



The Theoretical Framework and Pedagogy of an Overlooked Competency in Education: A Review of Daily Life Problem-Solving Skills

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ABSTRACT

This article presents an academic review of Dr. Muhammet Fatih Doğan's 2025 work titled "Daily Life Problem-Solving Skills." The article analyzes the book's central thesis: "Daily Life Problem-Solving Skills" (DLPS) constitute a set of competencies with a unique theoretical structure, distinct from general frameworks like "Basic Life Skills" or "21st Century Skills," with which they are often conflated in educational literature. The author, motivated by an academic debate during his doctoral dissertation process, aims to fill a gap in the literature by providing a "comprehensive study" and "concrete definition" for the field of DLPS. This review details the work's 650-page volume and its systematic structure, which addresses twenty distinct skills. It particularly emphasizes the consistent pedagogical template presented for each skill (daily life factors, development strategies, educational application, and case studies), which facilitates the transition from theory to practice. In conclusion, the article argues that this work serves as both a theoretical foundation and a practical guide for its target audience—academics, teachers, and teacher candidates—and possesses the potential to become a significant reference source in the field.

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Introduction: The Search for an Undefined Competency Area in Educational Literature

The literature of educational sciences possesses a rich accumulation of defining and classifying the competencies necessary to prepare individuals for the future. Macro-frameworks such as "21st Century Skills" or "Basic Life Skills" have long guided curriculum development efforts. However, this voluminous work titled "Daily Life Problem-Solving Skills," written by Dr. Muhammet Fatih Doğan and published in May 2025 by Nobel Bilimsel Eserler, claims to illuminate a specific, overlooked area within these general categories.

In the "Preface" (pp. 5-6), the author bases the motivation for the book not just on an intellectual quest, but on an academic debate experienced during his own doctoral dissertation process. Doğan intended to center his dissertation on the concept of "Daily Life Problem-Solving Skills" (DLPS) but faced a disagreement with his thesis advisor regarding the boundaries of this concept. While his advisor compared these skills to existing categories like "basic life skills" or "21st century skills," Doğan believed they were "entirely separate in structure" and based on a "different theoretical framework."

The dissatisfaction stemming from this academic dilemma forms the primary impetus for the book. The author states that he "had to reduce" the inclusion of these skills in his thesis, but the idea "never left him," and he decided to examine these skills in detail "independently" of his thesis. In this context, this 650-page work can be read as a comprehensive, post-doctoral manifesto of an argument the author could not fully defend during his doctoral process.

The main objective of the work is to prove that DLPS is the "most overlooked" yet "most needed" competency area for individuals "throughout their lives" in the modern education system. The author argues that these skills

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cover a wide spectrum, "from grocery shopping to complex social problems," and asserts that his work aims to fill this theoretical and practical void, claiming there is no "comprehensive study" or "concrete definition" of this concept in the literature. This review aims to analyze the methodological and pedagogical tools the work employs to achieve this ambitious goal.

The Book's Methodology: Theoretical Framework and Systematic Structure

Dr. Doğan's work is carefully structured into two main parts to support its theoretical claim and offer a practical roadmap to its target audience of educators.

Part 1: Conceptual Groundwork and Justification of the Argument

The first part of the book, "The Concept of Skill and Skill in Education" (pp. 15-38), serves as a conceptual foundation that prepares the reader for the author's main thesis. In this section, the author first presents a general taxonomy of the "skill" concept, defining different categories such as Mental, Physical, Technical, Social, and Life Skills.

The strategic layout of this section is evident in the "Table of Contents." The author introduces the "Concept of Daily Life Problem-Solving Skills" (p. 27) immediately after discussing existing and popular frameworks like "Basic Life Skills" (p. 23) and "21st Century Skills" (p. 24). This structural choice, combined with the academic debate mentioned in the "Preface," reveals a deliberate argumentation strategy. By defining the existing frameworks, the author implies that they are insufficient in fully addressing the specific domain covered by DLPS (i.e., everyday, practical, and situational problem-solving) or that they address these skills in a different context. Thus, Part 1 establishes the theoretical justification for why the new classification of twenty skills, presented in Part 2, is necessary.

Part 2: Pedagogical Application and Systematic Architecture

The main body of the book, "Daily Life Problem-Solving Skills" (pp. 39-650), examines "twenty different topics" identified by the author "after a long study." The most striking aspect of this part, which enhances the work's academic value, is its hyper-systematic and teacher-friendly architecture.

