



Social family models: a way to foster social skills and learning

Amin Beigzadeh¹, Masoumeh Rahimi², Mehrdad Nazarieh^{3*}

¹Health Services Management Research Center, Institute for Futures Studies in Health, Kerman University of Medical Sciences, Kerman, Iran

²Department of Medical Education, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Isfahan, Iran

³Department of English Language, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Kerman Institute of Higher Education, Kerman, Iran

Article info

Article History:

Received: 17 Oct. 2015

Accepted: 10 Apr. 2016

ePublished: 30 June 2016

Please cite this article as: Beigzadeh A, Rahimi M, Nazarieh M. Social family models: a way to foster social skills and learning. *Res Dev Med Educ* 2016;5(1):1-2. doi: 10.15171/rdme.2016.001.

Keywords: Social, Family models, Learning

Dear Editor,

The social family models of teaching highlight the social nature of learners and are used to develop the learning process through social interactions. Our article discussed the role of these teaching models in the formation of social skills and achieving educational goals. Based on that, we concluded that education systems ought to devise these models in order to facilitate collaborative learning and overcome the social problems in different communities. Evidence shows that vulnerable groups such as youth, adults and families are at risk of numerous social problems. These problems can be categorized as juvenile delinquency, expulsion from school, pregnancy among younger teens, illiteracy, poverty, domestic violence and child abuse.¹ Considering social problems as an inevitable part of modern societies, scientific investigation and evidence-based interventions at different levels are essential.² One of the ways of tackling these problems is through educating younger generations. Education plays a pivotal role in this regard and the development of societies depends upon the development of the educational systems.³ Thus, universities as a single entity can educate others by providing educational opportunities, conducting research and developing field-related activities. In this regard, members of society will be equipped with essential knowledge and skills to participate in social development. Community involvement is an important aspect of any social development that leads to learning. People interact with their family members through appropriate behavior to educate and prepare them for life in society. Individuals learn when the activities, habits, words and thoughts of their society members are internalized within them. Fostering collaborative learning is the most fundamental step

for learning in the educational environment.⁴

There are several matters that play a role in the teaching and learning process. Not only are the professional and humanistic attributes of teachers important in the teaching and learning processes,⁵ but different teaching models are also of utmost importance for better learning.⁶ By the same token, providing an appropriate learning environment can contribute to the development of skills and metacognitive awareness of learners.⁷ If teachers use different teaching methods and models, the results would be the achievement of educational goals. Teaching models are actually learning patterns. Applying these models will not only help the students learn how to gain and retain information, ideas, skills, ways of thinking and opinions, but will also help them in the learning process. Teaching models help students to learn and comprehend a variety of subjects, skills and attitudes. Joyce and Marsha Weil⁸ categorized four families of teaching models including (a) Individual family models, (b) Social family models, (c) Information processing family models, and (d) Behavioral family models.

The social family models emphasize the social nature of the learners, their social behavior and how to enhance the learning process through social interactions. The models associated with the social family are focused on developing the concepts and skills needed to work in groups.⁹ Consequently, we can deal with social problems through the use of effective educational models or patterns. Social family models help learners learn social skills to build effective relationships with others and avoid irrational social interactions. When members of society establish a sincere relationship with each other, the results can be a sense of safety, reliability and comfort.¹⁰ The World Health Organi-

*Corresponding author: Mehrdad Nazarieh, Email: mehrdad.nazarieh@gmail.com



zation's (WHO's) 10 basic skills of decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal skills, self-awareness, empathy, coping with emotions and coping with stress are considered the main social skills to be practiced.¹¹

The social family model is one of the most successful models for solving problems such as child abuse, delinquency and illiteracy.¹ Given the important role of social family models in solving social problems, it is expected that this model, which includes methods such as cooperative learning, exploration and role-playing, can be used for better learning. For instance, teaching in small groups helps learners to deal with difficulties they may encounter in their future and seek the best solutions possible to tackle those difficulties.⁷ During a group work activity, the learner can learn more about responsibilities as well as gaining some experience in the management and organization of the activities to be accomplished. Besides, the group discussion can result in a more profound and sustained learning experience. Ashman and Gillies suggest that cooperative learning can result in a positive attitude toward other people even with different cultural and social backgrounds. This type of learning is also effective in working with other individuals and providing a collaborative learning environment.¹²

With regard to the social problems in communities and the need to overcome these problems, it is highly expected that the education system, using teachers as those who are responsible for educating communities, apply the social family models. This will help and prepare different learners to interact with others, participate in activities of different types, engage themselves in group discussions and role-playing and organize diverse social activities.

Ethical approval

Not applicable.

Competing interests

Authors declare that they have no competing interests.

References

1. Fixsen DL, Blasé KA, Timbers GD, Wolf MM. In search of program implementation: 792 replications of the teaching-family model. *Offender rehabilitation in practice: implementing and evaluating effective programs. The Behavior Analyst Today* 2007;8(1):96-110. doi: 10.1037/h0100104.
2. Rafiee H, Madani Ghahfarokhi S, Vameghi M. The priority of social problems in Iran. *Iranian Journal of Sociology* 2008;9(1-2):184-208. [In Persian].
3. Mohagheghian S, Ahmadi G, Saadatmand Z. Recognition and application of new teaching models among the humanities faculty members. *Research in Curriculum Planning* 2012;2(8):48-59. [In Persian].
4. Saif AA. *Modern educational psychology: psychology of learning and instruction*. 7th ed. Dowran Publication; 2013. [In Persian].
5. Esmaili M, Haghdoost AA, Beigzadeh A, Bahmanbijari B, Bazrafshan A. Personal and scientific characteristics of positive and negative role models among medical educators from the viewpoint of dentistry and pharmacy Students in Kerman University of Medical Sciences, Iran. *Strides in Development of Medical Education* 2013;10(3):298-311. [In Persian].
6. Ganji M, Zahed-Babelan A, MoeiniKia M. Meta-analysis of studies carried out regarding the role of teaching models in students' academic achievement. *Journal of School Psychology* 2012;1(1):93-107. [In Persian].
7. Malakouti M. Teaching in small groups (Group discussion). *Educational Strategies* 2010;2(4):183-187. [In Persian].
8. Joyce BR, Weil M. *Models of teaching*. 3rd ed. London: Prentice Hall; 1986.
9. Badrkhani N. A survey about the viewpoints of Shiraz teachers about the effective of modern teaching methods [Dissertation]. Shiraz: Azad University; 2009. [In Persian].
10. Hargie O, Saunders C, Dickson D. *Social Skills in Interpersonal Communication*. Beigi K, Firoz Bakht M, trans. London: Croom Helm; 1987.
11. The WHOQOL Group. The World Health Organization Quality of Life assessment (WHOQOL): position paper from the World Health Organization. *Soc Sci Med* 1995;41(10):1403-1409. doi: 10.1016/0277-9536(95)00112-k
12. Ashman A, Gillies R. *Cooperative learning: The social and intellectual outcomes of learning in groups*. 1st ed. London: Routledge; 2003.