

Life skill-based education of geography in Iran

Heydar Lotfi

*Assistant prof. in Political Geography, Islamic Azad University,
Garmsar Branch, Garmsar, Iran*

Navid Shakaroyan*

*M.A. student in Tourism Planning, Islamic Azad University,
Garmsar Branch, Garmsar, Iran*

Abstract

One of the aims of education is to help students improving fast based on their preferences in education centers. Also teachers should try modern methods to increase knowledge and skills which are useful for their future. Some countries take geography education objectives into account in their education systems while others see the curriculum of the subject without analyzing the objectives. Life skill-based education increasingly attracts experts and teachers during the last two decades in Iran since traditional educational methods could not be used like past. Meanwhile education should be based on learner's demands so they could use them in life and workplace. The current study proposes a novel instruction design that could almost provide this.

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*Corresponding author: n.shakaroyan@yahoo.com

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Introduction

Many people lack sufficient and basic skills to face with life issues, though deep cultural changes in lifestyles. This makes them sensitive to face with daily life issues and their requirements. In 1990s, “education for all” movement focusing mostly on education accessibility (though being unreachable) established by Jamin. After a decade activity, the results indicated that the education presentation was not enough for all. In Dakar activity statute in 200, the necessity of conducting “a qualitative education” in an expanded view of education was approved by the signed countries including Iran. The sixth objective of Dakar statute emphasized on improving all aspects of a qualitative education so that everyone could take advantage of it and clear results especially in “learning”, “mathematics education”, “life skill-based education”. Therefore, education experts emphasize on the necessity of educating legislating, life skills and social justice.

The necessity of life skill-based education

Nowadays many people still lack basic and necessary skills and abilities even with human scientific advancements and their effects in life styles. These make them sensitive to face with routine life issues and problems. Effective parameter and factor complexities in development are so high that the experts in setting the defined pattern to study a society development. Therefore mixing various parameters such as education, economy, hygiene and so forth helped them to reach an expanded meaning and a common unit for constant development. Meanwhile, the effects and roles of educational parameters in constant development are so critical and basic. Therefore in knowledge development, expanded field of complicated educational processes comes into mind. In knowledge development, the effective role in society movement to improve production systems could be noticed. More importantly, the basic step in appropriate and updated development of a knowledge-based society is accurate evaluating and assessing to define the priorities and shortages in knowledge-based society structure.

According to whole role of education, Experts and professionals take it as an effective parameter in preventing social issues and the way to behave effectively and timely with it and believe “life skills education” plays a definitive role in preventing issues, facing with

them and finally “improving the life quality of humans” to strengthen communicative skills and to improve socio-behavioral abilities.

Life skill education methods

Experiences of various countries indicated that the best ages to educate are 6 to 16. Therefore, world life skills education begins prior the elementary school and gradually completes. It is attempted to schedule in a way that the cultural and social conditions coordinate in every society.

These days, life skill education in Iran education system is flourishing in common education methods, which are of few primary preventative intervention strategies. To achieve these skills, schools are the most important places. Life skills are related to actions and behaviors and hence they should be taught practically. These instructions could be taught by active learning methods in education programs and/or showing life skills to the students in schools.

The definition of life skills:

Different definitions are given in various texts and references which some are as followed.

A collection of abilities that make the person able to live on communicating with God, achieving sophistication and improving compatibility with other, resulting in improving his life quality.

Life skills and social and mental abilities are effective and conformed behaviors that make persons face with life issues more effectively.

Life skill education is the most direct way to improve social and mental skills of the persons.

