

APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION SKILLS OF RURAL ENGINEERING STUDENTS

Dr. Ananda Rao Bonthu

Assistant Professor of English, Sri Vasavi Engineering College,
Tadepalligudem, West Godavari, Andhra Pradesh, India,
banandarao1972@gmail.com, 9703304265

Venkata Ramana Manipatruni

Assistant Professor of English, Sri Vasavi Engineering College,
Tadepalligudem, West Godavari, Andhra Pradesh, India,
mvenkataramana29@gmail.com, 7780349414

ABSTRACT

India is one of the developing countries having a lot of rural students but they are not properly utilized. Many of the students from urban areas having enough qualifications are getting good job opportunities. But the category which is the rural students is just having the dream of getting an employment. Employers prefer to hire and promote those persons who are resourceful, ethical and self-directed with good communication skills. Hard skills and experience are not at all enough for the competitive and escalation in the global world. The rural students also should get employment otherwise it will become very serious and critical. Rural students who are studying Engineering Education should be given opportunities to learn and practice interpersonal communication skills during their educational curriculum. In this paper the role of communication skill for the rural student in order to get better employment has been discussed. The communication skill Faculty has the responsibility of setting the stage for the Engineering students to get good communication skills when they are studying in the college itself. Once theory lectures are completed, faculty can develop strategies for improving communication skills. Students should participate in counseling, interviewing, and educational sessions. Also, students should participate in collaborative work with others. To ensure the development of communication skills in Engineering students, all the faculty who are teaching technical papers also incorporate the communication skill process into their teaching activities. By following these strategies, an institute can effectively and positively impact the communication skills of their rural students thereby they can get good job opportunities in the global world.

Keywords: Engineering, rural students, communication skills, faculty, counseling.

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, survival is very competitive due to the development of technology. Technical skills can be learnt, applied and measured to an established degree. But the same cannot be said of communication skills. Whether it involves face to face customer interaction or even indirect correspondence over telephone or Email, employees adapt at communication skills will achieve both individual as well as organizational success. This requirement of communication skills in a job has made the competition for getting the job and sustaining it very tough. All the

students who wish to get a better job over their competitors are expected to increase their communication skills.

So today's professionals need a high communication skills quotient, apart from domain knowledge in order to succeed in this competitive era. For inculcating communication skills in them, the institutes have to provide communication skill training as a part of their curriculum. This will improve their complete personality and compatibility therefore enabling them to secure a respectable position in the corporate world. Usually the rural students are far more lagging in their communication skills due to the society where they grow up. So the institutes should take necessary steps to incorporate the communication skills not only in the curriculum but also conducting workshops at periodical time and setting up mock interviews.

Hard technical skills contribute to only 15% of one's success while remaining 85% is made by communication skills as per the survey. In spite of such great relevance of communication skills in the present corporate world some of the institutions are yet to introduce communication skills in their curriculum. Interpersonal communication skills are important for Engineering students to master. Whether interacting or communicating with other students, or interacting with any one, students use their interpersonal communication skills daily.

Because of the importance of interpersonal communication skills in practice, Engineering students need appropriate training to develop their own effective communication styles. Faculty have the responsibility to create the environment for students to practice their communication skills, provide timely and constructive feedback, and demonstrate the significance of a variety of communication opportunities.

Faculty need a well thought out plan to incorporate training into the workflow and to provide efficient and effective teaching opportunities for students. The students should be also well versed in all the communication Medias like utilizing the mobile phones, emails etc. This paper reviews the role of the communication skill faculty in facilitating development of communication skills for the rural students participating in Engineering education and provides strategies for incorporating communication and collaboration in speaking activities.

Setting the Stage for Communication

During the first lecture session, faculty can make the groups randomly but ensuring that the group should have both rural and urban students and also having both sexes. The efficiency of the group will increase while having both sexes. Then the faculty should explain the task and what they are going to perform as a group.

Every group should get an opportunity to communicate the mission and goals of the group. The entire students should deliver some talks regarding the task during Practices. Setting this kind of stage for the students with these terminologies will prevent communication problems before they occur. During the practical session, the faculty should introduce students to various tasks so that they will be able to communicate with one another.

Also sometimes the guest speakers may serve as a role model for the budding young students on how to take phone calls from others and recorded calls from others provide scope for learning. Since each student has special needs, faculty will also need to describe to the students how they can improve their communication by doing different activities.

It is the responsibility of the language teachers to provide the students with different ingredients required for speaking effectively. In this regard vocabulary is one of the main important aspects. If the student is able to pick up some words which are useful to speak, surely he will improve his communication. Vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings. This knowledge helps the student to understand the text, expression of self-etc.

Rural students since they come from different backgrounds their speaking abilities are really poor compared with that of coming from the city. so they must be taught how to pronounce certain words properly. Improvement in pronunciation skills goes hand in hand with the improvement in reading, listening and speaking skills. The more students listen to the better they can express themselves in English.

This kind of activity will reduce the shyness of the students and specific products should be taken into consideration and at first the faculty should give the demo presentation so that the student can get an idea related to speaking activities. After the model session is finished the faculty should find an average student and send him for a real practice with others. The student feedback should be collected and demonstrated to the students so that they can rectify the mistakes. Both written and verbal communication skills will have to be taught to the students to establish positive and productive communication skills.

