

## **ROLE OF DRAMA INTERVENTION IN TRANSFORMATION OF PROFESSIONAL COLLEGE STUDENTS IN ENHANCING EMPLOYABILITY**

**RITESH BATRA**

Research Scholar Sharda University Greater Noida

**Dr.DALEEP PARIMOO**

Associate Professor School of Business Studies Sharda University Greater Noida

### **Abstract**

In India, the problem of employability is paramount amongst students of SFPPEIs. In the past decade, a trend has been observed of that of degrading quality of student at the screening or entry level of professional degree courses. Even more they need to be proficient enough with superlative degrees of communication skills, systems oriented process driven applied knowledge, professional attitude and attributes. The gaping gap becomes evident between student's preparation, aspirations and Corporate demand of well-trained candidates as their prospective employees. The current focus of self-financed private professional educational institutes (SFPPEIs) in professional education is development of students in terms of knowledge and skills, as degree alone cannot become a guarantee for gaining employability. The Industry – Academia gaping gap can never be bridged without acquisition of soft skills which actually begin by working upon an individual's experiential learning on self-confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. (Batra & Parimoo (2017)

Though Employability can be defined in contexts of society, organizational, Industrial and Individual, (Versloot, Glaude and Thijssen, 1998). This article focuses on the individual level. There are several synonyms - core, key, generic, personal transferable skills, common, work or employment related skills -. Added to that, what compounds the sense of confusion is that 'skills' are often referred to as capabilities, competencies or attributes, levels or learning outcomes. The term Employability has no meaning without its core antecedents, such as self-confidence, self-esteem, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. Since the classical approaches do not suffice. Drama Intervention as a novel tool is required to achieve the purpose of enhancing employability.

**Key Words:** synonyms, competencies, capabilities

### **Introduction**

#### **Employability Education in Self Financed Private Professional Educational Institutes (SFPPEIs)**

In India, the problem of employability is paramount amongst students of SFPPEIs. In the past decade, a trend has been observed of that of degrading quality of student at the screening or entry level of professional degree courses. Most colleges invite

admissions of students without screening barriers. Hardly do the students and their parents know about the scope of professional degree courses in India. Most students getting enrolled for professional education belong to a vernacular background. Entry level technical, executive, business development or technology driven jobs in India, which are other than sales, are less available for the professional degree

course students in SFPPEIs. Hence, this additionally requires emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in dealing with the corporate clients and business partners and vendors. Even more they need to be proficient enough with superlative degrees of communication skills, systems oriented process driven applied knowledge, professional attitude and attributes. The gaping gap becomes evident between student's preparation, aspirations and Corporate demand of well-trained candidates as their prospective employees. The current focus of self-financed private professional educational institutes (SFPPEIs) in professional education is development of students in terms of knowledge and skills, as degree alone cannot become a guarantee for gaining employability.

#### **Employability in context**

Often the term Employability is confused with employment. What skills are required for employability are found debatable. Employability has multidimensional contexts. Very few tests have been designed to assess employability but there exists no such commonly accepted employability measurement method or scale. Everyone wants to become employable after completing a professional degree course, but only 18% are found employable by the corporate sector in India. When the concept itself has not been understood with unanimous agreement by the experts, how then, can there be a rigorous effort by the concerned SFPPEIs on employability 'enhancement'?

The Industry – Academia gaping gap can never be bridged without acquisition of soft skills which actually begin by working upon an individual's experiential learning on self-confidence, self-esteem, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence. (Batra & Parimoo (2017)

Though Employability can be defined in contexts of society, organizational, Industrial and Individual, (Versloot, Glaude and Thijssen, 1998). This article focuses on the individual level. There are several synonyms - core, key, generic, personal transferable skills, common, work or employment related skills -. Added to that, what compounds the sense of confusion is that 'skills' are often referred to as capabilities, competencies or attributes, levels or learning outcomes.

Merely obtaining a degree is not sufficient anymore. According to Bandura (1995) mastery experiences are the most effective way of creating a strong sense of self-efficacy, and so play a vital role within employability. Therefore, by providing the opportunities for mastery experiences, vicarious experiences and social persuasion, and then, by encouraging 'reflection upon' and evaluation of these experiences, self-efficacy can be increased.

According to Goleman (1998) people with self-confidence are able to present themselves with self-assurance and have presence. Lawrence (1996) supported the inclusion of self-esteem in employability. A vast body of research evidence has accumulated, showing a positive correlation between self-esteem and achievement.

Forrier & Sels (2003) suggested use of behavioral capabilities and self-efficacy as indicators of an individual's ability.

