

Current and Emerging Challenges towards Competence Building and Youth Employment: A Critical analysis

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Abstract: The life skills approach also seeks to fill the gap in modern education and it creates an awareness of individual's environment, of social dynamics and of the roles one plays and wants to play. It requires individuals to be empowered to manage their lives in meaningful and responsible ways by exercising control over their living and working conditions. And life skills plays a vital role in competence building, it has to be initiated among school children at the earliest possible. In this connection it is highly imperative to be potentially proficient individual to compete in the global race. In light of these concerns, the researcher embarked on multipronged attempt on the issue of practical intelligences and competency building through life skills training. Keeping the implementation point in view that, given the dramatic changes in the world of work and careers, a more up-to date approach is needed to enable career counselors and their clients to respond adequately to new developments in careers, career choice and career execution. Further this paper will explore the role of life skills training in early years of schooling to gain and sustain in the world of career. In this genesis the following objectives are framed for this present study. 1. To explore the Current and emerging challenges towards competence building, 2. To Understanding skill development process, 3. To identify the factors influencing career decision making based on the current changing trends in world of work, 4. To relate the importance of life skills in promoting and supporting the individuals to optimize their potentials, 5. To help the youth in choosing the right career path and make informed decisions, and 6. To critically analysis the need for life skills training among youth to build competence to suit the emerging competence based world of work.

Key Words: *Life Skills, Skill Development, Competence Building, Career development, Employability and Entrepreneurship skills*

I. INTRODUCTION

Youth in the present century are facing newer challenges to decide a right career path. Current social, political and technological developments across the globe pose greater challenges towards them and learning to be independent is just not enough, they are expected to be highly productive and competent within a specific social context as well as technologically renowned to fit into the global society. With regard to Career Development, it has gone through dramatic changes over the past five decades (AMWAC Report 2005). The 21st century has witnessed an explosive pace of technological advancement, facilitating global sourcing which consequent in global operations, which perhaps the main drivers of change in employment patterns, leading to intense competition among employers to attract and retain talented workers (Osborn-Jones, 2001). So Selection of Career is now linked with multi-faceted factors which pave way to choose a right career for an individual. The integral dimensions like- Global Market trend, Multicultural influences, geographic preferences, migration, ethnicity, labour market shifts, economic fluctuations, gender based preferences play an inevitable role in choosing the right career track. And youth are also in flux to decide based on the set of predictable factors Viz. Lucrative or Passionate, Trendy or Traditional, Power or Fame, Desired or Available, so in this Global village it becomes absolutely necessary to prove sufficient skills to survive and sustain in the chosen field of career. Today's world demands higher skills for every level of jobs.

Career development involves one's whole life, not just occupation. It concerns the whole person that too, it concerns him/her in the ever changing context of life. Moreover many youngsters considered the life long process as just an entry point of work. Actually Career development is equal to personal development and in fact the life is converging of both. A number of authors have proposed alternatives to the notion of career development. E.g. Redkopp and Day (1999) suggested that career building is more useful than career planning in an individual needs to take charge of short term goals and continuous decision making, building on previous life/work activities with a direction in mind and allowing all the while for serendipity. Redkopp and day (2000) used the terms Life/Work design in identifying the career development competencies required by individuals to work across the life spans. The Career development theories, irrespective of the school of thoughts, they

highlight on certain important aspects of internal and external aspects of life which influence on the career development of the individual.

Overview of Career development Theories:

Major two types of theory based on structural and developmental approach. Structural Theories focus on individual characteristics and occupational tasks and the Developmental Theories focus on human development across life span.

Trait and Factor:

This theory began with Parsons, who proposed that a choice of a vocation depended upon: An accurate knowledge of oneself thorough knowledge of job specifications. The ability to make a proper match between these two is vital. Parson states that "In the wise choice of a vocation there are three broad factors need to be considered 1.A clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, and limitations thorough knowledge of the requirements and conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities.

- 2. Prospects in different lines of work
- 3. True reasoning on the relations of these two groups of acts (Parsons, 1909/1989).

Two major assumptions of trait and factor theory are:

- (1) That individuals and job traits can be matched, and
- (2) That close matches are positively correlated with job success and satisfaction.

These ideas are still part of our career counselling approach today.

John Holland -- Vocational Personalities and Environments

Holland suggested that "people can function and develop best and find job satisfaction in work environments that are compatible with their personalities"; (ICDM, 1991, p. 4-4). Holland based his theory of personality types on several assumptions. People tend to choose a career that is reflective of their personality. Because people tend to be attracted to certain jobs, the environment then reflects this personality.