Life skill expression is used with different meanings, such as:

Working skills (how a person employs, keeps his job and progresses in his job),

Caring skills (consuming healthy foods, proper tooth brushing, being neat and so forth),

Skills for Logical reactions to risky situations of life (such as being able to say no to drugs in gatherings and so forth),

Morris A. Elias, professor of Rogers University in the USA and the author of “social decision and growth of life skills” said “life skills mean making appropriate and effective interpersonal communications,

performing social responsibilities, making proper decisions, solving contrasts and conflicts without doing actions harming self and others. Bando and Francis, sociology experts in years before and after 1998, define life skills as developing critical thinking to analyze the probabilities, controlling the behaviors, acquiring more skills and knowledge, two-way communicating and editing social and physical environment.

Collection of skills provides the adaptation and positive and effective behaviors. These skills make the persons able to admit social responsibilities without harming self and others with demands, expectations and daily problems, especially in interpersonal communications.

Types of social skills

One the most effective ways to understand something is to classify it scientifically. To achieve this, everything counted in this area should be proposed and then a basis should be defined for the classification.

In case of life skills, the following collection could be proposed:

Behavioral skills

Practical or physical skills

Mental skills

Social skills (decisive skill) include decisive deny, decisive request and problem solving skill

Personal skills

Emotional skills

Communicational skills

Cognitive skills

Each of the above-mentioned skills could have some examples that surely stimulate the reader to ask some questions and to complain, sometimes. For example behavioral, social and behavioral skills are closely related.

To clarify, pay attention to these skills:

Self-reformation skill

Following behavioral basics

Performing religious duties

Social norm-based behaviors

Helping others

Behaving with parents

Socialization

Acculturation

Following rules and laws

Group communications

Making friends

Braveness

Choosing jobs

Honesty

It seems that these skills could not be classified and differentiated simply.

Specificity view of skills

Skills could be categorized in to three groups as followed:

General skills= society + general education

Semi-special skills= society+ high school education

Special skills= society+ academic education

Effectiveness duration view of skills

The skills could be categorized into three groups based on the effectiveness duration as followed:

Skills that could be achieved in a short time

Skills that could be achieved in a moderate time

Skills that could be achieved in a long time

Economic view of the skills

High profit skills

Non-profit skills

Costing skills

Little-cost skills

Profession view of skills

Simple skills

Semi-complicated skills

Complicated skills

Learning view of skills

Self-learning skills

Taught skills

Conjugate skills

Skills based on number of students

Personal skills

Group skills

In some important references, the skills are announced in 10, each of which has some compartments.

Life skills include ten main and basic skills that mostly categorized in pair since there a natural correlation between each pair and they are like head and tale of a coin. These include:

- Self-awareness/ empathy
- Communication/interpersonal communications
- Decision making/ problem solving
- Creative thinking/ critical thinking
- Coping with emotions/ coping with stress

Ten skills

Self-awareness

Self-awareness is the ability to recognize and to know the characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, demands, fear and hatred. Improving self-awareness helps the person to know whether he is stressed or not and this is usually the necessary perquisite for effective and sympathetic social and interpersonal communications.

Empathy

Empathy means a person could understand others even when he is not in their conditions. It helps him to admit other even when he is different and to respect them. Empathy improves the social communications and results in supportive behaviors for others.

Effective communication

This skill helps the person to express himself according to the culture, society and his position verbally and non-verbally, i. e. the person could express his ideas, beliefs and emotions and help and guide others upon request. The ability to ask for help and guidance in necessity is one of important parameters of a proper communication.

Interpersonal communications

These skills could help to make positive and effective interpersonal communications with others. Of these is the ability to make friends that plays a vital role as an important source in social and mental health and warm family relations.

Decision making

This skill helps the person to decide wisely about the issues. If the children and teenagers could actively decide about their actions, check the different

aspects of their choice and the results of it, they surely put in higher mental health.

Problem solving

This skill helps the person to solve his problems more effectively. If important life issues are not solved, they could result in mental stress causing body stress.

Creative thinking

This type of thinking could help to both problems and appropriate decisions. By this type of thinking, various solutions and their individual results are assessed. This skill could make the person to experience the problems directly and even if there is no problem and decision making process, adopt and flex more with daily life.

