

COMMUNICATION SKILLS: A RESOURCE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND CAREER ENHANCEMENT OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS

N. Uttham Kumar, R. Gowthaman and K. Jaganbabu

Effective communication skills are tremendously imperative for the triumphant line of business of present engineering students. Honestly speaking, effective communications skills are equally indispensable for everyone in today's mega competitive business world. In the accessible globalization setting, the majority of the MNC's are looking for a right and fitting candidate with sound knowledge in communication skills in addition to the hard skills. Regrettably, most of the present day so-called engineering students are not up to the mark in communication skills and as a result they are disqualified. This present paper focuses on why effective communication skills are amazingly significant and as well a few suggestions that are decidedly useful in triumphing over the most universal communicative dilemmas of engineering students.

Keywords: Communication skills, Engineering Students, Knowledge, Competition, Triumph.

Introduction

In today's elevated pace world, the triumph of an engineering student depends on the ability to communicate effectively. Effective communication is considered to be the key of such a life. The victory of Indian technologists in the last one decade is attributed to the fruitful mix of their strongly built acquaintance in the core technology and English language skills. At the same time, innumerable are losing job opportunities in consequence of the lack of the same said skills. Surveys have publicized that out of an outsized number of professionals being produced every year, only 10% are employable in various industries. Yet there is ample evidence that graduate engineers lack the required standard of communication skills when compared to the needs of industry internationally [2]. The engineering students of all the fields should keep one thing perceptibly in their minds i.e. having essential hard skills are not only sufficient for their future career but also effective communication skills are extremely significant and exceptionally desired. Indeed, communication skills are considered to be a valuable career enhancer [5].

Important Effective Communication Skills for the Engineering Students

So many renowned personalities have defined communication in numerous ways. One of them, by name Rudyard Kipling said, "Words are, of course, the most

Address for communication: **N. Uttham Kumar, K. Jaganbabu**, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Adhiyamaan College of Engineering, Hosur, Tamilnadu, India, *E-mail:* uttham.kumar@yahoo.com, klskjaganbabu@gmail.com and **R. Gowthaman**, Assistant Professor, Department of English, K. S. Rangasamy College of Technology, Trichengode, Tamilnadu, India, *E-mail:* gowthaman.ram@gmail.com

powerful drug used by mankind” [6]. Though it looks as if completely accurate up to some degree, but this present quote of Kipling fails to communicate why because communication is far more than words. Effective communication is concerning more than just exchanging information. Effective communication merges a set of skills such as non-verbal communication, attentive listening, LSRW skills, ability to present clearly and confidently to the audience etc. It is in general anticipated that engineering students should be outfitted with equilibrium of technical knowledge in addition to the pertinent communication and soft skills. The MNC's are now enthusiastically looking for the right candidates who hold strongly built communication skills to meet the challenges of the current global job souk. It has been stated that communication skills should be fostered in engineering education ... because they are qualities that employers look for ... [and] should be part of any tertiary education [1].

The following are some of the most imperative communication skills that are to be adopted and urbanized by the juvenile engineering students:

Good Listening Skills

It is well understood that Listening and Speaking are the two sides of a same coin. It is incumbent upon the engineering students to nurture high-quality listening habits. But listening is over and over again a deserted skill now-a-days. A winning communication process does not just encompassing of talking but also comprises effective listening. One should not fail to remember a significant quote that is associated to listening “one cannot become a good communicator unless one is a good listener” [7]. Countless studies have in addition uncovered that business people spend 45% of their working time for listening. Kline further affirmed that listening is crucial in the workplace [3]. The principal rule that the students remember while listening to an important person is to listen intensely without any kind of defensiveness.

Good Speaking Skills

The call for giving importance on the English speaking skills is of supreme significance in the current situation with an aim to build the job contenders gainfully employed. Effective speaking skills are extremely vital to the engineering students. It is stated by the CEOs of top companies that the most important things they hunt for when appointing new employees is how healthy they are clever to communicate. As mentioned earlier, engineering students must hold good speaking skills to face and attend interviews, group discussions, and oral examinations, and make technical presentations etc. They should be able to present themselves efficiently and effectively in all these activities. Therefore, a student of engineering should intentionally put into practice and build up his speaking skills with no homicide of his valuable time any more.

Good Reading Skills

Besides listening, speaking and writing skills, reading skills are also very crucial language skills which are necessary to the engineering students. Rapid, well-organized, creative and imaginative reading techniques are extremely indispensable so as to accomplish academic achievement. It is said that today's readers are tomorrow's leaders. Taking into consideration the necessity to read measureless amounts of materials connecting to various fields of knowledge, the engineering students should become skilled at various reading styles such as - skimming, scanning, intensive reading and extensive reading and also they have to build up a genuine love for reading an imperative segment of Communication skills.

Good Writing Skills

It is an established fact that good quality writing is a blessing. Good writing skills are incredibly much indispensable for effective communication. In this spirited world, the engineering students should be acquainted with how to write different formal and informal letters, reports, memos and e-mails. Regardless of plentiful papers written and a lot of presentations made all the way from beginning to end of their college career, many of these people are not sufficiently expert to communicate their engineering skill by means of written communication. Therefore, the engineering students of current generation have to pay attention to these vital skills and with incessant practice and hard work they certainly enhance writing skills. Writing can enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as serve to identify and confront personal misconceptions [4].

