Chapter 5: Life Skills Programmes and the ‘Disciplining’ of the Self

The story of ‘Warm Fuzzies’ and ‘Cold Pricklies’

There was once a kingdom in which all people had one good practice. Whenever they met each other, they would put their hands into a small bag and take out an object, which they would hand over to the other person. This object was called ‘Warm Fuzzy’. On receiving this object, the receiver would feel a warm, tingling sensation of happiness. Everyone had a ‘Warm Fuzzy’, to exchange. So, suppose I was angry, and I came to meet you, I’d give you a ‘Warm Fuzzy’, and take a ‘Warm Fuzzy’. Then both of us would have a warm sensation and my anger would have dissipated. That’s why everyone was happy in this land.

One day, a witch called Henrietta, happened to fly over the land. She resented the fact that everyone was happy here. So, she met an old woman, Bretalina, took away her ‘Warm Fuzzy’, but did not give anything in return. She misled Bretalina by telling her that there was a shortage of ‘Warm Fuzzies’ in the land, and advised her to keep them for herself. Thus, spreading the word across the land, Henrietta brought unhappiness to the land.

Instead of spreading ‘Warm Fuzzies’, they started spreading ‘Cold Pricklies.’ If someone came, they would turn their faces, instead of reciprocating by looking at each other and acknowledging each other. This continued until the time that a little girl understood what was going on, and explained to everyone that they could never run out of ‘Warm Fuzzies’, since on giving one they would always get one in return.

In the previous chapter, I began by presenting a discursive and genealogical account LSE, and pointed to its role in the construction and normalisation of certain ideas about childhood. I argued that in presenting life skills as ‘everyday’, individual skills for adaptation, and its absence as a condition of ‘risk’, discursively, two ends of ‘government’ were

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1A story related at a life skills session conducted by Dr. Chandrika Bavegadi at UGHS, a government school in Bangalore (on February 11, 2012).
served: first, in line with the culture of neoliberalism, it served to prepare individuals to relate to themselves as a ‘bundle of skills’ (Urciuoli, 2008), and presented problems of poverty, school failure, violence, poor nutrition, hygiene and health, as problems of individual deficits in skills; placing the onus on the individual to become more ‘responsible’ and ‘adaptive’. Second, through the construction of these skills as integral to everyday life, and to the general practices of childhood socialisation, it also served to bring a previously-unidentified population under the ‘gaze’ and regulation of a large number of authorities (i.e., educational, clinical, middle class, state, etc.).

Extending this argument on the regulation of conduct further in this chapter, I aim at presenting concrete instances of text and practice from the field that will help demonstrate this. Specifically, I aim at showing how LSPs function as ‘technologies of government’, by elaborating on how ‘disciplining’ is organised through these programmes. That is, by ‘disciplining’, I refer to the ways in which the programmes sought to bring children to understand and relate to themselves that were in line with the desires of various authorities (i.e., schools, parents, middle class, job markets, etc.).

While, conceding that these skills, such as decision making, problem solving, critical thinking, and so on, are intrinsically valuable to children’s development, particularly, as the NCF 2005 has noted, for developing “sensitive, interrogative, deliberative, and transformative citizens” (NCERT 2005, p. 51), I attempt to show how these are not the real ends of the programmes. Rather, through field accounts, I try to show how these programmes become spaces to deliver specific messages about the self, rather than skills.
5.1. Life Skills Programmes and the Multiple Modes of Disciplining

In establishing the central point of this chapter, I begin with a set of illustrations from the field that demonstrate, how, it is largely the cultural aspects of the self (such as mannerisms and ways of being) that are presented as ‘skills’, and how these ‘skills’ are mainly seen as “bit of information or data”, based on a predetermined curriculum that must be delivered effectively (Johnson, 1998, p.211). That is, I try to show how ‘skills’ are conceived, as Johnson (ibid) argues, as a “marketable bag of tricks”, or “techniques” or “knacks acquired through routine” (p.210) that many educated people learn to use, without a knowledge of their underlying principles. Missing within these programmes are deeper conceptions of learning that involves complex moral, and human relationships, and the need to preserve the linkages between personality, knowledge and skills (Johnson, 1998) that can lead to a phronetic awareness on applying these skills.

Further, in unpacking the nature of the skills taught through these programmes, I also attempt to show how these represent those ‘skills’ that are valued by employers, markets, and the middle class, such as that of ‘self-regulation’, ‘self-responsibilisation’ (Gooptu, 2013; Hollingworth & Williams, 2009; Reay, 2008; Rose, 1996b) and other conventions of social decorum (e.g., on how to speak, how to dress or conduct oneself, etc.), emphasised within the current neoliberal climate. Beginning with examples of classroom discussions that privilege such behaviours and curricular material that emphasise certain ways of being, I then present a critical reading of the pedagogic techniques through which this curricula is translated, showing how all these factors come together in ‘disciplining’ the government school child.
5.2. Understanding the Self through Classroom Discussions, Curricular Texts, and Middle Class Values

In the opening vignette of the chapter, the story of ‘Warm Fuzzies, Cold Pricklies’ related by Dr. Chandrika Bavegadi, an independent psychologist and life skills trainer, to a class of ninth standard students was given. The story, which was meant to teach children about the use of ‘positive strokes’ (i.e., ways of enhancing self-esteem), was used by Dr. Bavegadi to draw her students’ attention to a range of social expectations for individual behaviour, such as the use of social greetings such as ‘good morning’ and ‘thank you’; parental and societal expectations regarding excessive television viewing, greater academic orientation, greater participation in domestic chores, and the dangers and pitfalls of sexual attraction.

Stating that the “Eighth and ninth standards are an age of ‘Whys’ and ‘I’”, she pointed out to them that at this age they would only want to receive ‘Warm Fuzzies’. Presenting television as one of the ‘Warm Fuzzies’ that students desire, she asked them to think of the following situation: “if I see T.V. today, what will happen tomorrow? I won’t tell you to study, but you think and decide.”2 Similarly, drawing their attention to the topic of sexual attraction (and presenting it as a ‘Warm Fuzzy’), she told them “In this age there will be boy-girl attraction, but the problem is the consequences.” Pointing out that every choice has consequences, she asked them “Why don’t we use our choice with respect to this?” Children responded in a chorus, stating it was because they don’t think. She summed up the discussion, then, stating “because like T.V., it

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2 What could be seen here was how ‘Warm Fuzzies’, which was a term used to signify forms of self-reinforcements to increase one’s self-esteem, was differently interpreted within the session to imply hedonistic behaviours.
gives us immediate pleasure, so we don’t think.” The result, she argued, was “trouble, trouble tomorrow”.

That LSPs were about drawing attention to specific behaviours in order to change them, rather than about ‘skills’, was unmistakable from a repeated encounter with sessions and discussions such as these. Making this point amply clear, managers of some programmes, such as Joel Mathias (the former head of the Programme Delivery and Management team at IP) even argued: “We’re not telling children don’t stand up and talk. But there’s a way to do it. We are correcting their behaviour and saying ‘give respect, take respect’” (personal communication, March 3, 2012). As can be seen from the classroom observations presented above, even when children were asked to reflect upon their behaviours, these were rhetorical requests, with the outcomes of such choices and expectations for behavior pre-given to them through intonation, speech, and the presentation of childhood or adolescence in particular ways.

Based on the ‘authority’ of psychology, and their own experiences as an adult and a teacher, programme managers and facilitators constructed children as impulsive, incapable of thinking for the future, and hedonistic, and therefore requiring training in self-control, and external guidance, as can be seen from the excerpt given above. The life skills class itself never became a space for deliberation, co-construction of knowledge, or critical questioning of ideas and notions associated with the self, bodies, or social norms and expectations. It remained a space within which conventional norms and expectations could be reinforced, albeit in interesting ways, through the use of activities such as stories and games, replacing the conventional and didactic methods of disciplining used by regular school teachers. (Interestingly, children also concurred that life skills facilitators differed from their regular teachers not in what
they taught them, but how they taught the same messages to them in a more friendly manner).

Similarly, even during training programmes conducted for facilitators, it was their personal behaviour and ways of being (rather than their abilities to think critically) that became the focal interest during training. (Managers argued that this was important so that the facilitator could, then, transmit this personal culture down to the children). As can be seen from the following illustration of an incident that took place during a training programme for the staff and volunteers of IP, what got valourised through such training were middle class norms for behavior. These, as will be shown below, were often in conflict with non-middle class ways of being and behaving, but were the outcomes desired by the programmes.

5.2.a. IP’s master training programme, October 10-11, 2012

In this incident that took place during a two-day training programme facilitated by IP’s international curriculum and training expert, Christiana Munro, a theatre improvisation activity was underway. The activity involved having two members of the group start the task, by performing an act or scene, which was to, then, gradually be extended, modified or changed by other members of the group, who would take turns, replacing one actor at a time. Thus, the activity essentially involved a situation of collaboration, interpretation, teamwork and creative extension through which the impromptu skit could be moved forward.

3Unlike other training programmes, which were offered specifically to the facilitators, who had to deliver the life skills classes within schools, this programme had all of IP’s staff and volunteers participating. Thus, it consisted of a mixed group of middle class and non-middle class participants.
During one such round of the activity, two facilitators (Dhanush and Gautam), started the act by pretending to be two children playing cricket. This was then modified by another facilitator (Nandini), who replaced one of the ‘children’ as a teacher reprimanding the child for playing cricket during class time. Another facilitator (John), then replaced the other ‘child’, playing the teacher’s husband, ordering her to cook food. Finally, Jishnu, a new recruit to IP, replaced the ‘wife’, acting as the ‘husband’s’ employer at a hotel, ordering him to serve the prepared food.

