Paul Staiton says critical thinking is an important life skill and, as such, needs to be taught as a subject in its own rights.

On a recent trip to China, I was taken to a state-of-the-art school that is considered to be among the top five in the country. It is a school that is renowned for its high standards and rigorous curriculum. The school's principal, Mr. Li, explained that the school's approach to education is based on the principle of fostering a love for learning and critical thinking. He emphasized that critical thinking is not just a subject to be taught in isolation, but rather a life skill that can be applied to all aspects of life. Mr. Li said that the school's curriculum is designed to encourage students to think critically and creatively, and to develop a deep understanding of the world around them.

In regard to livelihood issues, he said, “We have an especially high priority on providing education and training so that the young can learn skills that are in demand.” He added that the school is also working to improve the health and well-being of its students, with an emphasis on mental health.

Mr. Li is not alone in his views. Many other Chinese educators and policymakers emphasize the importance of critical thinking and problem-solving skills in the education system. In an interview with the South China Morning Post, the President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Mr. Zhang, said, “Critical thinking is not only a life skill, but also a fundamental value for a democratic society.”

The importance of critical thinking is also being recognized by governments around the world. In the United States, for example, the Common Core State Standards initiative places a strong emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving skills in its standards for English and mathematics.

In conclusion, critical thinking is an important life skill that needs to be taught as a subject in its own rights. It is a skill that will benefit students not only in their academic pursuits, but also in their personal and professional lives. As Mr. Li said, “We are preparing our students for the future, and critical thinking is one of the most important tools they will need.”