The students, after going through thorough training, will be ready to face any one they meet. So the communication skill faculty should provide excellent training for the students especially from rural areas to develop a professional relationship with others. And also the faculty should explain the need of this relationship and what all the basis for an excellent relationship like foundation of trust and an open exchange of information and it should be collaborative relationship. Engineering students should understand the importance of this relationship and that it builds over time with each one.

Communicating their ideas is a very important task for the Engineering students and this is the place where rural students are lagging due to the lack of communication skills. so they need to be given more opportunities because basically they are very shy and will not come forward to face any gathering.

All the Engineering students will be working with other students and support staff once they become graduated and moved for the job. Therefore, learning and utilizing the interpersonal communication skills within the workplace with all colleagues is an important thing for the student. Good communication in the workplace begins with mutual respect with other coworkers and they should have a willingness to become a good team player. To bring such a mindset. The institution should set up the rules in such a way. Once the students completed half of their academic sessions they should be taught good communication skills.

Among the students they should have a corporate relationship so that they can play a very good role when they are in the working scenario. Skills for providing critical feedback to employees can be demonstrated during the student evaluation. Successful practices and clerkships involve ongoing feedback to staff and students, respectively. This feedback from an institute or faculty about the student should always be constructive and educational. It should help the students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and discuss ways they can improve to meet the expectations of the evaluator. This kind of feedback is not easy to give or to receive, but if done appropriately, it can be used to improve performance.

Written Communication Skills

The need for written communication skills is also needed for the Engineering students to communicate well to others in a variety of ways. Written communication skills can be improved by establishing periodical model writing tasks for the student to figure out the problems faced by them in written communication skills and counteract the same. Exercises that the student could create and complete during the training include:

- (1) Developing to write a paragraph
- (2) Writing a story.
- (3) Writing an official letter.
- (4) Preparing a technical paper.
- (5) Preparing a presentation.
- (6) Preparing the bio data.

Writing skill is becoming more and more important in all practice settings. Faculty should evaluate the writing made by the students during their training routinely in their practice. By critically evaluating their written document, the faculty can determine the areas they need to document more effectively. The student should determine what needs to be documented, and after receiving approval from the faculty, enter the documentation. Frequently, the faculty can check the documentation for clarification.

Faculty can have the student prepare the Email and be responsible for following through with the tasks. Students need to get some work like students could write the letter and then modify/revise it according to feedback from the faculty. The student can review existing material to become familiar with all. One strategy that can be used to help students practice documentation is to create a teaching chart. The teaching chart allows faculty to provide written and verbal feedback to the students before they begin to write. Many students are apprehensive about their writing skills. The more opportunities the students have to write and to receive feedback, the more concise and confident they will become. Writing exercises in the practical sessions provide real world examples to the student and demonstrate the importance of developing professional writing skills.

Conclusion

Communication skill is one of the best tools to increase job employment for the rural students who are studying in engineering colleges. All the above methods were carried out and the results showed there is a very good improvement of communication skill of all rural students and as well as their morality also increased. The stated methodologies cannot be applied in all areas of the world but they can modify the methodologies depending on the suitability of the environment. Communication in various forms is becoming more important in the evolving world of Engineering. Due to communication skill set up the outcome can positively impact the workplace, faculty, student, and more importantly, the rural students.

Effective communication and interpersonal skills are crucial to increase employment opportunities and to compete successfully in the business environment. The real key to the effectiveness of professionals is their ability to put their domain knowledge into effective practice. To conclude this, the communication skills program is about enabling and empowerment. With these kinds of communication skill training programs the students will have a smooth transition from aspiring students to young successful Engineers. The paper also

puts forward some suggestions for making the above initiatives more effective for developing the rural students fully equipped with relevant communication skills.

REFERENCES

1. Thacker A Rebecca and Yost A Christine (2002), "Training Students to become effective workplace team leaders" Team Performance Management.
2. Tobin P (2006), Managing Ourselves Leading Others". ICEL2006, Inspiring Leadership: Experiential learning and leadership development. Vol.2,
3. Kalam APJ & Srijanpal Singh (2011) Target 3 Billion PURA: Innovative solutions towards sustainable development, Penguin books.
4. The Marketing White Book -2012 -13 One stop guide for Marketers, Business world Publication 8th Edition, March 2012, pp 389-404.
5. V Sarvanan, Sustainable employability Skills for Engineering Professionals, The Indian Review of World Literature in English, Vol. 5 No.II July, 2009
6. Abdul Karim, A. M., Abdullah, N., Abdul Rahman, A. M., Mohd Noah, S. M., Wan Jaafar, W. M., Othman, J. Said, H. 2012. A Nationwide Comparative Study between Private and Public University Students, Soft Skills. Asia Pacific Educational Review.
7. Idrus, H., Mohd Dahan, H., Abdullah, N. 2009. Challenges in the Integration of Soft Skills in Teaching Technical Courses: Lecturers' Perspectives. Asian Journal of University Education. Jackson, J. F. L., Moore, J. L., Leon, R. A. (2010).
8. Male Under achievement in Education across the Globe: 3rd Edition. Peterson, P., Baker, E., McGaw, B., Editors. Elsevier Science.
9. Shakir, R. 2009. Soft Skills at the Malaysian Institutes of Higher Learning. Asia Pacific Education Review.
10. Wats, M., & Wats, R.K. (2009). Developing soft skills in students. The International Journal of Learning,