

Mapping Life Skills Development for the Language Classroom: Observations and Reflections

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***Abstract-** The development of life skills is currently the primary goal of school education. Students' holistic development is facilitated by the development of life skills. Life skills are the mixture of thinking skills, emotional skills and social skills that helps the learners accomplish their daily requirements. The development of practical life skills is mostly overlooked at the school stage. The school places a high value on academic success. In order to prepare students to satisfy their own needs and deal with problems on their own, life skills development must be addressed at the school stage. The development of life skills is substandard at the school stage. Life skills development takes place as a separate course during the school years. However, the development of life skills should be interwoven with other educational subjects. Student life skills can be developed through the use of language. The classroom is the most easily accessible location for students, and it is where they spend the most of their time at school. Language classroom can be a most appropriate place for developing life skills among students. In view of the present context, this chapter is through light on concept of life skills including essential life skills for learners, need of developing life skills through language and exemplar life skills-based activities in language, transfer of life skills through language.*

Key Words: Life Skills Development, Language Classroom, Life Skills Transfer.

Introduction:

Developing life skills is one of the primary goals of the National Education Policy, 2020. Life skills are a part of life that can't be taken apart. It has been shown that life skills may improve mental health (Jamali et al.), as well as one's self-esteem, self-confidence (Dange et al.), and self-efficacy (Koyuncu). A decrease in gender-related issues is facilitated by the acquisition of life skills (Chaudhary, Sangeeta, and Bhamini Mehta). The development of life skills has a positive impact on emotional and social adjustment (Roodbari et al.). The development of life skills improves the quality of relationships between people (Umesh, and Kaur, Navkiran). Individuals' personalities are modified through the development of life skills (Kumar). Life skills development enhances individuals' quality of life (Ritu). Individuals' emotional intelligence is improved by acquiring life skills (Gheitarani et al.). It has been shown that the development of life skills improves person's psychological well-being (Sadati et al) and Self-concept (Anuradha). HIV prevention (Govt. of India) and the delaying of child marriage (Amin et al.)

may benefit from the development of life skills. Anger management is much easier with the development of life skills (Ahmadian, M., and L. Fata). Developing life skills may help alleviate anxiety, despair and insomnia, (Shabani et al.). Students who learn life skills are less likely to use cigarettes and alcohol (Abd Elwahab El Sayed et al.). The emerging approach to avoiding child's 3d (death, illness, and disability) is the development of life skills (WHO-a). Development of life skills is beneficial for autistic children's ability to communicate verbally (Saad). Blind girls' assertiveness and self-esteem are boosted through the acquisition of life skills (Soheila et al.). Thus, life skills development benefits all students holistically. Since students spend the majority of their school time in the classroom, it may have a big impact on their overall development. For its focus on LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) abilities, the language classroom has the inherent potential to engage all students in the learning process. This makes it an effective tool for fostering life skills in children. Therefore, a diverse language classroom may favourably impact the development of a learner's life skills.

Concept of Life Skills and Essential Life Skills for the Learners:

Life skills are a set of skills that make it easier for an individual to confront and overcome the challenges of everyday life. WHO in 1997 defined life skills as "life skills are abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life". Life skills are defined by the CBSE in 2013 as abilities that an individual may acquire in order to have a productive and healthy life. So, life skills are abilities that will help one to lead a better life.

Learners require a variety of life skills. Here are some of the abilities that individuals will need to succeed in life (CBSE):

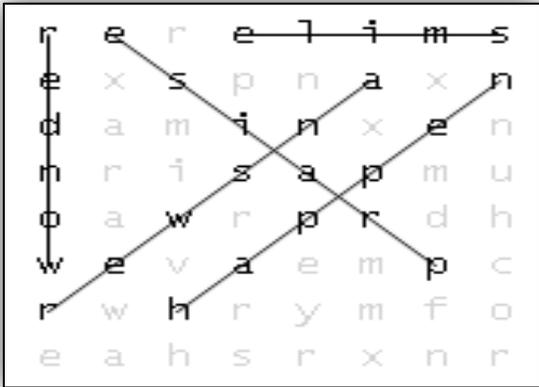
- **Thinking Skills:** Problem Solving, Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking, Decision Making and Self-awareness.
- **Emotional Skills:** Managing Stress, Managing Emotion and Resisting Peer Pressure.
- **Social Skills:** Communication Skills, Assertiveness Skills, Co-operation Skills and Empathy.

