

Communication as a Skill For Effective Classroom Teaching (An Introspection)

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Abstract

The origin of communication process is found in the ancient time. People used body language as a technique for showing their emotions at that time. After that, they started using symbols as a technique of exchanging ideas. Later on, language developed with the social development of mankind. People started using languages for communication. With the advent of technology, man invented and developed different means that could be used in communication to make its process easier, faster and wide-spreading.

The teacher can use any one or more of the following communication strategies as Continuous Prose Communication, Heuristic Communication, Audio-visual Communication, Multi-sensory Communication, Multi-media Communication, Mass-Communication etc. for presenting information and for interacting with the students effectively in actual classroom teaching-learning condition.

For presenting the information in verbal form, teacher should use simple words according to the level of students and the nature of the content. He should use simple language which the students can understand and should use practical examples to clarify the information. The teacher with a healthy mind and mental hygiene can put his ideas before the students in an interesting way and effectively. He can take care of the individual differences of the students and can make them think and perceive things in a systematic manner. On the other hand, mentally healthy students can concentrate more and can develop their perception in a desired manner. Thus effective communication between the teacher and the taught results into proper understanding of the students by the teacher and teacher does not have to repeat the things again and again.

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Introduction

Teaching may be considered as a specialized form of communication between the teacher and the taught. This communication can be either formal or informal. Formal communication is a designed and contrived way which takes place in a well regulated setting for achieving specified objectives according to standard rules and procedures. Classroom teaching is formal communication which is organized in a deliberated manner to be conducted according to pre-determined time-table by pre-determined set of teachers.

Informal communication is passing of an underhand message of which the teacher is not generally aware. It is unintentional, unplanned, indefinite flow of ideas, feelings and attitudes from teacher to the students, from student to student inside the class and outside the class.

Communication is a process by which an idea is transferred from a source to a receiver with the intention of changing his behavior. It is a mutual exchange of facts, thoughts or perceptions leading to a common understanding of all parties. It does not necessarily imply agreement. It is the transfer of information from the sender to the receiver with the information being understood by the receiver.

According to Anderson, “Communication is a dynamic process in which a person knowingly or unknowingly affects cognitive structure of the other through symbolic tools or means”.

Lumis and Veegalopine that “Communication is a process by which information, decisions and directions pass through a social system and the ways in which knowledge, opinions and attitudes are formed or modified”.

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary the word means ‘the act of imparting, especially news’, or ‘the science and practice of transmitting information’. These definitions clearly show the link between ‘teaching’ and ‘communication’: teachers are constantly imparting new knowledge, or transmitting information.

John Dewey (1916) also observed: There is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community, and communication. Men live in a community in virtue of the things which they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common ... Not only is social life identical with communication, but all communication is educative.

Need and Importance

The need for communication arises due to the need to express. None of us can live with bottled up feelings. Thus, the basic need to communicate arises, so that

one can express. The same logic applies at every workplace, organization or any other place. The need for communication and the ability to communicate helps in developing efficient management, organizational skills, laying down plans, establishing a healthy work culture and resolving impending issues. Teaching profession demands good communication skill, along with the knowledge of the subject. If they are unable to teach what they know, students tend to be less involved and lose inspiration to learn. They should be motivated to speak up their viewpoints in class and raise questions, if they are unable to grab certain topic. For this, it is vital for the teachers to communicate effectively with them.

The field of communication has evolved since 1960^(s). The communication process is the guide towards realizing effective communication. It is through the communication process that the sharing of the common meaning between the sender and the receiver takes place. Individuals that follow the communication process have the opportunity to become more productive in every aspect of their profession. Effective communication leads to understanding.

Components of communication process include sender, message, encoding, transmission-channel, receiver, decoding and feedback.

Sender : The communication process begins with the sender who wishes to send a message to the receiver.

Message : The message can be an information, thought, idea or fact. It can be verbal or non-verbal. The message is what the sender wants to convey to the receiver.

Encoding : Encoding is putting a message into words or by using symbols to express the ideas or feelings regarding a message.

Transmission-channel : Channel is the medium of transmission from one person to another mainly to control noise.

Receiver : receiver is the person or group for whom the communication effort is intended. Receiver converts information into verbal language, translates and decodes it for his use.

Decoding : Decoding is the process by which the receiver interprets the message and translates it into meaningful information.

Feedback : Feedback is the reaction without which the sender of the message cannot know whether the recipient has received the entire message.

Formal communication network is created to regulate the flows of communication as to avoid any confusion and to make it more orderly, timely and smooth. Informal communication network arises to meet the needs that are not satisfied by formal process. Communication can be of two types – Educational communication

and Mass-media communication. Educational communication or classroom communication can be further categorized into two sub-types – Verbal (oral and written) and Non-verbal (vocal cues, eye-contact, facial expressions, head-movement, postures and mannerism). Mass-media communication is categorized into two sub-types – Print media or software accessories and Non-print media or hardware accessories. Examples of software accessories are self-instructional material and other materials such as newspapers, encyclopedia, journals, books, atlas and handouts. Hardware accessories include audio media (radio, tape-recorder etc.), visual media (slide projector, overhead projector etc.) and audio-visual media (TV, computer, video disc, video text, teleconferencing etc.).