He classified these personality types and work environments into six types which he labeled realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional (often referred to by the acronym RIASEC). He suggests that the closer the match of personality to job, the greater the satisfaction. All types are part of each of us. However, one type is usually evidenced most strongly. We may even resemble up to three of the types. Holland developed a hexagon model that illustrates some key concepts: consistency, differentiation, identity, and congruence. A very brief overview of the six personality types, six work-related activities, and sample occupations is presented below:

TYPE	ACTIVITIES	OCCUPATIONS
Realistic	Working with things, tools and machines	Farmer, Carpenter, Mechanical Engineer
Investigative	Working with information, abstract ideas and theories	Chemist
Artistic	Creating things	Painter, Writer
Social	Helping people	Social Worker, Counsellor
Enterprising	Leading others	Sales Representative, Entrepreneur
Conventional	Organizing data	Night Auditor

Holland's theory places emphasis on the accuracy of self-knowledge and career information necessary for career decision making" (Zunker, 1994). Although the theory appears to be applicable to both male and female workers, there is some question of gender bias in that most females frequently tend to score predominately in three personality types: artistic, social, and conventional. Holland suggests that in our chauvinist society, females will display a greater interest in female-dominated occupations.

II. SOCIOECONOMIC THEORY

Sociologists and economists provide detailed explanations and descriptions of how one's culture, family background, social and economic conditions and other factors outside an individual's control strongly influence one's identity, values, and overall human and career development.

Socioeconomic theory is also known as the "chance" or "accident" theory. This approach to understanding career development suggest that many people follow the Path of least resistance in their career development by simply falling into whatever work opportunities happen tocometheirway. Improved Career Decision Making (ICDM) in a Changing World, NOICC, Garrett Park Press, 1996, p.4-4 - 4-6)

Super's Theory

Donald Super (1957) and other theorists of career development recognize the changes that people go through as they mature. Career patterns are determined by socioeconomic factors, mental and physical abilities, personal characteristics and the opportunities to which persons are exposed. People seek career satisfaction through work roles in which they can express themselves and implement and develop their self-concepts. Career maturity, a main concept in Super's theory, is manifested in the successful accomplishment of age and stage developmental tasks across the lifespan. Self-concept is an underlying factor in Super's model: "...vocational self-concept develops through physical and mental growth, observations of work, identification with working adults, general environment, and general experiences....As experiences become broader in relation to awareness of world of work, the more sophisticated vocational self-concept isformed"Zunker,1994,p.30).

Super's contribution was the formalization of stages and developmental tasks over the life span:

STAGE	AGE	CHARACTERISTICS
Growth	Birth to 14 or 15	Form self-concept, develop capacity, attitudes, interests, and needs, and form a general understanding of the world of work.
Exploratory	15-24	"Try out" through classes, work experience, hobbies. Collect relevant information. Tentative choice and related skill development.
Establishment	25-44	Entry skill building and stabilization through work experience.
Maintenance	45-64	Continual adjustment process to improve position.
Decline	65+	Reduced output, prepare for retirement.

People change with time and experience, and progress through the following vocational development stages:

VOCATIONAL	AGES	GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS/DEVELOPMENTAL TASKS
Crystallization	14-18	Developing and planning a tentative vocational goal.
Specification	18-21	Firming the vocational goal.
Implementation	21-24	Training for and obtaining employment.
Stabilization	24-35	Working and confirming career choice.
Consolidation	35+	Advancement in career.

Super and Thompson (1979) identified six factors in vocational maturity:

1. Awareness of the need to plan ahead
2. Decision-making skills
3. Knowledge and use of information resources
4. General career information
5. General world of work information, and
6. Detailed information about occupations of preference.

Krumboltz's Social Learning Theory

Much growth takes place as a result of learning and imitating the behavior of others. Krumboltz developed a theory of career decision making and development based on our social learning, or environmental conditions and events, genetic influences and learning experiences. People choose their careers based on what they have learned. Certain behaviors are modeled, rewarded and reinforced.