Need of Developing Life Skills through Language and Exemplar Activities for the Development of Life Skills through Language:

Life skills are developed among students in a non-integrated fashion but it should be developed in an integrated manner because to carry out a separate programme on life skills is not realistic in countries like India. To maximise the use of available resources and the holistic development of pupils, it is vital to develop life skills in an integrated fashion with existing school subjects. In this way, language can serve as a vehicle for the development of a wide range of life skills. There are several ways to include life skills into a language textbook, such as by employing a variety of different learning strategies, such as puzzles, realistic situation and visualising pictures. The following three activities were prepared by a researcher based on the English textbook for CBSE Class VI.

Activity-1
Class-VI
Subject- English
Chapter Name- Who Did Patrick's Homework
Life Skills- Thinking Skills
Technique- Puzzle

Activity Procedure: Students will be asked to explore the puzzle by their facilitator. The next step is for the facilitator to instruct the children to draw a line across each word. Then, they will be encouraged to link these words to their everyday lives. The students will not be given any word to solve this puzzle.



Instructions: Words can cross over one other and share letters in any direction.

Words: answer, smile, praise, and wonder, happen.

Facilitative Questions:

- 👉 Take a look at the puzzle and see if you can find any word.
- 👉 Line up words with a blue dot?
- 👉 How would you describe a typical day in your daily life to someone with each word and action?
- 👉 What if you had to sum up your entire day in a single sentence with any of this word?

Activity-2

Class-VI

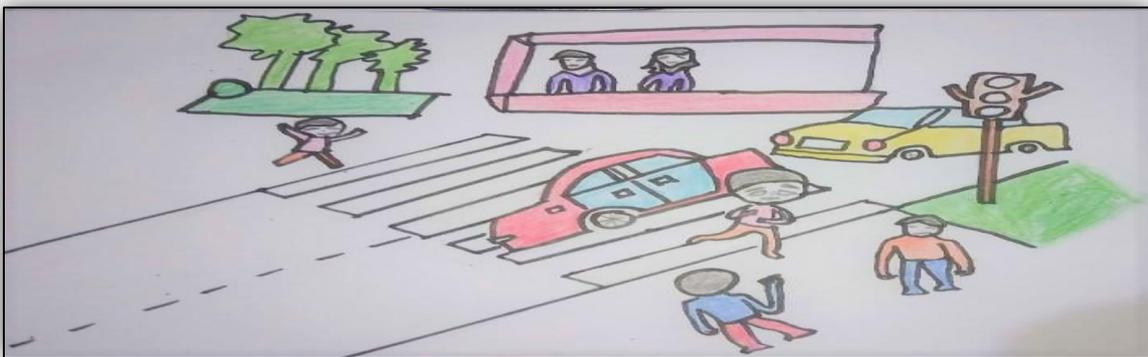
Subject- English

Chapter Name- Who Did Patrick's Homework

Life Skills- Emotional Skills

Technique- Visualizing Picture

Activity Procedure: Students will be encouraged to observe the picture by their facilitator. Then, they will be invited to verbalize their feeling in writing. Once students are finished writing, their facilitator will ask them to share with all.



Facilitative Questions:

Take a look at the pictures and consider what you may do if you had an experience similar to those depicted.

Activity-3

Class-VI

Subject- English

Chapter Name- Who Did Patrick's Homework?

Life Skills- Social Skills

Technique- Realistic Situation

Activity Procedure: The class will be divided into four groups (Groups W, X, Y, and Z). Each group will receive the mentioned realistic situation and questions. Each member of a specific group will be invited to discuss their own experiences with friends' care.