While the performance took on the manner of a slapstick comedy and had the audience laughing at how the actors’ had managed to outwit each other, Christiana and some other middle class members of the group reprimanded the actors for ‘putting each other down.’ In response, facilitators John and Dhanush tried to explain to them that everyone had enjoyed the performance. They further tried to argue that none of the actors themselves had felt insulted because of the rapport and close camaraderie shared among themselves, which allowed them to take such licenses with each other. However, Christiana intervened here stating that even though they had enjoyed themselves during the performance, some of them, such as Nandini, may have been unconsciously hurt in this process. She argued that Nandini may think about this more deeply when she went back home, and further stated that “There are other reasons why we do theatre than to make jokes.” Pointing to another act in which a middle class, female volunteer had added to an ongoing scene by tying a ‘rakhi’4 to the other actor, who was a lower class male facilitator,

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4Rakhi is a sacred band tied by sisters onto their brothers’ wrist in some communities in India. The band symbolizes their bond of love, as well as the expectations of protection by the sister, and the commitment made by the brother to uphold this.
Christiania provided this as an example of personal transformation that was the goal meant to be achieved through these activities.

As this example shows, rather than being received as an opportunity to reflect upon, critically think about, analyse and question certain stereotypical beliefs that had been revealed during performance (e.g., the emphasis on academics and the devaluation of other aspects of childhood, such as play; gender relations; work relations), the activity seemed to have mainly ruffled a middle class sensibility about interpersonal relations and the licenses that can be taken within this. Thus, Christiana’s primary reaction was towards the behaviour of ‘putting down of others’ that she had perceived the facilitators to have engaged in, rather than the everyday normative expectations for children, women, and workers that they had displayed.

Further, what is also important to note in this example, as with Dr. Bavegadi’s class given above, is how, in setting certain expectations for behaviour, individuals are already discursively constructed and guided to understand themselves in particular ways. For example, denying the facilitators’ understanding of their relationship as friends who could take certain licenses with each other, Christiana presented Nandini as deeply hurt at an unconscious level that she herself had not yet understood. Presenting this as the normal and expected reaction, Christiana not only established expectations for a certain kind of middle class propriety and decorum in interpersonal interactions, but also gave to Nandini a certain way of understanding her own self. This, I argue, was one of the first ways in which programmes ‘disciplined’ subjects, by giving to them an understanding of their selves (e.g., as impulsive, lacking control over themselves, hedonistic, uncultured, lacking social decorum, etc.). Along
with this, they also prescribed the appropriate choices to be made in overcoming these aspects of the self.

5.2.b. Curricula and ‘cultural disciplining’

In addition to these aspects of ‘cultural disciplining’, there were other messages transmitted through the LSPs. These messages, as I will show, aligned individuals with the larger socio-economic ends of ‘governmental’ reason and action. This was most evident in the curricula and its structuring of the content that was to be delivered and learnt in a life skills classroom. An analysis of the curricula of the different organisations mainly revealed how specific skills such as ‘self-awareness’ or ‘communication’ came to be defined by the programmes to achieve particular ends and develop particular kinds of understanding about the self, in students.

As an illustration, I present an analysis of one of the first topics taught by VYB to eighth standard students, on self-awareness. An examination of the curriculum reveals how this topic was structured to achieve the goal of ‘responsibilisation’.\(^5\) Below, excerpts from the self-awareness module is reproduced verbatim to demonstrate this.\(^6\)

Self-awareness includes recognition of our personality, our strengths and weaknesses, our likes and dislikes especially our emotions. Developing self-awareness can help us to recognize when we are stressed or under pressure. It is also often a prerequisite for effective communication and interpersonal relations, as well as for developing empathy for others.

\(^5\)See chapter 4, footnote 16.
\(^6\)From the soft copy of the curriculum document shared with me by Ranjit Rao (the head of operations at VYB’s Inspire project), via email (dated May 25, 2013).
Describing self-awareness thus, there were just two main activities and a set of corresponding facilitating questions given as a part of this module. The first activity, called ‘Roles I Play’, sought to “create an awareness and positive perspective about the roles that the student plays”, particularly drawing attention to their “role of a student and the responsibilities attached to it” (as given in the curriculum document). The stated aim of this activity was to convey the importance of school and education to children.

The second activity called ‘Your Strengths, Your Opportunities’ sought to draw children’s attention to their personal strengths, weaknesses and opportunities through which they could perform their roles as students successfully. Thus, the primary emphasis within the self-awareness module appeared to be on developing an understanding of one’s roles and responsibilities, particularly in relation to that of being a student. Further, even when guided to make a ‘Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats’ (SWOT) analysis, the focus was on drawing students’ attentions towards available opportunities and how to make most of these to be a good student. Instead of making students critically aware of themselves in relation to the environment, state, society, barriers of caste, class, gender etc., that operated upon their lives and posed challenges for mobility or success, the primary message sought to be conveyed by the self-awareness module seemed to be that of understanding one’s self and roles as emerging from internal factors.

Even with a large majority of children coming from working class homes, as described earlier, and many employed in part-time work, the difficulties this posed for academic participation never became a point of

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2The full details of both activities, along with the specific facilitating questions used are presented in appendix 5.
discussion within the programmes. Even when facilitators encountered specific cases of children who had dropped out because of a hostile school environment that did not take into account these factors about their lives, counselling was employed (as part of the LSP) to motivate the child to return to school. The focus was on explaining to him/her the importance of education, rather than on helping him/her critically understand and question the system that had contributed to these conditions.

What these instances seemed to suggest was how LSPs acted as tools of neoliberal responsibilisation, wherein conditions such as education became a matter of individual responsibility. Attending, performing at, and completing school were all presented as problems of rational decision making on the part of the individual. Cultivating an understanding of responsibility among students, by having them deliberate on their roles, strengths and opportunities (as opposed to the structural challenges that framed their lives), it seemed that the programmes were aligned with the various developmental goals and requirements of national and international agencies, on achieving universal literacy and schooling as the solution to all problems of development. Thus, they functioned as ‘technologies of government’ that aligned children’s interests and disciplined them to understand themselves in relation to the global discourses on education and development.

In fact, what could be observed on field, was how, in focusing exclusively on the point of roles and responsibilities (as opposed to other

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8 For example, at AGS, Yamuna, a facilitator from VYB had to counsel and deal with a child who worked early mornings as a newspaper boy, and would thus come tired to class and fall asleep. After having been scolded and reprimanded for this by the teacher, the boy had decided to drop out, when Yamuna intervened and counselled him to continue school. Similarly, in other schools, I met other children who were unable to attend school regularly, either due to financial difficulties at home, or were unable to attend due to other duties or chores at home.
aspects of the self, such as achievements, aspirations, self-esteem, emotions, life and cultural histories, class, caste and gender identities), these sessions even fed into certain normative and patriarchal constructions of the self. For example, during another session observed at AGS,\(^9\) an eighth standard student, Jency, had written the following account in response to the task of listing out one’s responsibilities as a son/daughter:

A boy should be a suitable son to his mother. He should do the work that she sets for him. He should earn a good name from the people around. It is not enough if he just does what he is told, but he should also stand on his own feet, and support his mother and family.

A girl means she should do the work assigned to her by her mother. She should preserve and uphold her tradition and must remain within her limits. She should study and try to take care of everyone. She should take responsibility for all the work.

As the account clearly shows, Jency presented a normative account of gender roles that revealed the internalised patriarchal norms and expectations of society. Yet, the interest within the class was not on critically examining these ideas on the social limits set for girls, or the burdens of economic provisioning and family care that had to be taken on by boys. Rather than discussing what implications these have for the formation of identities, the facilitator’s interest was on getting children to complete the task of enumerating one’s responsibilities as part of specific roles. Thus, the facilitator only acknowledged Jency’s responses for having successfully met the session objective, but did not undertake a further discussion about these responsibilities and roles.

Similarly, even during Dr. Bavegadi’s session at UGHS (described earlier) it was noticed how certain gender stereotypes were reinforced in her discussion of children’s behaviours, and in her attempts at bringing them to reflect upon themselves. Speaking of the ways in which children may give others ‘Cold Pricklies’ (i.e., hurt others, or bring them sadness), she pointed to instances at home, when girls complained on being given a chore to do by their parents, stating the following: ‘When there is a brother at home, you fight saying why doesn’t he get any work, and only I get?’, seeming to suggest that such a reaction would amount to an inappropriate behaviour. Again, instead of enabling girls to understand or challenge the forms of patriarchal expectations placed upon their selves, Dr. Bavegadi appeared to be validating social expectations that contributed to the establishment of differentiated roles for girls and boys, specifically in relation to tasks such as performing and taking responsibility for domestic chores. Thus, such instances not only presented examples of ‘responsibilisation’, but also pointed to strong practices of disciplining of the self in line with normative expectations of school and society, which were far from the goals of empowerment that these programmes talk of.

Putting together these different instances of organisational talk (i.e., organisational members’ narratives, visions, field accounts) and ‘text’ (i.e., their specific curricula), what emerges is a picture of how LSPs become sites of regulation through which ‘docile’, manageable’ subjects, ‘amenable’ with the goals and visions of various institutions (such as schools, state, industries, workplaces, families, etc.,) can be formed. While, on the one hand, the developers of these programmes, such as Devesh Arya seemed to be purporting to address the mismatch between ‘skills’ and ‘job’ created by the education system, what they actually
appeared to be training children in were attitudes of ‘adaptability’ and ‘flexibility’ required for the globalised, post-Fordist conditions of work. In contributing through their discourses and work, to the growing social perception that investments in technical skills for the future was a ‘waste’, and that ‘soft skills’ such as communication and initiative were the essential skills required for job guarantee, they also contributed to the phenomena of ‘deskilling’ underway in the current context of advanced capitalism. Further, such views failed to take into account how technical and domain specific knowledges were, in fact, central to securing white collar, middle class jobs, and offering working class youth opportunities for real mobility. They, therefore, contributed to the very discourses through which class gets reproduced.

