



ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

There is a need to make the High school students especially at the tertiary level aware of their emotional/social/multiple intelligences. It is mandatory to look at how this could be ingrained into their lessons so that they have a wonderful learning experience. Soft skills is become a compulsory subject in today's world. It suggests practical activities that can make the teaching of soft skills more interesting and meaningful.. This paper focuses a model of teaching soft skills, wherein soft skills could be integrated with literary texts and used in the classroom. Communication skill is not only the technical jargon of our world, but also the language for employable criteria. Communicating in English plays a wider role. Communication skill is given importance in all the fields.

Keywords: English, Literature, soft skills, communication skills, emotional intelligence,

1.0 INTRODUCTION

English is a language of opportunities and it plays a vital role in securing desirable employment. Accuracy and fluency in the use of language are very essential. Technology – aided learning has started playing a significant role in the pursuit of language learning. The state - of -the - art language laboratory which has been established aims at facilitating the learners to gain mastery in the use of English. It enables the students to expedite the process of improving learning skill with more emphasis on LSRW (Learning, Speaking, Reading, and Writing) leading to desirable employability. The language lab intends to develop the confidence level of students and it would motivate them to use their language skills outside the classroom as well. The technology thus fulfills all the needs of language learners and educators. In the recent years researchers and teachers are showing much importance to learning strategies in teaching communications skills in India. Much research has been conducted to investigate the effects of strategy training on improving reading skills to name a few (for example, Albert F Rayan& Ramakrishna T. Shetty, (2008) Arun S. Patil Marc J. Riemer (2004). Richards argue that it is essential to teach students how to interact with each other in order to activate their thinking and create ideas which are crucial to second language learning. The studies show about their experience of training the students. Philipson (2000)

describes English from various perspectives such as the influence of globalization, finance and the economy connected to world trade organization and so on. The students from Telugu medium too difficult to communicate with their urban peers and their thirteen years of English language education could not provide them confidence to communicate in English. For this reason a group of interested Telugu medium learners have been considered.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To enhance the proficiency of the students in all four primary skills (LSRW) of English through computer aided teaching.
2. To emphasize the importance of English as a medium of learning academic subjects. To facilitate the students to shed fear and anxiety while using English and to overcome their mother tongue influence
3. To equip students with confidence to undergo placement training programs through round the year practice in small presentations, group discussions, debates and mock interviews.
4. To enhance spoken skills through various software/ computer programs.
5. To provide every student enough time to practice the components of the language through repeated exposures.
6. To make them aware of the need to learn better pronunciation through stress on word accent, intonation and rhythm.

3.0 SOFT SKILLS: AN INSIGHT

Soft skills are defined in different ways by the media and eminent people. Soft skills is a combination of personality traits, elegance, language skills , and good attitude that make people different from the others.

1. According to Belzer,2004, soft skills is described as an art in the corporate sector as it is to do with managing oneself and the people at work so as to ultimately attain maximum customer satisfaction at the end of the day.
2. According to Verma(2012), effective soft skills reduce stress and conflict, improve relation building ability, enhance intimacy , increase understanding , and promote joy. These skills consist of communication skills, assertive skills, conflict resolution and anger management. By this we could estimate how important soft skills are for better living.

3. Verma(2012) also equates soft skills as a combination of IQ (Intelligent Quotient) plus EQ(Emotional Quotient). One needs to work today using both the mind and heart.
4. According to Goleman(1996), EQ matters more than IQ.This makes it clear that even though a balance needs to be drawn between hard and soft skills, soft skills need to take a upper hand as it deals with how one says and does things than what one know , does or says.
5. Soft skills have lot to do with non-verbal behavior. According to Latha(2009),body language is an essential soft skills that speaks loader than words. It occupies 73% of the communication and only 7% is taken up by actual words. So grooming students to focus on non-verbal behavior is an important prerequisite for success.
6. According to Shipurkar(2009) , soft skills can be integrated into the college curriculum by way of the add-on model, integrated model or composite model .So a novel way of integrating soft skills with their subjects so that it can help them imbibe soft skills.

Soft skills are doing what other do in a different manner in order to get result. This requires perseverance, self-knowledge and the knowledge about how others behave and act. The soft skills that bring success to career. Soft skills are the personal capabilities that determine how well you work with others, job performance, communication and all of the other things that make you different from every other expert in your field. While your technical expertise is very important, soft skills are much harder to teach. These can be a deciding factor in getting and keeping your dream job. In this post, we'll outline nine soft skills that will make you successful in your career or in the classroom, and some tips to help you develop them further.