III. DECISION-MAKING THEORIES

Some decision-making theories hypothesize that there are critical points in our lives when choices are made that greatly influence our career development. These decision making points are such events as educational choices, entry-level job positions, changing jobs, etc. Other decision-making theories concerned with ongoing choices across the life span. The decisions that we make are influenced by our awareness of the choices that are available to us and our knowledge of how to evaluate them. Others address our complex environment. For example, H.B. Gelatt says, "We make our decisions based upon what is actual and what is actual is never static" (Gelatt, 1991)

IV. COGNITIVE THEORIES

Cognitive theories of career development are built around how individuals process, integrate and react to information. The ways in which individuals process information are determined by their cognitive structures. These structures influence how individuals see themselves, others and the environment. Cognitive theories suggest ways to help clients build or refine a hierarchy of thinking skills and decision making skills that influence career development.

V. CONSTRUCTIVIST THEORIES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Constructivist theory offers alternative approaches to career development and counselling. Constructivism emphasizes the self-organizing principles underlying human experience as a holistic approach. The decision to use a constructivist framework for career counselling resulted from the observation that youth often were not lacking career information, instead, they did not feel empowered or motivated to put the information to use. In a number of cases, feelings ranging from disempowerment to apathy were due to lack of knowledge about self in relation to the world of work. Consequently, it was concluded that a counselling approach, which empowers clients to adopt proactive, mindful stances about their work life, needed to be developed. Therefore, a focus was developed that would assist clients in understanding how their self-organizing principles shape their world view and influence and direct the choices they make Marie Hoskins (1995). A constructivist premise is that career information is enhanced significantly when personal meanings become the central task of the counselling session. These meaning-making processes take on a variety of forms that promote client self-awareness of the processes underlying meaningful career decisions.

In summary, irrespective of the difference in views, whether positivist or constructivist enquiry the focus areas can be plotted on major elements like, Self-Assessment, Career Awareness, Goal Setting, Skill Development and Career Management which are the vital sources for career decision. In fact, the current labour market is even more complex to decide upon the definite career path. The 21st century has witnessed an explosive pace of technological advancement, facilitating global sourcing and the consequent global operations, which are the main drivers of change in employment patterns, leading to intense competition among employers to attract and retain talented workers (Osborn-Jones, 2001).

The current challenges for youth are entirely different as they were before. In this globalized era, Modern social, political and technological developments across the globe pose greater challenges towards the Youth... Selection of Career is now linked with multi-faceted factors which pave way to choose a right career for an individual. The integral dimensions like- global market trend, multicultural influences, geographic preferences, migration, ethnicity, labour market shifts, economic fluctuations, and gender based preference.

Youth are also in flux to decide based on the set of predictable factors Viz. lucrative or passionate, trendy or traditional, power or fame, desired or available, so in this Global village it becomes absolute necessary to prove sufficient skills to survive and sustain in the chosen field of career. The researcher had a primary survey with 50 students from varied background to find out, what is their major worry about career? And what are the questions that arise while thinking about career? Interestingly the students were happy about the current changes in the society but they are really confused to spot the real issue.

They have risen following questions: Just give me job for my qualification? Why I am not selected? I would like to look into some job for just for a time being. I found it interesting but not able to meet the expectations of employer? I can say that I am capable? Just one cannot decide my talents by interview? Is there any easy way to convince the employer in the interview? Just to have fun I am working? I am really struck? I don't know what makes me happy in work? Is that one need to have recommendation/favorable person or money to get into job? And reviewing research studies on employability reveals an insight about determines of factors influencing current career decision or development are Changing concepts of Career or Employability

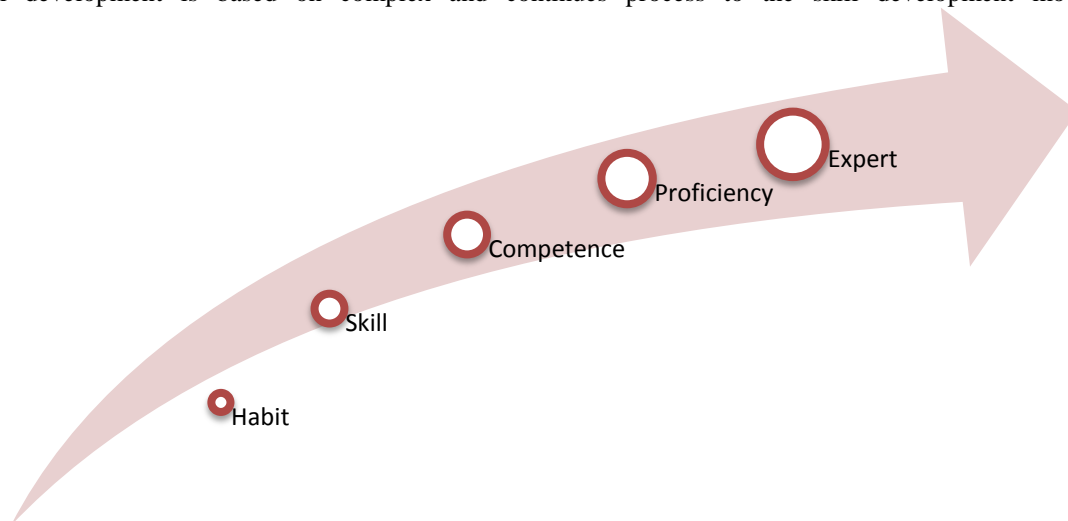
and Employment. Career mobility, Training and Qualifications are inevitable components hidden behind the career development. Keeping National Centre View the constant Changing Social Partner for youth are playing crucial role in selection of career and Shift in Youth Perspective about Career itself is changing time to time. So, in this context of Career decision making for the youngster become complex and laborious as well as continuous process. The career and individual need to be blend in the revolutionary process, as we cannot separate the work and life; it is complementary to each other and also influences each other.

