

IMPARTING INTRAPERSONAL SKILLS TO THE TERTIARY LEVEL STUDENTS THROUGH SELECT POEMS OF JOHN KEATS

Mohankumar S.

Research Scholar

SSL VIT University, Chennai, India

V. Vijayalakshmi

Assistant Professor

SSL VIT University, Chennai. India.

Abstract

The present generation and education system gives much importance to personality development and soft skill. Teaching necessary skills is not enough but language teachers should train them and provides a chance to exhibit talents of the students. Soft skills is divided into two major domain based on the character that one posses. Major two categories in soft skills are interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Inculcating these skills among youths will give tremendous positive changes in their personalities and it also reflects to the development of society. Teaching moral ideas in interesting way is not an easy task. It needs some extra effect in language classroom teaching. The student expects learner based center classrooms and they want to take part in discussion and considers it as learn process. Based on student needs and expectations, teachers must include and modifies the activities in language classrooms. This research paper focuses on how poetry will be used in language classroom, in order to teach and train soft skills among students. This paper deals only with select poems of John Keats. Focus group for this approach is tertiary level students. There is lot and lots of skills are there in soft skills but here it concentrates only on intrapersonal skills. The poems chosen for this paper are “Ode to Nightingale”, “Ode to Grecian Urn” and “Ode to Melancholy” by John Keats.

Keywords: *Intrapersonal Skills, Poetry, ELT Classrooms, Personality Development and Soft Skills.*

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Introduction

Importance given to personality development and organizational behaviour which also incorporates emotional intelligence in the present decade is comparatively higher than last a few decades. Intrapersonal skills a constituent of soft skills is given much importance by almost all the educational institutions particularly for the tertiary level students and the could be reason for this according to various stalwarts and researchers are the drastic negative steps students take while they are in a failure situation, depression, unmet expectations etc. considering the importance of intrapersonal skills, this research article concentrates on the issues faced by the youth community and Tamil Nadu is the geographical location focused on. Present era is filled with lot of chaos and pressure that many times youth fail to understand the situation and their inability to manage their emotions has often resulted in many tragic endings. Statistical data and authenticated information related to various unbearable actions taken by the youngsters of today from the article titled “Crime in Chennai: Is Tamil Nadu ready for Police Commission prediction of rise in crimes?” from First post by Sandhya Ravishankar on Jul, 25 2016 has served as one of the primary source of this article. Considering all these issues, through this research article, how intrapersonal skills could be imparted to the tertiary level students through poetry to reduce not only the crime rates but also to make the world of youngsters better where they will be professionally equipped to face the real challenges in a better way is torched upon.

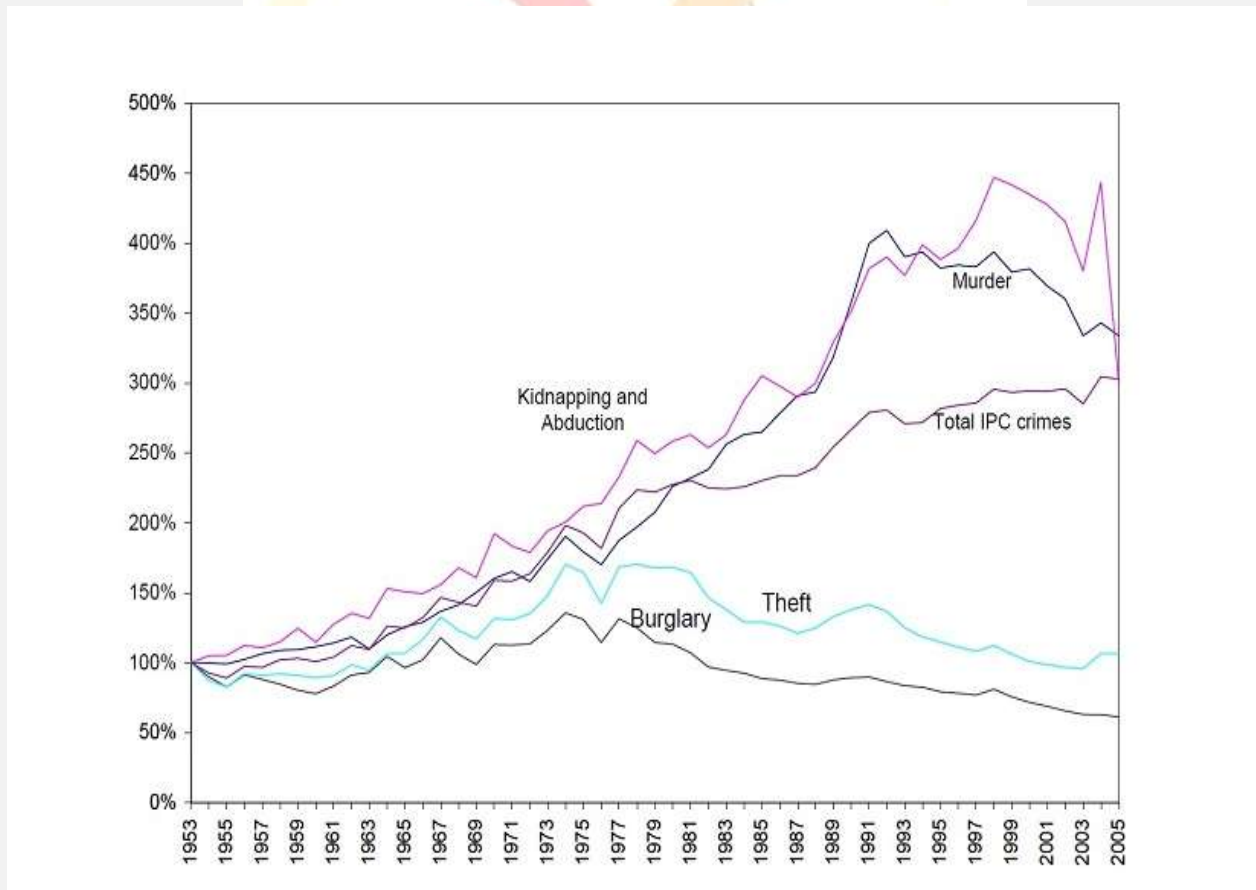
Pressure or Pressurized: Pathetic Situation of Youth

