

The art of teaching communication through technology

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Abstract

Taking into account the value of English speaking in India, one can realize the huge demand English language scholars cater to. The demand of English teachers has risen manifold in the recent past. They are not only required to teach literature and language to its aspirants but also are hired by the technical institutes to teach communication to engineering students. Because of the need of the teachers in this field, teachers of language have tried to put in extra amount of hard work to study and teach a subject they never studied before, i.e. technical/business/professional communication. But the thing worth taking note of is that they have perfectly adapted themselves to the somewhat varied area of teaching that they have become a part of.

Keywords: taking, perfectly, adapted, demand, themselves

Introduction

In the path of adapting to the different field of learning, an issue with the instructors of English arise in the context of technology. Till recently, the people of "Arts" background were not as exposed to the technological advancements as the engineering students are. Though now it can be frankly said that even this stream of education is not untouched by technology because now students are taught to work on presentations, etc. But as this has happened only in the recent past, i.e. three to four years back (in Uttar Pradesh), teachers who did not get the privilege to learn it formally had to take help from various means to update their knowledge over it and make it their strength by aptly using it. Hence, another challenge that some teachers face is in adopting technology better than the ones who are formally learning it, and become adept enough to make use of the same to teach them. In the process, the teachers do face hurdles as not only do they have to learn something that they have never been taught, but also they have to keep themselves abreast with the recent advancements and changes taking place in the corporate sector. As the teachers' success depends upon the recruitment of their students, they have to put in every possible effort to train the students for the same. Students are taught the dos and don'ts of preparing themselves for the interviews, for participating in group discussions, etc. Teachers also prepare them for the life after getting the job; telling them how to communicate (both verbally and written) in the business environment.

Engineering institutes attach immense value to personality development of their students because of which they even run extra classes/ training sessions of personality development programmes; for which if needed they also invite corporate trainers. Communication teachers, on the other hand, work round the clock to live up to the expectations of the institutions, lending a helping hand to them when and how it is needed. To enhance the personality of students, it becomes necessary for the teacher to make use of various ways to help students in getting rid of their hesitation as the biggest fear of students is speaking in public. Certain ways to help them in overcoming this is by putting them into situations where their communication

skills can be enhanced, i.e. by making them appear for group discussions and presentations. In the case of presentations, teachers not only tell the students the communication skills they should use to prepare for it but also the techniques and ways they should use in making slides, i.e. the font size to be used, the number of sentences written per slide, etc. To provide training to the students, it is necessary for the teacher to have a command over it themselves. For this, teachers should take active part in conferences and seminars to keep themselves updated in context with the technology and methodology that is being used worldwide that would ultimately help them in training the students. Being a part of such conferences and seminars is a best source of learning, and sharing one's learning with others. This enhances the personality of the teacher, ultimately resulting in the enhancement of the personality of the students.

Learners are also provided a surrounding in which they could get an idea of the descriptive use of English language. For this, teachers employ different techniques. They take help of audio/visual aids to acquaint the learners with the accent of the native speakers; making it a substitute for one-to-one interaction with the native speakers of English. Whenever possible, teachers can provide the facility of watching English movies to the learners as this turns out to be the best medium for them to learn how to respond in different situations; to give apt answers for questions asked; and learn the ways to reply to puns, etc.

Making use of English speaking software is again a difficult task to be performed by English teachers. Using software requires having basic knowledge of computers. In case of the absence of the lab instructor, the teacher should be competent enough to carry out the task on his/her own, and should also be smart enough to check the progress of students on the software. Dealing with the software connected to the LAN is even more difficult as this increases the chances of problems like virus attack, causing systems to crash, shut down, etc., leading to chaos in the lab. To avoid such situations, teachers are expected to be "computer-friendly".

As a matter of fact, language instructors are expected to be

all-rounders. They should possess good communication skills; should be aware of recent advancements in the field of technology; should be smart enough to make use of those advancements and teach the same to the students; should be capable of working as a personality development trainer; should have practical knowledge of computers; and the list goes on. Although this is an inexhaustive list that demands a lot from the teacher, but the fact remains that this list could not be cut short due to the need of the students. Therefore, teachers teaching communication in engineering colleges have to put in additional hard work to live up to the expectations of the students and the management of the institutions.

Hence, the teachers of language not only face lot many hurdles to teach the language to its non-native speakers but, every now and then, also work on improving and enhancing communication skills of their students. This requires the teachers to remain alert and updated about the technology and make use of it in teaching language, as the language can best be taught by providing appropriate surroundings. Teachers should make appropriate use of the technology in hand and through it provide such surroundings to students that they get exposed to and learn the ways of using the language in day-to-day life. Finally, it will not be wrong to say that hard working English teachers are an asset for communication to management and engineering colleges. It does become easier for the students to interact and correspond in the business environment if they understood the relevance of being taught communication at the initial level itself and inculcate its rules and regulations in their writing and speech. Therefore, the competence of the English teacher depends solely upon the amount of hard work he/she puts in and his/her willingness to do so. No matter the task is herculean but at the end if the teacher succeeds in gaining mastery over the advanced technology and uses it aptly, the pleasure for him/her will be no less than finding honey in the rocks.

Reference

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