



## ENHANCING THE INTERPERSONAL SKILLS OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS THROUGH LISTENING AND SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

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### ABSTRACT

This paper explains the effectuality, importance and purpose of Interpersonal Skills taught to engineering students. Developing Interpersonal Skills is really important for engineering students for a better learning, expressing themselves to others, personality development and improving academics too. It is considered that students who have good Interpersonal Skills have a successful career and personal life too. Interpersonal Skills highly sought by companies and become increasingly prominent in today's technology-infused world. Engineering education communities have recognised that graduates not only need to possess technical knowledge in their chosen disciplines, but also need to be better educated in communication skills, teamwork, leadership, creativity, problem solving and a host of other human factors. Laboratory courses like Communication Skills and Soft skills Laboratory Based and Interpersonal Skills Laboratory courses offered in Engineering colleges enhance the core competences among students and promote their capability, employability, productivity and sustainability in personal, professional, and social life. Here we discuss why Interpersonal Skills are important for engineering students and how it benefits them. Hence, it is very important for students to develop Interpersonal Skills through Listening and Speaking Activities to pursue employment and business opportunities.

### INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal Skills- Listening and speaking, a course for undergraduate engineering and technology students studying at colleges, plays a significant role in enhancing the skills of engineering students. It comprises of the two skills of learning – Listening, Speaking, in addition to their theory. The Interpersonal Skills Lab", a practical subject and training is given with the assistance of Networked Computers and specially designed software.

### IMPORTANCE

An engineering student's success in the "on campus recruitment" is mainly based on their Interpersonal skills. An English language Interpersonal Skills Lab is a facility where a student can learn a language with the help and guidance of a teacher through a system, to improve his / her speaking and listening capacity. The Interpersonal Skills Lab can receive inputs from recorded tapes, audios and videos, CDs, etc. The lab develops among the students a habit of listening and speaking with accurate pronunciation. Students can record their own voice and play back for self-evaluation. It acts as a platform for learning, practicing and producing language



skills through interactive lessons and communicative mode of teaching. Language laboratories are for drills and for listening comprehension. It is also used for consolidating the learning. Interpersonal Skills may have the following objectives, purposes, functions to work upon.

#### **WHAT ARE INTERPERSONAL SKILLS?**

Interpersonal skills are traits you rely on when you interact and communicate with others. They cover a variety of scenarios where communication and cooperation are essential.

These skills involve the ability to communicate and build relationships with others. Often called people skills, they tend to incorporate both your innate personality traits and how you've learned to handle certain social situations. Effective interpersonal skills can help you during the job interview process and can have a positive impact on your career advancement.

Some examples of interpersonal skills include:

- *Active listening*
- *Teamwork*
- *Responsibility*
- *Dependability*
- *Leadership*
- *Motivation*
- *Flexibility*
- *Patience*
- *Empathy*

In a work environment, strong interpersonal skills are an asset that can help you navigate COMPLEXITY, CHANGE AND DAY-TO-DAY TASKS.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE**

The Interpersonal Skills Lab focuses on the production and practice of sounds of language and familiarizes the students with the use of English in everyday situations and contexts.

1. To expose the students to a variety of self-instructional, learner-friendly modes of language learning.
2. To enable them to learn better pronunciation through stress on word accent, intonation, and rhythm.
3. To train them to use language effectively to face interviews, group discussions, public speaking.
4. To initiate them into greater use of the computer in resume preparation, report writing, format-making etc.,.
5. To maintain good linguistic competence- through accuracy in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.
6. To enrich the discourse competence, to prepare the learner to be able to produce contextualize written text and speech.

**COMPONENTS OF THE COURSE**

- Importance of listening and Types of Listening –
- Listening to TED Talks, lectures, etc.
- Listening to motivational speeches, music and poetry.
- Listening- to gather information such as facts, directions, news or instructions.
- Critical Listening- listening to examine and evaluate the message for logic and truth - televised debate, election campaign.
- Empathetic Listening – paying attention to another person with empathy – listening to problems and issues (videos).

**ROLE OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS ENHANCING THE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN STUDENTS.**

In the Indian context, an engineering student's success in the "on campus recruitment" is mainly based on their demonstrations of communication skills. An INTERPERSONAL SKILLS Lab is a facility where a student can learn a language with the help and guidance of a teacher through a system, to improve his / her speaking and listening capacity. Strong interpersonal skills can help you during the job interview process as interviewers look for applicants who can work well with others. They will also help you succeed in almost any job by helping you understand other people and adjusting your approach to work together effectively. Employers will be looking for workers who can both perform technical tasks with excellence and communicate well with colleagues.

