

AN INDIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' EVALUATION OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND SOFT SKILLS LABORATORY COURSE

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Internationally, organizations emphasize the importance of communication skills in the workplaces. In order to develop the students' communication skills, professional institutions in India have started to give importance for developing their students' communication skills. A questionnaire was developed to examine students' perceptions of a communication skills course offered in an institution. The results of the study reveal that the students have various experiences from the classroom. They have different beliefs, strategies and autonomy in learning language. The course was found to be useful by more number of students in developing the four language skills but there are issues needs to be paid more attention to enhance teaching and learning process effectively.

Keywords: Communication Skills, Teacher, Resources, Beliefs, Strategy, Autonomy

Introduction

In English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course evaluation has an important place in order to know whether the needs of the students have been fulfilled by the course. The available literature on ESP is useful and sufficient to evaluate a course (e.g., Swales, 1985; Robinson, 1980; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Communication skills have recently gained wider popularity in India, though the word has been used nearly for more than a decade. There is a great difference for workers in the past thirty years. The employers expect the engineering graduates from the universities to possess both technical skills and communication skills, in other words hard skills and soft skills. This paper presents an investigation conducted on students' perceptions of the course on Communication Skills and Soft Skills Laboratory Course (GE 9371) offered for a semester during their eight semesters of undergraduate engineering program at a University in India. The course gave importance to communication skills and soft skills rather than language skills. In Indian context, there are three major factors which heavily influence the students in higher education at Indian Universities. Firstly, English is the second language for all the states of India and Indian languages are used as the first language. Secondly, English as a language of communication is much required in the academic and professional settings. Thirdly, most of the students lack an environment that could offer opportunity to communicate in English. In keeping all these factors into consideration, the study is designed with the aim to determine whether the course offered to the engineering students is useful or not. In order to know students

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views and enhance courses offered to them, there are many studies have been conducted. The results of this study will provide understanding of the teaching and learning process of the course and for further development.

Students Views on Different Courses

The studies related to students' views on courses were extensive. Students' views were highly valued to determine the usefulness of the course. There have been a number of studies based upon students' views on course. Erdogan and Tuncer (2009) had conducted an evaluation of the course on 'Educational and Awareness for Sustainability' offered for three years in the department of elementary education in Middle East Technical University, Ankara (Turkey). The results revealed that the course had created awareness among the learners. Pospiech (2001) reported from Institute Fur Didaktik Der Physic University, Frankfurt, Germany. For the purpose of the study students who were doing 'Quantum Physics' in the University were asked to submit a report on the course. The results revealed that the course had given them understanding of concepts and knowledge. Though their overall expectations were met the students understanding of the differences between the quantum world and the classical world was not clear to them. Soliman and Fouda (2008) reported on students' perception on 'Clinical Skills Laboratory Course' conducted at King Saud University Medical College. The students reported that the course was useful and they were satisfied with the course. In addition students expected teachers to be friendly. Sandra et al (1998) reported students' views on 'Engineering Professional Development' (EPO) 160. The result revealed that "the lack of integration among homework lectures and their laboratory work on the project had downplayed the usefulness of the course". Cardinal et al (2002) reported a study on 'Life Time Fitness Health' (LFH) course was useful to the students. Lina Lee (2010) reported on 'Spanish Oral Proficiency Test' (SOPT) course. The results revealed that oral skills conducted according to "ACTFL Proficiency guidelines was effective and respond to the progress of particular institutions". Isabel Borra's (1993) reported on 'Practicing Spoken French' (PSF) a multimedia program. The results revealed that the students had gained extremely positive attitude in speaking French. Tunc (2010) refers to Yildiz (2004) who reports 'Turkish Language' program for foreigners at Minsk State Linguistic University (MSLU) in Belarus. The students' views revealed that the students' needs and the demands were partly met. Ma T Singhong (2009) reported on a listening course conducted in Shandong Institute of Commercial Technology, China. The results revealed that there was significant difference after the course between the experimental group and the control group of students. Minghua (2008) reported on a public speaking course in an ESL classroom offered at arts and science Yangtze University. The results revealed that the course had helped the students to speak in English, to participate in debate, improved their confidence, strengthened their

