

## **A Comparative Study On The Extent Of Life Skill Identification By Student Teachers Using Narrative And Visual Media.**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Life Skill education is a participatory learning programme aimed at promoting positive and adaptive behaviour by assisting individual in developing and practicing psycho-social skill that minimize risk factors and maximize protective factors. Life Skill is believed to be derived from Western Culture. But the investigator realizes that life skills were an integral part of our ancient educational system. Stories can play a major role for in life skill education. It is the sound of mind and poem of emotions. Life Skill Theories can be transmitted precisely through stories. We know Life Skill is not something to be only theoretical. But without theory, the purpose and significance of a concept won't be clear. With theory, the awareness on skill can be acquired effectively and excellently. For this purpose stories are introduced in order to give critical awareness about life skill application and its role in the successful life. The investigator identifies life skill included in three narrative interpretations and designed a visual module based on these interpretations. The mean scores on awareness of life skill for visual media and narrative interpretations group are not significantly different. This concludes that the visual media and narrative interpretation are equally important in generating awareness on life skill among student teachers. It would be a way of empowering youth to fulfil their life motives and their dreams.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Narrative Interpretations, Visual Module, Life Skill Extraction, Life Skill Education, retelling of stories,*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The World Health Organization has defined Life Skill as the abilities for adaptive and positive behavior that enable individual to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. The constituents of Life Skill include the capacity necessary to apply conceptual thinking and our reflection to concrete situations. This implies capabilities to promote an effective interaction with the environment and to provide an appropriate motivational attitude. Life skill is the capacity to strive for a common goal as a part of heterogeneous group.

Life Skill education is a programme which is based on needs and outcome. It is a participatory learning aimed at promoting positive and adaptive behavior by assisting individual in developing and practicing psycho-social skill that minimize risk factors and maximize protective factors. Life Skill education programmes are based on both theory and evidence and are learner-focused, are delivered by competent facilitators, and are appropriately evaluated to ensure continuous improvement of documented results. Modules on Life Skill training programme for adults and children assert that effective acquisition of Life Skill can influence the way we feel about ourselves and about others, and equally will influence the way we are perceived by others. Benefits of Life Skill education are better teacher-pupil relationship, desirable behavior change, reduced learner problems such as truancy, absenteeism, drug and substance abuse and teenage pregnancies. The social benefits enable learners to choose good and reliable friends, assist learners to recognize and avoid dicey situations, bring about meaningful interaction among learners, teachers and the school community. In the context of advantages related to health, it leads to less strain on health facilities and also helps people to be responsible for their own and other people's health. In the cultural context, it promotes harmonious interaction between people of different cultures and helps in the creation of value based society. It leads to high productivity due to a motivated, strong and energetic labor force. Life skill education acts as a booster for better orientation and superior culture. It can impart talent in every child. Talent need not be inborn. Talent is a gift, it can be gained by education and training which helps someone to achieve the desired skill and knowledge. Talent is the combination of three essential elements called intelligence, creativity and responsibility.

The generic thinking, reinforced across society, is that information is necessary but not sufficient to develop or change behaviour. This focus on behaviour changes as a primary objective distinguishes life skill from other approaches such as information acquisition but is not generally effective in making an impact on behaviour. Practical experience shows that behaviour is substantially more difficult to change and requires more intensive approaches than knowledge and attitude change. While information is necessary for behaviour change,

it is not sufficient to be effective, primarily because necessary balance of all three essential components (KAS) is not achieved. A direct consequence of achieving this overall goal is the achievement of positive outcomes in terms of knowledge, attitudes and values and intermediate life skill.

### **IMPORTANCE OF STORIES**

Telling stories or narration is a human attribute. Traditionally human beings are regarded as reasoning animal. It is a tool used to express ideas, persuade others to accept ideas and to understand the history. We can find various stories related to every field in literature, advertisements, speeches and many other discourses.

Most of the training programmes are forgettable and boring. To make them interesting stories could be fit into the discourse in an effective manner. Stories concentrate on the overall plot and not the underlying point. Stories can persuade the audience. Often we'll barely notice what the story is trying to say and ultimately we'll have no position to argue against. We can build a connection with other people through stories. It can build rapport and trust. These are two big qualities which aids in influencing others. Emotions are central to efficient story telling. Emotions are also useful for building strong memories of what is being said and for strengthening whatever message we're trying to get across. It's a good way to get someone to remember what we've said. Someone listening to a story is engaged as an active listener.

Now companies are getting professional story tellers to unify and motivate groups of employees. Story narration is not only viewed as a powerful tool, but something every leader needs to be competent in.

