

## **Enhancing Life Skills – Self Awareness, Creative thinking, Decision making And Effective communication**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Before going into the details of Enhancing Life Skills, we need to understand what life is all about. Is it the time period between birth and death of a person? No it is not. Is it difference between happiness and sad. No it is not. Then what is life? Life is about living and making progress by following righteousness. While being righteousness, you need to drive out the four flaws such as envy, desire, anger and harsh. If you follow these, you can live happily, progress and move ahead. The question may arise what is happiness. Happiness is a state of being contented with life and the progress one is making in life. When you are happy and contented you will do more good deed rather bad. There is a saying in Tamil literature “Theethum Nandrum Pirar Thara Vara” it is means you are only responsible for good and bad deeds NOT others. National Educational Policy (2020) clearly envisaged that there is an urgent need for making the students to understand what are the life skills which they need to know, nurture and follow to become a lifelong learners?. World Health Organization (WHO) has defined Life skills as “abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life”. Life skills are 1.Self Awareness 2. Creative Thinking 3.Decision Making and 4. Effective Communication. In this article, I would like to deal with the each of the four of the life skills in detail and how it is important in imparting education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century students.

### **SELF-AWARENESS**

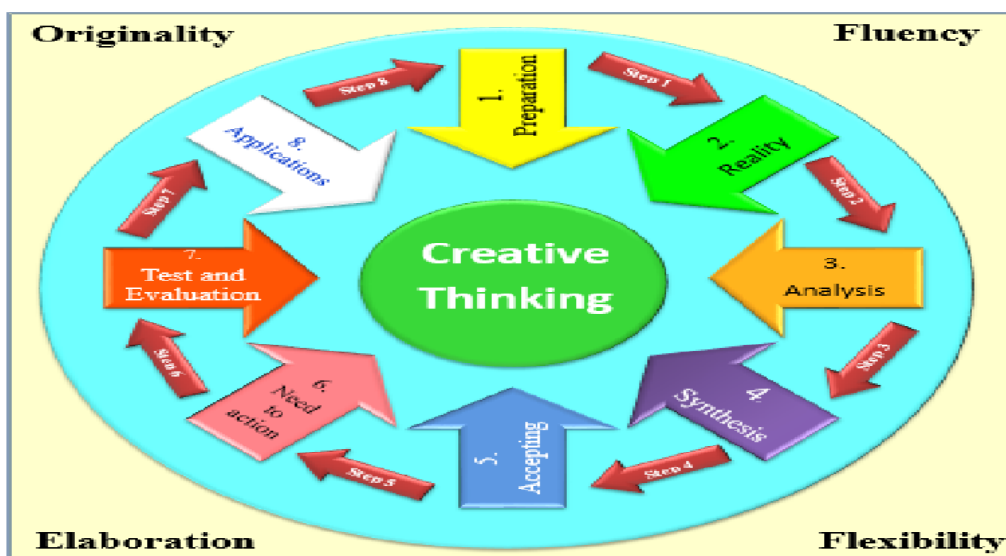
Self-awareness is nothing seeing yourself clearly, thoroughly and objectively through reflection and introspection. Every individual need to recognize their own strengths and weakness, desires and likes. Correct the weakness and make it strength with a vision in life. Developing self-awareness help to understand when I am getting more stressed, under what circumstances. Where the problem lies, is it because of my behaviour, character, communication and inter-personal relationship with others etc. Further this can help us to learn how to manage our weakness and reach the desire goal with them. It is difficult to be objective when we think about ourselves, and how others actually see us can be quite different from what we think they see. Two major factors causing illusion about our self- understanding are:

**Attribution Error:** We judge others based on their personality traits, but we attribute ourselves to the given situation

**Spot Light Effect:** We perceive ourselves as being under spot light

It is a human nature to be always in the lime-light and more so for politicians and religious affinities. We should not judge anyone based on their personality traits rather what they done to you or to the society as a whole. We need to get the answer for clear understanding of self-awareness by posing the question who you are? You is it is your soul, body or name but it is your action. Action speaks much more than what you are. You acquire larger than life size if you know yourself better. Our actions will also depend on how much time and effort we believe that realignment will take; the slower progress will be, the less likely we are to take on the realignment efforts—especially if the perceived discrepancy between ourselves and our standards is large (Silvia & Duval, 2001). If the teachers kindle the proficiency of a student by bringing self-awareness, student can become not only productive but also true his/her abilities. By understanding the self, one can do wonders not just for him/her but to the society as a whole. Students can develop their interest in the subjects using his creative idea and apply the concepts into practice and become a lifelong learner. Figure 1 depicts clearly about self-awareness by being mindfulness to manage relationship with others, social awareness by controlling your emotions.





### DECISION MAKING

The couplet of Tamil Sage Thiruvalluvar clearly displays very clearly about the decision making progress and it goes like this

“Though things diverse from diverse sages' lips we learn,  
 'Tis wisdom's part in each the true thing to discern”.

