



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 3. Issue.2.,2016 (April-June )

ISSN  
INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
INDIA  
2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS OF SCHOOL LEARNERS USING GARDNER'S  
INTRA-PERSONAL AND INTER-PERSONAL INTELLIGENCES

E. SURESH KUMAR<sup>1</sup>, N. PRATHYUSHA<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Professor of English and Registrar of Osmania University

<sup>2</sup>Research Scholar, Department of English, Osmania, University



ABSTRACT

Interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills play a key role in the personality development of any individual. Employers these days are looking for only those prospective employees who possess excellent interpersonal skills. Some people might inherently possess these two skills but the rest have to work hard to acquire them. Gardner referred to these skills as “intelligences” and stated that people who have these learn faster. This paper focuses on measuring the inter-personal and intra-personal intelligences among school students using the Likert scale, through a structured questionnaire. The data thus obtained was analyzed and interpreted. Based on the pre-test scores, a training programme was conducted for 15 days and its impact was measured through the difference in scores between pre-test to post-test performances.

**Key words:** Interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, training programme

©KY PUBLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The theory of Multiple Intelligence was first proposed by psychologist Howard Gardner in 1983 in his book “*Frames of Mind*”. Gardner (1993) defines “intelligence” as the ability to “solve problems or fashion products that are of consequence in a particular cultural setting or community” (p.15).

He further stated that

The problem-solving skill allows one to approach a situation in which a goal is to be obtained and to locate the appropriate route to that goal. The creation of a cultural product is crucial to such functions as capturing and transmitting knowledge or expressing one's views or feelings. The problems to be solved range from creating an end for a story to anticipating a mating move in chess to repairing a quilt. Products range from scientific theories to musical compositions to successful political campaigns. (p.15)

Gardner (1983) identified seven different types of intelligence. They are:

1. Linguistic intelligence – the ability to use words in different contexts and settings.
2. Logical/Mathematical intelligence – refers to the ability to apply reason/logic

3. Spatial intelligence—refers to the ability to pursue pictures and store and retrieve information in the form of mental images.
4. Musical intelligence—the ability to appreciate music, play musical instruments, compose music and so on
5. Bodily/Kinesthetic intelligence—the ability to process information through body movements such as dancing, miming, etc.
6. Interpersonal intelligence—refers to the ability to understand feelings of others and think from different perspectives.
7. Intrapersonal intelligence – refers to assessing one’s own inner feelings, strengths and weaknesses

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS

Some people have a great ability to develop rapport with others easily and quickly, making them feel at ease. These people can read other persons’ reactions and can empathize with them. Language skills are the live skills we use every day to communicate and interact with other people, both individually and in groups. Interpersonal skills are not just important in the work place, - our personal and social lives are also benefited from them. People with good interpersonal skills are usually considered as optimists who hardly lose their self-confidence.

The ability to communicate effectively is a vital human intelligence. Each of us is already equipped with the interpersonal skills to an extent, but how confidently we interact with them makes us a better individual.

### RESEARCH DESIGN

The present research focuses on enhancing the English language skills of the school student’s using Gardner’s Intra-personal and Inter-personal Intelligences. For this purpose an experimental preliminary study was carried out by the researcher in different schools and observed that language learning was prioritized. A structured questionnaire based on Gardner’s Intra-personal and Inter-personal Intelligences was administered to hundred randomly selected students. After the collection of the data, the results were analyzed and interpreted. There were seven questions under each category and for each question, three options such as “frequently”, “sometimes”, “Never” were given.

### INTRA – PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE

People with Intra-personal Intelligence are skilled at self-reflection and know themselves very well. Learners with strong Intra-personal Intelligence have a deep awareness of their feelings, ideas and goals. Students with this intelligence usually spend time alone and are very productive.

The questions under the Intra-personal Intelligence were asked to explore the learners’ ability to understand themselves, appreciate and harness their own feelings, fears and motivations. The Intelligence may express itself as:

- I have a very high self esteem
- I display a sense of independent or strong will
- I like to write my thoughts and feelings in a diary
- I like doing things by myself
- I usually know/understand my feelings
- I like to spend time thinking or writing about things that matter to me.

### INTER-PERSONAL INTELLIGENCE

It involves effective verbal and non-verbal communication, the ability to note distinctions among others, sensitivity to the moods of others, and the ability to entertain multiple perspectives. Learners strong in Inter-personal Intelligence have a natural ability to interact with, relate to, and get along with others effectively. They are good leaders. They like to interact with others and usually have a lot of friends.