A detailed analysis of the "Table of Contents" shows that the author applies a consistent pedagogical formula when examining each of these twenty skills (e.g., Decision Making, Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking, Communication, Self-Awareness, etc.). This formula provides a clear flow from theory to practice:

1. Definition of the Concept: Explains what the skill is.
2. Factors Affecting the Skill in Daily Life: Analyzes the psychological, social, and environmental factors that hinder or facilitate the application of the skill (e.g., Time Pressure, Emotions, Lack of Information).
3. Developing the Skill: Offers general strategies for how an individual can develop this skill.
4. Application of the Skill in Education: Discusses the pedagogical dimension of the skill.
5. Stages of the Process in Education: Explains how the skill is scaffolded in an educational setting (e.g., "Stages of the Decision-Making Process in Education").
6. Development Strategies in Education: Lists specific pedagogical strategies that teachers can directly apply.
7. Case Study: Presents a case analysis, typically set in a classroom, to concretize all theoretical and practical information.

This repetitive structure frames the work as a "theory-practice pipeline." The target audience—teachers and teacher candidates—can find the theoretical background, practical strategies, and concrete application scenarios needed to teach any skill under a single heading.

Pedagogical Depth and Practical Value: A Critical Review of Selected Skills

The extent to which the book's systematic structure is supported by its content is the main determinant of its practical value. The provided sample content pages and the "Table of Contents" indicate that this structure is not merely a superficial template but offers a pedagogically profound analysis.

Theoretical Depth: "Factors Affecting in Daily Life"

The practical value of the book lies in its ability to answer not only "what should be done" but also "why the current situation is as it is." The "Factors Affecting in Daily Life" section for each skill serves as a powerful diagnostic tool for educators. For example, the barriers to "Critical Thinking" are defined not only as "Lack of Information" but also as "Prejudices," "Time Pressure," and "Emotions."

The sample pages for the "Decision Making" skill (pp. 42-53) confirm the depth of this approach. Under the heading "Factors Affecting Decision Making," the author details sub-topics such as "Time Pressure" (p. 44), "Emotions" (p. 46), "Lack of Information" (p. 49), and "Priorities and Values" (p. 51), analyzing in detail how each factor affects the cognitive process. This provides educators with the opportunity to understand (diagnose) why a student is struggling to make decisions and to develop a specific intervention (treatment) accordingly.

Practical Value: "Application in Education" and "Case Study"

The book's true pedagogical strength emerges in the sections where it translates theoretical analysis into directly applicable steps and concrete scenarios. The "Stages of the... Process in Education" and "Development Strategies" sections offer teachers a methodological roadmap.

However, the most concrete and valuable part of this map is the "Case Study" provided for each skill. These case studies act as a bridge, connecting abstract skill concepts to classroom reality. For instance, titles listed in the "Table of Contents" like "Case Study: Time Travel and Innovative Solutions" (for Creative Thinking) or "Case Study: Stronger Together" (for Interpersonal Relationship Building) demonstrate the creativity of this pedagogical strategy.

The provided content for "Case Study: Application of Critical Thinking Skill in the Classroom" (pp. 118-120) proves the effectiveness of this approach. The author sets a challenging class topic like "gender inequality" as the "Initial Situation"; then, he transforms theoretical stages, such as "Defining the Problem," "Gathering Information" (students questioning sources), "Developing Alternative Solutions," and "Reviewing Results", into a concrete scenario through classroom dialogues and student (Oğuz, Zeynep, Ahmet) responses. This is an invaluable guide for a teacher to see "how" to apply the theory. This systematic pedagogical structure of the book can be summarized in Table 1. below:

Table 1: The Systematic Pedagogical Structure of the Book (Sample Based on the Table of Contents)