context awareness, created an opportunity to think and a majority of students felt that the course was necessary. Najat and Nadra (1994) reported an evaluation conducted on a reading course in English offered at the faculty of Education in Kuwait. The two courses 'English 110' first essential reading and 'English for Academic Purpose' enabled student-teachers to acquire reading skills. Gupta and Eileen (1997) reported a technical writing course offered to Bachelor of Science graduates. The results revealed that the course was "very useful" to "employment". Rizvi (2005) reported course on 'Oral Communication' program offered to undergraduate business and commerce curriculum in Sultan Qaboos University, Sultanate of Oman. The students had different views about classroom activities. They were comfortable to follow lectures easily but the textbook was very difficult. Ponniah (2009) reported a study on Multimedia Language Laboratory. The language laboratory offered to the students was "a pleasurable learning experience". A good deal of research studies is presented to direct our study.

Method

A quantitative design is used for this study to provide information on the current situation. A questionnaire is used to collect data from the students. The purpose of using questionnaire was to collect data in the interview mode. The contents of the questionnaire is based upon sources like Sheorey (2006), Aldred (2002), and Alderson (1985). In addition, other course evaluation questionnaires from various universities and personal experiences from classrooms are added in the contents.

Course

The course on Communication Skills and Soft Skills Laboratory Course is offered since 2009 by the department of English Anna University, Chennai. The students' performances are assessed through written assignments and spoken activities. The course is conducted for thirty periods in a semester. Students of all the engineering and technological departments have to take in one of the semesters of their four year program. The students received the course in their fourth to sixth semesters. It is offered in the odd semester during July-December to the undergraduate students of Computer Science and Engineering, Petroleum Refining Engineering, Geo-Informatics, Information Technology, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Civil Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Bio-Medical Engineering, and Agriculture and Irrigation Engineering. The other departments students received the course in the even semester during December- May to the undergraduate students of Industrial Engineering, Mining Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Material Science Engineering, Textile and Apparel Technology, Leather Technology, Manufacturing Engineering, Food and Pharmacy Technology, Printing Technology, Ceramic Technology, Industrial Bio-Technology, Electronics and Communication

Engineering, Automobile Engineering, Aeronautical Engineering, Production Technology, and Rubber and Plastics Technology.

Students

The students participated in the study are totally 689 of the three campuses of Anna University, Chennai. The students participated in the study have taken the course during their fourth, fifth and sixth semesters. The students' age ranges from 19 to 23. In this study, 61.2% males and 38.8% females participated. The students who studied in English medium at the school level are 89% and the students who have Tamil as their medium of instruction are 8.3 % and 2.8% are in other mediums of instruction such as Telugu, Malayalam, etc. The native places of students are categorized into three: village, town and city. The students from villages are 16.8%, students from towns are forming 40.2% of the sample and the students from cities are forming 42.4%. The students who registered themselves as first graduates from the family in the data analysis are 25.3% and the students who did not identified as first graduates from 25.3% and the students who did not identify as first graduate from their families as in the data analysis are 74.7%. The students participated in this study are from different branches of Engineering and technology. The class strength ranges from 20 participants to 61 participants.

Key Findings

Students of the Communication Skills and Soft Skills Laboratory Course considered the indicators on general experiences from the classrooms, performance of teachers, course design and class organization, learners' beliefs, learners' strategy, learners' autonomy, usefulness of the course in listening skill, usefulness of the course in speaking skill, usefulness of the course in reading skill, and usefulness of the course in writing skill are provided in the table on students' perceptions.

TABLE ON STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS

<i>GENERAL</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>UD</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>
1. The time schedule and duration of the class were convenient.	5.1%	9.0%	18.4%	42.8%	24.7%
2. The course was useful in developing my listening skills.	2.8%	6.2%	21.2%	41.9%	27.9%
3. The course was useful in developing my speaking skills.	2.3%	6.0%	6.8%	46.3%	28.6%
4. The course was useful in developing my reading skills.	3.9%	7.5%	23.8%	37.4%	27.3%
5. The course was useful in developing my writing skills.	45%	9.0%	21.5%	38.0%	27.0%
6. I started listening to English a lot after this course.	4.5%	10.9%	29.3%	34.4%	20.9%
7. My interest in speaking English increased because of this course.	4.8%	9.3%	26.9%	34.0%	25.1%