Body Language

Effective communicators are the people who listen to what other people say and continuously give and receive wordless signals. All of our nonverbal behaviors - the gestures we make, the way we sit, how fast or how loud we talk, how close we stand, how much eye contact we make send strong messages. This is an essential part of the communication process. Various studies show that the words account for only 7% of the message you convey. The remaining 93% is non-verbal. Hence, the engineering students must pay attention to the nonverbal cues and signals they send and receive and with this effort their ability to communicate will improve.

In addition to the above said skills, engineering students should also develop various important skills such as - team work, leadership skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills etc. With all these necessary skills, an engineering student will undoubtedly become a dynamic professional and technocrat without any doubt.

Having interacted with thousands of engineering students in so many institutions in the state Tamil Nadu, an assortment of obstacles and problems that are being faced by the student community of engineering and technological

institutions has been observed. The following are some of the most important and common communicative problems expressed by the students are:

Lack of Self Confidence

Good communication skills are extremely fundamental and important for everyone for the successful career. It is a well known fact that confidence is the key to success. A good number of engineering students not only Tamil medium and rural area but also some English medium and urban area students is found lacking self confidence. Amusingly, a few students who are good at speaking English are also incapable to speak well by standing in front of audience owing to lack of self confidence. It is essential on the part of engineering students to defeat this obstacle by mounting self confidence in them.

The Psychological Pressure

The making of mistakes in the presence of their classmates is another most widespread and central communicative problem amid the engineering students. Due to these kinds of psychological feelings and pressure, the students are not in a position to communicate effectively in English.

Lack of Exposure to Speaking in English

The students have been spending and exposing much of their time speaking in their respective vernacular language or mother tongue since their childhood and they do not have proper exposure to speaking in English.

Fear and Shyness

The astonishing truth is that a good number of the engineering students are fundamentally efficient in their academic but stand pathetic when it comes to communication skills. Consequently, fear and shyness dwell in them while communicating with others. They hang about as unproductive communicators, because of these two problems.

Inadequate Practice

It is obviously an important and most common problem among the engineering students. Despite the fact that they are lagging behind in communication skills, they do not practice more. Though, they are well aware that their power of vocabulary is inadequate, poor in construction of sentence, poor in listening skills etc, only a small number of students who are very serious about their bright future and career put into practice well and ultimately achieve something in their endeavors.

Suggestions to overcome communicative problems of Engineering Students

Here are the most important suggestions for overcoming the common communicative problems of engineering students:

Try not being fearful when you are asked to speak in front of the audience.
Take appropriate steps to enhance your confidence level.
Try to avail every single opportunity to speak in the public.
You want to make sure when speaking to someone you are using the right body language, hand gestures, facial expressions, and emotions.
Practice more to develop all the segments of communication skills with conscious effort.
Do not bother about errors while communicating with others, instead keep on talking in English.
Read extensively various news items, articles, magazines, journals etc. in order to boost up your word power and reading skills.
Carefully observe how proficient speakers of the English language pronounce words and frame their sentences.
Many online sites offer you the opportunity to voice chat with another user.
Give your full attention on the person who is speaking.
Keep writing about something for at least twenty minutes daily. Writing everyday is the key to improving your writing skill.
Maintain proper eye contact with the person whom you are talking to.
Make a conscious commitment to strive for better communication skills every day.
Stop listening to that little negative voice. With a substantial dose of positiveness give a counter-punch on the negative self talk.

Conclusion

Well-organized and effective communication skills are well thought-out to be the key component of successful career of engineering students. Technical skills can make a person a knowledge worker but technical skills along with communication skills can make a person a manager or leader. This is the authentic and proven fact. A practically sky-scraping level of expertise in English and outstanding communication skills will certainly amplify the employability of students. With the exception of augmenting academic knowledge in their focused and major subjects, the engineering students are required to adhere and give much importance to build up their communications skills so as to turn out to be vibrant, energetic, effervescent and efficient communicator to fulfill the urgent demands of the present corporate world.

References

- Beder, S. (2000). 'Valuable Skills Learned from Basket Weaving'. Engineers Australia, 46.
- Jensen, H.P. (2000). Strategic Planning for the Education Process in the Next Century, *Global Journal of Engineering Education*, (4)1: 35-42.
- Kline, J.A. (1996). *Listening Effectively*. Alabama: Air University Press. <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/kline-listen/b10p.htm>
- Larken-Hein, T. (2000). Writing: a Unique Strategy Designed to bring Current Topics in Science and Engineering to Non-Majors, Proceedings of 30th ASEE/IEEE Frontiers in Education. Kanas City, USA, T2F-15-T2F-20.

Polack-Wahl, J. A. (2000). It is Time to Stand up and Communicate, Proceedings of 30th ASEE/IEEE Frontiers in Education, Kanas City, USA, FIG. 16 – FIG. - 21.

www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/r/rudyardkip101386.html

www.selfgrowth.com › *Articles* › *Success Skills* › *Listening Skills*