

“Education Innovations for 21st Century Skills”
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Live Blog

Session SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Main takeaway points

1. Social and emotional skills (SES) are learned competencies to get along with others, understand ourselves and resolve social issues and conflicts. The SES that are both most valued by employers and are teachable are the so called “PRACTICE” skills: 1) **P**roblem solving, 2) **R**esilience, 3) **A**chievement motivation, 4) **C**onfidence, 5) **T**eam work, 6) **I**nitiative, 7) **C**ommunicate, and 8) **E**thics. SES also overlap to some extent with the Big 5 skills concept that includes personality traits such as openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability.
2. SES cannot be measured through traditional cognitive skill assessments. SES such as self-control, persistence and teamwork could be measured through self-report, experiment and behavioral observation. The key research challenge is the establishment of predictive power of the SES measurement tools. The key policy challenge is how could the education system build SES of students?
3. Skills lead to skills. SES directly affect the academic performance and indirectly determine the economic outcomes (through cognitive skills). Cognitive skills help the formation of SES, and vice versa. For example, creativity depends very much on cognitive skill.
4. Early childhood development (ECD) is instrumental for the formation of some of the key SES, for example, conscientiousness and self-control. ECD has long-term effect on non-cognitive skills.
5. There are two approaches to teaching SES in schools. 1) *Direct teaching*- encourages formation of SES through practicing SES in classroom. Requires curriculum and training of teachers to directly teach SES. Example: Peru – a 2 year SES program was developed and implemented and is currently being evaluated. 2) *Indirect teaching*– Venezuela’s “National Orchestra” program is an example of a program that supports the indirect formation of SES

Questions for further discussion

1. How are SES to be developed through the education system?
2. How is the delivery of SES to be delivered by the education system?
3. How should SES be blended with the cognitive skills into the school curriculum?
4. How learning materials need to be adjusted to include and foster formation of SES?
5. How are SES to be assessed?

Other thoughts

Evidence and knowledge base for integrating SES into education system is still limited.

STEP (WB) and PIAAC (OECD) are instruments measuring skills, including SES.

Early tracking of students have negative impact on SES formation for the students belonging to the inferior track

Focus on SES is needed but it should not distract the education systems from the main objective to develop solid cognitive skills.