8.	My interest in reading English increased because of this course.	4.8%	11.9%	25.0%	36.6%	21.8%
9.	My interest in writing English increased because of this course.	6.1%	11.9%	29.5%	30.5%	22.1%
10.	I did not speak in English with my classmates during the course due to lack of proficiency in English.	22.5%	22.4%	19.7%	20.2%	15.2%
11.	My aim was to pass the course and not to give importance to the course content.	28.2%	26.3%	15.7%	15.5%	14.4%
TEACHER						
12.	The teacher was an effective communicator.	3.8%	4.1%	14.1%	39.8%	38.3%
13.	The teacher used commercially available materials and made the course Interesting.	2.8%	7.8%	21.3%	40.6%	27.4%
14.	The teacher used standard teaching equipment including Projector, T.V, and computers.	4.9%	7.8%	18.7%	38.6%	29.9%
15.	The teacher was not audible to the entire class.	15.7%	27.9%	20.5%	19.2%	16.8%
16.	The teacher interacted with all students.	4.1%	7.8%	17.0%	37.2%	34.0%
17.	The teacher paid special attention to the students who were weak in communication skills.	6.0%	11.8%	19.3%	37.7%	28.3%
18.	The teacher encouraged us to communicate in English inside the class.	2.2%	5.8%	16.0%	41.1%	35.0%
19.	The teacher was a role model for us to communicate in English.	5.2%	11.0%	27.3%	31.6%	24.8%
20.	The teacher used a variety of activities to keep all students interested in attending the class.	2.9%	9.1%	19.9%	38.9%	29.2%
21.	The teacher gave clear explanations.	6.2%	6.7%	19.4%	41.2%	26.4%
22.	I did not like the teacher asking me a question in front of the class.	21.5%	24.8%	18.6%	17.6%	17.6%
23.	The teacher should have shown individual attention and care to all students.	7.7%	10.7%	25.4%	28.6%	27.6%
COURSE DESIGN AND CLASS ORGANIZATION						
24.	The overall course was excellent.	2.8%	4.8%	23.5%	39%	29.9%
25.	The course content was excellent.	3.5%	5.8%	23.1%	43.5%	24.1%
26.	The instructor's contribution to the course was excellent.	3.2%	7.0%	25.0%	39.0%	25.8%
27.	The timing was sufficient to practice Presentation, Group Discussion and Interview skills.	5.2 %	12.8%	19.4%	35.7%	26.9%
28.	The movable chairs will be suitable rather than long desks for the communication skills and soft skills course class.	2.8%	5.4%	12.6%	34.3%	45.0%
LEARNERS' BELIEFS						
29.	It is important to speak English with good accent.	2.2%	2.2%	8.2%	31.1%	56.3%
30.	You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly.	13.5%	22.9%	19.6%	26.6%	17.4%
31.	The most important part of learning English is learning a lot of words.	3.8%	10.6%	18.6%	36.7%	30.3%
32.	In learning English, it is important to repeat and practice.	3.5%	6.1%	10.6%	43.3%	36.6%
33.	If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be difficult to get rid of them later.	12.9%	19.2%	17.3%	26.4%	24.2%