The questions under the Inter-personal Intelligence were asked to find out the learners’ ability to understand and interact effectively with others. This intelligence manifests itself as follows:

- Friends are important to me
- I like to participate in class discussions
- I enjoy playing games with other kids
- I have concern for other people's feelings
- Study groups are productive for me
- I enjoy working in a team
- I enjoy group activities

The following are the average scores obtained through Likert scale for learners:

Inter-personal Intelligence	2.3
Intrapersonal Intelligence	2.1

### TRAINING

The main focus of this research was to make the learners realize their interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. For this purpose fifty students were randomly selected and a pre-test for 30 marks was conducted. A training programme for the experimental group was then conducted for 15 days based on the scores of the pre-test. The control group was asked to follow their regular learning ways. The various activities conducted during the training are as follows:

#### Activity 1

The learners were given opportunities for setting goals and planning for the progress towards their goals. The researcher asked the learners to list three short-term goals, that they wanted to accomplish in the near future or short term, and three long-term goals they wanted to achieve ten years from then.

The learners were surprised that they had such ambitions in them, as they never thought or were encouraged to achieve their goals. At the end of the activity, the learners had a clearer focus on what they wanted to achieve. Their decision-making skills also helped them in communicating confidently with peers around them.

#### Activity 2

The researcher asked the learners if they had a hobby and what it was. They were encouraged to describe how and when they took it up, why they enjoyed it and finally how they planned to continue in with it in the future. The learners never really got on opportunity to work on their hobbies. Though they had their favorite past time, they never felt the need to think about it in detail. Finally, after the researcher boosted their confidence, they wrote about their favorite hobby. By the end of the activity, they realized that hobbies are great stress- busters, and once they got into a relaxed mood, they can discuss their hobby with their friends, and in the process improve their communication skills.

#### Activity 3

The learners were asked to create a timeline, where in they should be writing the events of the previous week, describing how the week was spent and if they had any exciting or sorrowful moments

Initially the learners were reluctant to finish this activity as they felt that there would be nothing to write about a week in their life. But after a little motivation and brainstorming they started writing and were surprised to see that they had so many complexities and details in their day-to-day routine. By the end of this activity the learners got an opportunity to introspect into their lives, thus in the process enhancing their writing and language skills.

#### Activity 4

The learners were divided into pairs and a situation was given to them, wherein a girl had to stop her education as her family was facing a financial crisis. The researcher asked the learners to enact a conversation between the two friends and give a possible solution. At the end of the activity, the learners

not only came up with a possible solution but also enhanced their linguistic, communicative and language skills.

#### Activity 5

The researcher asked the learners to collect two advertisements by different companies of cell phones or any other electronic gadget detailing their products. They were then asked to compare the features of the two rival company products, giving advice to the buyer on which one was better. At the end of the activity, the learners came out with best possible solution, improving upon their decision-making, leadership and language skills. Good interpersonal communication skills enabled the learners to work more effectively in groups and teams.

#### Activity 6

Role-plays are an excellent way of getting the students practice their English. They simulate real life situations and allow them to act out what they would do in a real situation. A topic, "phoning to make a complaint" was given to the learners and were asked to enact the situation.

Many learners came forward for the role play as the topic given to them was a part of their real life situation. The learners enacted using different reasons for complaining. The learners gained confidence and enhanced their English language skills, through this activity.

#### POST-TEST

At the end of the training programme a post-test for 30 marks was conducted to check the impact of the training programme on the sample learners. The following are the scores obtained in the pre-test and the post-test:

Sl. No.	Test	Average score
1	Pre test (Entire Group)	15
2	Post Test (Control Group)	16
3	Post Test (Experimental Group)	21

It can be seen from the scores above that the sample learners improved their Inter-personal and Intra-personal Intelligences after the training programme. They felt that the training programme helped them in realizing their potential. Further, the researcher had an informal discussion with the sample learners to understand the changes that the training programme brought in them.

#### FINDINGS

1. A majority of the sample learners opined that their teachers had never taken their potential into consideration.
2. The sample learners stated that they learnt how to work synergistically in teams after the training programme.
3. The learners never got an opportunity to introspect themselves or to assess their strengths and weaknesses, which the researcher's work initiated in them.
4. The learners showed a great interest when learning was combined with physical activities and sports – a feature which was lacking in their curriculum.
5. Though the learners were not fluent in English, they tried their best to communicate with their peers in English to enhance their language skills.

#### CONCLUSION

The improvement among the sample learners successfully demonstrated that Inter-personal and Intra-personal intelligences help in enhancing the English language skills. If the hidden potential of the learners are tapped they can do wonders in whatever field they choose in future, which can be opened up and brightened by judicious harnessing of Intelligences as shown by Gardner.

**WORKS CITED**

Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind. The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York. Basic Books.

\_\_\_\_\_. (1993). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences* 10th Anniversary Edition. New York: Basic Book.

---