

Communication and Presentation Skills

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Abstract

One of the most important areas of a teacher's job is effective communication. It is safe to say that in teaching – learning more, mistakes occur- more projects ago away- more pupils are upset – because of imperfect Communications than for any other single reason.

How students communicate with each other and with the teacher has significant impact on group dynamics. Under any class-room social structure, teachers should accept and encourage the ideas of the students. When all communication is from teacher to student and communication among students is discouraged, the class may not function as a true group.

When and how children like each other and how the teacher and students feel about one another has an impact on students' performance.

Communication can be treated as exchange of thoughts, information, facts, ideas, opinions, or emotions by two or more persons with the objective to bring about mutual understanding, confidence or good human relations. Its purpose is generally to effect change or influence action

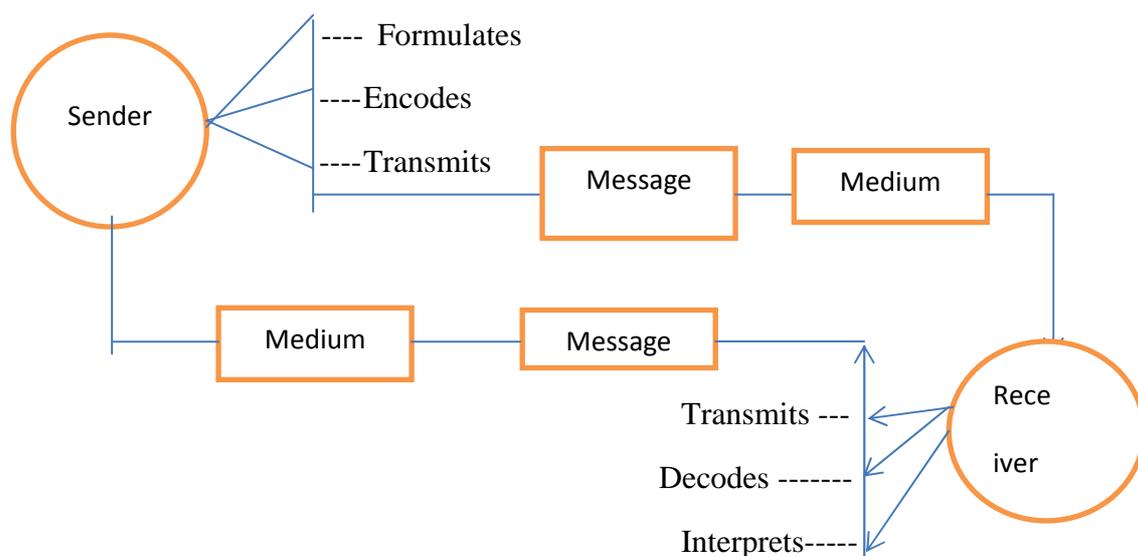
KEYWORDS:- communication, classroom social structure, exchange of thoughts, mutual understanding, teaching-learning process.

Introduction:- Communication is a Latin word, meaning 'Common'. Hence communication is having Common experience with people. The word communication means a wide variety of things to different people. Some Definition of Communication -

- 1) "Communication means sharing of ideas and feelings in a mood of mutuality.
- 2) "Communication involves interaction which encourages give and take ". This provides feedback to persons involved in exchanging ideas.

Communication Cycle :- There are essentially four components in the process of communication. They are-

- 1) Sender or source, technically called encoder
- 2) Message or Signal
- 3) The medium or channel of communication
- 4) The Receiver or destination or decoder



Principles of Effective Communication :-

- 1) Subject matter of communication should be organized carefully.
- 2) The vocabulary chosen should be simple- within the easy reach of the pupils.
- 3) Long and involved sentences they require extended concentration on the part of the students defeat the purpose of communication.
- 4) Questions and statements of a leading character – ones that put replies into the mouth of the respondents –are to be guarded against. The wording of the question should not make it easier to say ‘yes’ than to say ‘no’ or vice-versa.
- 5) Subject matter should be broken into small components.
- 6) Students should be encouraged to express their ideas.
- 7) It should be ensured that the students listen to the teacher patiently and carefully.
- 8) Various types of audio visual aids may be used to make communication effective, challenging and inspirational.
- 9) Voice should be suitably modulated.
- 10) Different devices and methods suiting the subject matter should be used.