34. The most important part of learning English is learning the grammar.	2.8%	5.2%	19.2%	38.9%	34.0%
35. It is important to practice English with cassettes or CDs.	4.4%	10.7%	27.0%	29.8%	28.2%
36. Learning English is different from other academic subjects.	2.9%	6.1%	16.0%	39.6%	35.4%
LEARNERS' STRATEGY					
37. I work on my own to enhance my communication.	1.3%	6.1%	14.8%	40.9%	36.9%
38. It's OK to guess the meaning if you don't know a word in English.	2.6%	8.1%	20.3%	40.6%	28.3%
39. I use the dictionary to understand unfamiliar words.	2.6%	4.5%	12.5%	43.0%	37.4%
40. I correct myself if I realize that I have made a mistake.	2.0%	3.2%	11.0%	44.4%	39.3%
41. I make sure that I understand what I am speaking.	1.6%	3.2%	13.4%	41.9%	40.0%
42. I read English slowly and carefully.	3.8%	9.9%	22.5%	36.0%	27.9%
43. I watch T.V. programs and movies in English.	2.8%	4.6%	13.9%	36.3%	42.4%
44. I follow the writing style of what I read in English.	4.4%	7.3%	19.3%	37.2%	31.9%
45. I try to think in English while speaking or writing.	3.5%	4.8%	14.7%	36.1%	40.9%
LEARNERS' AUTONOMY					
46. The amount of effort that I put into this course was excellent.	5.1%	6.8%	23.7%	39.6%	24.8%
47. My involvement in this course (doing assignments, attending classes, etc.) was excellent.	3.6%	6.2%	23.5%	39.5%	27.1%
48. I wanted to learn English to read books, etc., in English.	3.8%	7.3%	16.0%	40.5%	32.5%
49. Knowing English allows me to talk to others who don't know my mother tongue.	2.2%	3.2%	12.2%	38.3%	44.1%
50. I have a strong desire to communicate in English.	2.5%	2.9%	11.8%	34.7%	48.2%
LISTENING: The course was useful					
51. To listen to other subjects in English.	2.6%	4.1%	18.3%	37.7%	37.3%
52. To listen to seminars in English.	2.2%	5.5%	19.0%	40.6%	32.7%
53. To listen to lectures in English.	2.6%	5.1%	19.4%	39.9%	32.9%
54. To listen to presentations in English.	2.8%	5.1%	17.1%	42.1%	32.9%
55. To listen to group discussions in English.	2.5%	3.9%	16.3%	40.5%	36.9%
SPEAKING : The course was useful					
56. To understand spoken English of other students when mixing with others.	2.6%	3.0%	16.8%	44.6%	32.9%
57. To understand spoken English in seminars.	2.0%	3.8%	20.2%	46.6%	27.4%
58. To understand spoken English in lectures.	2.8%	4.8%	18.6%	42.7%	31.2%
59. To understand difficult words in English.	3.0%	5.7%	21.0%	40.8%	29.5%
60. The course gave confidence to give presentations.	3.2%	4.1%	16.7%	41.9%	34.1%
61. The course helped me to participate in group discussions.	2.2%	3.9%	17.0%	40.2%	36.7%
62. The course helped me gain confidence to attend interviews.	3.0%	4.1%	14.2%	44.0%	34.7%
READING: The course was useful					
63. To read the notes given in the class.	5.1%	5.4%	20.3%	36.0%	33.2%

64. To understand texts.	4.1%	5.8%	20.6%	42.4%	27.1%
65. To understand words.	4.1%	6.0%	23.1%	36.7%	30.2%
WRITING: The course was useful					
66. To write reports.	3.2%	5.8%	15.1%	41.1%	34.8%
67. To write essays.	2.9%	7.5%	20.0%	40.5%	29.0%
68. To write cover letters and résumés.	3.3%	5.2%	14.4%	41.2%	35.8%
69. To write assignments.	3.5%	8.4%	20.1%	38.7%	29.4%

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, UD = Undecided, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

The results on general classroom experiences of students reveal that 74.9% of students' speaking skill was enhanced. For 69.8% of students, their listening skill was enhanced. 67.5% of students find that the duration was convenient. 65% of students' writing skill was enhanced. 64.7% of students' reading skill was enhanced. 59.1% of students' interest in speaking English increased 58.4% of students' interest in reading books in English increased. 55.3% of students have just started listening a lot after undergoing this course. 52.6% of students' interest in writing English increased. 35.4% of students did not interact with their classmates during the course owing to lack of proficiency in English but 44.9% of students had interacted with their classmates. 54.5% of students' aim was not just to pass the course but to gain communication skills only 29.9% of students' aim was to pass the course.

The views expressed on teachers reveal that 78.1% of the students accepted that the teacher was an effective communicator. It is the highest of all agreements. 76.1% of students agreed that they have been encouraged to communicate in English inside the class. 71.2% of students felt that the teachers have interacted with all students. 68.5% of students expressed the view that the teachers used standard teaching equipment including projector, T.V, and computers. 68.1% of students agreed on the fact that the teacher used a variety of activities to keep all students interested in attending the class. 68% of students stated that the teacher used commercially available materials and made the course interesting. 67.6% of students thought that the teacher gave clear explanations. 66% of students felt that the teacher had paid special attention to the students who were weak in communication skills. 56.4% of students found that serving their teachers as role model to communicate in English. 56.2% of students felt that the teacher should have shown individual attention and care to all students. 36% of students reported that the teacher was not audible to the entire class. 35.2% of students felt that they did not like the teacher asking them questions in the class, whereas 46.3% of students liked teachers' questions.

Tot (2013) observes that "teaching skills, special knowledge of the subject he/she teaches learners, curriculum, teaching methods, etc." are extremely important to achieve the teaching results. The results of the students views on course and resources. 79.3% of students reported that the movable chairs will be suitable rather than long desks for the communication skills and soft skills laboratory course class.

