# THE ROLE OF ART TEACHERS IN DEVELOPING INTERPERSONAL INTELLIGENCE OF JUNIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS IN SRI LANKA

**A.A.N.D ABEYRATHANA**
Siyana National College of Education

**Prof. W.M. SHAMINDA WANASINGHE**
The Open University of Sri Lanka

**P.K.S.S.T THILAKARATHNE**
University of Colombo

## ABSTRACT

This study was conducted with the main objective of examining the role of art teachers in developing interpersonal intelligence in today's school education. For that, the opportunities in the subject of art and the problems faced by teachers in developing interpersonal intelligence were kept as specific objectives. Survey design was used to study this research. 60 art teachers were selected using simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire was used for data collection. Data analyzed using quantitative methods. It was revealed that there are enough opportunities to develop the interpersonal model in the art subject. It was clear that activities related to pair group activities have been included in the learning and teaching process. But it was also revealed that the development of interpersonal intelligence does not take place sufficiently in the classroom. According to these findings, it could be concluded that there are enough opportunities and activities for the development of interpersonal intelligence in the syllabus. Accordingly, it was concluded that the teacher's role in the development of interpersonal intelligence is not fulfilled properly. Suggestions were also made to mitigate this problem. To develop interpersonal intelligence, traditional teaching methods should be avoided and student-centered and practical teaching methods should be adopted. It was suggested that it is necessary to direct students to curricular as well as extra-curricular activities.

**Keywords:** Art Teachers, Interpersonal Intelligence, Junior Secondary Students

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The main institution that provides formal education in Sri Lanka is the school. The school offers formal education from Grade 1 to Grade 13 through a recognized curriculum. Dolati & Tahriri, (2017) [6] stated that education is not just about memorizing books. Accordingly, it should be the responsibility of the teachers to prepare the necessary background to develop interpersonal intelligence based on the knowledge obtained from the textbook. But Bratcher (2012) [3] has mentioned that such experiences are not available to today's school students. Therefore, it is clear that not only the knowledge of students but also the development of skills should be given priority in school education. It has become a problem that needs to be questioned whether the teacher works to provide the elements of creativity, critical thinking,

cooperation, and communication related to learning skills associated with the twenty-first century through Sri Lankan education. Roger & Johnson (1994) [14] and Simsek (2013) [17] have also pointed out that interpersonal intelligence, which develops multiple skills to be developed in students, is a serious problem. Reasons such as non-modernization of the learning and teaching process, traditional classroom activities, excessive syllabus, and exam-centered education patterns have been pointed out. Daichendt (2010) [5] has also shown that although human virtues can be developed through a subject such as aesthetics, teachers do not do it. From this point of view, it can be seen that there is a problem with the development of interpersonal intelligence through the school education process. The main aim of this research paper is to examine what should be the role of the art teacher in developing interpersonal intelligence.

The following specific research objectives were used to achieve the above purpose.

1. Investigate opportunities in the art curriculum for developing interpersonal intelligence.
2. To identify the problems faced by the art teacher in developing interpersonal intelligence.
3. To make necessary suggestions for developing interpersonal intelligence.

Gardner (2011) [7] has analyzed interpersonal intelligence as follows. Interpersonal intelligence includes skills such as the ability to understand and relate to others, social intelligence, verbal and non-verbal communication, cooperation, sensitivity to the feelings, fears, expectations, and beliefs of others, the ability to help others and leadership. (Gardner, 2011 p. 23)[7]

The above-mentioned qualities are very important to be a successful person in normal life. However, in the current exam-centered and competitive education pattern, instead of all these virtues, it can be seen that education is focused on a method of knowledge development and knowledge measurement.

Through this study, especially the students will be able to develop their interpersonal intelligence and get the necessary experience to live as a social person by getting rid of the exam-centered education pattern. Also, the teacher will be able to identify the measures that can be followed to develop the interpersonal intelligence of the students in their learning and teaching process. Also, it will be possible to successfully implement the learning and teaching process and thereby create the necessary background. Also, parents can use these research findings to help their children enter society as good citizens by creating a harmonious personality development in them. These research findings will be very useful for the curriculum makers as well as the policymakers to identify the measures to be followed in designing the future education process and to integrate them into the curriculum.

