



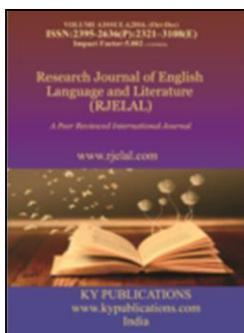
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CONCENTRATING ON COMMUNICATION AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT IN LEARNING OF A LANGUAGE (ENGLISH)

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ABSTRACT

It is believed that English Language Skills are important to India's aspirations in today's world, and many are concerned about the Quality of English Language teaching in Schools.

Communication by all means has been referred to as to interact with people around you to get your work done or to share your thoughts and ideas with others. But communication triumphs beyond that. Children should be given the "freedom of speech" which stands firm only on the book of Indian Constituency, freedom of speech at the basic level of school learning is a punishable issue as far as the school rule is concerned. A child is never allowed to speak inside the classroom and is supposed only to listen to what the teacher says and is not even given the opportunity to come out with his doubts. We must have surely come across these kinds of incidents very often. The truth underlying behind this is the traditional or conventional theory on school or teachers which suppresses the growing ideas from the mind of these children. Who knows how many children have been suppressed and devoid of their freedom which has misled them in life and had kept these scientists buried under the dark side of life and never gave them an opportunity to expose themselves to this world.

The changes expected by the society as a whole entirely depends on how well the changes are implemented by the teachers. Hence the teachers should be in the position to enhance and encourage the communication skill among the students.

The more we stress on communication at early stage the more we witness success of the children in life. Hence communication leads to carrier development. To start early entrust life to its full anticipation.

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Communication: beyond talking & listening

Although extensive research has explored the importance of communication, the continuing creation conveys the needs of research in Human communication which was revolutionized with speech approximately 100,000 years ago. Symbols were developed about 30,000 years ago, and writing about 5000 years ago.

All we observe in an English classroom is that the teacher speaks and the children listen. As far as observed, many primary levels of teaching starts with Reading the lesson and the most disgusting thing is to make the children understand the content through the vernacular language.

Usually we find children speaking or communicating extremely well in their mother tongue which is never taught to them. This process

is generally titled as acquisition by many researchers.

If acquisition is possible for one language called the mother tongue or regional language it must surely be possible for any language which is being exposed to a child.

"Children who are in need of speech and language face higher risk in learning to read, write and spell. When they cannot say a word in a proper way they will face difficulty in pronouncing it for reading or writing. The vital problem lies in the basic understanding of what is being said which obviously lead to struggle in what is being read" (*All Together Now Sec – 2, 14, The Communication Trust, London,*)

As stated in *All Together Now Sec – 2, 8, The Communication Trust, London*, "it is proved that 50% to 90% of children with constant communication needs tend to have continued reading difficulties. The result of quality of education gained when children leave school depends entirely on what they have acquired at their primary level".

It is believed that English Language Skills are important to India's aspirations in today's world, and many are concerned about the Quality of English Language teaching in Schools.

We always come across children with learning disabilities mainly in the second language. Learning a new language is always under misperception of learning to read and write well. But the most tragic part is, a child though may read and write well in the second language always find it highly complicated in communicating in that particular language.

"Most teaching has at its core emphasis on ensuring that the student knows how to access, evaluate, understand, and produce information in the Curriculum" (*Developing Research and communication skill,32, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, US 2003*). Therefore, it is the role of faculty members to define the desired student outcome, to outline where in the curriculum certain skills are developed and practiced, to consider the range of potential learning experiences, and to select the most appropriate teaching strategies.

Faculty members can improve student learning by encouraging students to explore and

analyze ideas creatively. They also can use an awareness of the principles of information literacy as a Meta cognitive strategy to manage their own learning because they can determine more clearly where they fit within the process at any given moment—whether accessing, evaluating, or using a particular piece of information—and whether they need to return to some prior point with a different breadth or depth.

Thus the major role is played by the teachers who teach English at primary levels. Many teachers who are with profound knowledge regarding their respective area of interest and course they teach, they tend to fail to communicate clearly with their students and thus fail to achieve the desired results. In most of the schools teachers who themselves cannot speak English teach English through vernacular language.

COMMUNICATION

The Principle Purpose of a Language is Communication.

Communication by all means has been referred to as to interact with people around you to get your work done or to share your thoughts and ideas with others. But communication triumphs beyond that.