68.9% of students accepted the course was excellent. 67.6% of students reported that the course content was excellent. 64.8% of students reported that instructors' contribution to the course was excellent. 62.6% of students accepted that timing was not sufficient to practice presentation, group discussion and interview skills.

The results on beliefs reveal that 87.4% of students believe that good accent is important to speak in English. 79.9% believe that repetition and practice are more important. It is believed by 75% of students that learning English indifferent from other academic subjects. 72.9% students believe that most important part of learning English is learning grammar. 67% of students believe that most important part of learning English is learning a lot of words. 58% of students believe that it is important to practice English with cassettes or CDs. 50.6% of students believe that if they are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be difficult to get rid of them later. 44% of students believe that speak only in correct English and 36.4% of students do not believe in speaking only in correct English.

The results on strategy reveal that 83.7% of the students have a strategy of correcting themselves if they realized that they have made a mistake. 81.9% of students were sure of what they were speaking. 80.4% of students used dictionary* to understand unfamiliar words. 78.7% of students watch T.V programs and movies in English. 77.8% work on their own to enhance their communication. 77% of students tried to think in English while speaking or writing. 69.1% of students followed the writing style of what they read in English. 68.9% of students accepted that it is right to guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word. 63.9% of students read English slowly and carefully.

The results on learner autonomy reveal that 82.9% of students had a strong desire to communicate in English. 82.4% of students' autonomy is motivating because it allows them to talk in English to others who did not know their mother tongue. 73% of students wanted to use learner autonomy to learn English to read books, etc., in English. 66.6% of students' involvement in this course (doing assignments, attending classes, etc) was excellent. As stated by 64.4% of students the amount of effort they put into this course was excellent.

The results on listening skill reveal that the course was useful to listen to group discussions in English for 77.4% students and 75% of students reported that the course was useful to listen to presentation in English and listening to other subjects in English. 73.3% of students reported that the course was useful to listen to seminars in English. 72.8% of students accepted that the course was useful in listening to lectures in English.

The results on speaking skill reveal that 78.7% of students reported that the course was useful in providing confidence to attend interviews. For 77.5% of students — the course was useful to understand spoken English of other students when mixing with others. 76.9% of students felt that the course was useful in speaking to participate in group discussions. 76% of students received confidence

to give presentations. For 74% of students, the course was useful to understand spoken English in seminars. 73.9% of students reported that the course was useful in understanding spoken English in lectures. 70.3% of students reported that the course was useful to understand difficult words in English.

The results on reading skill reveal that 69.5% of students reported that the course was useful in reading to understand texts. 69.2% of students reported that the course was useful to take notes given in the class. 66.9% of students felt that the course was useful in reading to understand words. The results on writing skill reveal that 77% of students found the course useful to write cover letters and résumés. 75.9% of students found that the course was useful to write reports. 69.5% of students reported that the course was useful to write essays. 68.1% of students found that the course was useful to write assignments.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that majority of students reported that the course have helped them to develop their communication skills. The speaking skill is one of the important four macro skills essential for communication in different levels of organization. The skill cannot be developed unless the students have practice of speaking in English. The students of this course are from the tertiary level hence they must possess basic knowledge of English language. It is to be noted that they have been taught English as a subject (and not as a tool of communication) from their school days. This course is offered to the students to develop their oral communication skills. But it is noteworthy that some students did not find the course useful in developing their speaking skill. It may be because they lack proficiency in English and need more activities to enhance their speaking skill or they may already have the necessary speaking knowledge. The student's listening skills was enhanced next to speaking skill. Listening is the ability to understand the language and comprehend the information for better communication. The course had offered them an opportunity to listen. Listening differs from hearing because it needs minute attention and involves comprehension. The course has helped the students to develop their listening skill. For enhancing listening skill computers are recommended in this course. The individual privacy with the use of headset would have been helpful for the students to enhance their listening skill. It is noteworthy that the course had helped the students to develop their writing skill. Writing skill is important in industrial organization because the engineers need to communicate in writing through letters, memos, reports, etc. It is noteworthy that writing skill taught for more than ten years is different from Communication Skills and Soft Skills Laboratory Course offered at the university level. The course is least useful in developing reading skill among the four skills. It reveals that the students are not given much reading matters because it focused much on speaking practice.