The researcher finds gaps between industry and academia, one can easily understand that, the concept of employability as such itself is not clear to many stakeholders. The purpose, significance and importance of Soft Skills is grossly misunderstood due to the lack of awareness as to what needs to happen to make a student of professional degree course employable in such a dynamic economy. This prompted the researcher to try a new discipline called Drama

Intervention as a new approach to augment the existing facilitation methods which are by and large lecture driven and passive in nature. An attempt has been made by the researcher to study the impact of Drama Interventions as a learning and development tool on employability of students of professional degree courses.

### **L&D for Employability**

The largely prevalent method in soft skills for employability education is preachy and didactic, with listings and logical bombardments of too many do's and don'ts. It makes it hard for a student to 'understand' as lecturing method is limited to the listening ability of a student which one may tend to forget. Moreover listening to a lecture only facilitates 'transfer of information'. Gleason et,al,(2011) in their study done especially for pharmacy students, it was clearly opined that passive learning gets predominated in lecture method and this requires less effort from the student. The default learning outcome is just rote memorization. The researchers further mention that 'without meaning', anything which is attempted to learn, can soon be forgotten, also it is difficult to understand as it is difficult to 'apply'. Bensley & Ellsworth(1992) described lecturing method as 'bulimic learning' which results only in short term memory retention of information. The other soft skill education methods which are classified as active learning have their own limitations. For example, Problem Based Learning (PBL) pioneered by McMaster University in Canada, though it facilitates cognitive thinking and critical analysis, it lacks the scope for utilization of affective domains. Case based learning is quite similar to PBL, but again is often limited to the scope of text value ( there may be many alternatives overlooked which might stimulate 'creativity'). It works most on the Left Brain, which means it harnesses

mostly the logical aptitude. Again, lesser scope of viewing the situation alternatively. The video clips attract only the passive audiences, despite the visual appeal which might help a student to 'remember', yet not necessarily 'understand'. For example the movie Three Idiots, by Rajkumar Hirani, was thought provoking and even had the emotional appeal to the young and old alike, yet could it become effective enough to make the 'leaders of change act to transform the much criticized Indian educational system? That still continues to promote rote learning and never ending quest for making scores in the marks sheets?

To understand, learning by doing was proposed by John Dewey. Drama is a form of "learning by doing." Dewey also stressed the importance of the imagination. We all have distinctive intelligences that reflect how we realize or learn and what intrigues or interests us. Dr.Howard Gardner names no less than five separate intelligences that people might include. Professional degree college students will have better chances of learning, if L&D facilitators educate their students, realizing that there are different intelligences other than just logical and verbal "They [intelligences] include visual/spatial, bodily/kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences"

A great part of the information and thoughts regarding training and learning depend on the Constructivist Theory. This hypothesis regards that people don't learn by dousing up outside sources, yet rather we learn by effectively making our own particular meaning.

### **Drama involves all learning styles**

The power of drama intervention methods to connect with all learning styles is apparent through its history and improvement.

Dramatization is profoundly viewed as a successful and significant learning facilitation system on account of its one of a kind capacity to connect with intelligent, unique ability to engage reflective, constructivist and dynamic learning in the classroom and also improving oral aptitudes improvement. Heathcote cited in Wagner (1976)

Drama techniques, strategies and methods have the ability to bring authenticity in learning as the majority of the intelligences are used in learning exercises. For instance, dramatization blends verbal etymological learning by using dialect, scripts, vocabulary and perusing. Intrapersonal learning identifies with the sentiments and feelings included in dramatics, portrayals and how we react as an individual, while interpersonal learning originates from working with others to make a scene or pretend. Kinaesthetic learning enacts the physical self, the body and doing activities. As participants re-make pictures, visual points of interest, organizing, development, area and course with drama their spatial learning aptitudes are produced. Sensible learning comes from utilizing balanced examples, circumstances and end results connections and other reasonable ideas included with the drama. Sometimes music, or even the music of language, is also used in facilitation with drama.

#### **Role of Drama Intervention in Learning**

Classically, drama has been used as a medium for communicating the subtle nuances of the religious and social messages to simplify the complexities. In ancient times in India, Drama as a tool for learning was propagated and explored by Bharat Muni who authored 'Natya Shastra.' This was meant to take the spirit of the Vedic vision to the common man, became the FIFTH VEDA.

Drama has been practiced since ancient times in India. In a research article by Namboodari pad C.N (2004), Bharata Muni's impression management for students has been discussed which mentions clearly that even during ancient times in India, it was delineated, that how should an executive behave, speak, dress up professionally as per the prevalence of formal styles and attires during those times. This was mentioned in Natyashastra and related to contemporary business dealings and behaviours of business executives today, as these 'ways' of dressing and speaking , most importantly – 'The Body Language ' casted a major impact on 'others'. Ancient Greeks and Romans had also practiced drama as a tool for learning and social cognition. Within this concept of participative drama, the participants would get a chance to explore and negotiate their internal conflicts, their social issues and life opportunities.