**ACTIVITIES IN INTERPERSONAL SKILLS LAB**

The scope of activities in the Interpersonal Skills lab can be categorized into three levels

**INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY**

- S.D.(Self-Introduction & Description)
- JAM (Just A Minute session)
- Oral presentations-prepared and extempore
- Describing objects –persons-places etc.
- Pick and talk, short talks on any event on topics
- Activity on Idioms and Phrases.
- Persuasive speaking
- Demonstrative speaking – Demonstrate a process using visual aids (charts, graphs, maps, pictures, etc.)
- Phonetics practice

**PAIR ACTIVITY**

- Exchange of dialogue
- Role-play
- Telephoning conversation

**GROUP ACTIVITY**

- Debate
- Group discussion on general topics
- Seminar
- PPT (power point presentation)
- Conferences etc

**ADVANTAGES OF INTERPERSONAL SKILLS LAB**

- Students are attentive in the lab than in the theory class.
- gives freedom to students to learn at their own pace.
- builds self-confidence.
- enhances the listening skills of students.
- Active participation
- helps the students to acquire comprehension skills after listening to a text.
- meets the employers' demand - communicative competence in English.
- trains students to face interviews, group discussions and public speaking.
- As students are asked to work in pairs & groups, they can speak English with confidence.
- The shy learners can get more benefits as they are monitored individually by the monitor.
- trains the students in soft skills, decision making, business communication and pre-placement training.

**THE ROLE OF THE LANGUAGE INSTRUCTOR.**

- He helps the students in overcoming their fears about communication and motivate them to develop more positive perceptions of communication activities.
- He is expected to play the roles such as – counselor, motivator, communication skills trainer etc.
- He must also be aware of the latest technologies, methods and approaches of language teaching, explore new ideas and having a certain amount of specialization in the concerned subject.
- It is the responsibility of the instructor to drag the students' attention and concentration skills to the maximum extent and make them good listeners.
- The English language teachers can also organize mock interviews, oral presentations to motivate and sharpen the speaking skills of the learners.

**How to improve our INTERPERSONAL SKILLS Other than lab classes**

These are the following ways to improve your interpersonal skills:

- **Join workshops or online classes.** There are several workshops, online classes and videos on ways you can practice building interpersonal skills. While many are free, some are available at a cost.
- **Pursue out opportunities to build relationships.** If you work from home or do not otherwise have many opportunities to build interpersonal skills, you might consider joining a group. This could be related to your work like networking or industry-specific groups, or simply a group that shares a similar interest or hobby.



- **Be thoughtful about ways your interactions could improve.** Take time to review the interactions you have and consider ways you could have interacted more effectively. This might be certain words you said, ways you reacted or body language you used.
- **Ask trusted friends or colleagues for constructive criticism.** It is helpful to get a third-party perspective about your skill level and specific ways you can improve. Ask friends or trusted colleagues to provide constructive criticism regarding your interpersonal skills.
- **Observe other positive interpersonal interactions.** It can also be helpful to learn by seeing others use interpersonal skills. Observe positive interactions of those around you and apply those qualities you admire to your own relationships.
- **Try to find out mentorship.** Asking someone you trust, admire and respect to counsel you on improving interpersonal skills and advancing in your career overall can be an extremely effective way to learn.

Setting goals for yourself can also provide structure, making your learning more efficient by understanding when and how you have made adequate improvements.

#### **INTERPERSONAL SKILLS in your Resume for Employability.**

English Fluency and Interpersonal Skills add great value in making successful career.

Interpersonal skills must be included on a CV/resume under skills section Resume skills section may look like this:

- Technical skills: MS Office, HTML, C, C++
- Additional skills: Effective team player, highly communicative and cooperative, active listener, flexible, innovative researcher.

Do this by including concrete examples of how you worked with others and the results you achieved.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In the current competitive period teaching English to the Engineering and Technology students is a great challenge. Interpersonal skills among these said students can be developed by rigorous training programmes and lots of practice work. It requires tenacious efforts and imperative on the part of students to master them. As teachers of English, it is incumbent upon us to help students discover the astonishing power of the English language and it is our bounden duty to play a pivotal role in developing the skills of English language among the students of Engineering and Technology. Interpersonal Skills lab is an elevating tool in learning these important language skills through technology in the present generation. It will be more effective if Interpersonal Skills lab is introduced from the elementary level.

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