

# EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP SKILL TRAINING FOR ENHANCING TEACHING COMPETENCY OF B.ED STUDENTS

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## **Abstract**

High level of intrapersonal skills and teaching competency are essential for teachers to become effective classroom managers. Individuals in the classroom environment and what they learn are influenced by a variety of interpersonal, emotional and cultural factors in addition to the cognitive factors associated with classroom learning. The teacher- teacher relationship and teacher-student relationship are to be cordial for the smooth functioning of an educational institution. A teacher who demonstrates appropriate social skills serves as a model for students to internalize better social skills. Hence interpersonal relationship skills are to be enhanced among prospective teachers. Present study is aimed at the effectiveness of interpersonal skill training for enhancing the teacher competency of B.Ed Students.

**Keywords:** Interpersonal Relationship skills, Teaching Competency

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is fundamentally a social enterprise and the modes of social interactions determine better educational outcomes. Positive interpersonal relationship has been proposed as a buffer against stress and strain and serves as the basis of social and emotional development. The interpersonal skills of the teacher foster the social, emotional and intellectual functioning of learners. As facilitators of teaching and learning in the classroom, a high level of intrapersonal skills and teaching competency are essential for teachers to become effective classroom managers. Interpersonal skills involve the interpretation of social interactions with others. The combination of various skills such as listening, communicating, analyzing, interpreting and responding helps individuals to better relate and interact with others. Interpersonal relationship skills are reflections of the interpersonal intelligence one possess. How well we connect to our communities and keep a sense of where we are in relation to others shows the confidence of a teacher for effective social behavior. Such people lead and influence others, mediate conflict and build consensus. They are genuinely interested in other people (Tenedero, 2001)

Interpersonal skills are the sum total of the individual's ability to interact effectively with other people. An individual's interpersonal skills also determine one's ability to initiate, develop and maintain caring as well as productive relationships. Individuals in the classroom environment and what they learn are influenced by a variety of interpersonal, emotional and cultural factors in addition to the cognitive factors associated with classroom learning.(Shuell,1996) Productive learning environments are characterized by supportive and warm interactions of the teacher throughout the class (Fraser,2007:Wubbels etal, 2006) A relationship build on trust, frequent conversations,

setting of a nonjudgmental environment and democratic approaches are essential for positive teacher student relationships.

A positive relationship in the classroom is considered as an influential factor in learning since it can have either a positive or negative effect on students' achievement and willingness to class work. It may also improve their knowledge and social skills. (Larson, 2011). Positive teacher-learner interpersonal relationships, thus, can be expected to have an influence on learners' educational performance. Then, it is necessary for the teachers to make students feel comfortable and confident with their teacher. Nugent (2009) mentioned that when learners perceive the support and the reliability of instructors, they tend to interact with their educators and consider their teacher as someone who supports them and provides them with some hints to develop their education. Teaching competency is one of the significant factors influencing teaching- learning process. The qualitative improvement of teaching competency is essential for effective performance of teachers. The preparation for teaching, the content transaction, assessment and monitoring depends on the competency possessed by a teacher. The teacher- teacher relationship and teacher-student relationship are to be cordial for the smooth functioning of an educational institution. A teacher who demonstrates appropriate social skills serves as a model for students to internalize better social skills. Hence interpersonal relationship skills are to be enhanced among prospective teachers.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

B.Ed curriculum of University of Kerala includes two phases of school internships for a total period of 20 weeks. During the class observation of these students, the investigator observed that the interpersonal relationship skill of the student teachers is not adequate for effective teaching. Most of the student teaches reflected that they face challenge in maintain the proper interpersonal communication. B.Ed. students shared their perception that the teaching competencies could be enhanced with proper interpersonal skills.

