

# COMMUNICATION SKILLS: A PREREQUISITE TO STUDENT'S ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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## ABSTRACT:

Communication plays an important role in one's life. It is one of the most preferred skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that holds great value in the academics of the learners as well as professionals. This paper attempts to reflect the importance of the communication skills in senior secondary education. The paper has been divided into three sections. Each section highlights the different domains of vocational education, particularly communication skills, as a key to student's academic success. The first section points out communication skills as a core of employability in the professional life. The current scenario of vocational educational at the schools and the essence of language teaching and communicative competence is also included in this section. The second section points out the factors affecting the language learning like syllabus design, learner's motivation, time management, classroom management etc. This section also focuses on the unbalanced coordination between the four basic language skills and thereby identifying the constant learning gaps despite of everyday classroom interaction. The third section provides suggestions to improve the communication skills keeping in mind the varying domains. This domain points out integrated approach, instructional material, learning environment, exposure to real language and syllabus design and its emphasize. This section also includes evaluation criteria of the skills. The paper attempts to provide the vision of dynamic framework of vocational education coupled with mainstream education.

**Keywords:** Language, communication, vocational education, skills, language competence, language learning.

## INTRODUCTION:

Communication plays an important role in one's life. It is one of the most preferred skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that holds great value in the academics of the learners as well as professionals. This paper attempts to reflect the importance of the communication skills in senior secondary education. The paper has been divided into three sections. Each section highlights the different domains of vocational education, particularly communication skills, as a key to student's academic success.

The first section points out communication skills as a core of employability in the professional life. The current scenario of vocational educational at the schools and the essence of language teaching and communicative competence is also included in this section.

The second section points out the factors affecting the language learning like Syllabus design, learner's motivation, time management, classroom management etc. This section also focuses on the unbalanced coordination between the four basic language skills and thereby identifying the constant learning gaps despite of everyday classroom interaction.

The third section provides suggestions to improve the communication skills keeping in mind the varying domains. This domain points out integrated approach, instructional material, learning environment, exposure to real language and syllabus design and its emphasize. This section also includes evaluation criteria of the skills. The paper attempts to provide the vision of dynamic framework of vocational education coupled with mainstream education.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

In this study there were two main objectives to be achieved:

- a) To investigate the gaps in language learning and communication skills.
- b) To provide the suggestions for boosting the communication skills at school level.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

In 2016, Seema Pandey the professor in the Department of Physics, JECRC, Jaipur in “Improvising Skill development and employability potential through higher education”, described the importance of skills development in the India. She highlights the different sources of the skill development in India like the Government sources and Private Sources and how they play the key role in overall development. The goal of this literature review is to highlight the importance of skill development in India.

In 2016, Ms. Deepti Rawat, the research scholar, Shobhit University, “Importance of communication in teaching-learning process”, highlights the importance of communication in the teaching-learning process. The paper explores the importance of the communications in education with the specific focus on the language learning. She points out the chain of communication and its role in the education. The goal of this literature review to draw attention towards content knowledge of the language teacher and how they can make the use of it.

In both the literature reviews, it can be drawn that the former one focuses on the skill development in general and the shared vision towards skilled nation while the later one focuses on the content knowledge of the educator and how the enlightened educator would make an enlightened learner. This research paper attempts to focus on the learner and suggest how the learner can be compatible with the 21<sup>st</sup> century by learning 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, thereby focusing and inclining the education system towards the aim of National Education Policy 2020 and remain in good coordination with Directorate of Education. This paper focuses on the specific notion of communication skills and its development at the senior secondary level. The paper also highlights how the school can participate in making the place for the learners in the job market.