Storytelling is a skill that has been gaining importance over the past few decades. It's time that people take their storytelling skills more seriously. It has never been more important to answer the question 'what's your story, supporting life skill?'

### **IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL MODULE**

In social research, pictures can be used as an effective tool. In order to use photographs, either as data or as data generators, we need to have some notion of how viewers treat and understand photographic images: whether those viewers are informants or researchers. Because photo-elicitation generates extensive verbal commentary, use of this technique yields several benefits. Informants respond to photographs of their community, neighbours and family without hesitation. It is not the photographs themselves which inform, but rather, the analysis of them. The photographs show concrete details of events, activities and the contexts in which they occur, and provide data in detail about the particular situation.

The analysis of the images is performed by insights gained through fieldwork and informants' responses to the photo-sets. Photo-elicitation, used in conjunction with traditional methods of data collection, enhances our ability to understand the meaning of everyday life of community members.

The use of photographs in an investigation implies a presentational strategy which brings their multiple meanings to the foreground. By presenting photographs with an associated tag, we can draw attention of informants to the role of the photographer as an elicitor, and to viewers' proclivity to treat these pictures as mirror images of their subjects or as aesthetic objects. The yield of such an approach would be two-fold, giving the reader or viewer a way to understand the culture of the community under investigation, as well as a way to understand photography as a medium of communication.

This approach addresses the recommendation made by Wagner that the dialectic between the use of photographs to study human activity and the study of photographic imagery should be kept alive.

### **IMPLEMENTING VISUAL MODULE FOR RETELLING STORIES AND LIFE SKILL EXTRACTION**

Life Skill is well thought-out as a skill development programme. Since it is a skill, it can be attained only through training. There are many training methods to infuse these skills to students. But without understanding the exact advantage of gaining these skills, students won't dedicate themselves for this purpose. The importance of such skills as well as the necessity to be trained in those skills can be infused in children through stories and visual graphics. The investigator is examining the effectiveness of both these approaches below.

Life Skill is believed to be derived from Western Culture, and the system of Western thought. But the investigator realizes that life skills were an integral part of our ancient educational system. As part of the Gurukul system we imparted Life skill education effectively. This is explained with the help of three stories from our ancient classics. The investigator is extracting life skill components associated with these three stories. These stories are given to two sample groups: one of which is provided with narrative interpretations while the other with Visual Modules. The comparison between these methods facilitates a trainer to know the modality which is effective to introduce life skill among children.

## **NEED FOR THE STUDY**

Life Skill education is a very important and integral part of educational system worldwide. However, in Indian schools, Life Skill education is yet to be fully initiated and recognized as an integral part of the curriculum. Shiela Ramakrishnan, in her article in Teacher Plus, says value education is confused with Life Skill education. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) asserts that Life Skill education has been introduced in class 6th in 2003-4, in class 7th in 2004-5 and subsequently in classes 8th, 9th and 10th. The CBSE has presently introduced (in 2012) Life Skill training programme as part of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation targeted at the adolescent students between 10-18 years of age. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan (SSA) has, under its agenda, Life Skill training for the upper primary girls along with providing them quality elementary education. Some studies have revealed that Life Skill education has often been confused with vocational education also. When asked about the details of Life Skill education offered in the government schools, many teachers responded that the girl students are being taught to make dolls, stitch frocks, make candles and napkins. This data indicates that the Indian education system has not yet awakened to the necessity of life skill training programmes in schools.

Life skill Education is a novel promotional program that teaches generic life skill through participatory learning methods of games, debates, role-plays, and group discussion. Such initiatives provide the adolescent with a wide range of alternative and creative ways of solving problems. Repeated practicing of these Life Skills leads to certain mastery and helps to apply these skills to real life situations and to gain control over the situation. It is a promotional program, which improves the positive mental health and self-esteem. Our country places a premium on life values. Life Skill program empowers the youth to choose the appropriate values and behaviour which are ingredients of a successful life. The activities of Life Skill were planned to be experiential, participatory and also mainly targeted on the students. "Didactic methodology" or "advice" was not part of this model at any level. Cultural sensitivity was always maintained.

Stories can play a major role in this activity. It is the sound of mind and poem of emotions. Theory of Life Skill can be transmitted precisely through stories. We know Life Skill is not supposed to be only theoretical. But without theory, the purpose and significance of a concept is not clear. With theory, the awareness on skill can be acquired effectively and excellently. For this purpose stories are introduced, in order to give a critical awareness about life skill application and its role in the successful living.