Communication : Meaning and significance

In the common parlance, communication is the process of passing on information from one person to another. It is vouched for that the communication is the basis of all human interactions. It is supposed that the biggest punishment for a human being on earth is to be alone, as man is social animal and longs to be in groups. It will not be exaggerated to proclaim that the lack of communication makes the social as well as the professional life difficult.

Communication for professional as teacher, lawyer, manager and so on is central to justify the cause of their existence. A teacher without sound communication skills is like a warrior without needed armaments. Communication skills are regarded to be the most needed skills in the personality of a teacher. A teacher feels handicapped in putting across the views in the lack of the good communication skills. There are cases when teachers quit their jobs as they realized that they lack the communication skills and they are not fit to be a teacher. The term communication can be thrashed out with the help of the letters it is constructed of as follows-

C- Considerate and Concise (should be thoughtful and terse)

- O- Onus (One must feel responsible as a communicator)
- M- Media-(can be made through different ways.)
- M- Message(The message must be meaningful)
- U- Uninterrupted(must be incessant)
- N- Novel(must be original)
- I – Interesting (Must be appealing)
- C- consistent(must have consistency)
- A-attractive (must be catchy)
- T—Timely (must be made at right time)
- I—Involved (communicator must feel involved)
- O- Outright (must be complete)
- N- Never Ending Impact(its impact must be everlasting)

Communication passes through a sequential process. Everybody makes the use of the process at the time of making communication but s/he does not get concerned about it. The process goes like- the sender puts the encoded ideas into a channel as a message. The receiver on the other hand decodes the message and gives the feedback. Two important factors as common frame of reference and noise have n much relevance in the process meaningful. The process must be free from both kinds of noise as physical and mental /psychological. The quality of the communication will hinge upon the way the whole process of communication is carried out.

There are different ways of communication viz., oral/verbal, written and non-verbal. The non-verbal communication may further be classified as Sign Language, Body language, and Object language. The written communication is in black and white, which is non- reinterpretable and creates a record too. Nevertheless, it is time taking and can be dubious. The oral/verbal communication is quick and gives an opportunity to read out the facial expressions. However, it is reinterpretable and lacks a record . The non-verbal communication is equally significant and plays an important role in general and professional life. It is argued that the real message lies in the facial expressions, the words are meant to tell a lie. The significance of the non-verbal communication is augmented by the fact that verbal and non-verbal communication goes hand in hand.

Barriers in Communication:-

There are barriers, which work as impediment in the meaningful occurrence of the communication process. These barriers can be physical, psychological, organizational, etc. . For example, if a teacher does not prepare for the class in a planned manner s/he can suffer from the barriers as unplanned communication and uncommon frame of reference. Communication, if not made in a planned manner may suffer from the following barriers-

- Unplanned Communication
- Lack of proper Environment
- Uncommon Frame of References
- Weak sense of trust between sender and receiver
- Poor Listening Habits
- Emotional state
- Semantic Barrier
- Cultural barrier
- Information Overload
- Status/Gender/ differences

- Perceptual gaps /
- Poor Listening
- Incomplete communication
- Unduly long Channel

Making the communication Effective:-

An effective communication can do miracles. Communication made in a premeditated manner vouches for the meaningful accomplishment of the purpose for which it has been made. The probable barriers to communication if managed properly can result in to an effective and meaningful communication. The following tips can be instrumental in augmenting the effectiveness of communication.-