## **COMMUNICATION SKILLS: A CORE OF EMPLOYABILITY**

Communication is the most basic activity of humans. Everyone communicates whether intentionally or unintentionally. Even the child cries or babbles in the need of food. We communicate with our family, friends and relatives to build relations. No human can live in isolation, they need people who attend them, listen to them and most importantly get them. In the book, “Everyone communicates few connect” by John C. Maxwell, he says that “Connecting can make you or break you”. Being a knowledgeable person does not knock the doors of success but when you know how to express and communicate your ideas that takes to greater heights. To be successful, one needs to learn how to communicate and convey their ideas effectively. So, it is important to prepare the child to be good speaker and provide them training in the similar manner not only at universities but also at schools right from the beginning till end. Because the people with effective communication skills know how to express themselves in the appropriate manner and develop competence in application of the language. The way you communicate affects your relations in the professional world. So, it is significant to develop such skills which makes you the perfect fit in the competitive world. India is not only

the country with largest population but also the country with the largest youth population. The questions arise “how are they trained”, “what is being done to make them competent”, “Are they getting prepared for facing the real world”.

According to National Association of Career Educators and Employment, “communications skills holds first place among all the other skills.” In order to have good employment opportunities, one must have sound skills where the students know how to express oneself effectively and organize thoughts to follow certain chain of thoughts rather than crowded perception. To enter any new professional environment, the communication skills play an important role and no one can sustain the dynamic environment if they don't know how to respond, inform, persuade and build relationship with others. You are defined by how you speak and present yourself. It not only boosts your confidence but also provides you with a clarity of thought. Communication skills needs to be developed right from the school level and every student must have good command over language. No student can become proficient in language overnight. It is the lengthy process of constant guidance and regular drills. They must be taught in a way that they adapt the language naturally and speak freely in the classroom setting.

## FACTORS AFFECTING THE LANGUAGE LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The twin factors that affect the language learning and communication skills are: Curriculum and Teaching Methodology.

### CURRICULUM

- Syllabus Design
- Time Management

### TEACHING METHODOLOGY

- The Role of an Educator

- **CURRICULUM:** The curriculum is an organized framework that delineates the content that children learn, the process through which children learn, the process through which children achieve desired learning goals, teachers' methodology and the context in which learning is happening. The curriculum differs school to school but the common thread that must run across all curriculum is the preparation of real life. There are certain dimensions of curriculum, for example, Syllabus Design, Time Management, Co-curricular activities etc, that requires due consideration.
- a) **SYLLABUS DESIGN-** It is important that the syllabus gives scope to real-life education and provide wide platform for fostering communication skills. The syllabus must be designed in a way that every language skill is given its due importance. The communication activities like weave a story, role play, word mania, music time with expressions, Impromptu mic challenge, framing questions, storytelling game, fun with companions, open ended story contests, must be included in the separate section of communication skills. It should not be mixed with the core elements of the subject. Such activities are not only enjoyable but also it gives the chance to students to speak and express themselves. The good expression is also one of the most significant elements of effective communication. Depriving the expression at the young age can prove to be a great hurdle in the future. The classroom should be an open platform for all the students to speak, make mistakes and learn. So, it plays great role in deciding the future of the students and their skill development.

b) **TIME MANAGEMENT-** It is a crucial aspect to decide that “how much” time is assigned to particular subject. The factor of time division is the major concern. The learning is enhanced by conducting various activities. The scope of the different activities depends on the time allotted to each course. If there is a time limitation, then completion of the syllabus becomes the priority for the educator than focusing on the multiple activities. The flexible time-table caters to the dynamic environment and development of skills. For example, the days in a week can be assigned for the specific communication tasks, or for carrying out any planned activity. The days can be named as “Talking Tuesday”, “Vocal Wednesday” etc. Such days cater to the speaking skills of the children. So, time management is crucial for focusing on the communication skills of the children.

- **ROLE OF A EDUCATOR-** The curriculum is laid down keeping in view the development of every learner but how it is received and implemented depends on the educator. The instructional materials, methodology, classroom management, learning environment, evaluation depends on the educator. The unprepared teacher can be great hindrance in the teaching-learning process. Every classroom has its own challenges and in order to respond to the dynamic learning environment, the educator must not only be “updated” but should be prepared also. They must provide the free and flexible learning environment where the learner has wide scope of development. The proper planning brings forth the effective implementation, the flexible teaching strategies brings forth the learning in true sense and the quality evaluation gives the strong platform to unlearn and relearn. The educator must prepare the lesson plans beforehand. The good lesson plan is the one that covers the overall learning outcomes, that is, cognitive, affective and psychomotor objectives. It is not important for how long an educator is in profession of teaching, but what is important is that how they are modifying their teaching methods in alliance with the current learning needs of the students.