Skill Name	Factors Affecting in Daily Life (Examples)	Application Stages in Education (Examples)	Concrete Pedagogical Tool (Case Study Title)
Decision Making	Time Pressure, Emotions, Lack of Information	Stages of the Decision-Making Process in Education	Case Study: Decision-Making Skill and the Classroom Environment
Creative Thinking	Imagination, Open-Mindedness, Courage to Take Risks	Stages of the Creative Thinking Process in Education	Case Study: Time Travel and Innovative Solutions
Critical Thinking	Lack of Information, Prejudices, Time Pressure	Stages of the Critical Thinking Process in Education	Case Study: Application of Critical Thinking Skill in the Classroom
Communication	Emotional State, Body Language, Cultural Differences	Stages of the Communication Process in Education	Case Study: Communication Skill in the Classroom Environment
Self-Awareness	Emotional Awareness, Personal Values, Self-Efficacy Perception	Stages of the Self-Awareness Process in Education	Case Study: The Process of Self-Awareness in the Classroom

Overall Assessment: Contribution to Literature and Potential Limitations

This section will evaluate the contribution of the "Daily Life Problem-Solving Skills" work to the literature and, with the critical perspective required of an academic review, its potential limitations.

Strengths and Contribution to the Literature

Doğan's work clearly contributes to the educational sciences literature on two fundamental levels:

1. **Conceptual Contribution:** The most prominent and ambitious contribution of the work is its attempt to create a clear theoretical framework that distinguishes DLPS from broader, sometimes ambiguous, categories like "Basic Life Skills" or "21st Century Skills," thereby providing the "comprehensive study" promised in the "Preface." The author strives to fill a conceptual gap in the field by arguing that these skills have a "separate structure."
2. **Pedagogical Contribution:** With its 650-page scope, detailed examination of twenty different skills, and the systematic "theory-practice-case study" template for each, the work serves as an *encyclopedia* or *reference source* for its target audience of teachers and teacher candidates. The work presents a highly successful methodology for breaking down abstract skill education into concrete, applicable lesson plan components.

Potential Limitations and Areas for Discussion

With academic rigor, it is necessary to discuss some potential limitations arising from the work's ambitious structure:

1. **Volume and Accessibility Issue:** While the book's 650-page volume is a strength that makes it "comprehensive," it also has the potential to become a practical weakness. For "teachers," one of the target audiences, this volume may be an obstacle to its use as a quick and accessible "handbook." This situation may lead the work to be positioned more as a "reference source" or a "textbook" at the graduate level.
2. **Breadth vs. Depth Balance:** The author has undertaken the ambitious task of covering twenty different skills in a single volume. According to the "Table of Contents," skills like "Decision Making" or "Critical Thinking," which have massive literatures of their own, are allocated approximately 25-30 pages each. At this point, it is a legitimate question whether the work sacrifices "depth" for the sake of "breadth." The question of whether analyzing the 10 most critical skills at twice the depth, instead of presenting 20 skills at a relatively shallower level, would have been more efficient in terms of pedagogical impact is left to the reader's discretion.
3. **Possible Influence of Academic Motivation:** The work's origin in the "doctoral thesis debate" mentioned in the "Preface" provides it with strong intellectual energy. However, there is also a risk that this strong personal motivation could affect the author's analytical objectivity. The author's desire to prove that DLPS is a "separate structure" may have led him to disproportionately emphasize the differences and overlook the obvious similarities these skills share with existing frameworks like "21st Century Skills" (which also includes skills like Critical Thinking, Creativity, and Communication). Whether the work convincingly proves this distinction will be an important topic of discussion for other researchers in the field.

Conclusion

Dr. Muhammet Fatih Doğan's "Daily Life Problem-Solving Skills" is a significant and ambitious work in the field of educational sciences. The author largely achieves the goals set out in the "Preface": to remedy the lack of "concrete definition" in the literature and to be a "guide" for educators.

The greatest success of the work is its effort to conceptualize an area like "Daily Life Problems", which is intuitively known but insufficiently defined academically, and to systematize this concept into a pedagogical framework by breaking it down into twenty sub-skills. The consistent theoretical analysis ("Affecting Factors") and practical guidance ("Application in Education" and "Case Study") provided for each skill make this book unique.

Leaving aside the accessibility challenges posed by its volume or potential debates about the breadth-depth balance, "Daily Life Problem-Solving Skills," thanks to its scope and methodological rigor, is, as the author hoped, qualified to be a *foundational text* in its field, addressing "all academics, teachers, teacher candidates, and everyone working in the field of education." This work offers a valuable resource on how to teach the skills necessary not only for academic success but for all of life, "from grocery shopping to complex social problems."

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Notes on contributor

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Authors' Contributions

Pelin Dinçbakan  Conceptualization, Formal analysis, Writing – original draft and Writing – review & editing.

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