4.0 COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Interpersonal communication is the backbone of all soft skills. Whether it's through emails, phone calls or in person, you need to be a clear communicator. Some ways to improve this skill include:

1. Make eye contact and acknowledge everyone's presence in the room
2. Be aware of your body language
3. Practice both formal and conversational speaking
4. Develop your writing skills and ALWAYS proofread before hitting the "send" button.



4.1 TEAMWORK

One of the things is always hear Teachers to look for a team player. Teamwork is a very important skill because not only does it show that you work well with others, but when a team works well together the result is always better. Some ways to improve this skill include:

1. Split up work evenly
2. Keep an open mind
3. Never make assumptions and always praise when possible
4. Make everyone feel important

5.0 ROLE OF TEACHER, LANGUAGE CLASSES & CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The role of the teacher, language classes and classroom environment changed drastically due to the emergence of learners focused curriculum and learning. The language teaching needs to be changed rapidly in order to address the future needs of the society and the learners. Learning environment should be conducive to the learning it should provide pace for acquisition rich environment. The language teachers cannot stop playing only the role of merely facilitator and guide by the side. They should play a multi-dimensional role like the Architect, Psychologist, Sociologists, Scientist and Educationist to enrich the learning, to equip the learner by eradicating the pitfalls of learning. The language classes should be more practical to tap and trigger the innate potential of the learners. It should motivate and encourage the learner to take a risk and learn the best out of the activities. Goals are clearly defined to bring the best out of the learner and autonomy of learning should be appreciated for better learning. The learning environment should be created to provide space for enjoyment the learning. It should helpful to the learners acquire and celebrate the learning.

READING

Short stories are very useful in the trials to improve students' vocabulary and reading. There can beas many words as the teacher thinks necessary. This activity helps students to learn more vocabulary, and italso teaches them how to use a dictionary. This could happen because when students read, they interact withthe text. By interacting with the text, they interpret what they read. By interpreting what they read, they canwork toward speaking English more creatively.

WRITING

Short story can be a powerful and motivating source for writing. Short story as a model occurs when students' writing becomes closely similar to the original work or clearly imitates its content, theme, organization, and style. However, when student writing exhibits original thinking like interpretation or analysis, or is creatively stimulated by, the reading, literature serves as subject matter. In accordance with this, **Oster (1989: 85)** affirms that literature helps students to write more creatively. Teachers can create a variety of writing activities to help students to develop their writing skills. They can ask students to write dialogues or more complex writing activities if students have reached a high level of language proficiency.

SPEAKING & LISTENING

Short story can also be a powerful and motivating source for teaching both speaking and listening. Oral reading, dramatization, creativeness, role-playing, rebuilding, and discussion are some effective learning activities which center on a short story class and it can be used for enhancing these two skills. Asking students to read story aloud can develop their speaking as well as listening skills. Moreover, it also leads to improving pronunciation. To develop listening skill using a short story, teachers can: read the story out loud so students have the opportunity to listen to a native speaker of English play the story if a recording is available.

Teaching Foreign Language Literature to non-native-speaking students is not always an easy task. Language teaching is a process whose aim changes not only from country to country and culture to culture but from individual to individual. The students can be told of literary terms and the meanings of words, and can be finally asked to analyze the subject of literary piece, which is often too abstract a task for the nonnative

speaker. The process of analysis, therefore, takes the form of repeating the material understanding mostly by memorization and at best, partly by rephrasing. Apart from short stories, another technique called "Simple Story-Telling" may also be used for improving the students' oral English.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to indicate how literary texts might enhance English language learning. Soft Skills are, however, one of the most wrongly referred words since there is a general impression among many as interpreting those skills which are „soft“ because of its name. Though it is called „Soft“ skill yet it is hard to inculcate them within a short span of



time. It somehow relates to our upbringing and company we tend to have most of the time, however can be developed at any stage with proper concern, adequate exposure and focused training. Soft Skills can help in enhancing good internal communication which maintains a sense of ownership and a shared vision. There is no denying the fact, that literature plays a pivotal and stimulating role in the acquisition of language in a relevant and causal sense. In the light of the observations made in this paper and the suggestions advanced therein, we can, therefore, safely conclude that literature or literary texts can play a vital role in developing language skills among the non-native learners of English and helping them to use language for communicative purposes in the real world.

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