Further, they also failed to acknowledge the investments that disadvantaged youth (must) make in acquiring such cultural capital (refer Jeffrey, Jeffrey & Jeffrey, 2004; Vasavi, 2013-14), in the hope of acquiring better jobs and futures. As other scholars have noted, while rural and working class youth are pushed to make these personal investments in acquiring education and ‘hard’ skills, what is freely available and offered to them, pushed by corporate, governmental and non-governmental networks of governance, are programmes such as these ‘life skills’ that seek to prepare them to comply with various socio-economic institutions, markets and the workplace. Within such programmes that emphasise particular kinds of personal skills for development, what gets left out are the critical skills of negotiation, awareness and knowledge of rights, abilities to critically examine and question conditions of labour, and so on.

10 A detailed account of this comment, made by Devesh, has already been given in Chapter 4.
The result of such dismantling of vocational, technical, and critical-liberal education systems through state and international policies, and the replacement of ‘hard’ technical skills (that represent domain specialisations, and offer workers bargaining power), with life and social skills, represent a move to render workers bereft of their bargaining power, as several scholars such as Ainley and Corbett (1994), Jackson and Jordan (1999), and others have noted. The emphasis on ‘soft skills’, as opposed to ‘hard skills’, it has been argued, leads to the creation of conditions of greater job insecurity (owing to the lack of specific domain knowledge that can anchor workers to specific jobs or industries, within which they can grow through accumulated experience and established networks). This, they argue, allows workers to be flexibly moved, transferred, retrenched and retrained based on industry and economic demands. Further, in this process, the very soft skills become important to create new cultural sensibilities, individualise and “de-unionise mentalities”, manage conflicts that may emerge in this process, and cultivate a sense of loyalty to the organisation first (Jackson and Jordan, 1999).

Devesh’s own LSP embedded these underlying rationalities. The programme, which focused on training children in five key areas, as a way to prepare them for future jobs, defined these skills (like VYB) in particular ways, through a structuring of the content and the curriculum. The five focus areas of IP’s programme were ‘Interacting with others’, ‘Overcoming difficulties and solving problems’, ‘Taking initiative’, ‘Managing conflict’, and ‘Understanding and following instructions’ (all of which are key areas sought to be managed within the workplace, and that contribute essentially to organisational work flow). Together, these five focus areas were said to cover the entire range of 10 life skills
identified by the WHO.\(^{11}\) While IP claimed to have covered the entire set of skills under these five broad domains, it is important to note how specific skills such as empathy, or managing stress or emotions, that deal with individual well-being, and contribute to the personal quality of life, did not get represented or become key areas of focus within the programmes.

Looking across the (arts) curriculum more closely,\(^{12}\) even individual skills such as communication could be seen to be presented in specific ways. For example, in training children in communication, the curricula mainly represented the sub-skills of ‘listening’, ‘public speaking’, and ‘taking and giving instructions’, which appeared in seven of 19 session plans in the facilitators’ training manual (for 2012-2013). While the skills of ‘listening / active listening’ appeared across six sessions, ‘public speaking’, and ‘taking and giving instructions’ appeared in one session each. From this it is already evident that the primary understanding of communication that was sought to be developed was with respect to listening to others, and receiving and giving instructions. Other forms of communication, such as assertive communication, questioning (e.g., stereotypes, normative expectations), negotiating, debating, technical or formal communication (all of which can be critically empowering in contexts of unequal relations of power), did not receive much focus within the curriculum.

To provide a clearer explanation of what specifically became the interest within such forms of communication training, I present below a

\(^{11}\) Joel Mathias (former head of Programme Delivery and Management, at IP; personal communication, March 3, 2012).

\(^{12}\) IP, as mentioned, before had two programmes – one that was arts-based, and another that was sports-based. I mostly visited their arts-based sessions, and hence am drawing my analysis from the arts curriculum.
discussion of an activity called ‘Blind Drawings’ given in their curriculum. The goal of the activity, as listed in the curriculum, was to help

- Identify how to communicate accurately or properly
- Listen attentively while following instructions
- Give instructions clearly

The activity itself had children work in pairs, sitting back-to-back against each other. Each child of the pair took a turn at calling out a set of instructions to the other child, so that he/she could reproduce the drawing the first child had made using just basic geometrical shapes, while the other child tried to follow these instructions as carefully as possible. Following this, children’s attention was drawn to the problems of communication (both in listening as well as giving instructions) due to which the drawings may have been erroneously reproduced.

What is seen here is how communication - a complex process of interpersonal interaction, reciprocation, negotiation and strategisation, that intrinsically embeds relations of power/knowledge, is depoliticised and reduced to a set of objective operations. The activity, which involves a simplistic transmission, reception and reproduction of a set of value neutral commands does not capture any of the undercurrents of real-world communication situations, even one that may involve a situation of communication at the workplace. For, getting a task done at the workplace may also involve differential relations of power, social dynamics, interpersonal histories, organisational hierarchies, work

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13The activity is fully detailed in appendix 6.
pressure and politics, all of which may affect the acts of ‘listening’ and ‘instructing’.

Further, the goals and questions for reflection presented as part of the activity also clearly showed how the onus was on the individual to examine his/her skills of listening or communicating (e.g., ‘were you drawing close or far from the original?’; ‘what kinds of communication were you using? where was the communication not working properly’; ‘what can we do to communicate more clearly, and to listen to understand?’), and correct this, rather than on understanding it as a dynamic process of interaction.

While this selective understanding of the skills and structuring of content linked the skills to specific messages and disciplined individuals in particular ways, an additional layer of ‘disciplining’ within the programmes, came from the nature of the pedagogy used. I now turn to this in the following section, showing how this provided the scaffold for bringing about desired behavioural change.

5.3. The ‘Pedagogy of Discipline’

In discussing how the pedagogy of LSPs conditioned and disciplined children in specific ways, I present three features of the pedagogic process - participation and the ‘relationship of care’ (Foucault, 1982) established to the self; the role of language as pedagogy; and the pedagogic structure itself, and its effects on body, rhythm and mood.

5.3.a. Participation, and the practices of ‘care’, confession and ‘visibilisation’

What is central to the pedagogy of LSE, in achieving its goals, is the relationship of ‘care’ established (i.e., the relation of care sought to
be established both to oneself, as well as the relation of care sought to be established between facilitators and students), through which inner aspects of the self can be examined, and brought to change. By ‘relations of care’, I refer to the idea put forth by Foucault (1982), in describing the novel forms of power through which modern (Western European) states undertook their projects of government. Arguing that this was fundamentally different in its modus operandi from political power, Foucault (ibid) showed how this form of governance drew its tools from the techniques of ‘pastoral care’ used by the church in governing its subjects and keeping its congregation together. That is, highlighting the techniques of personal care and concern for the well-being of individual subjects, ensuring their salvation through pedagogic techniques of confession and self-disciplining to purge their sins, Foucault (ibid) argued that the church was able to ‘visibilise’ the innermost aspects of people’s lives, and thereby gain greater control over them.

Pointing to similar practices adopted by modern states through such inventions of institutions such as prisons, juvenile homes, the apparatus of law, and most importantly, compulsory schooling, Foucault (1977; 1980), and other Foucauldian scholars such as Nikolas Rose (1999) and Ian Hunter (1996) have pointed to how control and regulation have taken the form of a ‘pedagogy of care’ that promotes self-inspection, visibilisation and correction.

Similarly, LSPs (a new invention, but that offer a similar kind of protection from ‘risks’, and ‘salvation’ through an escape from poverty through skills), appear to be also based on similar principles of ‘pastoral
care’ offered by states, international agencies and NGOs, using similar techniques of care and visibilisation as part of their pedagogic practices.14

These ‘relations of care’ embedded within the pedagogic format of LSPs were also what differentiate it from other forms of self-disciplining, such as moral or value education. The three main ingredients of the pedagogic format of the programmes that contribute to this were the practices of ‘safe space’, practices of engaging students in experiential learning, and the process of group reflection, which will be described in more detail below.

‘Safe space’. A prime requirement for achieving the goal of developing self-regulating individuals was an opening up of individuals and an examination of their deep-seated values and beliefs that informed their behavior. This was important in order to rework these beliefs, and help them develop a reflective control over these tacit aspects of the self. Thus, the programmes appeared to be structured as a sort of ‘confessional’ that provided them with a safe, secure, space within which they could reveal their inner most selves. The idea of a ‘safe space’ entailed not just physical safety, but a psychological space wherein participants would not feel threatened or judged, and could, therefore, express their thoughts, beliefs and values without the fear of being judged.

In creating this safe space, some organisations, such as IP, invested greatly in practices such as having the facilitator engage in personal conversations with participants, spend additional time outside the classroom in discussing their lives and building a rapport, work actively

14Here I refer to the wider ideological aspects of LSE, rather than to specific programmes observed within the Indian context.
at establishing a non-authoritarian environment within the classroom, build community trust (i.e., trust within the group in which reflection was to take place) through shared goals and agreements for participation, etc.