There are ample of news articles which has highlighted on how the youth of today are becoming successful failures because of their inefficiency to handle situations and manage emotions. From the article titled “Crime in Chennai: Is Tamil Nadu ready for Police Commission

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prediction of rise in crimes?” which is associated with the murder of a Chennai based techie it could be understood that Mr. D Mukherjee, former Director General Police of Tamil Nadu has transparently stated that “What is more worrying though, is the sudden spate of murders for gain, gang wars and related hackings, as well as kidnappings for ransom. These, according to law enforcement experts, hold up a true mirror to society” (First post). It could be also be read through the article that crimes of passions can neither be prevented nor eradicated for role of emotions in such cases are profoundly higher and such attackers are labeled psychopathic stalkers.

Following chart is a representation of the crime rate according to the data available with National Crimes Records Bureau (NCRB). Data of instability in the crime rates from the year 1953 to 2005 is represented and the report has also vividly elucidated that the population has tripled now. Though the entire blame is not on the youngsters, they are also a part of it.



(Crime Chart 1953 – 2005, Source: Third Tamil Nadu State Police Commission Report (First post).)

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From all the information mentioned above, one thing that could be comprehended is crime including suicide rates cannot be wiped out in a moment but, steps could be taken to develop the positive attitude, leadership skills, emotional intelligences and other milieu of intrapersonal skills of the upcoming generation so that there are high possibilities to reduce such intolerable happenings.

Tertiary Level Students – Adolescence

Often, many have confusion in deciding the exact age group of the people who occupies the stage of adolescence and the answer is anyone above thirteen and the maximum age cannot be exactly stated as the intelligence quotient varies from one person to other. The following views of experts in fields of Psychology and other varied fields will serve as a better answer. Dr. John W Santrock Psychology Professor of University of Texas in his work titled “*Adolescence*” has explained the historical perspective of adolescence through the ideologies of Aristotle who in fourth century has argued that “the most important aspect of adolescence is the ability to choose and that self- determination is the hallmark of maturity.” French philosopher Jean-Jacques offered a more enlightened view of adolescence stating in “middle ages, children and adolescents were viewed as miniature adults and were subjected to harsh discipline.”

Larson has defined adolescence as “the period of transition between childhood and adulthood that involves biological, cognitive and socio emotional changes. A key task of adolescence is the preparation of adulthood”. Accordingly, he further adds early adolescence is the period corresponding to the middle school or junior high school years and includes most pubertal change. Late adolescence refers to the latter half of the second decade of life. This has made clear that the tertiary level students are the adolescent age people occupying the late adolescence stage. Santrock states developmental transitions is usually categorized in two phases as childhood to adolescence and adolescence to adulthood. If proper attention, care and support are rendered to this particular age group people, they will be molded as the finest human beings.

Intrapersonal Skills through Poetry

A few reviews based on the need of inculcating intrapersonal skills or emotional intelligence through poetry will give an enhanced outlook to the importance of imparting the same. Chickering (1993) has identified that managing emotions as one of the seven vectors in college student development. Theoreticians like Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), Chickering’s

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vector has further described as, Students of any age must recognize and wrestle with emotions that can interfere with the educational process, including “anger, fear and anxiety, depression, guilt, shame and dysfunctional sexual or romantic attraction (Reisser, 1995). Development occurs when students learn to control impulses and to develop appropriate responses (both immediate and long-term) for handling intense, potentially disruptive emotions (p. 21). It helps to understand the psychological state of students and their situations based on surroundings.