In this technological era, the necessity of learning to develop your skills and to earn is more important than the traditional pedagogy of the past which was for the personal fulfilment. Life skills are an unavoidable part in the task of sustainable development, to be able to deal with paradox and conflict generated by the amount and pace of change. Life skill emphasizes in underpin initiative, motivation and entrepreneurship. It meets the demands of new work patterns that require the ability to communicate, team work, adapt to change, be innovative, and creative and be able to utilize new technology.

## **II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Life Skill is the ability which can be gained through various stages: familiarisation, perception, inculcation, blending and accomplishment. Among these stages, a life skill trainer should be mostly intent from inculcation of Life Skill through training programmes.

Two stages which are before inculcation, familiarisation and perception, are mostly neglected. Considering the theoretical and contextual background of this study, there is no well defined approach to teach these stages of life skill. Mostly the stress is on activity stage, which is skill-based. The absence of well defined guidelines for teaching life skill has led teachers to create their own individual methods for classroom training. Based on these techniques, the investigator has entitled the Study, '**A Comparative Study on the Extent of Life Skill Identification by Student Teachers Using Narrative and Visual Media**'.

## **OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE KEY TERMS**

Narrative: Three stories are selected from ancient Indian classics.

Life Skill Identification: Identify the components of Life Skill such as self awareness, empathy, creative thinking, critical thinking, interpersonal relationships, communication skill, problem solving, decision making, coping with stress, coping with emotions, which are inculcated in each of the stories.

Visual Media: Visual documentation of the selected stories in order to impart Life Skill Education.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. Identify the components of Life Skill included in three selected narrative interpretations.
2. Design a visual documentation based on the Life Skill Components included in the three selected stories.
3. Compare the extraction of Life Skill components from Narrative Interpretations and Visual Module included in the three selected stories. Data is collected from student teachers.

## HYPOTHESIS

1. There is no significant difference between the mean scores on the extraction of Life Skill components from Narrative Interpretations and Visual Module.

## III. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Experimental design was used to find effectiveness of visual documentation, based on the Life Skill Components which are part of the three selected stories, among student teachers. The sampling design includes random Parallel Group Design with post-test alone.

The population comprised student teachers of Training Colleges in Thiruvananthapuram. The sample selected by simple random sampling consists of 100 student teachers from Mar Theophilus Training College, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. Experimental group consists of 50 students and 50 are available for control group.

The following tools regarding Life Skill were used:

1. Transcript on three narrative interpretations includes:
  - a) Kashyapa's concept on grains relating with matter.
  - b) The best disciple of Acharya Drona
  - c) Ganesha rounding the world within seconds.
2. Transcript on Visual Module on stories.
3. Questionnaire to assess Life Skill extraction.

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The investigator identified the stories which include life skill components from the narrative interpretations of folklores in Kerala.

**Objective I:** To identify the components of Life Skill included in the three selected stories.

**Table showing the components of Life Skill included in the three selected stories.**

Life skills	Definitions	<i>First and Finest Discovery</i>	<i>Arjun</i>	<i>Ganapathi</i>
Self Awareness	Knowledge of one's own attitude, value goals and expectations	Sense of Conservation	Skilled archery	Disability to move fast
Empathy	Mental capacity to understand and accept others	Towards Grains	Towards Panchali	compassion to mouse
Critical Thinking	Evaluative thinking	Collection of Grains	Skill of Pandavas	Mode to round the world
Creative Thinking	Original and unexpected thinking	Starving results from absence of grains	Attention and Illustration of the focussed eye of bird.	To make universe versatile
Interpersonal Relations	Interactions and Interdependence between each other	Impressed Soma Sharma	Bond with Guru	Relation with Parents
Communication Skill	Process by which information and understanding transfer from one person to another	Response to Soma Sharma	Suggestion of ability by Drona Acharya	Convince the parents and Narada
Decision Making	Ability to choose the best alternative solution to a problem from the alternatives.	Food is also a matter consist of particles	Arjun decided to participate the exam	Parents as Universe
Problem Solving	Ability to know the difference between what you have and what you want	Substances are made of particles.	Yogic skills of Arjun	Encircle Universe within time
Coping with Emotions	Ability to control our language, facial expression, body movements and gestures at any situation	Perceiving and Expressing the idea on matter.	Jealousy towards Arjun	Murugha accepted the victory of Ganesha
Coping with Stress	Ability to overcome the mental strain when we confronts with an opportunity or a constraint.	When the idea was rejected by village.	Pip of envy among contemporaries	To finalise the success of Ganesha

The investigator identified the life skill included in the three narrative interpretations.