### SUGGESTIONS: A GATEWAY TO SUCCESSFUL LEARNING



**ADOPT INTEGRATED APPROACH -** The communication skills are boosted with habit formation and constant practice. If the learner is using language only in the classroom, the habit formation face challenges. As the language cuts across the curriculum, it is a job of all the teachers to focus on the communication skills of the learners and not just language teachers. The learners must be given free platform to express themselves so that they develop the sense of self-expression.

**STUDENT CENTRED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL-** The instructional materials must be wisely chosen in order to avoid any hindrance in comprehension. The best instructional materials are the one that are flexible as well as diverse. It should be all-time accessible. The materials should be the combinations of various tools like PowerPoint presentation, E-books, Videos, Live worksheets, Quiz etc. The materials must be a package of the tools. The diversity in the material not only interest the learners but engages them throughout the teaching-learning process. For example: Watching movies in the target language improves the speaking skills of the learner. So, it must be promoted in the healthy manner in a classroom.

**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT-** The language is not only developed in the language classroom but outside the language classroom also. The day-to-day to interaction brush up the language proficiency and communication among learners. The learner in the language-rich environment will grasp the communication skills better than learner in environment with less or no opportunities. The learning tasks must be designed in such a way that it connects the real-world with the learning content. Along with this, educators can be in constant connect to suggest parents in providing the language rich environment at home.

**EXPOSURE TO THE REAL LANGUAGE-** The communication skills are cultivated best when the learners are exposed to the real language. Every student prepares for interview. The interview is considered as the big deal for them because they face difficulties in expressing themselves and presenting their opinions. No matter how great their marksheet is or how well they are aware about the world, if they are not able to communicate, they become more hesitant to speak. This shows that how communication is a milestone in the career of the student. So, the step must be taken right at the school level to prepare them for facing the real-world in confident and efficient manner. The real-life importance is never delivered to the student until they themselves face the competition and fail. The knowledge remains superficial and learners does not bother to go deep in the comprehension. So, the educators must take action to improve this aspect. For example: the use of Intertextuality must be practiced from school level. The wide variety of interactive reading material should be available for students. The reading is limited to the textbooks and the references given for the extra-reading is often taken for granted. The literature must be used to connect real-life issues and opens up the minds of the students. The learning in the classroom must enhance dialogue and real-life conversation. For example: how to place order, how to deal in conversation at different institutions must be introduced. This not only boost the communications skills but also builds the confidence among the learners. They must be prepared for every situational context and this can be done by holding group discussions and welcoming students' opinions.

**QUALITY EVALUATION-** The evaluation is an important procedure for any learned activity. The question of “how” holds great value than “what”. The notion of “what” is restrictive in nature but the “how” focuses on every aspect of the learning. The educator must pay attention to individual learner. It may be challenging and time-consuming but it ensures the true development of the student. One of the best ways is to provide the quality feedback than quantity feedback. The quality feedback can be detailed and gives the best chance to learner to improve on the required areas. Along with this the educator must be open about the evaluation process so that the learners know “how” they will be evaluated. This gives the wide scope of preparation to the learners. For example: they must be provided the Rubric of any activity to be evaluated so that they can work according to that.

## **CONCLUSION:**

So, the education must cater to development of the student and prepare them for the challenges in the real-life. The university should not only take the responsibility of the student to be employable but the school education must join hands in creating the employment opportunities of the students. The importance should be given to both curricular and co-curricular activities. The balance between vocational education and mainstream education will prepare the learner for the real-life challenges. The curriculum of different schools must be prepared keeping in mind the true learning of the students.

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