**Experiencing skills.** In addition to the creation of this space, a second distinct pedagogic marker of the programmes was the creation of a space for participation, for individuals to gain active experience. Experience was central to gain insights into one’s behaviour and thoughts ‘in-the-moment’ and to have an experiential knowledge of how to apply a ‘skill’ (e.g., decision making), or behaviour (e.g., being empathetic). Thus, the programmes were meant to engage each individual in the process of applying the skill / demonstrating the behaviour through the medium of an activity (e.g., experiencing decision making during a game; displaying empathy through art which could represent these feelings; etc.).

**Reflection.** The final step within the programmes, following participation in activity, was to have a deep, introspective discussion about what the activity led the participants to realise. This discussion was to be guided by the facilitator in a manner that would allow participants to explore different aspects of their self. As will be further discussed below, these latter two markers, of participation and reflection, were the key technologies of ‘pastoral care’ and ‘confession’, in that they served to render individuals ‘visible’, and thus, make it possible to apply techniques of correction to them.

**LSPs and the pedagogy of ‘visibilisation’.** Experiential learning practices made ‘visible’ behaviours, movements, gestures, and expressions, as well as internal processes of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and values that were revealed during reflection. To present an illustration
of this, below, I present an analysis of an event observed during a life skills class for eighth standard students of ANMS.\textsuperscript{15}

During this session, children played a game called ‘Where’s my monkey’ that was facilitated by Bharath (a facilitator from IP). In the activity, one member of the group (the ‘denner’) placed a bottle (the ‘monkey’) behind his/her back (while he/she faced the wall). The task for the remaining members of the group was to start quietly approaching the individual from a point marked as the ‘start line’, retrieve the bottle without the knowledge of the ‘denner’, and return safely to the start line. While children made many attempts to retrieve the bottle without getting caught, on repeated trials they were unsuccessful at this. During reflection, Bharath asked the children to think of why they had been ‘unsuccessful’. Questioning the strategies used by them, he managed to draw attention to their behaviours of rushing forward, making noise, lacking a plan to retrieve the bottle, lacking teamwork, etc., as reasons for this ‘failure’. Thus, behaviours revealed during performance became valuable sources of information about the self with which Bharath was then able to guide children’s behaviours towards desired ends.

While visible, physical aspects of behaviour was one level at which programmes operated on individuals, activities even made internal thoughts, emotions and beliefs visible. For example, during another class observed at ANMS,\textsuperscript{16} children were engaged in an activity called ‘Portraiture’, in which they were asked to lie down (face up) on a large sheet of chart paper, with their arms and legs spread out, so that another child could trace them out on the sheet. Following this, each child (whose portraiture had been made on the sheet) had to write about themselves on

\textsuperscript{15}On January 15, 2012.
\textsuperscript{16}On December 18, 2012.
it. While, right from the beginning it was observed that many girls in the class were uncomfortable performing this activity (since they felt ‘exposed’ lying on the sheet with their arms and legs spread out, in front of the boys in the class), these strong emotions linked to the body image, social conventions and self, came out mostly strongly in Radhika’s case. Observing the portraiture made by her friend of her, Radhika felt that the picture was making fun of her, and started crying. In this manner, her internal feelings and beliefs linked to her sense of identity were revealed during the course of the activity.

Similarly, during another classroom session too, it could be seen how the internal beliefs and thoughts of children were revealed during discussion, which then allowed the facilitator to modify them. During this session, an activity called ‘Teasing Tableau’ was conducted by Bharath, in which children discussed and enacted different instances of eve-teasing. During reflection, children were asked how they would face such challenges of eve-teasing. After listening to the various responses given by the children (e.g., ‘scold them’, ‘tell my mother’, ignore them, appeal to them to treat them as their own sisters and mothers), Bharath presented these various options to the class, in order to have them evaluate the responses in terms of their appropriateness. In the case of the response of scolding eve-teasers, only one girl, Deepika argued in favour of this. Stating that girls, too, had feelings and would feel angry, she asked why they shouldn’t get angry if teased. While not explicitly rejecting this response, Bharath picked up this response and put it to other children for suggestions, asking them if this was appropriate. Questioning this response multiple times, encouraging and vigorously nodding his head in response to those who stated that this was wrong as it would worsen the

situation, Bharath seemed to indirectly establish the response as inappropriate. While allowing the conversation to focus on its negative effects, he never steered the discussion towards the sense of frustration felt by Deepika on having to face these instances, or towards solutions that could make her feel more empowered in such situations.

Rather, through the discussion, he seemed to establish the responses that are normatively considered appropriate for girls, such as walking away or avoiding these situations of confrontation. Thus, in having made her thoughts and emotions visible, he was able to draw attention to how this linked to behaviour, and the consequences to it, making room to, thereby question, challenge, interrogated and correct even the innermost aspects of the self.

5.3.b. Role of language within the programmes

In addition to these practices of ‘visibilisation’, programme design included language in specific ways, so as to have effects on behaviour. Foucault (1966/2005), and other Foucauldian scholars, such as Thomas Popkewitz (1998) have pointed to the role of language in being more than just a medium of communication and representation, and have sought to show how the norms of language construction play a constitutive role in the creation of identities. Similarly, pointing to the constitutive effects of language, I try to show how language-use through the curriculum was meant to have certain performative effects on the subjects on field.

While LSE was supposedly value-neutral in its approach, unlike value or moral education, that consist of specific propositional knowledge of ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘right’ ‘wrong’, it was through metaphoric and metonymic usage of language that such normative understanding of
behaviour was established. I discuss this below, drawing attention to three specific ways in which language was used within the programmes.

**Language use and the circulation of ideas about the self.** This was more evident in the curriculum and practices of IP, compared to the other two organisations. IP used language in more strategic and pedagogically impactful ways than the others. Unlike the other organisations, IP’s curriculum not only had a more defined structure, but also made use of linguistic devices, such as metaphors, and other verbal and non-verbal cues in deeply psychological ways to draw attention to the self. (As will be discussed in the next chapter, this also had certain problems, since cultural differences in the use and understanding of language proved to be one of the main hurdles for the translation of these programmes into practice). For example, there were several metaphorical devices, such as, ‘safe space’, and personifications, such as ‘voice of doubt’, ‘creative spirit’, etc. that were used in the course of the programmes, in order to represent the emotional states or conceptual ideas that could not be easily explained or verbalised.

Taking the example of ‘safe space’, what was sought to be communicated to the facilitators was more than an idea of a physical space. While the idea to be communicated was that of an atmosphere within the classroom wherein children would be comfortable, active, vocal and unafraid of authority, a sense of the hard-to-explain psychological characteristics of such a classroom was sought to be given through a psychical image. Drawing on the image of a ‘space’ that could evoke visceral memories of a place in which one felt ‘at-home’ and comfortable, what was conveyed was an idea of certain psychological states necessary for participation.
Through an extended discussion during training, on facilitators’ own sense of psychological and emotional comfort experienced during training, attention was drawn to a broader idea of ‘space’ as an extended relation between the bodies and the environment, and the concept of ‘safety’ as a layered process, ranging from physical comfort to psychological and mental comfort. Thus, the idea of the ‘safe space’ also served the purpose of drawing the facilitators’ attention towards their personal orientations of caring, understanding, supporting, being trustworthy and so on, so that it would allow others to open up and ‘reveal’ themselves in participation.

Again, in discussing the idea of facilitators’ performance and work, which would have impacts on how effectively sessions got translated within the classroom, performance was embodied through the use of imagery, such as the ‘facilitator’s relationship with his/her creative spirit’. Thus, embodying abstract aspects of performance (such as creativity, enterprise, productivity) as an animate being, to be taken care of (like a pet or a child), facilitators’ performances were sought to be improved. The ‘creative spirit’ was presented as a being inside oneself that the facilitators could have a conversation with, request support from, discuss misgivings, and receive reassurance from, and was given a physical identity as a small voice within themselves. What this practice that they sought to establish amounted to was ‘self-work’, that is, practices by which facilitators could be made responsible to constantly look into their selves and seek to improve their performance. During training, facilitators were made to close their eyes, enter a zone of introspection, and practice speaking with this ‘voice’, in order to derive guidance and support from it, during the course of the academic year.
Further, doubts regarding performance, creative blocks, and inhibitions to performance were also symbolised as a ‘tiny nagging voice at the back of the head’ (the language of which closely resembled the ideas of a ‘nagging doubt’, or ‘nagging pain’, both of which are generally considered to be best got rid of). Further, the use of the word ‘tiny’ itself seemed to give an appearance of something that could be got rid of easily. Supporting this image of non-creativity or non-performance as a ‘pain’, the group was encouraged to collectively ‘pull out’ this ‘tiny nagging voice’, by physically reaching out to the back of their necks and throwing it away, during training. Converting aspects of the self, that may have otherwise remained unacknowledged or unadmitted, into the level of concrete action, through these metonymic devices that allowed it to be first verbalised, and then performed, IP attempted to powerfully impact facilitators’ beliefs in their own self and abilities.

**Language use and setting the conditions for participation.** In addition to the use of language to condition behaviour, language was also used a medium to ensure specific kinds of involvement to bring behavioral change. For example, the introductory session of IP’s training programme for children and adults (such as teachers, facilitators, and volunteers) was called ‘Goals and Agreements’. The title of the session, along with the activity that was undertaken during the session was mainly designed to enforce a sense of commitment on participants to participate fully, and in an uninhibited manner, so that individual behavior would be revealed during the course of the activities. Thus, the session was structured as a 45 minute process of jointly evolving guidelines for how to participate (by facilitators and participants). Through a discussion on the need to build a supportive community, on not putting oneself or others down, on having fun and letting go of inhibitions, etc., the aim was to
build an atmosphere in which individuals would open up. In presenting these pre-conditions or requirements for participation in the programmes as a set of ‘goals and agreements’, the primary effect sought to be achieved seemed to be one of establishing a formal contract of participation, that would create a sense of obligation on individual to honour the contract by remaining open and willing to behavioural change.