**Objective II:** To design a visual module based on the Life Skill components included in the three selected stories.

The investigator chooses the life skills in the narrative interpretations and illustrates it among student teachers. The investigator primed a new approach to introduce life skills, entitled as visual ethnographic approach. It includes the visual module. The prepared visuals were validated with the help of teachers.

**Objective III:** To compare, the extraction of Life Skill components from Narrative Interpretations and from Visual Modules prepared from the three selected stories, among student teachers.

The hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the extraction of Life Skill components from Narrative Interpretations and Visual Module.

To find out the test score in questionnaire for experimental and control group, the investigator displayed the visual module of narrative interpretation to the Experimental Group and the written narrative interpretations to the Control Group.

**Table showing test of significance of test scores of different groups**

GROUP	Size	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error	t-value
CONTROL	50	8.92	3.34	.9649	.3964
EXPERIMENTAL	50	9.5	3.85	1.11	

Table reveals that t-value between control and experimental group for the test is not significant. Applying two tailed test at 0.01 level of significance, the observed t-value is 0.3964. The table value is 2.57 under normal probability curve. i.e.:  $t < 2.57$ , which is in acceptance region, thus accepting the null hypothesis. So it is concluded that the mean scores, on extraction of life skill, for experimental and control group, are not significantly different.

### OUTCOMES

1. The investigator identified the life skills included in the three narrative interpretations.
2. The investigator designed a visual module based on the three selected narrative interpretations
3. The mean scores on awareness of life skill for visual media and narrative interpretation groups are not significantly different. Both visual media and narrative interpretations are equally important in order to generate awareness on life skill among student teachers.

### SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Visual Module makes the students to learn life skill effectively.

Usually students are interested in hearing stories. According to the investigator, using this approach, students will be more enthusiastic and will unknowingly follow the life skill stories. Moreover, students like to listen to stories over and over again. Therefore, children receive the basics of Life Skills without being formally introduced. The present study would help the students to reduce complexities involved in learning life skills and also will add an element of fun in teaching and learning process.

### DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this study, the intellectual and other backgrounds of student teachers were not considered.

Student teachers from one Training College are only included in the study.

## IV. CONCLUSION

In order to bring life Skill education into the mainstream curriculum, we need to develop an in-depth conceptual and practical framework for the programme which should be made functional at all levels of schooling from pre-primary, extending to primary, middle and the secondary stage. Efficient network of educationists, psychologists, mental health professional and policy makers would be required to develop a concrete life Skill training programme which would need to transcend across all development stages of a child and should have an inbuilt monitoring and evaluation system.

It would be a way of empowering youth to build their lives and to achieve their dreams. It would be a means for supporting them through the critical stages in their life and for helping them to tap their potential to the fullest. Thereby, it is expected that the current education system with its oppressive rigidity would open up and will make life Skill education a part of its mainstream curriculum. This would enable the country to build individuals who believe in themselves, who are efficient leaders and administrators, who are able to understand their potential skills and will achieve them.

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## **APPENDIX 1**

### **THREE SELECTED STORIES**

1. The young Kashyapa started collecting the grains (Kana) of rice that littered the streets of river Ganges. A crowd was collected around the young Kashyapa by Muni Somasharma and questioned the activity. Kashyapa responded that even a single grain of rice is important for food as if it is uncared for, then all matter which is composed of Kanas are indefensible.

2. Acharya Drona arranged a test to decide the best archer amongst Pandavas and Kauravas. Accordingly, a wooden bird was put on a branch of a distant tree. It was partly hidden by the foliage. A prominent artificial eye was painted on the wooden bird. The teacher called all his disciples and said, "Look my children, a bird is sitting on that far off tree. You have to hit the arrow exactly in its eye. To the question Duryodhana, Bhima, Nakul, Sahadeva and others, and others responded, 'Why, O Gurudev, I am seeing you, the tree, people around me, and the bird!'", But Arjuna alone replied, "Sir, at this point of time only the eye of the bird is visible to me." He then explained to others that due to such peculiar yogic qualities and powers, he prefer Arjuna as his best disciple.

3. An interesting story is about Narada, who visited Lord Shiva and Parvati and presented them with a fruit, saying that they should give it to the person whom they liked most. Shiva set a test for his two sons Ganesha and Murugha. He asked them to go round the world and said that the person who finishes doing this first would get the fruit. Murugha at once rushed on his mount, the peacock and made a quick trip around the world. He was surprised to find that Ganesha had already finished doing this, since he knew that Ganesha could not move very fast. Ganesha replied that his parents were his universe, his only world. So he had completed his task by just going around them.

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