Many researches support the need and importance of teachers' interpersonal relationship and academic outcomes. Effective instruction comprises high-quality interaction between educators and learners and also among peers. Appropriate outcomes appear when collaboration between educators and learners happens. Creasy et al.(2009) categorized the behaviors of teacher-learner interpersonal relationships into four groups: connectedness, nervousness, independency/dependency, and peaceful/conflicting. They mentioned that connectedness is related to the intimate behaviors between learners and educators; nervousness as the level of learners' discomfort with their educators; the dependent/independent relationship is the learners' emotion of independency or dependency with their teachers. They asserted that peacefulness develops in strong relationships, whereas conflict occurs in undesirable relationships. Teaching competencies include the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and performance of teachers to guide learners in achieving their goals. It includes many other dimensions too classified as field competencies, research competencies, psychological competencies,

curriculum competencies, lifelong learning competencies, social-cultural competencies, emotional competencies, communication competencies, information and communication technologies competencies, and environmental competencies. (Bakic-Tomic et al., 2015)

For prospective teachers following teacher behaviours are specifically defined and they are trained with the practical experiences of microteaching skill development process. Hence the student teachers are familiar with these components and they get feedback related to these components during the practice teaching observations at school from the supervising teacher educators.

The components of teaching competency for the present study includes

(i) Preparation of Lesson Plans (ii) Introduction of the topic (iii) Explanation of concepts (iv) Use of Questioning (v) Communication modes (vi) Managing student responses (vii) Motivating learners (viii) Use of various support systems (ix) Ensuring learner participation (x) Managing Time (xi) Life skill & Environmental integration (xii) Confidence and cordiality

### **Objectives of the Study**

The present study is conducted with the following objectives

1. To find out the extent of Interpersonal relationship skills possessed by B.Ed Students
2. To find out the extent of teaching competency displayed during school internship by B.Ed students
3. To compare teaching competency before and after the Interpersonal Skill Training
4. To find out the relationship between Interpersonal relationship skills and Teaching competency of B.Ed students.

### **Procedure of the Study**

The study progressed in following phases.

#### **Phase 1 Need Assessment**

After the first phase of school internship, the need for interpersonal relationship for effective learner management was discussed. The interpersonal skill scale was administered to identify their level of interpersonal skills. Based on analyzing the data, the prioritization was decided for certain areas related to interpersonal relationship skills for conducting training.

#### **Phase 2 Formulating the Outcomes of Training**

The outcomes are decided in a collaborative manner by discussing with the students so that the training would enhance their competencies.

Thus the major outcomes formulated are:

- to identify the barriers in interpersonal skills
- to analyze the reasons in terms of personal variables
- to practice better interpersonal skills with peers
- to transfer the acquired skills in real classroom teaching.

### **Phase 3 designing the capsules**

The modules are designed to achieve the above outcomes. The training includes 15 hours interaction with student teachers with the following topics.

(i) Assertive Communication (ii) Immediacy Behaviour (iii) Motivating Learners (iv) Engaging learners (v) Learner Response Management (vi) Conflict Resolution (vii) Openness & Agreeableness

### **Phase 4 Implementation**

The Interpersonal Skill Training was given to a group of 23 student teachers. The training proceeded with the following steps;

1. Sharing of issues/challenges/ barriers- Student teachers present their barriers related to the specific interpersonal skill:
2. Skill presentation: Teacher educator presents the skill with minor components,
3. Generating implementation modes: Teacher educator and student teachers collaboratively prepares procedures of implementing this skill in actual classroom situations.
4. Reflection: Student teachers reflect in two ways; Reflection on Action- their benefits of attending the training and Reflection for Action- their plans for improving skills.

### **Phase 5 Feedback & Transfer**

The student teachers provide the feedback related to training process and they transfer the acquired knowledge and skills to the second phase of teaching. This would enhance their teaching competencies.

### **Collection of data**

Survey cum Experimental method was used for the study. A survey among 90 student teachers was conducted to identify the need of the training for Interpersonal relationship skills. An Interpersonal Skill Scale was developed to assess the extent of interpersonal relationship skills possessed by student teachers. Based on the result, Interpersonal Skill Training Material is developed.