Students learn English through grammar translation method and the rules, but unable to communicate in English.

As similar to the importance of oral & written communication skills play a major roles in job success today, communication also plays a vital role in deciding the future of a student or an employer at work.

Communication is a series of experience of hearing, smelling, seeing, tasting and touching with the three major components of Verbal, Para verbal and Non verbal communication.

On frequented occasions we're communicating our unconscious feelings, our requirements as well as our inner desires without understanding it. Spoken communication is effortlessly the most noticeable type of communication within our daily lives, yet our measures, actions as well as our choice of apparel and choice of songs may be making contact with

other individuals without utilizing phrases and words or perhaps believed.

It is completely important to take control of what we're sharing with other people creating certain that we do not hand out the incorrect which means or signals. Once we investigate deeper into the importance of communication in relation to our surrounding interactions, we are able to start to understand numerous the issues that we're performing nicely and a few from the regions that require betterment, whether or not they're conscious choices or unconscious behavior.

An international research study conducted in primary classrooms in five countries '*Five Nations Study*' has demonstrated the powerful learning effects of skillfully used 'dialogic teaching'. This approach has been defined as classroom teaching where teachers and children both make substantial and significant contributions through which children's thinking on particular idea or themes is moved forward (Mercer, N. & Littleton, K., 65, *Dialogue and the Development of Children's Thinking 2007 London: Routledge*).

LISTENING FOR COMMUNICATING

"Day-to-day we are confronted with communication challenges in any kind of interpersonal relationships. Listening to each other is not as easy as it seems. However, listening – real listening – is a key factor. Communication skills are, though, regarded as one of the top generic key skills in higher education" (*Guidelines on recording personal learning and thinking skills in the Diploma ,Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), Jan 2008*).

Effective communication depends mostly on effective listening. People who listen well obviously speak well. Many of us lack this proficiency. This attitude is quite very often seen in the classrooms or any other general places where listeners pretend to listen to the speaker but actually does not. This is an unavoidable scene in a classroom.

The foremost thing to begin with communication skill is to teach how to listen when others speak. The introduction towards the difference between listening and hearing has to be

cleared. The children must be prepared to listen before they start communicating.

This listening part plays a significant role and this part should also be concentrated on by the curriculum framers. The syllabus must also focus on different listening task which would enable the children to become good listeners. Apart from mere re structuring the curriculum with these tasks and changes, the Govt. and the private schools should ensure for the necessary equipments available at the school like audio tape recorders or CD players of an LCD etc. The curriculum framed without ensuring these basic requirements is a mere squander.

However, nowadays computer-based communication – mostly in written form – dominates business and learning settings. Rather than developing oral or written communication skills independently, it seems crucial to strengthen communicative as well as media competence for being able to fully exploit (inter)personal capacities in each medium's scope and to make appropriate choices regarding the usage of media. Active listening has been originally proposed as a concept for oral communication, prior research has analyzed its effects only in face-to-face (f2f) settings .Up to now, no research has been undertaken in order to understand whether the concept of "active listening" can be transferred to written online communication.

In recent years, the effects of different computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools on online communication have been studied extensively. "Negative social responses to CMC have been accounted for theoretically through more complex frameworks that can explain both negative affective outcomes as well as positive ones, in formulations incorporating CMC's impersonal, interpersonal, and hyper personal effects" (Joseph B. Walther , *Theories of Computer- Mediated Communication and Interpersonal Relations* Chapter 14: 447).

Moreover most conversation does not take place with full attention which in turn might result in the loss of valuable information which was not heard. It is difficult to become a proficient listener but can be developed. This requires more concentration and effort. As we develop the habit of

listening, we try to interpret and evaluate the core meaning of what is delivered by others through their verbal and non verbal information.

Active listening skill might involve listening openly to what people say, avoid distractions, have eye contact with the person who speaks, attention towards what is being said trying to appraise the speaker by nodding etc.,

Teacher and Student in a classroom

Many teachers though might possess extraordinary knowledge in their respective subject but fail to communicate clearly to the children which in turn fail for the expected result. A teacher is generally evaluated by her students' performance. Therefore it becomes a compulsion for teachers to possess good communication skill.

It was immensely realised that students are so energetic and enthusiastic to learn and absorb anything at primary level. They could be molded in any form as the teacher might want them. They have abundance of potential inside them which could only peep out with the immense support of the teacher. Being a language teacher, one should never focus on the completion of the syllabus and always should believe that the child should be nurtured competent by all means- reading, understanding, questioning, answering and reasoning.

