

## Soft Skills through Activity Teaching Swot Analysis to High School Students: A Modal Lesson

**Dr. SAMBAIAH MEDIKONDA**

Assistant Professor & HOD  
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences  
JNTUACEP-Pulivendula

### Abstract

The ever emerging technological and industrial phenomena is demanding the students to adopt global skills. In order to compete globally, the students are expected to know themselves, set a goal and enhance their skills accordingly. Knowing themselves include what kind of personality traits they have and where they set in the job environment and how to excel in the profession in future. Therefore, in order to explore themselves many tools like SWOT analysis and Johari windows proved to be helpful in both academic as well as industrial areas. Therefore, the research paper presents a model lesson plan for graduate students on improving SWOT analysis skills from a short biography of a young girl who climber Mount Everest at the age of 13 from Telangana State. This lesson is basically an activity based one. It incorporates activities like pre-reading activity, think before you read, reading the text, understanding the story through discussion in pair work, glossary activities, learning from people, focusing on applying the story, undergoing a self-assessment test, learning about skills, tips to develop the skills, and some post reading activities/assignments. As the researcher has been successfully incorporated in various text books prescribed in State level educational institutions, and using as teaching aid in motivational lecture around the State. Hence, the present lesson plan is expected to be a just guiding material for promising soft skills teachers and trainers.

**Keywords:** Body language, eye contact, facial expressions, posture, gestures, proxemics, distance, appearance

### Think before you Read

Have you ever participated in any sports or games or any competition? How much dedication and commitment is required? How much time do you need to practice every day? What type of encouragement and positive environment is needed for them to win? Read the story with the intention of how Poorna Malavath, a Telangana tribal girl, had challenged the life and society and fulfilled her dream. Poorna has overcome her weaknesses with her inner strengths and used her opportunities against threats or challenges.

"In order to achieve success, you must believe that you are not inferior to anyone," said Poorna Malavath. On May 25, 2014, she became the youngest, at the age of 13, female climber in the world to scale *the* Mt. Everest. But she didn't stop there. Now she is attempting to climb the Seven Summits—the seven highest mountains in each Continent.



With all her climbs, Malavath's goal has been to encourage other girls and women to never give up on their dreams. Malavath Poorna's life is an inspiration for every girl and women to never give up self confidence.

The saga of Poorna's story started with several insurmountable obstacles since her childhood. Poorna was born in Pakala, a small village in in Nizamabad district, Telangana. Her parents were farmers, earning about 2,000 rupees (about \$1) a month—far below even India's poverty line. As part of the tribal ethnic class, the family belonged to one of India's least privileged groups. Poorna grew up

outside a village that didn't have shops or buses; she had to walk three miles to even buy a matchbox. As she was a girl, she was looked down by the tradition of the community and forced to get married by discontinuing her school education by her parents and elders. She needed understanding and cooperation from friends, relatives, parents and teachers. As Poorna is female, tribal and poor, there is a wrong perception that she is less capable and less human than others. Hundreds of thousands of people across India from Tribal and Dalit communities face the same discrimination and are denied basic human rights like education.

The first thing that changed Poorna's life was her admission into the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Education Institutions Society (TSWREIS). Second opportunity knocked her door was in the form of Dr. R. S. Praveen Kumar, Secretary, TSWREIS. He organized "Operation Everest," which was a project aimed at helping train students in mountaineering. He played a crucial role in grooming Poorna. "He wanted to show that everybody can do anything," Malavath explained. "I wanted to prove that girls could do anything, that too social welfare students could do anything. *For a tribal like me, opportunities are very rare and I was looking for one opportunity where I could prove my caliber.*"

Poorna's coach and trainer, Sekhar Babu was the third opportunity came on the way to Poorna's success. Although Poorna scared in the beginning, she started believing that victory comes from finding opportunity in problems. Poorna was selected to attend the workshop. The first day she said to her coach, "I cannot do this climbing." But he encouraged her and told her some tips, and she just started slowly climbing.

There are always new, grander challenges to confront, and a true winner will embrace each one. Poorna began her journey to the top of Mt. Everest in April 2014. But they received grim news: a freak avalanche had killed 16 climbers. Shortly afterwards, Praveen Kumar called Poorna via satellite phone, asking her and the other team members to return to safety as the Nepali government banned any more climbing from their side of the mountain. But for Poorna, turning around was not an option. Malavath's trip to the top of Mt. Everest took 52 days.

Poorna struggled with altitude sickness, including near-constant vomiting. "Every step is really dangerous. We had to be very careful," Poorna said. She and her team hiked through the night of May 24 and reached the summit early May 25, 2014. Poorna called Praveen Kumar on the satellite phone, announcing her success. Climbing the Everest was certainly more difficult than I thought, but my willpower to prove that a tribal girl can do something kept me going.