Drama Intervention differs from theatre performed as scripted dialogue on a set in front of an audience. Instead, drama in education often involves an entire class in improvised roles within an imagined context or frame. Heathcote & Bolton, (1995).

The actors and the audience are the students, director is the facilitator of the drama intervention technique. The students are actively participating and are also learning while performing. This is very similar to learning by doing.

Logic and arguments cannot change feelings but perceptions can. Drama creates a safe environment in which people feel more open to express themselves. By engaging with the character, they are more comfortable, challenging unacceptable behavior and finding ways to tackle delicate problems. The 'play' aspect can be easily developed by drama intervention as it can provide opportunities to develop multi-level enabling

competencies. It can be the perfect vehicle to lay out the concepts in an accessible, enjoyable, creative and economical form and to invite students to learn and develop.

### **Why Drama Intervention ?**

Drama is actually pretending or enacting something or someone, which we are not! This is the first thing about Drama. Therefore, the moment we say ( in colloquial sense) that one is “ doing a drama” in normal casual course of our conversation, what we mean to say is that a person is pretending or enacting or ‘doing a drama’. While reading such pretentions, the onlooker’s mind ‘reads images and notices ‘changes happening in those images.’ Worldwide, there are approximately 7.2bn people and they all are different in their DNA, even different in their thought processes, their feelings in situated behavior might vary. It’s a well known fact that no two humans are identical. Yet, the common factor amongst all humans is that they understand only one common language and that is – *the language of images*. This remains a fact since the times of Adam and Eve and will continue forever. Through this, we can change the entire scenario of employability as ‘DRAMA CREATES IMAGES’.

By applying Drama Intervention as a learning and development tool, we want to nurture the Right Brain.

In corporate world, how many people who are well known examples of success in their careers are those who have been academic achievers throughout? Let us also include The Famous inventors in our list! We will certainly be able to map that it was certainly due to their well- developed Right Brains. Left brain is logical to such an extent that it will believe only in “What Is” and not “What if”? Left Brain begins to work by first breaking a picture into pieces to start analyzing the multiple facets of the picture

or an object to narrow down the information backwards “ this is converging the analysis” or convergent thinking. The Right Brain imagines options and alternatives cascading ‘out of the box’, one object being imagined towards more possibilities of utility. The Right Brain multiplies a series of ill-logical ‘what ifs’. This is divergent thinking. Our present factory –like knowledge and information bombarding schools are producing ‘slave-minds’ in batches! To be utilized for the convenience of business owners and vested interests of capitalist economies. Drama Interventions begins to stimulate the Right Brain first to make the student develop lateral thinking or alternate views of handling a situation with creative thinking. At the same time it balances feelings-emotions with logic-rationale, by involving and engaging the “Whole Brain” both the left and right brain. Drama even engages all learning styles (Ashton Hay, 2007).

### **Conclusions**

The term Employability has no meaning without its core antecedents, such as self-confidence, self-esteem, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. Since the classical approaches do not suffice. Drama Intervention as a novel tool is required to achieve the purpose of enhancing employability.

Though drama Intervention significantly helps in developing sense of strong self esteem, there are many other factors like The Contageon Effect which may dimmer its overall achievement. Hence, it takes a longer duration to recover.

The findings of a recent study by the researchers confirmed that Drama Intervention as a Learning and Development tool most significantly enhances the employability antecedents Self Confidence, Self-Esteem, Emotional Intelligence and Self Efficacy. Hence, academicians must

understand and realize the need, strategies, methods and techniques for developing these attributes.

The practical value contributed by the findings is the new dimension of knowledge about what needs to be developed and more importantly, How a Novel L&D tool of Drama Intervention can develop the discussed variables and factors highlighted that contribute to discovering developing and improving the employability attributes in ever dynamic business environment.