- Communication must be made in a planned manner in the sense the communicator must feel implicated in the act of communication.
- The physical environment chosen for the purpose of communication ought to be conducive in terms of noise and disturbances.
- The communication must be opportune
- It is prudent to ensure that the communication is complete as it is tendency of human beings to fill in the blanks as per their convenience. That may be at times fatal. For example, the blacksmith instructed his helper, "When I nod you hit", the blacksmith nodded, the helper hit, next movement, the blacksmith was no more in the world. In fact. The blacksmith committed the blunder of not telling the helper as where to hit and the helper by filling in the blanks conveniently hit on the head of the blacksmith.
- Both the parties should be mentally and physically prepared to communicate.
- There should be common frame of reference. It means that the receiver is ready to listen what sender wants to say.
- It is said that a poor listener cannot be a good communicator. Effective listening is inevitable to literally serve the purpose of communication.
- Barriers related to language affect the quality of communication negatively.
- Avoid information overload
- Selection of the right media/channel
- Tailor the message to the audience
- Effective feedback
- Sharpen your perceptual skills
- Develop a sense of trust
- KISS (Keep it short and sweet)

What is a Good Presentation?

Making a presentation is scientific in nature. It needs lot of management. An impressive presentation should be a winning presentation. It must be duly planned and well prepared. It should be delivered with confidence and it must serve the purpose of the audience and other stakeholders.

A meaningful presentation requires to be serving the purpose of it. It must have an effective opening that can positively draw the attention of the audience and inspire them to be coupled with the presenter. It should be presented with enormous sincerity and honesty. The presence of the presenter must be felt in the presentation hall. The presenter must feel enthused at the time of making the presentation. There requires lot

of persuasiveness on the part of the presenter to make a convincing presentation. Eye contact is a tool to ensure that the message is being put across purposefully. It is also a device to ensure the interest and involvement of the audience in the talk. The presenter should exhibit positive gestures as this helps in upholding the interest of the audience. Moderate level of nervousness is required to make a good presentation. Voice control makes the talk appealing and a strong close leaves a never-ending impact on the minds of the participants.

Who is a Presenter?

P- Prepared / planned

R Receptive

E- Energetic

S-Smart/ Sensitive

E- Exact/ Empathetic

N – Network/Natural/ Novel

T- Trained/Time Manager/ Trustworthy

E- Educated/ Emotionally Intelligent/ Entertaining

R- Rational/ Research Minded

As per the foregoing description, a presenter is warranted to be planned and prepared. S/he must be amenable to the views of others. S/he must be physically and mentally energetic enough to sustain the interest of the audience for a given period. A presenter ought to look smart in terms of get up and appearance. S/he should be precise and ought to put him or herself in the shoes of the audience. A presenter must be well networked in terms of knowledge resources. S/he should possess the natural style and his or her ideas should be modish. A presenter must be duly trained. S/he should be a good time manager and s/he should be dependable. Education makes a man complete. A presenter should be well educated and emotionally intelligent. A presenter should be humorous to sustain the interest of the audience. A presenter must be lucid and research minded. Research makes a man exact. A research-oriented presenter can be flooded with statistics to convince the audience.

Presentation Guidelines:-

Making a presentation is a technical activity. It needs some rules and guidelines to be adhered to. These guidelines keep the presenter in track and discipline. They also work as a checklist to ensure a quality presentation. The following guidelines if adhered to can improve the quality of a presentation. –

- Every good talk is planned and prepared by keeping the audience the purpose of the audience to attend the talk must be given the top priority. In order to serve better the audience should be duly examined in terms of their sex, age, qualification, professional status, religion etc. The presenter should personally check out the physical facilities and milieu as the presentation venue and its

environment, lighting arrangements, seating arrangement, instructional aids and so on so as to make certain that they meet the given requirements.

- Undue anxiety works as a hurdle in making a good presentation. Anxiety should be duly managed. The anxiety appears to be there mainly due to audience. One can suffer from the fear of unknown. Meeting with participants before hand and controlling pre-talk and during the talk anxieties helps in getting rid of increased level of anxiousness.

An effective presentation is always opened up by making the use of a striking opener. Be it an attention getting remark, an incident, an anecdote, a couplet, an analogical story, a benefit statement, a general question and so on forth. It is prudent to keep one thing in mind at the time of making the choice of the main body of the talk. It is required in order to ensure that your shift from opener to main body is so smooth even the audience fails to smell it. This eventually results in to the upholding of incessant attention of the audience in the main body of the talk.