Most English teachers enter the class only with the course book. They open the book, read the lesson and explain the content in the vernacular language and then the final stage of wiping out creativity is to write down the answers on the black board for the students to copy down.

In this traditional framework of Teaching English provides less or no space for communication between students and the teacher. Many teachers do not like their classrooms to be noisy and love for peace does not permit the students to open up during the class.

There is a great demand of teachers who take teaching not only as their mere profession but take it as a passion which would dig the way out to bring success to the children. A teacher who is ambitious to bring her children's life to prosperity would definitely aim at the overall development of a child for the traditional rote method.

Children should be given the "freedom of speech" which stands firm only on the book of Indian Constituency, freedom of speech at the basic level of school learning is a punishable issue as far as the school rule is concerned. A child is never allowed to speak inside the classroom and is supposed only to listen to what the teacher says and is not even given the opportunity to come out with his doubts. We must have surely come across these kinds of incidents very often. The truth underlying behind this is the traditional or conventional theory on school or teachers which suppresses the growing ideas from the mind of these children. Who knows how many children have been suppressed and devoid of their freedom which has misled them in life and had kept these scientists buried under the dark side of life and never gave them an opportunity to expose themselves to this world.

The classroom for a child should be a place to explore what a child wants to and must by all means support his views and mischievous attitude. When a child is controlled on speech, he would never come out with his brilliant thoughts and ideas which could possibly bring out drastic changes in science and technology.

CURRICULUM AND METHODOLOGY – LIMITATIONS OF TEACHERS

"What is a curriculum for at this time? It highlights skills necessary for learning throughout life, as well as for work, and for one's personal development and well-being. But a curriculum is also political. Decisions about 'what's in' and 'what's out', change from time to time depending on political needs and aspirations. A curriculum fundamentally establishes a vision of the kind of society we want in the future, and the kind of people we want in it: it decides what the 'good life' is for individuals and for society as a whole".(Ben Williamson and Sarah Payton, Curriculum and teaching innovation, 3, Futurelab 2009,)

Recently many publishing companies as well as the Govt. publications have moved on to communicative teaching which is usually systemized with lots of activities focusing on listening, speaking, reading and writing. They are also supported with digital assistance. But these digital supports are less utilized by the teachers as they may not be trained

on it or the school may not possess the required equipments like computer, digital boards or LCD.

As The introduction to the Primary School Curriculum states:

“Technological skills are increasingly important for advancement in education, work, and leisure. The curriculum integrates ICT into the teaching and learning process and provides children with opportunities to use modern technology to enhance their learning in all subjects”. (Primary School Curriculum,37,Govt.Publication,Dublin1999).

WHAT COULD A TEACHER ACHIEVE?

A teacher could achieve anything provided she is not interrupted with her syllabus or the school management or any other source that might affect her freedom to explore the students (children).

The freedom to come out with their views and ideas gave in a lot of space for the children to develop their communication skills. Today these are in class IX and are doing extremely well.

All a teacher could do is to allot some time to talk to the children provided the teacher should be equipped with good communication skill and with a little knowledge of current technological developments.

Children nowadays are acquainted with source of knowledge through media and internet. All they need is a proper guidance which will pull them towards the pinnacle of glory.

A teacher is defined by many terms – a guide, a friend, a philosopher etc., whatever term might be used a teacher is or should be a resource person to facilitate the children to stand on their own to face this world and to fulfill the global prospect.

HOW CAN CHANGES BE EFFECTIVE

Thoughts of bringing in changes in the field of education and the curriculum, has been a long process since years. Outstanding changes have been tried out and abundant efforts in implementing the same where educationists concentrated most.

In spite of all these efforts and changes we still have not reached the expected result of quality education. Quality education still remains a dream of Indian Education System. The foremost step which could enable the success is that the stress on regional language should be reduced and boosts the interest of teach English at all stages of Education.

As we all know the children at primary stage learn the most of their speech form, it is the duty of not only the Govt. but the curriculum framers as well to concentrate on the need for communication. The present world needs students and youngster who possess the quality of good communication. Communication today has become one of the most priorities for any job in any field.

The changes expected by the society as a whole entirely depends on how well the changes are implemented by the teachers. Hence the teachers should be in the position to enhance and encourage the communication skill among the students.