In this connection having possessed the requisite skills the candidates need to grow into various levels and layers to satisfy the employer's current day expectation. By the time the student complete his/her Graduation/post-graduation the emerging important of the particular career also appraises. So the candidate become miscue or she/he needs further training to suit the employer demands. Even three years after graduation, over 60 percent of all graduates remained unemployed. Although a significant proportion of apprentices find employment, close to two-thirds is not employed in the trade for which they were trained – 1/3 of these had been trained in obsolete trades. There appears to be three reasons for this: (a) limited growth and labour demand in the manufacturing sector, (b) mismatch between the skills attained and those actually in demand, and (c) mismatch between the skills taught and the graduates' own labour market objectives.

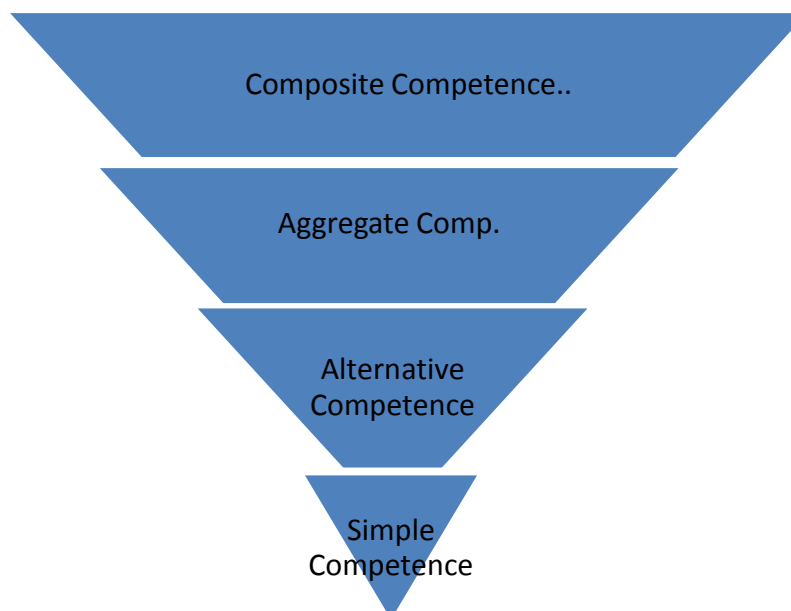
Thus, the Skill training at the right time with right direction is required. According to a review report by Mangrulkar et al,(2003), cognitive based competence-building model of primary prevention theorizes focus on teaching interpersonal- cognitive- problem solving (ICPS) skills to children at a young age which can reduce and prevent negative inhibited , impulsive behaviours. The Skill development programme in early years of schooling can be the most appropriate tool for youth to get shaped and enter into the desired promising career. In recent years there has been increased usage of life skills as an arena for developing skills in youth, with life skills being viewed as those personal characteristics and skills such as goal setting, emotional control, self-esteem, and hard work ethic that can be facilitated or developed in academics and potentially transferred for use in non- academic settings in early years of schooling itself. (Gould et. al. 2006).

Understanding Skill Development Process:

The skill development is based on complex and continues process to the skill development model.



The skill development process is step by step and which also seeks lots of interconnected layers and levels to be dealt before meeting the requirements and to be named as competency development. Today's youth are expected to be competent than just skilled. The interconnections are further given in details to understand how the multiple cognitive skills are synergizing towards practical intelligence to strengthen the youth (employees) towards the labour market trend. The level of competence could be further split into various levels and layers: The tilted pyramid states the importance of having a widen knowledge, Skills with compound patterns are inevitable to build and balance a narrow structure rooted on earth.