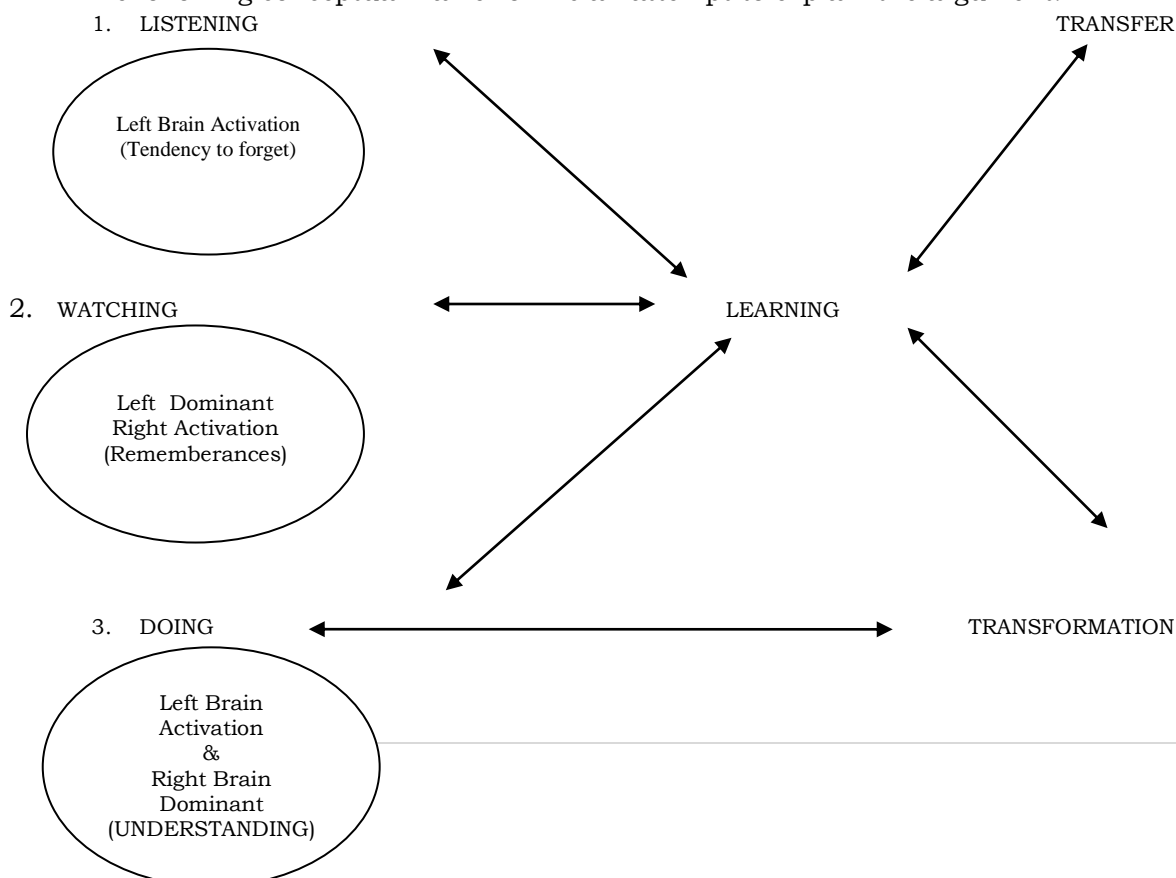
Life is full of fun, love goodness and learning during childhood because of Right Brain's activity. As we grow, the difficulties, responsibilities and rationalities compel us to use logic with the help of Left Brain. Through Drama Intervention, we are again bringing those adults back into the 'childhood zone'.

The magnitude of change is not important but it is 'The Sustainability' of the change (through learning intervention for employability) which is more important.

Drama Intervention is easily able to sustain that. It even brings around METANOIA-*permanent shift of mind.*

The current status of Professional Degree course students in colleges in India in context of soft skills and employability education is such that they are facing logic driven conditioning of the mind. Drama Intervention as an alternative to learning soft skills for employability brings around instant student engagement and has the power of transformation much desired to become employable as it appeals to all the student's preferred learning styles. Last but not the least Drama Intervention, as compared to the conventional methods(which only facilitate 'transfer of information),in sharp contrast, facilitates 'learning by doing and hence appeals to both the Left and the Right brain, rather 'The Whole Brain' and hence facilitates transformative learning with sustainability of desirable behaviors via situation engineering.

The following conceptual framework is an attempt to explain the argument.



This conceptual framework explains that

**1.** listening (lectures) involves only the Left Brain and logic. Since there occurs a possible information overload from a 'one way traffic', it results in a learner's tendency to forget. Hence only Transfer of information happens with short term retention by the receiver (learner)

**2.** Watching video clips or pictures activates the right brain but is still left brain dominant activity as the brain gets busy in comprehension of the visual images. But we tend to remember what we see ( Many times we come across people who say "I remember her face but I don't remember her name-(but not Vice -Versa)

**3.** Doing Drama Intervention engages all Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic modes with application of Multiple intelligences and hence facilitates UNDERSTANDING , and hence TRANSFORMATIVE METANOIA - most needed for delicate issue of EMPLOYABILITY.

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