



INTERPERSONAL WAYS OF KNOWING

Adapted by Leslie Wessman from the work of Howard Gardner, Thomas Armstrong, Linda Campbell, and David Lazear.

DEFINITION

Over the past twenty years social psychologists have worked out in sophisticated detail the inner mechanisms through which we think about other people. Research suggests that we build up complex mental frameworks, or social schemata, which guides out attitudes, beliefs, and responses to people we meet every day. We most often experience our Interpersonal Intelligence when we are part of a team effort. This intelligence utilizes our ability to engage in verbal and nonverbal communication and our capacity to notice distinctions among ourselves—for example: contrasts in moods, temperament, motivations, and intentions. It allows us to develop a genuine sense of empathy and caring for each other. Through our Interpersonal Intelligence we can stand in “another’s moccasins” and understand another person’s feelings, fears, anticipations, & beliefs. This person-to-person way of knowing is the one through which we maintain our individual identity, but we also become more than ourselves as we identify with and become a

part of others.

BRAIN CONNECTION

This intelligence primarily involves the Neo-Cortex as well as the Frontal Lobes. The neo-cortex is the one-eighth-inch layer of brain cells that covers the whole surface of the brain. It is several times larger than the actual surface because as it developed it became more and more complex and folded back on itself many times. It possesses unlimited information storage and is responsible for our higher order thinking processes.

The frontal lobes are still a mystery according to brain researchers. Many believe that this important part of the brain gives us the capacity to perceive higher states of consciousness, to have empathy for others, and to dream of and actualize possibilities for the future.



LEARNING CAPACITIES

Children are not born instinctively knowing how to cooperate with others. Interpersonal and group skills do not magically appear the first time children and adolescents are placed in contact with others. Many elementary and secondary students lack basic social skills such as correctly identifying the emotions of others and appropriately discussion an assignment. Their social ineptitude, unattended, seems to persist into adulthood.

There is no way to overemphasize the importance of the skills required to work effectively with others. Cooperative skills are the keystones to maintaining a stable family, a successful career, and a stable group of friends. Yet these skills have to be taught just as purposefully and precisely as reading and math skills. Generally speaking, II is awakened by one-to-one communication & teamwork.

CLASSROOM TOOLS

- Cooperative Groups
- Peer Teaching
- Cross-Age Tutoring
- Group Brainstorming
- Community Involvement
- Academic Clubs
- Interactive Software
- Board Games

ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

- Explaining to or Teaching
- Giving/Receiving Feedback
- Random Group Quizzes
- Group “Jigsaw” Projects

- Interviews/Questioning
- “Round Robin”
- Empathic Processing
- Assess Your Teammates

FURTHER READING

Lazear, David. 7 Pathways of Teaching: Teaching Students & Parents about MI, 1994

CAREER POSSIBILITIES

- Professional Teaching
- Counseling/Therapist
- Sociologist
- Anthropologist
- Religious Leader
- Politician



Interpersonal Capacities Developmental Journey

Basic Skill Level	Complex Skill Level	Coherence Level
<p><i>(involves developing fundamental familial relationships and learning the basic skills of person-to-person relating, including communication and acceptance of others)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of meaningful bonds and relationships with parents and siblings • Recognition, acceptance of familiar others (for example, extended family and family friends) • Development of simple communication strategies with others • Ability to imitate sounds, words, and facial expressions made by another person • Development of basic “compromise/agreement strategies” 	<p><i>(involves learning the skills of human relating that go beyond the family, including the social skills of cooperation and collaboration with other people)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of meaningful peer relationships that go beyond the family • Development of effective social skills of cooperation and collaboration • Ability to empathize with others and to understand their perspectives/viewpoints • Comprehension of factors involved in being an effective member of a team • Ability to participate in various situations of complex social role-playing 	<p><i>(involves a thorough understanding of group dynamics, human relations, basic human social behavior, and an appreciation for cultural and individual differences)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to build consensus in a group situation or effectively manage or resolve conflict • Comprehension of various group dynamics strategies and group process factors • Understanding processes and methods of cooperative or group problem solving • Sensitivity to individual differences in perspective, beliefs, motivations, and so on • Appreciation for varying cultural values and norms and social ideals

