 4. **Debate:** A debate is a discussion which involves two opposing parties with each group expressing opinions or views about a given topic or subject. Each group competitively attempts to win the other to their side of the argument. At the end of the debate the group with more points is declared the winner.
 5. **Role Play:** An informal dramatization in which pupil acted out a suggested situation. Provides experience in how to handle a potential situation in real life, increasing empathy for others and insight in to one's own feelings
 6. **Story telling:** They involve telling of narratives with particular theme, based on actual events. They give account of detailed information about an event or life situation in an interesting way while still passing a moral message. Stories can be composed or collected based on specific themes on Life Skills for example assertiveness, negotiations, decision making. When reading or telling stories they should be dramatic and larger than real life experiences.
 7. **Concept Mapping:** Process of representing the conceptual structure of a subject in a two-dimensional form. Concept map is a device for representing the conceptual structure of a subject/ discipline in a two-dimensional form. It is a special form of a web diagram for exploring knowledge, gathering and sharing information.
 8. **Situated Learning:** It is widely used in college teaching in India. In this model, students collect information and critically reflect on the theme. Situated learning exposes the students to life experiences and allows them to participate in the teaching learning process
 9. **Case studies:** It is a true or imaginary story which describes a problem, a situation or a character. It may be a dilemma in which the participants should come up with options on how they would resolve the conflict. Sometime it offers clues on how to solve a problem or provoke the reader's ability to solve the problem.
 10. **Miming:** Miming is acting without words by use of gestures, signs, physical movement and facial expression. Unlike drama, the idea or situation is solely communicated through actions.

Miming is suitable for communicating sensitive messages. It helps in expressing messages, which cannot easily be put into words.

11. Etc.

Life skills enable adolescents to explore alternatives, make rational decision in solving problem and facilitate productive interpersonal relationships with others. In addition, it fosters initiative, creativity and adaptability to meet the challenges of everyday life. It also promotes the ability to maintain a state of mental wellbeing and to demonstrate positive behaviour social problems and protection of human rights and finally to create worthwhile competencies among them. So, its essential to train our children using the strategies listed above. Finally, the end result will be the youth with enough higher order thinking capacities.

Conclusion

Concludingly we can say that Higher order thinking (HOT) is thinking on a level that is higher than memorizing facts or telling something back to someone exactly the way it was told to you. HOT takes thinking to higher levels than restating the facts and requires students to do something with the facts — understand them, infer from them, connect them to other facts and concepts, categorize them, manipulate them, put them together in new or novel ways, and apply them as we seek new solutions to new problems. Life skill education can be transformative system to supplement education practices and has a quality level bench mark to empower the learners with skill based advance competencies in life. Further, Life skill approach is considered a major strategy for the development of higher order thinking capacities. So, It helps in all round physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual development of youth population in India.

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