Student evaluation on teacher is considered important because of its vital influence in the teaching and learning process. The students from the University of Bologna paid teachers according to their teaching abilities in the beginning of the fifteenth century (Annadale, 1974) and it is considered an earliest record of student evaluations. In many universities student evaluations are used across the globe. In our study majority of students reported that their teachers are effective communicators. It is noteworthy that the students have rated high to teachers who interacted with the students. Wennerstorm, A.K., & Heiser, P. (1992) observed that teacher effectiveness includes, "instructor involvement, student interest and performance, student-instructor interaction, course demands, and course organization". In this course teachers' interaction is focused primarily on communication skills. The result also revealed that the teachers have interacted with their students. Some students did not report on teachers' interaction. It may be because of large classes, where, time may not be enough to communicate with all students etc. On the other hand nearly half of the students only reported that they liked teachers' question. The result also revealed that students are divided in their opinion on teachers questioning in the class.

Regarding resources, the students prefer movable chairs for the practicing of spoken skills. The results reveal that the students are not comfortable with long desks, which do not offer them opportunity to communicate face to face. It is noteworthy that a majority of students found that time was not sufficient to practice presentation skill, group discussion skill and interview skill. On the other hand they were convenient with the duration of the course. It reveals that the students want the course and contents should be limited to time. A majority of students rated the course organization is well. On the other hand some students are not satisfied with organization of the course. Beliefs play a vital role in learning specifically in developing communication skills. A majority of students believe that good accent is important to speak in English. Accent is important because it helps to communicate effectively. If a word is mispronounced there is a possibility of miscommunication. In addition, a majority of students believe that repetition and practice are more important. Repetition and practice are more important because they help to memorize certain parts of language for communication. The students believe that English is different from other academic subjects. This view may have positive or negative impact in learning. Nearly half of the students preferred speaking only in correct English. The results signify that the students prefer formal way of talking. The students' belief on speaking only correct English may have a negative impact, since it may hinder the progress in oral communication. The use of cassettes or CDs for practicing English is not much preferred by the students. It may be because of the advancement in technologies.

A majority of students possess the strategy of correcting themselves. In correcting themselves the students have the choice of referring to books and

technical resources also. The students' strong desire to communicate in English has potential to influence their 'learner autonomy' in developing communication skills. The course was useful in developing listening skill through group discussion in English. In group discussion, the students had to listen to other members of the group and also communicate with them. But in presentations, seminars, listening to lectures are not much stimulating factor in developing listening skill because they have to listen only and there is no interaction like group discussion. The results reveal that without technology listening skill can be developed naturally through group discussion.

It is to be attributed to the success of the course because most of the students have reported that the course has provided them confidence to attend interviews. Generally, it is difficult for students to speak effectively during interview though they possess good technical skill. The course has helped them to achieve success. In their observations on reading skill the students felt that to understand texts the course was useful. This may be because of the simple contents. The contexts focused are more on technical matters rather than difficult language skills, for example project report writing deals with the structure of the report and techniques of writing. Commenting on the writing skill, a majority of students reported that the course was useful to write cover letter, résumés, and reports. All these items are considered important for employment purpose. Hence the course has helped them to enhance writing skill also.

Conclusions and Implications

This study explored the course on Communication Skills and Soft Skills Laboratory through students' perceptions on the different aspects of teaching and learning. An attempt was made to collect students' perceptions to understand their personal and other influences on the course. In addition, data were collected to know the usefulness of the course in academics as well as in the job interview. A collection of studies on course evaluation has supported the importance between students' views and evaluation of courses. The results of this study reports that the course was useful in several ways but needs some considerations to be taken in order to enhance the course. The course achieved success because of many influences such as: the students' beliefs, strategies, teachers, autonomy and resources

The study offered an example of Communication Skills and Soft Skills Laboratory Course offered at an Indian university. The study reveals that the course was estimated to be successful by most of the students in developing communication skills, but it has to focus specially on weak students by providing more activities in communication skills to meet the aim of the course. From the findings this study raises some important questions: How do the students from English and non-English medium develop their communication skills in non-native speakers of English settings? This question is important because a considerable amount of students

feel that they did not interact with their classmates in English during the course due to lack of proficiency in English. In addition a majority of students reported that time was not sufficient to practice presentation, group discussion and interview skills. A study can be conducted to know the time required for conducting different activities in large classrooms. These issues are critical for understanding and developing the course.

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