Further, adding a performative end to this heavy discussion, in order to strengthen this commitment even further, IP had also instituted a practice called “Sealing the Deal”, in which participants were required to stand in a circle, with one hand extended out in front of them, and the other hand raised over their head. Upon having finalised and accepted the goals and agreements for the sessions, they were asked to, jointly, bring down the raised hand in a clap to “Seal the Deal”. This terminology, and performance, used at the beginning of a life skills course, to set the atmosphere and expectations from participants through the course of the programme, had a specific role to play. As mentioned in the trainer’s manual, it was meant to steer the group away from the need for external “punishments, and towards ways of working together, supporting each other, and taking responsibility for themselves and each other”,18 for bringing about behavior change. Further, reinforcing this point about replacing external disciplining strategies with self-discipline in children, Christiana Munro, the international curriculum expert for IP, who had designed the curriculum, noted that the session on ‘Goals and

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18 As given in IP’s arts-based curriculum and trainer’s manual (2012, p.13).
Agreements’ was essential, since in its absence, the programmes would “just bleed into school.”\textsuperscript{19}

\textit{Language use and behavioural reinforcement.} In addition to using language in setting the conditions for the effective practice of the programme, IP also used language as a form of reinforcement to bring about behavioural change. Using a format called TLC praise (‘Tell it; Label it; Celebrate it’), facilitators were asked to cultivate appropriate behaviours in children using the following steps: first, of identifying the behaviour to be praised and stating or telling it (e.g., X came early to class today, and set the table along with Y); second, of giving this behaviour a name or ‘labeling it’ (e.g., so this makes X ‘helpful’); and third, of using a distinct format of appreciation to celebrate it (i.e., to make it special and to think of something different from mundane options such as clapping. This could be giving the child a hug; or making a ‘whooping’ sound indicating praise, etc.).

What was significant about this practice of reinforcement was the emphasis laid on clearly stating or verbalising the behaviour, and labeling it. Thus, the label made the particular quality/characteristic of the child a visible feature by which he/she would be recognised by others, and would recognise him/herself. This practice, then, ‘subjected’ individuals (in the Foucauldian sense of the term) to specific identities, to which s/he is obligated to live up to.

\textit{Language as Activities.} Finally, language-based activities was also an important feature of IP’s curriculum, through which behavior change could be ensured. To give an example of how language was used

\textsuperscript{19}As stated by Christiana during a curriculum feedback session with the facilitators, on October 18, 2012.
as part of activities to condition behavior, I give an example of a warm-up game called ‘Yes and…’, played at the beginning of a session on team work. In this warm-up activity, participants had to build a story, with one participant adding a line to the story, at a time. After each person had made his/her statement, the next member of the group added his/her line after having affirmed the statement made by the person before. (For example: participant 1: “Today it rained so heavily that I could not go to school”. Participant 2: “Yes and, I played foot-ball).

As the trainer’s manual notes, the point of the activity was to encourage group work through acceptance of others’ idea, even when one did not accept it or agree with it. This point was also validated by Christiana, during the curriculum feedback session mentioned above. The point of the activity appeared to be to train children in the standards of politeness and social decorum that can be observed within bourgeoisie spaces (e.g., being amiable, even when not in agreement; refer Ainley & Corbett, 1994).

That the strategic patterns of language-use and statement-formations in these activities had certain material effects on individual’s selves and beliefs became amply evident through instances that emerged on field, where facilitators and children were unable to access the cultural registers of meaning involved in such activities or practices. For example, while the use of ‘Yes and…’, in the activity mentioned above, was to function as a conjunction, or as merely an acknowledgement of the other’s position (indicating socially approved conventions for turn-taking and polite conversation, even under conditions of disagreement), a translation of this game into Kannada created significant problems for children and facilitators. While, one may acknowledge the other’s position without accepting it as a truth claim with the use of ‘Yes and…’,
in English, the facilitators’ conversion of the term in Kannada to ‘Houdu matte...’ created dissonances, since, as they noted, this translation did not work and seemed odd to the context. To explain why this was so, I present the following illustrative example in Kannada:

Participant 1: Ivattu jōraagi maLe bandiruva kaaraNa naanu shaalege hōgakke aagalilla. (Today, because it rained heavily, I could not go to school.)

Participant 2: Houdu, matte, naanu ivattu football aadide. (Yes, and I played football today).

The real problem was that ‘Houdu matte...’ had very different implications when compared with ‘Yes and...’, since the use of the term ‘Houdu’ implies a verification, rather than mere acknowledgement, in Kannada. A suitable translation that may have caused less of a cognitive dissonance for the facilitators, could have been the use of ‘aadare’ (‘however’), which would have implied an acknowledgement of the speaker’s statement, while, still providing scope for disagreement, or for introducing a new independent clause or statement that need not have to follow from the former. However, the facilitators’ inappropriate translation of the term was indicative of the lack of access to the middle class cultural codes of polite conversation that was sought to be taught through the activity, and the lack of resonance this had with experiences in their own life worlds.

Further, the fact that these subtle changes in translation could have very different effects on speakers and listeners is also telling of the effects of linguistic structures and rules of language (not just the semantics of it), on behaviour, as noted by Foucault (1966/2005), and Popkewitz (1998). This, therefore, also caused a sense of ‘dissonance’ for the facilitators, who were unable to understand the goal of the activity itself when translated using inadequate syntactic structures in Kannada.
5.3.c. Modulation of body rhythm, mood and behaviour

Having discussed the role of language as a key pedagogic device in LSPs (rather than as just a medium of communication), a final pedagogic device within LSPs that served to shape the self, was the planning of session structures in definite ways, so as to regulate body rhythms, moods and behaviours. Specific tasks, such as ‘check-in’, check-out, ‘warm-up’ and ‘closing’ that were included in IP’s curriculum had the function of regulating participants’ mood and tempo. This became apparent in the discussions observed between facilitators and master trainers such as Christiana, who explained the role of these sub-tasks included in the session plan. For example, when Arvind, a facilitator, told Christiana at the curriculum feedback session that he did not know what to expect as answers (and therefore, did not understand what was to be learnt) from ‘check-out’ questions, Christiana responded by stating, “That is not what check-out is for. Children should learn messages during reflection and warm-up.” In response to his question about what a ‘check-out’ question does, she stated that it was for children to take back whatever they personally felt like taking, but added (referring to the particular session that was being discussed) that “In this case, because they have been so wild in activity, the check-out lets them leave quietly. We don’t want them to go to teachers and parents wild. It lets them become quiet.”

Thus, Christiana explained to the group that the role of the check-in and check-out activity was to condition group dynamics and the energy level of the group. As was explained in IP’s facilitators’ handbooks, and

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20The activity that Christiana was referring to was a painting exercise called ‘Water Colour Monsters’ that children generally enjoyed very much. In this, children created abstract shapes using water colours and tried to imagine pictures of monsters in it. This activity was done with fourth and fifth standard students.
during training and feedback sessions, each component of the lesson plan had a specific role to play. While ‘check-in’ and ‘check-out’ were conducted in order to gauge the mood of the classroom, or close the session on a particular note,\textsuperscript{21} components such as ‘goals and agreements’ (that were to be discussed at the beginning of every class) were used to shift children’s orientation within the classroom towards practices of participative learning and self-introspection, drawing their attention and motivation to be committed to a process of self-directed change (which was in contrast with the school culture of learning). The ‘warm-up’ activity that followed this (which involved a short game or activity) was meant to build up energy, interest and enthusiasm for the main activity, which was then followed up by a closing activity that would, once again calm down the excitement generated during the course of the activity. As Christiana made it clear ("We don’t want them to go to teachers and parents wild"), despite being participative and activity-based programmes that held different conceptions of learning, the programme nevertheless sought to align behaviours and moods with what would be considered appropriate at school and home (i.e., being disciplined, quiet, calm, less active or fidgety, etc.).

Similarly, other organisations such as VYB also sought to regulate behaviour by prescribing the mood states or feelings students were to be left in at the end of each session. For example, for the session on self-awareness, the curricular document stated that the aim was to “Leave the group in a state of thought or contemplation and also feeling happy about

\textsuperscript{21}Check-in and check-out were short activities conducted at the beginning and closing of every session, consisting of simple questions about personal preferences, current mood states, or specific experiences that were to be answered with a single word or short phrase.
the rolls [sic] we play in our lives”.22 The module on creativity instructed facilitators to “Leave the student in a state of high energy with a sense of achievement that they can also have so many ideas”.23 Thus, by associating feelings such as happiness with an awareness of one’s roles, what this aspect of the curriculum seemed to be achieving was that of changing individuals’ ways of being and behaving, by targeting changes at a bodily level.

As can be seen from the preceding discussion, the practice of ‘disciplining’ within LSPs was a layered approach, involving both overt and covert techniques and practices. Children were subjected at multiple levels, ranging from thoughts, feelings, emotions, and beliefs, to behaviours and practices, to the ends of ‘government’.

While these formed the tacit and minute technologies of ‘discipline’ embedded within LSE education as an approach, in the following section I attempt to show how the LSP itself was ‘disciplined’ by the context of the field in which it was employed (i.e., government and other low-income schools in the Indian context). This, as I will show, led to a very different form of ‘discipline’ than the kinds of self-discipline envisaged within this approach. Describing how programmes got modified through the context of the school, I conclude by looking at the forms of subjectivities (sought to be) cultivated through school itself, at the end.