In competence building the connectedness with other part of skills likely to be defined as “effective performance within a domain/context at different levels of proficiency”, as given in (Cheetam and Chivers, 2005), the skill development process invites lots of complexity when it reaches higher order thinking and doing. As application attitude to execute all are involved in this process moreover the role between context, competence at which level and layer determines the kind of action plan to execute the process. Based on the aforesaid complex model the researcher has drawn suggestions for competence building frame work by keeping the model of skill development by Gordon Training International by its employee Noel Burch in the 1970. According to this model there are four Stages for Learning Any New Skill, Namely **Unconscious**

incompetence, Conscious

incompetence, Conscious competence and Unconscious competence.

Unconscious incompetence is known as the individual does not understand or know how to do something and does not necessarily recognize the deficit. They may deny the usefulness of the skill. The individual must recognise their own incompetence, and the value of the new skill, before moving on to the next stage. The length of time an individual spends in this stage depends on the strength of the stimulus to learn.

Conscious incompetence though the individual does not understand or know how to do something, he or she does recognize the deficit, as well as the value of a new skill in addressing the deficit. The making of mistakes can be integral to the learning process at this stage. **Conscious competence** the individual understands or knows how to do something. However, demonstrating the skill or knowledge requires concentration. It may be broken down into steps, and there is heavy conscious involvement in executing the new skill. **Unconscious competence** the individual has had so much practice with a skill that it has become "second nature" and can be performed easily. As a result, the skill can be performed while executing another task. The individual may be able to teach it to others, depending upon how and when it was learned. Refer to reflective ability, or **conscious competence of unconscious competence**", as being the fifth stage, **complacency**.

The above mentioned method needs to be considered to seek success in competence building training activities. Keeping in view the competence building models discussed the researcher can draw conclusion as the fundamental and foundation skills need to build to gear up the process of competence building. In this process the life skills approach also seeks to fill the gap in modern education and it creates an awareness of individual's environment, of social dynamics and of the role one plays and wants to play. It requires individuals to be empowered to manage their lives in meaningful and responsible ways by exercising control over their living and working conditions. Considering the shift from **Unconscious Incompetence to Conscious Competence** the right amount of time invested on life skills plays a vital role. So it has to be initiated among school children at the earliest possible.

Labour market Trends and emerging Employment issues:

The Current day's labour market seems to be highly competitive to eliminate or to retain the best employee. The employers are constantly working and updating their criteria for selection. In this context it is highly unrealistic to provide equal opportunities to the labour force and the planning commission report on employment status reveals that Economic growth has brought changes in the structure of the economy but, so far, a less significant impact on the sectorial composition of the employed labour force. As per the table shown below.

Key Trends in Employment and Labour Market Trends in India
Absolute Numbers (million) Growth per annum (%)

	Absolute Numbers (million)			Growth per annum (%)	
	1983	1993- 94	1999- 2000	1983 to 1993-94	1993-94-1999-2000
<i>All India...</i>	718.2	894.0	1,004.0	94	2000
Population	261.3	336.0	363.3	2.0	2.0
Employed	239.6	315.8	336.8	2.4	1.3
Unemployed	21.8	20.1	26.6	2.7	1.1
Unemployment rate	8.3	6.0	7.3	0.08	4.7
<i>Rural...</i>	546.6	658.8	727.5		
Population	204.2	255.4	270.4	1.8	1.7
Labor Force	187.9	241.0	250.9	2.2	1.0
Employed	8.0	5.6	7.2	2.4	0.7
Unemployment rate	16.3	14.3	19.5	1.2	5.3
No. of unemployed					

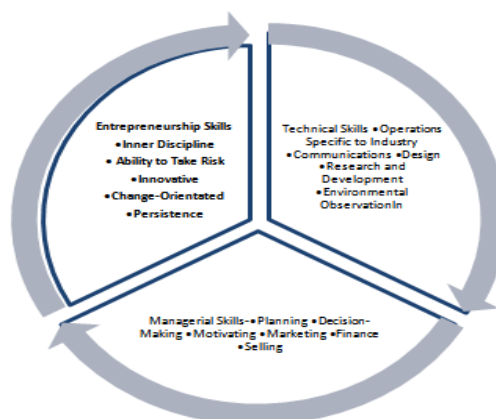
Source: Narain (2005); Planning Commission, Economic Survey (2001-02)