Poorna has few more challenges to achieve. "My goal is to complete all seven peaks before my twentieth birthday," she said. By climbing six peaks in six continents already, she again proved that a girl can reach her goal by altering her attitude. Climbing mountains can be an expensive hobby. But her coach and mentor take care of everything. "I'm really lucky to have them," she said. "Because of both of them and my parents' support, I here today".

Poorna has another challenge to face and win. She wants to continue her education. Dr. Praveen Kumar supported her education. "He helped not only me but many other students who are from underprivileged communities," she said. "I want to become like him. I want to help the same communities." It was my reason for climbing Everest," she added.

The biggest challenges ever faced by a tribal Indian poor girl are the barriers like caste and gender and poverty. Since she climbed Everest, the number of applications for admission at TSWREIS increased to 60,000 from 8,700 students in a year. Poorna continues to visit schools across India to encourage students to follow their dream.

### Highlights

- In 2017 a Bollywood movie "Poorna" was released based on the Poorna Malavath story.
- A biography of Poorna Malavath "Poorna" was written by Aparna Thota.

Answer the following questions and later you may discuss in your class.

1. Who was Poorna and what did she achieve?
2. What were the family conditions of Poorna?
3. What are the three opportunities came to her?

4. How did Poorna equip herself with her strengths?
5. What are Poorna's future goals?
6. What were the obstacles that Poorna encountered in her expedition?

### Applying the Story

*Poorna had weaknesses:* Poorna was born in a poor tribal family in a village which led her into many challenges. She was undergone lot of financial and social problems. As a girl she was not encouraged and need to walk miles together to school.

*Poorna had strengths:* Although Poorna had been looked down as girl, poor and tribal girl, she had the amazing power of mental strength. She had a dream of climbing mount Everest.. She had self confidence and higher self esteem. She was not driven away by the fear of failure but challenged the circumstances.

*Poorna had beaten gender, social and financial disadvantages with her mental strength:* She neither believed nor accepted failure. She tried to substitute weaknesses with her mental stamina. She strained her body and mind and worked hard in training as she was ambitious of reaching her goal.

*Poorna had threats:* Poorna was born in a poor family. She didn't have support of any training institute but she was studying in a social welfare school. She couldn't offer proper food or coaching for herself but she need to use the facilities whatever the social welfare schools provided. She had strong social barrier as she was tribal girl and had the stigma of untouchable. Above all, she was a woman, who meant for nothing in male dominated society.

*Poorna had opportunities:* She got all her source of inspiration from his guru Dr. RS Praveen Kumar. Sekhar Babu was her great strength. He was also a motivation to her who was a wonderful coach who encouraged her to the best.

*Poorna overcame challenges with her opportunities.* Although her family was poverty stricken, she found that they were not poor in spirit. She defeated poverty with the social welfare schools continues effort. She never allowed caste stigma in her mind and being looked down by anybody on the basis of colour or status. She successfully

over came the gender discrimination and proved herself more than any man in scaling the Everest.

### Thinking about SWOT/C analysis- Meaning of SWOT/C

SWOT stands for *strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats*. It is a scientific tool for any individual or organizations to study those four elements for existing status and plan for future. SWOT focuses on how an individual who has a goal to reach. It studies the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to reach that goal.

*Chance favors the prepared mind.– Louis Pasteur*

**Why “T” in SWOT changed to be “C”** The term ‘Threat’ is originated from military strategy which gives a negative meaning. Using “C” as Challenge or Constraints is recommended to create more positive attitude.

### Internal and External Factors

Strengths and weaknesses are often internal and personal to you, while opportunities and threats generally relate to external factors. For this reason, SWOT is sometimes called Internal-External Analysis. Strengths and opportunities are helpful whereas weaknesses and threats are harmful. Note that there are four factors in the SWOT analysis

- **Helpful** — Strengths and Opportunities
- **Harmful** — Weaknesses and Threats
- **Internal** — The Strengths and Weaknesses are internal to the organization
- **External** — The Opportunities and Threats are external to the organization

### Do you know your SWOT/SWOC?

*Read the following ‘yes’ or ‘no’ questions carefully. If your answer is YES, write 1, if NO write 0.*

	Questions	1 or 0
1.	Do you have specific goal in your life?	
2.	Are you aware of your strength?	
3.	Do you know which things are important for you?	
4.	Do you know which thing can add value to you?	
5.	Do you know your weakness?	

6.	Are you aware of your financial status?	
7.	Do you have somebody to help you to reach your goal?	
8.	Are you doing something to reach your goal every day?	
9.	Do you know your career opportunities?	
10.	Do you have abilities to reach your career goal?	
11.	Do you know where do you fit in job?	
12.	Do you decide your career goal?	
13.	Do you have proper resources to excel in studies?	
14.	Are you using the technology to enhance your subject?	
15.	Do you worry about your future?	
16.	Is there anybody that stops you to study?	
17.	Are you fond of something that distracts you from study?	
18.	Do you know the reason for your failure?	
19.	Can you create an opportunity on your own?	
20.	Do you have any challenge that can be overcome?	
21.	Have you ever failed due to your weakness?	