5.4. ‘Disciplining’ through the Reproduction of School Culture

Speaking of the school system in India, Majumdar and Kumar (2003) note that most formal schools in India remain ‘foreign’ and

22From VYB’s curriculum document titled ‘SS_ Content _Final Version_Class VIII, C08_S04_Awareness of Self” (2010, p.1).
23From SS_Content_Final Version_Class IX, C09_S01_All Are Creative (2010, p.1).
‘colonial’ in nature, comprising poor pedagogic techniques, placing undue emphasis on textbooks and examinations, consisting of an authoritarian culture that cultivates dependency among its subjects, and expecting to be obeyed and pandered to. In drawing attention to the nature of schools as ‘foreign’ and ‘colonial’, what they essentially point to is how knowledge and practices of modern school systems fail to resonate with the local culture and ways of being and understanding. As several scholars (e.g., Anitha, 2000; K. Kumar, 1988; 2004; 2005a; 2005b; N. Kumar, 2001; 2007; Majumdar and Mooij, 2011; Sarangapani, 2003; Seth, 2007) have noted, this has also led to an excessive orientation towards ritualistic and rote practices of learning, memorisation, and has established marks as an indicator of knowledge acquisition. Along with this, in a culture marked by formal, authoritarian relationships between the ‘knowledgeable teacher’ and the ‘unknowledgeable, unruly’ student (Clarke, 2003), modern, progressive pedagogies of participation and constructivist methodologies, have largely remained exotic, forced and instrumentally applied (refer N. Kumar, 2007; Sriprakash, 2010).

It is within this context that deployment of programmes such as LSE need to be understood. In order to explain this further, I systematically examine three variables of schooling, below, and how these factors conditioned the practices of the programmes, which in turn, had implications for the formation of students’ subjectivities. This included the spatio-temporal context of the schools; its authoritarian culture and practices in dealing with children, learning and knowledge, and the specific expectations of teachers and school administration from the programmes.
5.4.a. The spatio-temporality of schooling

Spatio-temporally, as well as ideologically, the school imposed itself on the programmes, regulating the manner in which learning occurred. With the exception of a few programmes, since most were conducted within the space of the regular classroom, they were also subjected to the spatial arrangements and time-tables of schools. This, in turn, had implications for how the programme could be conducted.

As described earlier, the pedagogy of LSE, spatially, and temporally, required room for carrying out experiential learning. Psychologically, it required a non-authoritarian, safe atmosphere, where knowledge acquisition could be undertaken as a process of self-driven enquiry. However, the spatial and temporal structuring of the Indian classroom and school disallowed for these practices of non-hierarchical, participative formats of learning.

Spatially and temporally, classrooms failed to become locations that could be developed into a ‘safe space’. Marked by a culture of formal, authoritarian relations between teachers and students, and practices of ‘giving’ and ‘receiving’ (i.e., of knowledge), the transformation of these physical-cultural spaces into spaces for participation and dialogue became a nearly impossible task, since children continued to view life skills classrooms as a continuation of schooling (even when these programmes were conducted by external agents), and their roles as one of following instructions. This became amply clear from several sessions within which, children oriented to the facilitators (and myself) as ‘miss’, and demanded that we give them the ‘answers’ to even those activities that involved creative improvisation and individual expression. For
example, during an activity called ‘Morning Mirror’ at ANMS school,\(^{24}\) in which children were divided into pairs and one partner from the pair took on the role of a mirror, imitating every action made by the other, a group of eighth standard children, who did not understand the expectations of the activity, demanded of me: “Neengo pannungo miss. Adhaye naango seyarum” (‘you do it miss, and we’ll do the same’).

In another instance,\(^{25}\) when the facilitator, Bharath, tried to get children to engage in a free-writing exercise, one of the girls from the same class asked me to tell her what to write, again unable to understand what the expectation from such an activity was, since this wasn’t clearly defined in terms of a concrete goal. In another incident, Soundarya, from the same class reported that she had gone home and performed the skit on aliens that we (the facilitator Bharath and I) had taught her in class (actually referring to a theatre improvisation activity, where the children had to spontaneously come up with their own acts. Instead of seeing this as an opportunity for personal expression, she, and others in the class had refused to participate in the activity, and had instead used the performance given by Bharath and me as a ‘script’).

Similar instances were also noted as part of the other programmes. For example, during another session, when Yamuna, a facilitator from VYB asked her class of eighth standard students to write what they had learnt in the life skills class, some children turned to me and asked me what they should write. When Yamuna provided an example saying they could write things like having learnt to respect elders, one of the girls who had asked me for help told her friend that ‘miss’ had given them the answer, and they could write the same. Thus, it was clear that for children

\(^{24}\) Session observed on March 3, 2012.
the life skills classes were an extension of schooling, and thus, they oriented to the pedagogic process of the life skills class in the same manner as they oriented to school knowledge. Further, the facilitators and I, were seen as teachers with the authority to prescribe what was ‘right’ and ‘wrong’, and who had to be respected and followed.

Some of these ideas were reinforced by the facilitators themselves, and through the spatial structuring of the pedagogic process, as a frontal teaching and learning process. While pedagogies of participation and facilitation were usually meant to adopt a circular seating arrangement, in order to facilitate discussions and face-to-face contact among all participants, the LSPs continued to use the frontal seating structure of schools. While the circular format ensured that no one individual was at the head of the group, in a central position of authority, so as to encourage participation and co-construction of knowledge, the LSPs retained the position of the facilitator as the head of the class.

Part of the reason for this was the high number of students (anywhere between sixty and ninety) within each class, except in the case of IP, which saw a smaller batch of twenty to twenty five students, since its classes were conducted after-school hours, and participation in the programme was voluntary. This restricted the numbers in each batch, since parents were often reluctant to allow children to stay back after school, in the absence of the regular school teachers, or because transport for children back home became a concern (particularly in the case of girls).

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26Facilitators exerted this authority by having children address them as ‘miss’, in order to be able to have control over the classroom.
Other programmes conducted their classes as part of the school day – either by incorporating their classes within the time-table (as in the case of VYB) or by fixing a particular time during the school day to take classes (as in the case of MFCL). Thus, they were required to cater to the entire strength of the class. Owing to these large numbers that made classroom control difficult, and the shortage of space for accommodating these large groups in a circle, frontal learning was adopted even within the life skills classroom. Frontal learning was carried out, with the facilitator standing at the head of the classroom (near the teachers’ table, in front of the black board) facing the children. The entire group of students was seated, as in the case of the regular classroom, in a file of rows facing the teacher to make ‘surveillance’ of individual students possible. The frontal learning format that privileges the teacher as the point of authority within the classroom, to whom all children must ‘report’, answer, or attend to (Hargreaves, 1988; Smyth, 1990/2006), thus, did not manage to break the hierarchical nature of learning at school, and construct an atmosphere of non-hierarchical learning, in which the facilitators partner, rather than supervise, the learner.

Further, due to this large group size (including in the case of IP’s programme) an intimate, and safe space also could not be built within the session, and neither did it allow for participation by all children. With respect to the first problem (i.e., the lack of a ‘safe space’), pre-existing group dynamics and interpersonal relations among members of the student body affected the processes of building a ‘safe space’. In building a ‘safe space’ and in developing relations of trust, the facilitator had to rework these existing dynamics and relationships. With large groups, this became particularly difficult, since the facilitator had to have a knowledge of, and remain aware of how these various interpersonal
dynamics came into play in sessions, during tasks such as performing oneself, expressing one’s creativity, or revealing one’s innermost self during reflection. Thus, the main challenge, in getting children to participate as expected within the programmes, in order to cultivate practices of self-introspection and working upon the self, was in undoing these previous histories and relations, which could seldom be achieved.

Further, within these large groups, it also became difficult to pay attention to individual students, their feelings, relationships, and doubts. Therefore, it also became difficult to engage the entire group in the process of activity and reflection. Often a large portion of the class was left unengaged, and students would be involved in their own activities (such as exchanging or copying notes, completing homework or classwork, talking or playing among themselves and so on). With the facilitator unable to pay close attention to every participant, their responses, feelings, gestures, expressions and behaviours, the process of facilitation itself was not able to dynamically reflect the thoughts, values or beliefs brought into play during the course of the sessions, and this therefore, limited the extent to which children’s understanding of themselves, as autonomous and self-regulating individuals, could be reworked and shaped.

An additional problem resulting from this large group size was linked to the temporal requirements of the programme, which was mismatched with the temporal structure of the schools. Since most programmes were planned to be held during the school day, and were scheduled as a ‘period’ (which were, mostly, of 40-50 minutes duration), sessions, also, had to be accordingly planned. With the programme structure requiring adequate time for all students to participate and reflect upon themselves, the large group size and limited classroom time did not
allow for this. Thus, not all students of a class would get an opportunity to undertake the activity and learn or apply the skill experientially. Only activities that involved stories or activities that could be administered in groups, such as writing or art activities, were possible with all students. Thus, organisations such as VYB and MFCL (that catered to large class strengths) limited the use of activities such as theatre improvisations, games, role play and other activities that could not be administered in groups.

Even when a group activity, such as a story, like ‘Warm Fuzzy, Cold Prickly’ was used, or a writing task (e.g., listing all the steps one would use in making a particular decision) was set, what was seen was that only a few children had an opportunity to share their thoughts, ideas and experiences. Typically, this took the form of the teaching-learning conducted in a regular classroom – with a few students raising their hands to share their ‘answers’, and the facilitator offering these students an opportunity to answer, following which s/he summarized the key points. Thus, the sessions never took on the format of a group discussion or brainstorming, where participants could co-construct knowledge among themselves through discussion, debate, sharing, cross-questioning and so on. This left a majority of the children unengaged in the process.