The economy and labour market are two big giants decide the current working work force in organized and unorganised sectors. So the market driven employment is even more challenging towards the competence building process. These games are never ending process and the gap keeps increasing, by the time the labour force seeking employment will double up which will result unemployment or underemployment. This filmic cycle is going to be continued unless the call for self -employment is thought of. The solution as simple as the greater awareness about one’s potentials lay a path towards productivity which could be cultivated in the young minds through life skills approach to adapt positively in the ever changing environment. The life skills strike a balance between skills and attitudinal changes as the culmination of group of fundamental skills mentioned in life skills are core skills for any kind of competence building.

Mapping Key Competencies into Employability Skills by Commonwealth of Australia 2006

Key Competencies	Employability Skills
Communicate Ideas and Information	Communication
Work with others and in teams	Teamwork
Solve Problems	Problem Solving
Use Technology	Technology
Collect, Analyse and organise Information	Initiative and enterprise ,Self-management and Learning
Planning and organising <i>Plan and organise activities</i>	
Use Mathematical Techniques and Ideas	<i>Contained within the descriptions of several of the other Employability Skills</i>

Employability and Entrepreneurship skills



Kutzhanova et al (2009) examined an Entrepreneurial Development System located in the Appalachian region of USA and identified four main dimensions of skill:

- Technical Skills - which are those skills necessary to produce the business's product or service;
- Managerial Skills, which are essential to the day-to-day management and administration of the company;
- Entrepreneurial Skills - which involve recognizing economic opportunities and acting effectively on them;
- Personal Maturity Skills - which include self-awareness, accountability, emotional skills, and creative skills.

In examining the key skills required of entrepreneurs, O'Hara (2011) identified a number of key elements which he believed featured prominently in entrepreneurship:

- The ability to identify and exploit a business opportunity;
- The human creative effort of developing a business or building something of value;
- A willingness to undertake risk;
- Competence to organize the necessary resources to respond to the opportunity.

Keeping the above said models and key skills which pave way to entrepreneur skills the life skills as a core and fundamental skills could be related and initiated at young age of children to build competence to suit current days employment market.

VI. CONCLUSION

Keeping the above discussions in front the individual entering into the career need certain basic training at their early years. The skill development could not be possible without appropriate training right from the beginning of there schooling. Core skills related to entrepreneurship and life skills are converging and it can contribute to each other in a complementary approach for building fundamental and functional as well as higher order skills which are highly imperative for current day's labour market.

VII. CONVERGENCE OF SKILLS

- Instilling empathy with entrepreneurial values and associated 'ways of thinking, doing, feeling, seeing, communicating, organizing and learning a thing **which is the key skill in Life skills.**
- Development of the capacity for strategic thinking and scenario planning and the practice of making intuitive decisions based upon judgement with limited information have a **root in critical and decision making skills.**
- Creating a vision and empathy, the way of life of the entrepreneurial person. This implies a strong emphasis upon the employment of educational pedagogies stimulating a sense of ownership, control, independence, responsibility, autonomy of action and commitment to see things through while living, day by day, with uncertainty and complexity **which is the core function of self- awareness.**
- Stimulating the practice of a wide range of entrepreneurial behaviour such as opportunity seeking, grasping, networking, taking initiatives, persuading others and taking intuitive **decisions by adopting appropriate skill sets right from the early years.**
Creating the capacity for relationship learning, network management, building 'know-who' and managing on the basis of trust-based personal relationships by **developing Inter personal**

VIII. COMMUNICATION SKILLS.

- The Business Plan becomes an important component of relationship management leading to understanding that different stakeholders need 'plans' with different emphasis (a venture capitalist or angel is looking for different things than a banker or a potential partner). **This demands a comprehensive range of pedagogical tools which is obviously interpersonal relationship and communication.**
- Focusing upon the conative (value in use) and affective (enjoyable and stimulating) aspects of learning as well as the cognitive as the relevance to application is of key importance (as is instilling motivation) **broadly thinking and self- managing skills are connected here.**
- Developing an understanding of, and building knowledge around, the processes of organisation development - from start, through survival to growth and internationalisation. This will demand a focus upon the dynamics of change, the nature of problems and opportunities that arise and how to anticipate and deal with them, **which in fact the dynamic part of ten core life skills and its culmination to provide insight for an individual to empower and enhance their potentials through constant training and conscious effort to gain competency.**

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