## 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Testing knowledge is very important in research. It will also enable us to explore the wealth of knowledge that has been uncovered so far related to our research problem. A literature review is also useful in uncovering existing knowledge gaps. In this research done on interpersonal intelligence, it can be recognized that various theories of intelligence have been presented. Among them, Spearman's two-factor theory, Guilford's two-factor theory, Thurston's

multifactor theory, Piaget's intelligence development theory, Gardner's multiple intelligence theory, etc. can be considered important.

The theory of multiple intelligences was first introduced by Gardner (2011).[7] His idea is that every person is intelligent, and the form of intelligence varies from person to person. For example, Gardner pointed out that there is intelligence in different forms in everyone, such as a doctor, a mason, a driver, and a laborer. Cherry (2023) [4], who comments on the theory of multiple intelligences, has said that Gardner named parts of intelligence. They are classified as

1. Verbal-linguistic intelligence (well-developed verbal skills and sensitivity to the sounds, meanings and rhythms of words)
2. Logical-mathematical intelligence (ability to think conceptually and abstractly, and capacity to discern logical and numerical patterns)
3. Spatial-visual intelligence (capacity to think in images and pictures, to visualize accurately and abstractly)
4. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence (ability to control one's body movements and to handle objects skillfully)
5. Musical intelligences (ability to produce and appreciate rhythm, pitch and timber)
6. Interpersonal intelligence (capacity to detect and respond appropriately to the moods, motivations and desires of others)
7. Intrapersonal (capacity to be self-aware and in tune with inner feelings, values, beliefs and thinking processes)
8. Naturalist intelligence (ability to recognize and categorize plants, animals and other objects in nature)
9. Existential intelligence (sensitivity and capacity to tackle deep questions about human existence such as, "What is the meaning of life? Why do we die? How did we get here?"

Gardner notes that not all people are born with all parts of intelligence. Also, Gardiner further points out that social and logical intelligence are more important in school and society. (Marenus, 2024) [10] Further defines interpersonal intelligence as the ability to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of individuals and thus work effectively with others (Marenus, 2024) [10]. Thus, people with high interpersonal intelligence communicate well with others and build friendships. Thus, it is clear that interpersonal intelligence should be developed to improve communication skills in students through school education. It can be further explained that students who have well-developed interpersonal intelligence will be friendly in society in the future. Thus, it can be said that Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences is important as the theoretical basis for this research that examines the role of the teacher in developing interpersonal intelligence.

Safaria (2005) [16] and Terri et al (2013) [19] have indicated that interpersonal intelligence has three forms: social sensitivity, social understanding, and social communication. It is clear that it is important to develop the above elements in a way that is important to society. Further commenting, Veronika (2021) [20] points out that well-developed interpersonal intelligence enables people to adapt to their environment and maintain regular and positive relationships with other people. Armstrong (2007) [2] has also shown that interpersonal intelligence can be divided into two parts: social awareness and social facilitation.

Armstrong (2007) [2] has further explained that interpersonal intelligence is useful for living actively and well in society. Han & Son (2020) [8] have shown that interpersonal intelligence is a personality trait. By developing interpersonal intelligence as a personality trait, students can fearlessly excel in society.

Sugasmith, Setiawan & Sargi (2019) 18] have pointed out several characteristics that can be seen in students with well-developed interpersonal intelligence. If they are,

- Have many friends at school or in the environment.
- Likes to socialize at school or with neighbors.
- Get used to the neighborhood's environment as your own.
- Participates in group activities outside of school.
- Acts as a mediator with friends.
- Enjoys team sports.
- Be sensitive to others.
- Acts as a problem solver, and mentor.
- Supports the work of others.
- To be a leader has the talent to win.

Also, Abas, Solihatin & Nadiroh (2019) 1] have analyzed that people with interpersonal intelligence are always capable of developing social relationships.

Nowadays, it is seen in school education that many people do not have the ability to work together. Nurunnisa (2017) 13] has pointed out that the lack of interpersonal intelligence is the reason. The above comments make it clear that the role of the teacher should be to create an atmosphere in which to understand others and act in accordance with their needs. According to the literature review, it is clear that interpersonal intelligence can be developed by adopting group activities, and cooperative learning methods instead of exam-centered learning teaching patterns in the classroom.