The experimental group consisted of 23 students of Physical Science Class. The Teaching Competency score of these students is taken during phase I School Internship. Interpersonal Skill training is provided for 15 hours and the Interpersonal Skill Scale is

administered as posttest. The Teaching Competency during the Phase 2 internship after the Interpersonal Skill Training is taken as the Teaching Competency posttest score of the group.

## **ANALYSIS AND RESULT**

### **1. Analysis of Interpersonal Skill Scores**

The interpersonal skill level shows that the mean is 74.38, median 73.21 and mode 76; standard deviation 13.23. The values show that the score is not satisfactory since the maximum score is 150. The component wise score analysis showed that the student teachers have low level skills in the following aspects (1) Conflict resolution (Mean 6.34, Standard deviation 1.35) (ii) Openness & Agreeableness (Mean 8.46, Standard deviation 2.38) (iii) Assertive Communication (Mean 10.34, Standard deviation 3.75) (iv) Learner Response Management (Mean 11.24, Standard deviation 4.35) (v) Motivating Learners (Mean 11.94, Standard deviation 3.35) (vi) Engaging learners (Mean 12.34, Standard deviation 4.35) (vii) Immediacy Behaviour (Mean 14.46, Standard deviation 4.35)

The post test scores of the experimental group of 23 students are as follows. The interpersonal skill level shows that the mean is 112.38, median 113.21 and mode 112; standard deviation is 16.23. The values show that there is improvement in the scores after the training.

On comparing the pretest and post test scores of Interpersonal relationship skill, the  $t$  value obtained is 39.45 which is significant ( $p < .001$ ). Hence the training programme was effective in improving the interpersonal relationship skills of B.Ed. Students.

### **2. Analysis of Teaching Competency Scores**

The Teaching Competency of the group ( $N=23$ ) is represented with a mean of 43.5 and standard deviation 11.56. After the training the Teaching Competency of the group is represented with a mean of 49.5 and standard deviation 10.56. The  $t$  value obtained is 5.023 which is significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). Thus the present study revealed that interpersonal skill training is effective in enhancing the teaching competency of B.Ed students.

### **3. Relationship between Interpersonal relationship skills and Teaching Competency**

The scores obtained in the post test for interpersonal relationship skills and Teaching competency were analyzed to find out the coefficient of correlation. The obtained value of  $r$  is 0.821 which shows that the correlation is positive and high. Hence as the Interpersonal Relationship Skills enhances, the teaching competency also improves among B.Ed Students.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The result of the present study indicates that interpersonal skill training is helpful for improving the teaching competency of pre service teachers. So the professional training in teacher education needs to include the strategies for developing interpersonal skills. The findings of the present study are supportive to other research findings in the field. The study of Ansari et al (2020) revealed that educators with positive relationships with learners have learners with moderately academic success in educational contexts. Pishghadam and Khajavy (2014) stated that when educators pay attention to their learners and ask them to take part in classroom activities, learners can gain a higher level of motivation and better performances. Rajabnejad et al (2017) asserted that teachers' positive behaviors are significantly correlated with learners' motivation and inclination to join classes.

Teacher educators have to integrate skill training in interpersonal relationship among student teachers to equip them for effective school practices. The class management becomes easier for them through acquiring appropriate interpersonal relationship skills. This would amplify their teaching competency and they will create conducive and positive classroom environment for maximizing student attainment. Teacher educators can intervene positively for the capacity building among prospective teachers that guide them towards successful teaching. Lack of interpersonal relationship skills may adversely affect the self-esteem and competency of student teachers. Hence, inspired teachers with communication competency and subject expertise are to be formed in teacher education institutions. The B.Ed curriculum should have provisions to impart interpersonal relationship training as a common programme to supplement the teaching skill training. Moreover, the interpersonal skill training serves as a catalyst to perform effectively in all professional and personal platforms.

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