From the research article titled “Developing Emotional Intelligence in Classroom” by Don Jordan and Joanna Le Métais (2000) has presents some classroom strategies which promote emotional growth and appropriate social skills to help reduce classroom disruption and improve student time on-task. Through this article, the needs and wants to incorporate behaviour modification strategies in classroom are understood. Though the interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence are highlighted, the involvement of parents, colleagues or friends in the process of developing emotional intelligence is not focused. It is to be noted that though predominant role is played by teachers in enhancing emotional intelligence, societal and peer role cannot be forgotten. This research article has well portrayed even if limited to the classroom, a non-confrontational approach, which focuses on students’ emotional and academic intelligence, has given the out result in better task and person-related behaviour.

Jo Budden (2007), states that the reason behind choosing poetry to teach English language is it can be used in many ways. The teacher can choose a poem based on its language style and capability of students. He suggested that there is no need for teaching poetry in style of explaining word by word. For him, poetry should give enough space for interpretation and imagination from students. He preferred to use visual aids for speed learning and creative ideas. Budden expects and advised teachers to follow and implement few activities while teaching poetry, they are, introduce a topic, ordering the poem, rhyming words for pronunciation, learn a verse, record their voice, write a new verse, role play and dialogues.

M. Robert (2000) in his article “Emotional intelligence, empathy and the educative power of poetry: a Deleuzo-Guattarian perspective” has brought out the increase in the demand for emotional intelligence in the precedence of nursing literature. The emphasis has been laid on the different dimensions and perspectives of nursing profession and the attention given to the nursing education. Accordingly, this paper stresses the need for executing poetry in educating of mental health nurses which has provided a valuable opportunity for the development of

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emotional intelligence and, in particular, the development of one of the central characteristics of emotional intelligence; namely, empathy. Particularly, this paper focuses on how to develop a Deleuzo-Guattarian account of the educative power of poetry, and the manner in which it provides a valuable opportunity for the development of emotional intelligence, and of empathy in particular. Research article by Robert has paved way for a new understanding of emotional intelligence and the power of poetry to enhance one's emotional status.

From these reviews, it could be understood that poetry is the best tool that could be used to impart intrapersonal skills and its sub genres in ELT classrooms. Poems are filled with emotions, rhythm and music no strict rules are followed and at times even writing two lines based on the situation becomes poetry. Just like how music gives peace and rejuvenates our spirit, poetry will ease the situation and soothes the ailing soul. So, it would be easy for the teacher to inculcate professional skills like emotional intelligence through poetry and giving activities based on poetry.

Keats Poetry and Intrapersonal Skills

The poems chosen for this research article is *Ode to Psyche*, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, *Ode on Indolence*, *Ode on Melancholy* and *Ode to a Nightingale*. Through all these poems, Keats has expressed a depressed state of mind, his anguish, yearnings, and love. Through his poems he has not only become a poet but has also eased his aching heart. Common themes in all these odes related to youth are -

- Expectation
- Experience
- Rejection
- Depression
- Man and the natural world
- Happiness
- Mortality
- Love

Rather than focusing on the theory of negativity that is often pointed out in the poems of Keats, it would be advisable if the positive side is considered it is because the poems of Keats are much expressive and emotive. In all the poems mentioned, enormous of example related to the

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life of readers in the present age could be pointed out. It is this real life association that could be used to enhance the intrapersonal skills of the chosen population.

Activities that could be given are

1. Making and presenting (autobiographical poems)
2. Researching and Responding
3. Dreaming and Association
4. Telling and Re-telling
5. Free verse

Through these activities, there will be a relaxation space, emotions will be down poured and moreover, teachers will be able to identify the attitude of the students which if need be could be tuned properly. But for all these, role of innovation is mandatory it is because if the mentor is not prepared to give new and apt situations, the entire process will be a failure. Poetry, if used properly will be a life savior of many.

Conclusion

India's higher education system is the world's third largest in terms of students, next to China and the United States. From the article titled *Higher Education in India – Issues, Challenges and Suggestions* by Dr. J D Singh it is read that

“Unlike China, however, India has the advantage of English being the primary language of higher education and research. India educates approximately 11 per cent of its youth in higher education as compared to 20 per cent in China. Most observers agree that Indian higher education, the significant and impressive developments of the past few decades notwithstanding, faces major challenges in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Perhaps the clearest and boldest statement of this issue can be found in the “Report to the Nation 2006” of the National Knowledge Commission which concludes that there is ‘a quiet crisis in higher education in India that runs deep’, and that it has to do with both the quantity and the quality of higher education in India.” (Dr. J D Singh)

The focal point is quality of the higher education if the quality is to be improvised, innovation is in demand it is because those traditional practices cannot be followed in the present era as the situation today is different. In the generation of technology, skill development concepts are to given importance. It is in the hands of many tutors to built a society that would be away from the evils of society and for this, intrapersonal skills are to be imparted and one should

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remember poetry can serve as an excellent tool for imparting intrapersonal skills as poetry is rich in emotive quotients and can enrich integrative emotive capabilities which can be tuned to keep up the pitch of life.

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