Developing interpersonal intelligence is a task that every teacher can and should do in every subject. However, there may be some variations in the actions that can be taken depending on the subject. In this research paper, the focus is on the art subject and the role of the art teacher. It was expected to conduct the study in connection with students of junior secondary grades. Opportunities for developing interpersonal intelligence in aesthetic methods were further explored. The art curriculum for the seventh grade and sixth grade have emphasized that the art curriculum aims to produce a person with active work, manners, interpersonal relationships, and moral values Teachers' Guide Grade 6 (2016).[11] and Teachers' Guide Grade 7 (2016).[12]

Sadirman (2016) [15] points out the role of the teacher in developing interpersonal intelligence. According to those ideas, teachers should be able to understand the maturity of children and understand the level of intelligence of that child. The teacher should know not only the nature, appearance, and circumstances of a child in general but also all his needs. Children should be able to lead. It can be mentioned that a teacher must have an awareness and understanding of the broad objectives of education, and the teacher must have knowledge of technology and the modern world. Thus, Veronika (2021) [20] also points out that the teacher should have good

discipline and exemplary character. Accordingly, it is important to use active teaching methods combined with modern technologies, away from the traditional learning and teaching pattern. It can be further mentioned that interpersonal intelligence can be developed in students more easily by giving priority to the development of attitudes and skills without being limited to the transmission of knowledge.

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

Choosing the right research approach and design is very important for the success of research. Accordingly, the survey research design belonging to the quantitative research approach is more suitable for this research which examines the teacher's role related to the development of interpersonal intelligence. According to Jayasuriya (2017) [9], it can be concluded that the survey design is more appropriate because it is possible to ask the opinions and attitudes of individuals to be able to choose a more representative sample and to collect quantitative and qualitative data.

The entire population related to this research is the teachers who teach art in junior secondary grades in Sri Lanka. For the convenience of the study, the sample of teachers was selected from Kegalle, Mawanella, and Dehiowita education zones in Kegalle district of Sabaragamuwa province. Accordingly, among the teachers who teach art, 60 teachers were selected under simple random sampling 22 teachers from Kegalle education Zone, 17 from Mawanella Education Zone, and 21 from Dehiowita education Zone. In addition, the three In-Service Advisors working in the three zones were also used as the sample for data collection.

Research is a carefully planned process to collect data. Thus, a self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from the sample of teachers. A questionnaire prepared related to the objectives of the research was distributed to the teachers and data was collected. An interview schedule was used to collect data from In-Service Advisors. Thus, the main objective was to triangulate the data. In addition to this, classroom observation using an observation sheet was also implemented to accomplish the objectives of the study.

The data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed statistically using quantitative method. Quantitative data were analyzed based on percentages. The data obtained through interviews and observations were arranged to be presented according to qualitative methods. This research was limited to Sinhala medium schools in the three education zones of Kegalle district of Sabaragamuwa province. Also, only teachers who teach art were selected as the sample for data collection. Although nine types of intelligence were described under multiple intelligence theories, only interpersonal intelligence was studied.

### 3.1 Data analysis and interpretation

Purposive analysis was done based on the data obtained from the sample of teachers used for data collection. According to the background information of the sample, 61%, female teachers and 39% male teachers were included in the sample. When analyzing according to the type of school, 25% of 1AB schools, 40% of 1C schools, and 35% of 2 types of schools were included in the sample. Analyzing according to professional qualifications, it was revealed that 42% of the post-graduates, 31% of educational science diplomas, and 27% of those without professional qualifications are present. Tenure was also asked because the teaching process

may vary based on experience. Accordingly, 20% of those with less than 5 years of service, 27% of those with 6-10 years of service, 27% of those with 11-15 years of service, and 26% of those with more than 16 years of service were scattered.

The first objective of the study was the opportunities available in the syllabus for the development of interpersonal intelligence, where in the teaching of the art subject, there are measures to approach the lesson in a way that develops interpersonal intelligence, 29% said that there are many such opportunities, 38% said that there are, 30% responded that there are several. 3% responded that such activities were not seen. Thus, it was seen that the measures to approach lessons in such a way as to develop interpersonal intelligence are planned in the syllabus.

Also, whether pairs and group activities are included in the syllabus for the learning and teaching process was brought to the attention of the teacher sample. According to the responses received, 34% responded that there are many, 41% that there are usually and 25% that there are a few. Thus, it is clear that the curriculum includes activities that can develop interpersonal intelligence. In developing interpersonal intelligence, it was seen that qualities such as social sensitivity, social communication, and social understanding should be developed in students. 23% responded that there are more than 23% of the people who were asked if there are necessary activities for that. Also, 50% response was somewhat present. 27% responded that it was seen very little. It is clear that there is more opportunity for the development of social skills in the syllabus. It was stated in the interview of the teachers that this skill can be developed more during the development of the lesson as well as during the co-curricular activities. In this regard, it was also stated in the interview with the teacher advisors that it was observed that the teachers work to develop more interpersonal intelligence during the student activities. It was clear from the responses of the teachers that during the group activities, the teachers could work on developing the interpersonal intelligence of the students. During classroom observation, it was observed whether the learning and teaching process is implemented in such a way that interpersonal intelligence is developed. Accordingly, it was also possible to see that these teachers guide the students through group activities. Thus, it was revealed from the data analysis that interpersonal intelligence can be developed due to the development of social skills in students through the art subject.