Communication is also a basic tool for motivation which can also improve the morale of the students or even of the faculty members. Good and effective communication is required not only for good human relations but also for successful teaching. By encouraging ideas or suggestions from students and implementing them whenever possible can also increase the output of the teacher and the student as well. Communication helps a teacher and student both for expressing themselves, for building healthy teacher-taught relationship, for increasing efficiency, for satisfying students' needs and for effective management of classroom teaching by proper planning, organizing, leading and controlling of the teaching-learning process.

Introspection

Communication can be an important tool in management analysis of effective classroom teaching. Mastering oral language skills may be very rewarding for students since a good command of oral communicative proficiency helps them express their feelings, thoughts and ideas. Speaking seems to be the most immediate and most obvious form of communication. Effective classroom communication is a transfer of facts, ideas, information, opinions or emotions between the teacher and taught. Thus communication is unavoidable social, continuous, universal two-way process (i.e. sender and receiver).

The importance of communication skills cannot be underestimated. Good communication skills are necessary in all walks of life. The lack of effective communication skills has a negative impact on the personal as well as professional life of a person. Teaching is generally considered as only fifty percent knowledge and fifty percent interpersonal or communication skills. For a teacher, it is not just important to give a quality lecture but it is more important for the presentation of a lesson or lecture in class. Communication skills for teachers are thus as important as their in-depth knowledge of the particular subject which they teach. Teachers should

be aware of the importance of communication skills in teaching. They must also realize that all students have different levels of strengths and weaknesses. It is only through communication skills that a teacher can introduce creative and effective solutions to the problems of the students. Thus, a teacher can enhance the learning process. A teacher, who is able to communicate well with students, can inspire them to learn and participate in class. Communication does not refer only to articulating words. Using sign language and the sense of touch to express and feel are also important modes of communication. Ultimately, communication should be effective. As long as there is clarity in communication, the goal of communication will be accomplished.

Teachers play vital roles in the lives of the students in their classrooms. Teachers are best known for the role of educating the students that are placed in their care. Beyond that, teachers serve many other roles in the classroom. Teachers set the tone of their classrooms, build a warm environment, mentor and nurture students, become role models, and listen and look for signs of trouble. It is universally recognized that the teacher is the key person in an education system. He or she takes a prestigious status sometimes denied to kings and emperors and he/she plays pivotal role in the learner's life. Around him, whole system of education revolves. When communication is effective, both the student and the teacher benefit. Communication makes learning easier, helps students achieve goals, increases opportunities for expanded learning, strengthens the connection between student and teacher, and creates an overall positive experience.

Essential components of communication are – speaking, writing, listening, reading, body language and facial expressions. Barriers to communication include physical barriers, perceptual barriers, emotional barriers, cultural barriers, language barriers, gender barriers and inter-personal barriers.

Barriers to communication can also be categorized into four basic categories :

- (1) Semantic : unknown language, unknown words, unknown symbols, signs and pronunciation etc.
- (2) Physical : noise, improper time, distance etc.
- (3) Psychological : premature opinion, perception, emotion, attitude etc.
- (4) Organizational : Hierarchy, organizational rules and culture etc.

Barriers to communication can also be categorized into two basic types:

- (A) Barrier on the part of sender – faulty planning, vague presumption, semantics, emotions and status ego.

(B) Barrier on the part of receiver – distraction, poor listening, instant interpretation and distrust.

Tips for effective classroom communication are :

- Know about your topic,
- Content matter should be clear, crisp and to the point,
- Statement should be short, straight and in clear sentence,
- Content and style of delivery should be interesting and useful for the students,
- One should be clear and sincere in his or her utterance,
- Be positive while delivering the content.

Thus effective communication must be complete, concrete, courteous, clear, concise and correct.

Conclusion

The communication is a very important sub-system of education. Every educational organization - the university, the college, the department of education and the school depends for its effective functioning on this sub-system. The communication relationships and processes that occur among people at various levels in the educational system, such as the administrators and the supervisors involve transfer of ideas, information, facts, knowledge, thoughts, emotions and values through which people relate themselves to the other people.

Effective teachers recognize the increasing importance of technology as a tool for student learning and as a major communication resource to be developed. Technological media, classroom environment, and the teacher's verbal and non-verbal communications should all work together to send the students clear and consistent messages about classroom expectations, goals, and challenges

Thus procedure of communication is dynamic concept and not a stationary. It takes presence of mind and courage to face people with the power to prove what we want to convey through communication. A communication can be said successful only if we are able to convince people for whatever we wanted to convey. Depending on the environment and circumstances the effectiveness of speech changes. It is therefore a dynamic interaction both affecting and being affected by many variables. It is a basic social process required for the growth and development of individuals, groups, society and people. Knowing good communication skills are really important in every walk of life.

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