Thus, what could be seen from the modification of programme practices to suit the school structure, was, not only how school time-tables determined the format of the classrooms, but also how (by extension) they conditioned children’s understanding of their selves. That is, by bringing about a modification to the structure of the classes, they helped reinforce self-perceptions cultivated within the regular classroom, of children as lacking knowledge and authority to engage as equal participants in knowledge production; as those who must speak only when spoken to;
and as those who must have their ‘answers’ validated by a more knowledgeable adult.

Even when organisations such as IP tried to take care of this problem of participation, by instituting practices such as ‘check-in’ and ‘check-out’, this already-established understanding of children’s selves and the school’s role in guiding and shaping it, disallowed the achievement of the desired effects. As explained earlier, the idea behind the check-in and check-out question, was to provide every child an opportunity to participate and voice his/her opinion, since this opportunity may not be available during the course of the other activities of the session. The second reason for this practice was to help get a sense of the group energy level and take the session forward based on this. (For example, if the check-in revealed that the students were upset or caught up with problems encountered during the school day, the facilitator was expected to modify the session accordingly, taking into account the emotional needs of the children).

However, what was observed during the course of the sessions, conducted by IP, was that rather than using this opportunity as an occasion for expressing oneself, one’s thoughts, feelings and desires, children imitated each other, or provided routinised responses, showing a reluctance to express themselves. For example, during a session with eighth standard students at ANMS, as part of the check-in process, Kaveri, the facilitator, asked the class the following question: ‘If you had a super power, what would it be?’ Explaining that by ‘super power’ she meant something that one had, with which they could do everything required for everyday life, she gave the example of responses given by

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27 On July 24, 2014.
children in another class. She said “In another class someone likes karate. If she does a karate step, she will feel happy. Somebody else likes dance.” With this she invited the class to present their ‘super power’. One student, Gowrama, started by saying she liked to sing well. Soon all other children started answering with the same responses of singing and dancing, rather than individually reflecting upon what made them feel empowered.

To give another example of this behavior by children, I present below an account of what happened during another check-in activity conducted with the same class by facilitator Bharath:28

The check-in activity given to the class was to imagine that they were aliens, and to describe the clothing on their planet. As an example, Bharat held up his palm with his middle finger and ring finger held together, and with the other fingers parted, telling them that their bodies might look different. Then, Bharat asked me if I would be willing to demonstrate a scene wherein he would behave like an alien and I would translate his actions and talk.29 Accepting this request, together we acted out a scene in which I explained to the children that the alien was extremely hungry and was looking for food, and found the children to be particularly appetizing.

The children had a good time laughing at our act, and then kept asking us repeat it. But, when we then encouraged them to come and try it, immediately some responded saying ‘No let’s do something else’. Finally, after much coaxing and encouragement to shed their inhibitions and perform in pairs, only Narendra and Murugan volunteered to do this. They performed the same story that we had presented in our act.

Since after this, no one else was willing to try this activity, Bharath asked them to sit in their own places and show how

29 What Bharat was referring to, here, was actually a main activity that we had learnt during a training session called ‘Alien Conference’. The idea of the activity was to teach children empathy for those who were different, and the ability to communicate and interact despite differences. In the activity participants paired up in groups, and one partner of each team had to act as an alien, while the other would act as a translator. Here, Bharat had actually modified the check-in activity which was to imagine that one was from another planet, and describe three things about the planet.
they would behave as an alien. Here, too most children were hesitant. Only Narendra got up and did a robot act. After this, Bharath went row by row, forcibly asking children to perform as an alien, and most children made a similar screeching sound with their throats to show that they were aliens.

This reluctance to perform/share their ideas, and the imitation of responses, was, in fact, a recurrent feature of most sessions observed, across schools. Part of the reason for this was the difficulties children had in understanding the task and what was expected of them. But another part of this response (as mentioned earlier) was conditioned by the level of ‘trust’ in the group, and a lack of confidence in the space as a ‘safe’ one, where fellow participants would remain non-judgemental. To give an example of this sense lack of confidence in the group, I present another incident wherein I had an opportunity to probe a child on her reluctance to participate.

The following incident that took place during the life skills session conducted for the same group of children by Bharath. The activity underway during this session was that of identifying one’s individual preferences, such one’s favourite, place, dress, colour, movie, song, actor and so on. When it came to sharing their responses, Asma, a Muslim student, volunteered to share her responses. However, while reading out her responses she skipped certain portions of her responses, such as on favourite movie and song. Another student, Priya, who was sitting next to her, tried to draw her attention to what she had missed out. But Asma pretended as though she did not understand what Priya was pointing out, and tried to quieten her. When she had finished, I spoke to Asma separately, and asked her why she had not read out her responses for her favourite song (for which, she had written the name of a

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Bollywood song called ‘Chance Pe Dance’) and movie. She replied, “They [other children in the class] won’t know miss”. Asma was worried that the other children would make fun of her or distance her, since cultural knowledge and tastes, were different from that of other children in the class, who were mostly familiar with Tamil songs and movies.31

Instances such as these clearly revealed how programmes were unable to provide children with a sense of ‘safe space’ within which practices of self-introspection could be carried out. These, also showed how programmes failed to cultivate the very skills that they claimed to transfer, such as ‘empathy’, which could have addressed problems such as that faced by minority students like Asma, within a predominantly Tamil speaking, Hindu school. Thus, in the absence of transference of these skills, what programmes seemed to mainly be doing was that of reproducing the schools culture of rote learning, memorization and imitation in the learning of skills. Far from creating a sense of agency and autonomy in students, and developing self-disciplining individuals, this served to reinforce conventional ideas of dependency and unquestioning deference to authority, among students.

In fact schools even seemed to impose these ways of being on the facilitators themselves, setting limits on their behaviours, and their techniques of bringing about behavioural change. These forms of regulation of facilitators’ conduct and behaviour, were seen in simple daily routines to which facilitators were required to comply, such as reporting to the school (rather than the organization that the facilitators worked in), marking their attendance with the school, applying for leave.

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31ANMS being an aided-Tamil medium school, with ninety five per cent Tamil speaking children, and a smaller proportion of Kannada speaking children, most children were familiar only with these Tamil movies and songs.
with the school, participating in other duties such as teaching, invigilation, organisation of extra-curricular activities by the school, following the dress code given by the school, and so on.

Explaining how schools regulated their conduct and practices, Nayanika, a facilitator from VYB, presented to me the regulations imposed by the school on them. She pointed out that schools initially did not understand their methods and imposed their norms of working upon them. Questioning their efforts at personal counselling and building rapport with the children, she pointed out that teachers would reprimand her (a female facilitator) for talking or spending time with the boys and for sharing physical proximity with them. In other words, they expected that the facilitators too maintain a position of authority, formality and distance from the children.32

In another context, during an informal conversation, Kaveri, a facilitator from IP informed me that the head master of the school she worked in, was angry with them (the life skills facilitators) since he perceived their techniques of participative learning and the absence of standards of ‘discipline’ and punitive action in their sessions, to be responsible for the increase in ‘bold’ and ‘rash’ behaviours on the part of the children. Giving an example of how a tenth standard student had locked some other junior students in the toilet, she explained that the head master thought this to be a result of the freedom given by IP’s LSP.

These forms of suspicion shared by the regular teachers and head masters/mistresses of the school often led to teachers and the heads of the institution threatening to supervise these sessions. For example, during one such instance at ANMS, for the eighth standard, the class monitors

32Personal communication (March 29, 2012).
Soundarya, Ramya and Asma informed us that the head master was going to observe the session and had asked to be called when the class started, since he had received complaints that children made noise in the life skills class and that they did not listen to the facilitators. Stating this, they went to call him, and while he did not come to attend the session, the monitors had been asked to bring the children who made noise to him. While Kaveri and I tried to intervene and explain to the children that this was not necessary and that it would take away from the ‘safe space’, the monitors were insistent that the children who did not stay ‘silent’ and who did not listen to us be punished.

Thus, what could be seen was how programmes deployed within the context of the school got conditioned by the regulations of the school itself, and how these had implications for the conceptualisation of children’s roles and identities. In fact, schools even set other explicit goals from the programmes, as most organisations admitted.

Even during the earliest interactions with the organisations conducting these LSPs, managers, such as Pavan Raghunath (the former HR and life skills team manager at VYB’s Inspire project), explained the need for their programmes to cater to these goals. Explaining that while his director, Rajesh Sridhar, had planned to introduce life skills from the primary to the post-degree level, in every government school and college, considering this to be important to build the confidence and the ‘right personality’ required to succeed, he pointed out that the schools had not been interested in this. Therefore, he argued, VYB had entered schools by providing the academic tools and resources that schools wanted, and which were particularly short in government schools. He further noted that having entered this way, schools were then most cooperative, since they believed that the LSPs would give them a better classroom
environment to work with, by laying the foundations for higher level learning (e.g., alphabets in English, numbers, addition, subtraction and other basic operations in maths). VYB had therefore also included these basic forms of academic learning as part of the LSPs.

What this also revealed was that for schools, the programmes were, primarily, about improving academic performance and ‘discipline’ (by which they meant traditional values of obedience, respect, completion of academic tasks, punctuality, regularity, etc.). This was also evident from teachers’ and students’ accounts of these programmes. For example, in a personal interview (August 2, 2012), Ragini, the high school mathematics and science teacher at ANMS pointed out to me that the LSP conducted by IP at their school was helping them with school management, by making children more disciplined and helping them achieve their academic goals. Pointing out that the programme had first been started on an experimental basis, she argued that it had been continued as a result of the success it had in achieving academic goals. Particularly, she reported that the programme had helped to secure a pass percentage of 93 per cent the previous year. Children too, in her opinion, had become more disciplined when one compared them with other schools, as a result of these programmes.