Attention was paid to the problems faced by teachers in developing interpersonal intelligence. The observation also revealed that although the activities related to art are included in the syllabus, not all of them are implemented. In the interview conducted with the teachers, the teachers stated that since it is essential to cover the syllabus, there is a problem of time in doing such activities frequently. Here, 10 problems were presented for the teacher sample, and he was instructed to number 1-10 according to the priority of the problems he was facing. The responses given by the teachers are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: - Problems faced by teachers in developing interpersonal intelligence**

| No | Problems faced | Frequency | percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Inability to complete the lesson on time. | 32 | 53 |
| 2. | Slow learners not doing activities. | 31 | 51 |

| 3. | Not all students grasp the subject unit. | 26 | 43 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4. | Children behaving loudly in the classroom. | 24 | 40 |
| 5. | Inability to achieve all planned objectives. | 20 | 33 |
| 6. | Failure to manage the classroom properly | 12 | 20 |
| 7. | Difficulty in imparting knowledge required to pass exams. | 11 | 18 |
| 8. | Failure to face supervision. | 10 | 16 |
| 9. | Inability to cover syllabus. | 07 | 12 |
| 10. | Not having a suitable classroom | 05 | 08 |

According to Table 1, it is clear that in developing interpersonal intelligence, not being able to finish classes on time, and slow learners not actively participating in the lesson are the main problems. The main reason may be that students spend more time on practical activities. But to develop interpersonal intelligence, it is essential to provide more such opportunities. Interviews with in-service advisors also revealed that teachers should provide opportunities for students to engage in more practical activities in order to develop interpersonal intelligence. But they further pointed out that there is the problem of whether a group activity can be successfully completed in a specific period of 40 minutes in the timetable. It was also pointed out as a problem that there are only three periods per week for this subject.

Although the development of interpersonal intelligence is a necessary process, it is clear that teachers face various problems in implementing it. Finally, the suggestions of measures that can be followed for the development of interpersonal intelligence were examined. The points presented by the teachers are summarized below.

- Always provide opportunities for students to build social relationships.
- Organizing field trips related to topics.
- Involvement in leadership and personality development programs.
- Focus more on group activities in the classroom.
- Referral to collective project work.
- Provide opportunities to apply what is learned to real life.
- Regular reference to co-curricular activities.
- Creating awareness of social opportunities and providing opportunities to gain practical experience.
- Design lessons in such a way that interpersonal intelligence is developed as much as possible within the syllabus.

Here it can be pointed out that it is very important to organize activities such as exhibitions, field trips, workshops, and conferences in the classroom as well as in the school.

## 4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

According to the data analysis, opportunities for the development of interpersonal intelligence were investigated. Accordingly, it could be concluded that there are enough opportunities for the development of interpersonal intelligence in the junior secondary level syllabus in Sri Lanka. In practice, it was found difficult to implement them in the classroom learning-teaching process. This is because, in the examination-centered model of education, the emphasis is not on skill development but on how far the syllabus has been completed. It was also seen that the teachers do not pay much attention to whether the students have developed skills in the internal supervision of the school as well as in the external supervision done by the zonal offices. They aim to teach and complete the syllabus for the term and the year. It was made clearer by the responses presented by teachers and in-service advisors. Armstrong (2009) [2] and Han & Son (2020) [8] have confirmed these conclusions. It can also be concluded that teachers face various problems in developing interpersonal intelligence. The data analysis revealed that students have to face various problems related to the learning and teaching process. The fact that Sri Lanka has turned to an examination-centered education pattern could also be identified as a major problem seen here.

Also, the need to conduct training sessions for teachers related to the development of interpersonal intelligence could be concluded according to the data analysis. Teachers often work with the same professional qualifications, so there is a need to update their knowledge from time to time. It can be pointed out the need to provide residential and practical training of at least 3-4 days using school vacation periods.

