

Developing Interpersonal Skills through Experiential Learning Methods in Higher Education: Exploring the Use of Role-Plays, Storytelling, and Group Activities

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Abstract: *In today's dynamic academic and professional environments, the development of interpersonal skills among higher education learners has emerged as a critical necessity. Interpersonal skills—ranging from empathy and collaboration to communication and conflict resolution—are no longer optional but integral for workplace readiness and social integration. Despite this need, higher education curricula in India and beyond often remain limited to theoretical instruction, failing to sufficiently nurture practical, real-world interpersonal competencies. This paper explores how experiential learning methods, particularly role-plays, storytelling, and group activities, can serve as effective pedagogical tools in developing these essential skills. Anchored in David Kolb's experiential learning theory and supported by relevant literature, the paper examines the transformative potential of these methods within communication and soft skills education. It also identifies classroom strategies, pedagogical benefits, and cultural challenges associated with their implementation in Indian colleges. Through a conceptual and practice-based approach, the article argues for the inclusion of structured experiential modules in undergraduate curricula to build emotionally intelligent, socially aware, and communication-competent graduates*

Keywords: Interpersonal Skills, Experiential Learning, Role-Play, Storytelling, Group Work, Communication Education, Higher Education