Meaning “To discern the truth in everything, by whomsoever spoken, is wisdom”

In lay man point of view, decision making is choosing between the two either this or that. In a wider sense, in a problem solving area, decision making process taking into consideration of both intuition and reasoning. While reading the judgement in judicial court, the Judge used to listen the views of far and against a particular subject in contention. Listening carefully, reasoning out, analysing situation in which the particular crime has happened and finally pay attention to intuition and deliver the verdict. Reasoning has its roots in the here-and-now, and in facts. It can, however, ignore emotional aspects to the decision, and in particular, issues from the past that may affect the way that the decision is implemented. Teachers should set an example in swiftly solving the problem at hand by analysing the facts and arrive at decision and instil among the student community the decision making process. Figure 3 portrays how a good decision makes sense and feel right and happy.

Figure 3.

## A Decision is Only as Strong as the Weakest Link



**A good decision makes sense and feels right**

### EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Sharing our thoughts, opinions, information and people by speech or by writing or signs are called communication. The same communication become effective when it inspires confidence, to make friends, to have distinct personality and reveal your ability to others. Effective communication has deep rooted goals such as to get and give information, persuade the listens by ensuring clear understanding to have behavioural change and thereby change the course of action. Effective Communication skills play a crucial role in honing one's personality. Communication helps individuals to express themselves in the most convincing way. People with great communication skills tend to have a better and impressive personality. Effective communication skills strengthen the bond among individuals and improve the interpersonal relationships with other people.

Human beings can express love, affection, anger and other emotions through their speech and body language. In addition to inter-personal communication, human beings can also communicate with multitude of people simultaneously. Almost two thousand years ago, Tamil Sage, Thiruvalluvar in his Thirukkural (Couplet) has recognized the power of speech (Kural No.641) and he says that it is the chief among all the gifts a man can possess

The gift of speech is indeed a special gift  
And it stands apart from other gifts

Valluvar further explains that if there be those who can speak on various subjects in their proper order and in a pleasing manner, the world would readily accept them and the couplet (Kural No.648) goes like this

Swiftly the listening world will gather round,

When men of mighty speech the weighty theme propound

In the couplet no.712, Valluvar assures that knowledge and wisdom of the speaker will be appreciated by men of learning and critical judgement.

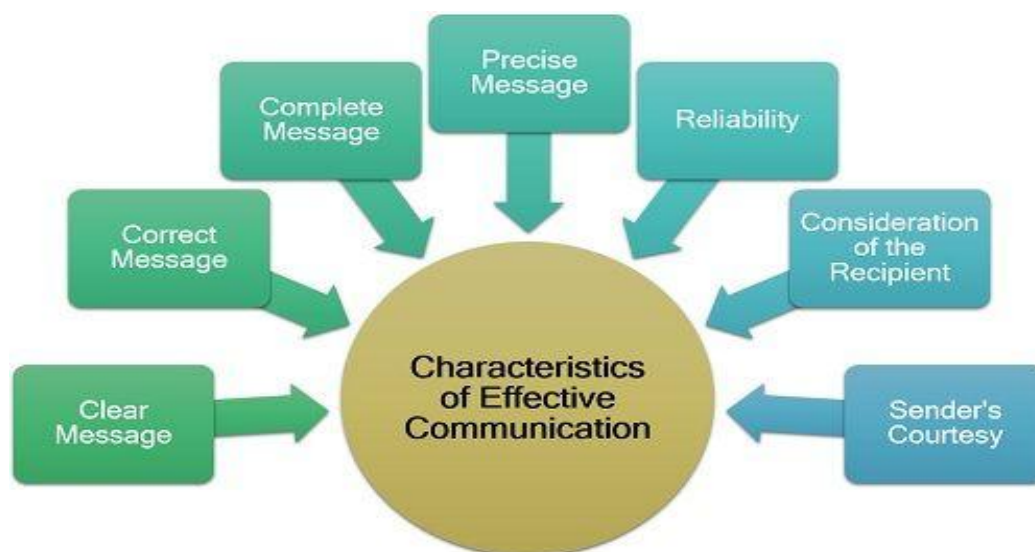
Good men to whom the arts of eloquence are known,

Should seek occasion meet, and say what well they've made their own

Let the good who know the uses of words speak with a clear knowledge after ascertaining the time (suited to the court).

Teachers needs to be very fluent both in their subject knowledge and communicate in a language which is understandable by the students using appropriate idioms and phrases and get the proper feed-back from the students. It is the ultimate responsibility of the teachers to instil the characteristics of effective communication to the students. Figure 4 enlist the characteristics of effective communication which were taken into consideration by the Tamil Sage Thiruvalluvar some two thousand years ago.

**Figure 4.**



## II. CONCLUSION

National Educational Policy has emphasized the important of developing Life Skills for the students to become more vibrant and life- long learners. If any individual become self-awareness, they develop self-confidence, creative in approaching towards problems at hand, swiftly take the right decision at the right time for right use and communicate with efficiency. Students' needs to adapt themselves to the demanding situation with problem solving ability and effectively communicate the decision made precision.

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