In this study, which examined the role of teachers in order to develop interpersonal intelligence, some suggestions can be made as follows.

- Organizing the learning and teaching process as group activities based on hands-on experience rather than transfer of knowledge. Self-study activities should be included more.
- Providing opportunities for students to engage in interdisciplinary projects in groups and individually. School-level exhibitions can be organized based on these projects at the end of the year.
- The contribution of the school as well as the family is essential in the development of interpersonal intelligence. Therefore, parents of school children should be informed and work to direct students to activities that develop social relationships as much as possible at home.
- Prepare the necessary background to implement the learning and teaching process in such a way that not only the children and parents but also the education officials get rid of the exam mentality and develop interpersonal intelligence in the students.
- It was also suggested to provide necessary teacher training to plan the teaching process in such a way that the inter-professional intelligence is developed through systematic training opportunities for art teachers.

Thus, it can be stated that not only the teacher who teaches the subject of art, but every teacher has a very important role in developing interpersonal intelligence in junior secondary students. It can also be concluded that by developing interpersonal intelligence in students, they will be able to live as a socially sensitive virtuous citizen who stands out among others in society. It can be mentioned that the main reasons for the problems seen in Sri Lanka today are the

deficiencies in the development of this interpersonal intelligence in the citizens. Therefore, it has become essential to plan activities in school education as well as outside of school in such a way as to develop interpersonal intelligence in individuals.

## LIST OF REFERENCES

Abas, M., Solihatin, E., & Nadiroh. (2019). Effect of Instructional Models and Interpersonal Intelligence on the Social Studies Learning Outcomes. International Journal of Instruction, 12(4), 705- 718. https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2019.12445a

Armstrong, T. (2009). Multiple intelligence in the classroom. Alexandria, VA: ASCD

Bratcher, S. (2012). The learning-to-write process in elementary schools. New York, NY: Routledge.

Cherry,K. (2023) Gardner's Theory of multiple intelligences. From.www.verywellmind.com

Daichendt,J.G. (2010).artist teacher, a philosophy for creating and teaching, the university of Chicago pre,1427 e 60th street,Chicago.il 60637,USA

Dolati, Z., & Tahriri, A. (2017). EFL teachers' multiple intelligences and their classroom practice. SAGE Open, 7(3), 1-12. doi: 2158244017722582.

Gardner, H. (2011). Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences. Theory in practice, New York Basic Books.

Han, S. L. & Son, H. S. (2020). Effects on cooperative learning on the improvement of interpersonal competence among students in classroom environments. International Online Journal of Education and Teaching (IOJET), 7(1). 17-28. http://iojet.org/index.php/IOJET/article/view/717.

Jayasooriya, C. (2017). Educational Research Method. Sara Publication.

Marenus, M. (2024) Howard Gardner theory of Multiple intelligences. www.samplypsychology.org.

National Institution of Education (2016). Teacher's Guide for Grade 6, Maharagama

National Institution of Education (2016). Teacher's Guide for Grade 7, Maharagama

Nurunnisa, Euis Cici. (2017). Early Childhood Interpersonal Intelligence Literacy. Journal of Tunas Siliwangi volume 2 number 2 October 2017 edition.

Roger, T., & Johnson, D. W. (1994). An overview of cooperative learning. In Thousand, J. S., Villa, R. A., & Nevin, A. I (Eds.), Creativity and Collaborative Learning (pp. 1-21). Baltimore: Brookes Press.

Sadirman. (2016). Teaching and Learning Interaction &Motivation. Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada.

Safaria, T. (2005). Interpersonal intelligence: Metode pengembangan kecerdasan interpersonal Anak. Amara Books.

Simsek, U. (2013) International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications. Volume: 4 Issue: 3 Article: 07 ISSN 1309-6249.

Sugasmith I, Setiawan D & Sargi D, (2019) Budapest International Research and Critics in Linguistics and Education (BirLE) Journal Volume 2, No 4, Page: 603-615 e-ISSN: 2655-1470 (Online), p-ISSN: 2655-2647 DOI:https://doi.org/10.33258/birle.v214.652. www.bircu-journal.com/index.php/birle

Tirri, K., Nokelainen, P., & Komulainen, E. (2013). Multiple intelligences: Can they be measured? Psychological Test and Assessment Modeling, 55(4), 438-461.

Veronika. D.A.(2021). Early Childhood. Islamic education study program. Faculty of Ttarbiyah and teacher. State Islamic University. Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin. Jambi. 209173196.