If your score is between 15-20, you have clarity about SWOT. If your score is less than 15, you need to improve looking within and out for focusing goal.

### Why SWOT/SWOC is useful for students?

The typical problem of today's youth is familiarity with many things and ignorance of own self. They know many things about Sachin and Dhoni and many more about Hollywood and Bollywood but they do not know few about themselves. That is why there are advertisements like "Do you want to know about yourself? Contact us" in any daily newspapers. "Whether you think you can or think you can't, you are right", said Henry Ford. "When we know better, we do better" is the axiom emphasizing the need and meaning of self knowing skills. In order to achieve in

life, one has to know oneself and build strong personality, as people who use their talents to their fullest extent only will be succeed. The quality of achieving the world depends on the quality of knowing self that precede it. But on the path of exploring, you may suffer fewer problems if you know what weaknesses are. And if you manage these weaknesses the path to excellence is easy to reach.

Therefore in order to identify these strengths and weaknesses, and analyzing the opportunities and challenges, SWOT Analysis is proven to be most useful technique. The following are the some of the advantages.

- SWOT Analysis shows why people are unable to reach their goals in life.
- It helps to understand various ways to reach your goal.
- It is a beneficial to recognize both the opportunities available and the threats to face.
- By realizing weaknesses, one can overcome and escape threats.
- Its framework makes you unique from your peers by showing your rare talents.
- It points out the need to boost your career and assists you reach your personal goals.
- Knowing and using your strengths can make you potential and turns you a quality person.
- Used in a employment context, it stirs you to excel in your profession.
- It discloses opportunities that you need to be utilized.
- It also helps to peep into yourself so that you can draft your career plan and complete it successfully.

### How to do SWOT Analysis

To do your personal SWOT analysis, write down answers to the following questions in another given empty matrix.

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. What merits do you have that others don't have (ex: skills, certifications, education)	1. What tasks do you usually avoid due to fear of failure?
2. What do you do better than anyone else?	2. What do people around you see as your weakness?
3. What personal	3. Are you completely confident of your

resources can you utilize?	subject learning? If not, where?
4. What do other people see as your strengths?	4. What are your negative work habits? (ex: late, short temper)
5. Which talent makes you most proud of?	5. Do you have personality traits that hold you back in your field? (Ex: Public fear)
6. What values do you have than others?	
7. Do you have motivating friends?	
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
1. What new subject can help you more?	1. What obstacles do you currently face at study?
2. How can you take advantage of the sources?	2. Are any of your friends competing with you for projects or roles?
3. Do you have friends who offer good advice?	3. Is your subject demand changing?
4. Can you take advantage of changing syllabi?	4. Does changing syllabus fearing your goal?
5. How do you tackle a difficult subject when others fear?	5. Could any of your weaknesses lead to failure?
6. Do you find any skill that only filled by you?	
7. In which area are you complaint free comparatively with others?	

### Post Reading activity

- A. You want to speak English fluently. Prepare your SWOT chart analyzing all your possibilities and find out how to overcome those weaknesses and threats by using strengths and opportunities.
- B. Gather stories of two such individuals who have achieved some extraordinary success in spite of strong opposing conditions or chronic diseases from newspapers or web, and compare their lives with that of others leading normal lives with the help of SWOT.

C. Answer the following questions and collect additional information.

1. What is SWOT/SWOC?
2. Why "T" in SWOT changed to be "C"?
3. How SWOT/SWOC is useful for individuals and organizations?
4. What are the advantages SWOT/SWOC analysis for students?
5. How to find out strengths and weaknesses opportunities and threats?

### My SWOT/SWOC analysis

To do your personal SWOT analysis, write down the points in given empty matrix.

My Strengths	My Weaknesses
My Opportunities	My Challenges

### References

1. Weihrich, Heinz (April 1982). "The TOWS matrix—a tool for situational analysis". *Long Range Planning*. 15 (2): 54–66.
2. Nutt, Paul C.; Backoff, Robert W. (Summer 1993). "Transforming public organizations with strategic management and strategic leadership". *Journal of Management*. 19 (2): 299–347 (316).
3. Silva, Carlos Nunes (2005). "SWOT analysis". In Caves, Roger W. (ed.). *Encyclopedia of the city*. Abingdon; New York: Routledge. pp. 444–445.
4. Minsky, Laurence; Aron, David (23 February 2021). "Are you doing the SWOT analysis backwards?". *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved 7 November 2021.
5. Andrews, Kenneth R. (1971). *The concept of corporate strategy*. Homewood, Ill.: Dow Jones–Irwin. p. 37.
6. Watkins, Michael D. (27 March 2007). "From SWOT to TOWS: answering a reader's strategy question". *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved 7 November 2021.
7. Pickton, David W.; Wright, Sheila (March 1998). "What's swot in strategic analysis?". *Strategic Change*. 7 (2): 101–109.