Realistic Situation:

You are currently staying at a hostel. Your friend becomes sick. It is early morning, and you notice he is feeling ill. Sleeping in the morning is also one of your favourite pastimes.

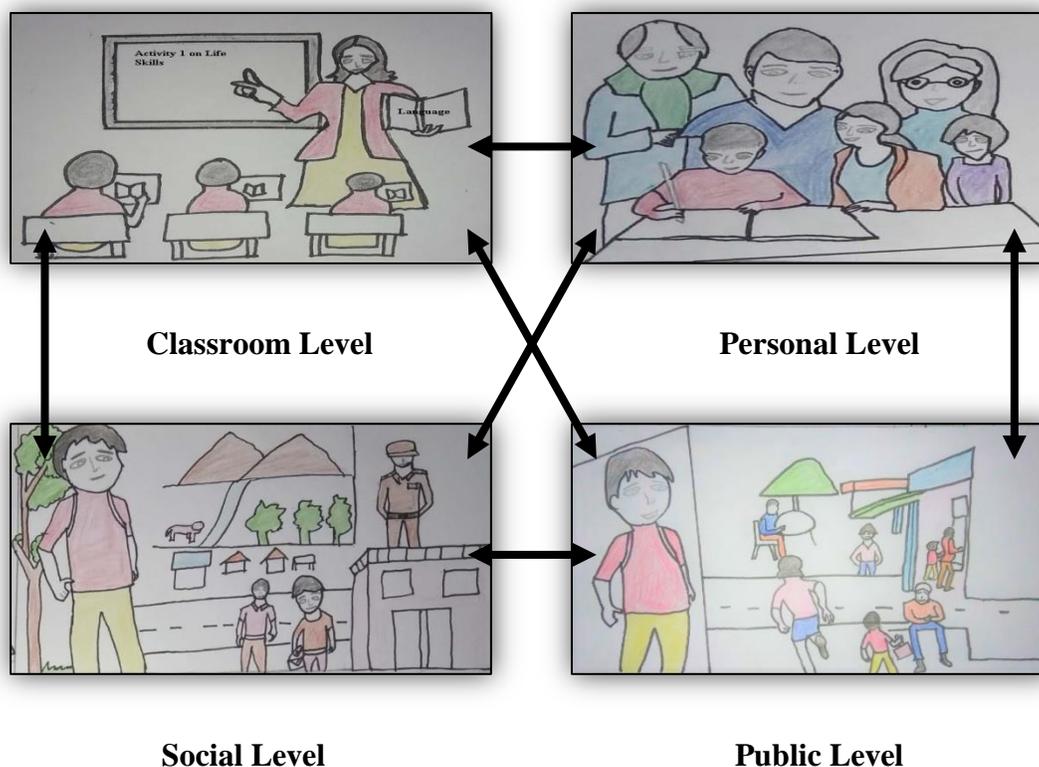
Facilitative Questions:

- 👉 What will you do if you observe like this?
- 👉 How will you take care of your friend?

Transfer of Life Skills through Language: A Sketch

Life skills transfer is the process of transmitting life skills from one person to another person. It can be a natural process of transferring life skills from one person to another in varied living conditions. Life skills must be transmitted from personal level to public level. Language can be an effective medium for transmitting life skills. A sketch of transfer of life skills is presented below:

Sketch of Life Skills Transfer through Language



“ ← → ” This arrow represents the transfer of life skills from one level to the next

Conclusion:

The acquisition of practical knowledge and abilities is a critical component of formal education. It is important to focus on the acquisition of practical life skills. There should be an emphasis on integrating life skills with existing school subjects. The development of life skills in students can be greatly aided by the use of language. Individuals can most easily acquire life skills in a classroom setting. Life skills should be taught in a language classroom because language is itself a culture that reflects many social situations. Communication is facilitated by the ability to express oneself via the use of language. God has truly blessed us with the gift of language. Language-based life skills focused activities should be designed to help students for acquiring life skills. Language is an excellent medium for transferring life skills from one individual to another. Therefore, textbooks for language learning should be redesigned to incorporate life skills into the curriculum.

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