Critical thinking

Critical thinking is the ability to analyze information and experiences. Learning these skills make the teenagers to be able to resist upon group and multi-media pressure and norm fighting and to survive from the resulted damages.

Problem solving

This skill makes the person to identify the emotions of self and others, to know the effects of the emotions on the behavior and to react properly to different emotions.

If the person does not behave properly upon emotions such as depression and anger, they effect negatively on physical and mental health and causes negative results.

The ability to cope with stress

This skill includes understanding various types of life and their effects on him. Recognizing the stress sources and their effects on the people makes the person to decrease the stress by actions.

The components of ten life skills

Self-awareness

- Recognizing the strengths
- Recognizing the weaknesses
- Self-realistic picture
- Recognizing rights and responsibilities
- Describing values
- Motivation to recognize

Communication skills

- Effective verbal and non-verbal communication
- Assertion
- Negotiation
- Avoidance
- Overcoming to shyness
- Listening

Empathy

- Interest in others
- Tolerating different people
- Interpersonal communication with being less aggressive
- Being more lovely (for making friends)
- Respect others

Interpersonal skills

- Cooperation
- Trust in group
- Distinguishing appropriate interpersonal boundaries
- Making friends
- Starting and ending relationships

Problem solving skills

- Detecting the causes of the problems and accurate evaluation
- Asking for help
- Compromising (to solve conflicts)
- Recognizing the centers for problem solving
- Detecting common solutions for the society

Creative thinking skills

- Positive thinking
- Active learning (looking for new information)
- Self-expression
- Recognizing the other available choices (to decide)
- Recognizing new solutions for the problems

Skills for facing with emotions

- Recognizing the emotions of self and others
- Correlating the emotions with feelings, thinking and behavior
- Dealing with frustration, anger, impatience and anxiety
- Dealing with intense emotions of others

Decision-making skills

- Active decision making based on knowing the actions that may affect the choice
- Deciding based on accurate evaluating of situations
- Setting realistic goals
- Scheduling and being responsible for actions
- Preparing to change the decisions to cope with new situations

Critical thinking skills

- Understanding the cultural and social effects on norms, attitudes and behaviors
- Understanding inequalities, prejudices and injustices
- Knowing that others are not always true.
- Recognizing the roles of a responsible resident

Skills to cope with stress

- Coping with unchangeable situations
- Coping strategies with difficult situation (loss, rejection, criticism)
- Facing with problems without getting addicted
- Calming down in stressful situations
- Timing

Also the ten skills have been pointed out in another form, as followed:

Decision making ability

Problem solving skill

Creative thinking skill

Critical skill thinking

Effective communication skill

The ability to make adaptable interpersonal relations

Self-awareness skill

Empathy skill

The ability to cope with emotions

The ability to cope with stresses

As you can see, all of these are the life skills and the classification could be continued in other aspects. Now the main question is that geography education could help to which of these skills or in other words, what is the role of geography education in developing life skills?

To answer this, it is better to refer to one of life skill definition again. "A collection of abilities that make the person able to live on

communicating with God, achieving sophistication and improving compatibility with other, resulting in improving his life quality. “

While the definition of geography is to study relations between the people and environment to improve people`s lives.

Is there a common point between these two? If so, could this common point is used to relate geography and life skills?

But how?

Geography provides facilities according to its definition, including interdisciplinary and holistic view to the events. This could help us in education and develop some of above-mentioned skills.

Cognitive skills (providing the basis to recognize natural and human environments and increasing resident knowledge),

Special skills (skills of orientation, map reading, remote evaluation and so on),

General skills (skills of devoting to God-given gifts, behaving wisely in environment, thinking about the creation of universe, being optimistic in common points of human and environment, etc.),

To achieve the acceptable reasons, it is recommended to think about the following subjects:

The role of geography in strengthening or weakening the life skills

The role of geography teachers in strengthening or weakening the life skills

The role of geography secretariat in strengthening or weakening the life skills

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