

DELHI PUBLIC SCHOOL, GURGAON
WEBINAR REPORT
TOPIC: 21st Century Skills

DATE: 13.07.2021

ORGANIZED BY: DPSS-HRDC

RESOURCE PERSON : Dr Laura Jana, Associate Research Professor-
Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Centre, Penn State ,USA

ATTENDED BY: Shalini Arora

The webinar aimed at preparing our children for the complex and rapidly changing world, through 21st century skills.

Our children are the rock on which our future will be built. The rich potential in each child must be developed into the skills and knowledge our society needs to enable it to prosper.

-Nelson Mandela

According to Dr Jana, world over, the education systems follow a rigorous and well developed set of academic standards for learning. However, success relies on much more than mastery of these academic standards; successful engagement in the classroom and in life relies on a set of cognitive and social, emotional skills and mindsets which are not represented in current academic standards.

Globally, education systems have focused on rote memorization but now in an ever-changing world, which leaves us with a lot of unknown and uncertainty, we need our children to think and learn differently and thereby we need to educate them differently.

Dr Jana talked about the importance of emotions (Nerve Science) and how they play a major role in learning by helping critical thinking, making meaningful decisions and being essential in life management.

About the brain science she mentioned the following:

- We are born with approximately 100 billion brain cells.
- 85% of brain growth happens in the first three years of life although brain development continues throughout life.
- 1 million new neural connections are made every second.

- Strength of neural connections depends on experiences gained from the outside world.
- Experiences shape up the brain architecture.
- Brain is malleable and continues to adapt to the environment.

She also mentioned that the future of education starts early in life.

- 3rd grade reading scores predict future life success.
- 18 month vocabulary predicts 3rd grade reading scores.
- 5 year old social skills predict future life outcomes.
- By 1 year of age, language development is at its peak. Language development serves as the foundation for reading development and communication skills.
- Thinking, reasoning and communication skills peak by age 5.

Dr Jana who has an expertise in Neural Science mentioned that the future of education, to a large extent, depends on developing and possessing the - Executive Functional Skills:

1. **Self Control:**

- Think before acting and control emotions
- Prioritize actions instead of acting impulsively
- Focus, instead of getting distracted

2. **Cognitive Flexibility:**

- Shift attention or “mental gears” based on new information
- Out -of-the-box thinking
- Apply different rules to different circumstances

3. **Working Memory:**

- “The mental surface on which important information is placed” so that information is accessible and easy to use in our daily lives.

Executive Functional Skills build into the early adult years. As a teacher /parent our goal should be to lend our EFSs to the children until they build their own.

She also talked about the various ‘Soft skills’ which are the need of the hour:

1. **Me Skills/ Self -management** skills that include:

- Self awareness
- Self regulation
- Self control
- Attention

- Focus
2. **We skills/People skills** which are necessary for effective communication, collaboration, relationships and teamwork, including:
 - Emotional intelligence
 - Social-emotional skills
 - Perspective taking
 - Active listening
 - Language
 - Empathy
 3. **Why skills/Curiosity skills:** they are necessary to strive for a better understanding of how the world works, including:
 - Questioning
 - Curiosity
 - Inquisitiveness
 4. **Will/Motivational skills** that include:
 - Dedication & drive
 - Commitment & conscientiousness
 - Grit
 - Persistence & perseverance
 5. **Wiggle/ Physical and intellectual restlessness that includes:**
 - Hands-on exploration
 - Agility
 - Taking action
 6. **Wobble Skills/the adaptability** skills that build and foster:
 - Intelligent risk-taking
 - Learning from failure
 - Resilience
 - Adaptability
 - Agility
 7. **What if/possibility skills** that allow us to understand not just how the world is ,but envision how it could be. They include:
 - Innovation
 - Imagination

- Creativity
- Open-mindedness
- Hope

It was an enriching and engaging session which laid importance on the rise of Emotional Intelligence and the need to plan to adapt with rapid change. The session made all educators realize that the 21st century skills are a prerequisite in preparing our children for the world which is ever changing.