- The main body of the talk needs utmost attention and energy of the presenter as it contains the key points of the talk. The close of a presentation ought to be having a never-ending impact. It must impress upon the mind of the audience that it was literally benefitted in terms of its objectives of attending the talk. This can be done with the help of rephrasing of key points, concluding statement, use of benefit statement and so on.
- All the good presentations are followed by a question answer session. To handle the questions meaningfully a strategy is to be developed on the part of the presenter. A good presenter should anticipate the probable questions that can be posed by the person in the audience. S/he can prepare the answers to these questions in a general manner. At the conclusion of the talk, the presenter should solicit questions from the audience. If no question asked a general question to break the ice can be posed by the presenter to the person in the audience who has been sincerely listening to him throughout the presentation. This will not only help in dispelling the apprehension prevailing in the minds of the persons in the audience but also encourage them to open up and ask questions. Always replace each question asked before replying. This will help in making the question clear and getting more time in organizing the answer to the questions purposefully. A presenter is required to be professionally wise to handle the questions the answer to which is not known to him/ her.
- The body language of a presenter ought to be quite apt at the time of making presentation. His facial expressions and gestures must be relaxed and comfortable.
- Time management plays a very critical role in making the presentation a success. Managing time properly in the class is a crucial task for a teacher. If the presentation is not well planned, it may suffer from time management and spoil the show. The following allocation of time at the hand can be a god example of time management. If the session is of 60 minutes , the allocation of time can be as follows.-

5 minutes- Introduction

40 min.- Main Body

5 Min. – Conclusion

10 Min.- Question and answer

For 5 minutes, say what you want to say(Introductory Remarks). For 40 minutes say (Main body of the talk) and for 5 minutes for say what have you said(Concluding Remarks). The remaining 10 minutes will be used for question answer session.

- Nervousness is natural and is bound to be an indispensable ingredient of the personality of a person. There is a correlation between performance and nervousness. The performance will not be up to the mark in case of low and high nervousness rather performance will be good when the level of nervousness is moderate. The gesture of nervousness carries negatively. It spoils the image of a teacher in the eyes of a student in terms of knowledge, confidence, competence, professionalization and so on. The students do not pay due attention to a teacher who undergo the state of over nervousness at the time of giving instructions rather they tend to hoot him.

If a teacher goes to the class unprepared or a presenter makes and unprepared presentation s/he may get apprehensive and exhibit the following nervousness gestures.

- a) Too much use of “UM”
 - b) Playing with pen or pencil
 - c) Hands stuck in pockets
 - d) Conversing continually to flip chart or OHP screen instead of audience
 - e) Using the podium as a crutch
 - f) Having a “death grip” on podium invariably
 - g) Pulling at ear or chafing face
 - h) Looking at the watch time and again
 - i) Looking repeatedly towards the door
- Tips for Making a Good Presentation:-

Everybody belongs to be an impressive presenter. One can be blessed as a good presenter but one can also learn how to be a good presenter. It carries a lot of sincerity, enthusiasm and persuasiveness to make a meaningful presentation. In a good presentation, the presenter gets his or her presence noticed in the audience. A good presentation starts with an influential opening. It is planned and well managed timely. A professionally sound presenter maintains eye contact with every person in the audience. S/he demonstrates encouraging gestures and postures and maintains moderate level of nervousness in order to ensure a meaningful performance. A good presentation also needs a good voice control on the part of the presenter. A good presentation looks for a very convincing close so as to convince the audience purposefully. Some of the tips to make a good presentation are narrated below-

 - a) Be well prepared
 - b) Make a dressed practice
 - c) Make sure physically that the facilities required are in order . However, do not be fully dependent on them.
 - d) Eat lightly before the presentation
 - e) Have a good night sleep
 - f) Dress as per the need of the hour.

- g) Get rid of the anxiety by meeting with participants before hand, control pre-talk anxieties and control anxieties during the talk by making the use of breathing exercises and techniques.

In fine, it can be said that a teacher with out the treasure of communication and presentation skills is professionally poor and direly needs to acquire these skills. Sound communication and presentation skills make a teacher self- assured to do justice to the profession.

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