Children too echoed these ideas about the programmes, rather than explaining personal, psychological or emotional changes they had experienced as part of the programmes. The first responses, from children across different schools (e.g., ANMS School, AGR Government School, JPLY Government Girls High School, PADY Government Girl’s High School, and so on), to the questions ‘What is the meaning of life skills?’ or ‘What did you learn in the life skills class’, were always about learning how to live or how to study. For example, a group of tenth standard girls
from JPLY Government Girls’ High School explained to me that LSP were for ‘learning about life’. They added that the aim of the programme was to teach them ‘how their life should be’, and to study well. Stating that in the course of the programme they had to learn about themselves, they pointed out that they learnt to solve family problems, overcome stage fear, and to study well and score good marks.33

In another instance, during a life skills class at VYB, I spoke to a group of four eighth standard girls I was sitting next to, about what life skills meant to them.34 The girls responded immediately stating that it referred to “good behaviours”. When I probed further and asked them why they needed life skills, the girls responded by saying that they needed it to share their emotions and difficulties with their friends. Further, they added that it was important in order to learn to give respect to elders and to be disciplined. Trying to further understand their responses, I asked them if this wasn’t taught by other teachers and elders too to them. In response to this, one girl replied that while others told them to give respect to elders and to be disciplined, in this class they were taught how to be disciplined and to give respect. Thus, as both the examples show, while children do make a mention of these skills for personal development (e.g., ‘knowing ourselves’, ‘to share our problems’), ideas of ‘discipline’, academic achievement, and ‘how to be’ formed a prominent part of their responses.

Catering to these demands of schools, all the organisations positioned their programmes to schools as that which would help them improve their school climate and targets of attendance, pass percentages and discipline. That these school goals of attendance, pass percentages,
and discipline became privileged components within the programmes. This was evident from observations of classroom sessions, internal training programmes, as well as from an observation of the measures used by organisations to evaluate programme success. For example, in addition to catering to the school’s goals of inculcating academic foundations, VYB had, in fact, even started a ‘dropout prevention’ programme as part of their life skills project for the academic year 2012-2013 (replacing their previous goal on ‘positive adaptation’). In line with this, they instituted the practice of ‘support groups’ within each classroom, encouraging group members to monitor each other on aspects of attendance, behaviour and completion of work. Each group also had a group leader, who reported to the facilitators and thus, allowed them to track children on these dimensions.\[^{35}\] Thus, clearly moving away from an emphasis on just self-regulation and skills on self-awareness and critical decision making through which these ends (choosing to remain and continue in school) were to be assured, programmes such as VYB were explicitly conditioned by the demands of the field.

Discussions on life skills within classrooms were also conditioned by these demands and practices of the field. For example, even during the introductory sessions on ‘what is life skills?’ some facilitators such as Yamuna (of VYB) clearly oriented the discussion towards classroom behaviours. Validating the different answers given by students in response to this question, explaining life skills as ‘how to behave with elders and teachers’, ‘how to behave in class’, ‘how to be clean’, ‘how to be disciplined’, performing the academic tasks demanded within class, such as learning tables, etc., Yamuna summarised the meaning of life

\[^{35}\]The new focus of VYB’s LSP was explained to me by Rajesh Sridhar, during a personal interview (February 23, 2012).
skills as “nothing but good behaviours to be a good student or good human being.”36 On other occasions, sessions undertaken to teach specific skills (e.g., problem solving) through games, were also oriented towards learning these rules for conduct, as can be seen from the following illustration. Playing a game called the ‘Yes game’ with students, in which one child must find an object hidden by the rest of the group, by following the cues they gave in response to the direction of his movement, Gautam, the facilitator from IP, concluded this session by drawing students attention to the following point:

“In the ‘yes game’, if you tell the child searching for the object the wrong route he can’t reach the goal. In the same way only if we follow our parents and teachers we will be able to reach our goals. We have to listen to elders and teachers. Otherwise you will go off on the wrong path.”37

In this manner, Gautam presented students an understanding of themselves as directionless and needing guidance from elders. This account of the self in fact aligned closely with the school’s understanding of children, and reinforced dominant socialisation patterns rather than of the LSP’s understanding of children as autonomous and self-regulating individuals.

While, IP and VYB engaged students in activities through which they could, at least, experience the process of taking control of their selves, in the extreme case of MFCL, sessions were exclusively structured as lectures on how to behave and the importance of following school protocol such as how to dress, how to study, paying attention in class, completing homework, etc. For example, reprimanding the ninth

36 During a session with a group of eighth standard students at AGS (July 16, 2012).
37 During a session at ANMS (February 17, 2012).
standard students of KGHS for making noise in her class, Vrinda, the facilitator from MFCL drew the following picture on the board.

![HERO | ZERO](image)

Pointing to the two columns respectively, she told the children that those who keep making fun in class, tease and fight with others, create trouble or commotion will all become ‘zero’, while those who take care of their homework, finish their classwork, stay quiet, mind their own business, will all become ‘heroes’ in the end.\(^{38}\) In other classes too, she and her colleagues constantly reprimanded children along this line, and presented the session, broadly dividing it into two parts – a brief portion focused on playing games as an end in themselves; and a longer section designed to advise children on how to be and behave.

Similarly, school goals became a focus even within internal training sessions of organisations, and a part of their evaluation strategies. For example, during a training programme conducted by IP for its facilitators,\(^ {39}\) the former head of the Programme Delivery and Management team, Joel Mathias, also drew their attention to schools’ goals of securing a result of 100 per cent pass percentage. Linking this to the new monitoring component (i.e., of facilitators’ performance) and evaluation procedure that IP was planning to introduce for the academic year 2012-2013, he pointed out to the group that this was linked to teachers’ performances. Therefore, he argued that IP would be instituting a practice of monitoring facilitators’ performance based on indicators such as arrival at sessions on-time, adherence to lesson plan given in the

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\(^{38}\)The session was observed on November 22, 2012.

\(^{39}\)On May 16, 2012.
curriculum, regularity of undertaking reflection, and so on. In addition, he pointed out that feedback would be sought from teachers at schools with respect to the impact of their programmes, in terms of indicators such as whether children sat in the classrooms without disturbing the class, whether they improved in examinations, and so on.

In fact, indicators such as SSLC results, pass percentages, absenteeism, dropout rates and attendance were indicators used by all organisations to present the success of their programmes, both to schools as well as to funding organisations, in the absence of other reliably quantifiable indicators for variables such as self-awareness and decision making. These different practices seemed to suggest that the programmes were specifically oriented to keep with the school culture, which imposes specific forms of expectations on students – namely, that of academic achievement and obedience to authority.

Based on these various layers of ‘disciplining’ discussed above, it is perhaps obvious that LSE is a project specifically oriented towards the making of the child’s self. What I have, particularly, attempted to demonstrate in this chapter, however, is how the term ‘skills’ (a term that refers to forms of procedural knowledge, devoid of intrinsic value judgements) is misapplied here, in order to present these programmes as value-neutral. Through an examination of how these programmes and ‘skills’ are translated in practice, I have tried to show how they enable a particular understanding of the self. Thus, as others such as Coe and Natasi (2006) have also noted, what such programmes, that purport to teach children personal and social skills to manage life, do in fact, is break down “…narrative performance and artistry” of everyday life by validating a singular way of using and applying such skills (p.180).
In presenting this argument, what the empirical data from the field, particularly, helped me show is how these specific ways to perform skills also present specific messages about the self. This is done by tightly coupling the pedagogic format, content and the internal structure of the LSP. Thus, participation, the care offered and personal rapport built by facilitators, activities, stories, games, and group discussions, all become ways by which individuals could be presented a particular understanding of themselves (e.g., as risk-oriented, coarse, impulsive, dull and uncultured, etc.). Further, through these processes, a desire for how their ideal selves could/would look (e.g., polite, responsible, having self-control, autonomous, rational, and cultured, like the middle class) could also be cultivated.

Further, observations from the field have also helped me show how these specific ways of being were defined and interpreted in relation to specific governmental ends – for example, that of being a good student or citizen (by adopting the ways of thinking about education and performance at school, and behaviour, in line with the expectations of schools, national and international agencies, and middle class societies).

In addition, another little discussed feature of the programmes that I have sought to establish through the data, was the effects of the school culture on the programmes themselves. In presenting this, I have sought to draw attention to the scope for these programmes to be appropriated to alternate ends of government. Like others, such as Coe and Natasi (2006), who have argued for the unintended consequences that such programmes could have, such as becoming sites through which students’ relations with school authorities could be managed through a display of teacher-approved responses (rather than developing ‘competent’ problem-solvers), I have also sought to show how programmes get adopted to
certain traditional ends of schools and society. Through field data, I have aimed at showing how contradictory goals of discipline (i.e., self-discipline and self-responsibilisation desired by the programmes, and obedience to external forms of authority, desired by the schools) sat together within the space of LSE, and were seamlessly woven together, to achieve the overall effect of a ‘deskilled’, uncritical self that must accept, adapt and adjust to various demands placed upon it.

What implications did these contradictory ‘disciplines’, imposed on children, have? What kind of subjectivities did it help develop? I turn to these questions in the next chapter, looking at the ‘disconnects’ that emerged between the global programme ideals, and the local contextualisation of the programmes. Examining the nature of these ‘disconnects’ that emerged from the differences in worldviews of the groups involved, I attempt to show how the implementation of these new pedagogies for self-making have effects on the formation of subjectivities and the social context.