The language (English) curriculum should be framed in such a way that most part of the syllabus should focus on increasing the practical knowledge rather than mere reading the lessons with explanation. The syllabus should be supported with CD's or assisted with digital supports which will give opportunity to the students to listen and speak in the language taught.

Apart from these significant changes the teachers should be provided with the required training on how to handle the classes and how to face the challenges that might occur on spot or during the learning process.

This in turn might also affect the regular schedule of the pre planned syllabus or curriculum but ultimately the aim of learning is to enable the students to face any challenges in life which is a long time goal. The approach in which the teacher talks to the children, affect the children in learning and also motivate them. Therefore a teacher should be strong in her communication skills before she could bring in changes in her children.

We also find children of the same school speak at different phase and style of English language depending on the teachers who teach them. The known part is that children acquire language by listening at their initial stage. This stage should provide them with lots of listening to good language which is lacking in our primary schools where even the English teacher does not converse or speak in English. This is the place where we need to concentrate by selecting or appointing teachers who communicate well and have good command over the language.

The style of language spoken by any person depends on what he has listened to. That is the reason why children are asked to read newspapers and watch English news channels like BBC or NDTV where they can listen to good English. This indirectly says that the teachers at school do not speak good English which could inspire a child to follow the same.

It is also essential that the methods or changes brought about in the language learning curriculum should be planned in such a manner that it provides freedom for the children to experience and explore what they learn. At this stage self learning digital support can be replaced to teachers where students evaluate themselves and have opportunity to correct themselves. This will pave way to the reduction of traditional method and allow the children to work and learn or learning by working or practice. Here a child is given her/his own time to learn things. Once they acquire mastery over one skill, they are allowed to move on to the other. In this process the teacher plays the role of a facilitator. For this method to come into practice might take years to be implemented. Until then the teachers need to act like agents who would transmit such wonderful experience to all children at school.

WHY IS COMMUNICATION IMPORTANT FOR STUDENTS

Developing communication at school level will organize students to communicate better and it is also an important device to be successful in prospect. Moulding the oral, written and interpersonal communication skill will prepare students to become confident.

Inside a classroom

Many children with communication difficulties do not come out with immediate conversation and thus lack friends and play alone. Some children may also behave in a very different manner which would push their friends away from them. Sometimes they are even bullied by other children for their poor communication skill. This incident sets a strong impact on the children which leads to miserable health issues.

The present day situation is that children with good communication skills reach the topmost carriers in life and prosperity knocks their doors.

Children who are skills enough but lack communication skill are haggard back which in turn minimizes their level of confidence in themselves and this leads them towards a miserable life style filled with stress and frustrations *as stated by Fathi M. Ihmeideh, .Aieman Ahmad AL-OMARI,*

Kholoud A. Al-Dababneh, Hashemite in 'Attitudes toward Communication Skills among Students'-Teachers', Australian Journal of Teacher Education Vol 35, 4, July 2010, , Jordanian.

Speaking or communicating becomes the base for learning and understanding. If this is handed over with care to the children they would take their lives to the sky and will also the nation.

OPPORTUNITIES BEYOND IMAGINATION

The more we stress on communication at early stage the more we witness success of the children in life. Hence communication leads to carrier development. To start early entrust life to its full anticipation.

Any place of employment the first and the foremost criteria for selection or appointment is the test for communication skill. These days' employers do not need people, who perform well in their academics, but people who would perform well in interaction with others and their clients which would enhance their profit. The screening process involves a test called group discussion in which the communication skill is tested and candidates who possess good communication skills are selected for appointment.

A person with outstanding communication skill is an asset to all new emerging vacancies. It also endow with exceptional job opportunity.

In a country like India where English is a non native language, teachers are the only hope for the development of successful communicating children from our rural and urban schools. Private institutions are aware of the new trend and stress on spoken inside the school premises which creates an environment where the children are exposed to communicating to each other.

In the end, communication skills are not merely about teaching the rules of the language. I would never mean to make light of students' writing deficiencies, or suggest that correcting deficiencies is not important, but this kind of work is best done

in a pedagogical context that stress on thinking. It is impossible to have a text that is perfectly correct, and yet it is worthless for what it says. Instructive in this regard is the *American poet, Emily Dickinson*, who, among other deficiencies, did not know the difference between “it” and “it’s,” and yet became one of the greatest poets in the English language.

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