

Communication Skills and Engineers

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ABSTRACT

Communication skills are an important tool in the education of engineering graduates to cope up with the new era of global competition. The present Engineering curriculum is emphasized only on the development of technical knowledge and skills of students. However, in recent years, employers have strongly recognized that graduate engineers lack the required standard of communication skills, particularly when compared to the needs of industry worldwide. The present research article is trying to focus on the need to understand the importance of communication skills in competitive industrial world. It is time to recognize the need of enriching good communication skills with a professional degree. The Curriculum need to be structured with the issue and make suitable and appropriate changes.

1. Introduction

To be successful in any sphere, it is essential to know and understand how to communicate effectively. Particularly in the professional world, it is communication and its related skills decides person's career curve. The better one's communication skills, the higher are the chances to touch the zeal of success.

Communication in English is making a miracle in these days. It has the power to make the whole world rotate around it. The whole world has understood the importance of communication. With the help of developing technology, English has become a global language, the lingua franca of the world. Effective Communication skills in English considered highly important for personal as well as professional growth.

Globalization directly affects industry's need; a global engineer must have sound communication skills as well as good technical knowledge. For employers getting work done effectively is more important than having most knowledge. Now a day's organization gives more value to those graduates who have acquired a diverse set of skills in different environment. Besides subject knowledge, communication skills and ability to cope with the different types of personalities are equally important qualities needed for a successful engineer to work in the international environment. There is necessity that the new global engineer will be able to face challenges of the new millennium. "Industry needs a global engineer who ought to be able to effortlessly cross national and cultural boundaries." (Kitao K, 2015)

However this highlights the importance of effective communication skills. Thus this in turn directly affects engineering education. Universities/ colleges can play an important role in molding the future engineers to cope up with increasing needs of an industry. Unfortunately the engineers produced by the universities suffer largely due to lack of communication skills. Many students do not have the required skills and as a result they are not offered good jobs in the reputed multi-national companies. According to Riemer, the colleges and the educational institutes who trained their pupils in communication skills, those young graduates of new global world will able to meet the demand of corporates.

Therefore Engineering curriculum requires broader perspectives which will create an ability amongst graduates to handle the increasing pressure and challenges of 21st century. But unfortunately the traditional engineering curriculum is majorly focused on the development in students of technical knowledge and skills. Hence there is a growing expectation that engineering curriculum should directly meet the needs of industry standards and produce global engineers who will be good in technical skills as well as in non-technical mainly communication skills. Thus the need of the hour is to augment technical student's communication skills as promptly focused in an interview by Mr. Narayanan, Vice Chairman of Cognizant Technology Solutions and Chairman of the NASSCOM as he rightly commented that as per the present scenario, the availability of engineers is not an issue. The problem lies in the fact that only 25% of graduates are fit for the job or they are industry ready. As with the changing technology industries are rapidly changing to cope up with competitions. Hence syllabus and educational institutions need to change rapidly to cope up with the changing environment. Thus there is a great urge to redesign the curriculum and develop pedagogy to enrich various skills of communication of engineering graduates. At the same time there is a great responsibility on English language teacher to help the students in employment by developing their communication skills and make them employable. Changes in the curriculum will motivate students to indulge in the communication and will help them to cope up with the changing pedagogical culture. By using the various teaching methods for the subject, the teacher can improve the ability and communication skills of the students. Communication skills as a compulsory subject should be made to all the engineering streams. This will increase active participation of the students in learning activities and will be able to apply various skills in real life situations. While designing the course it should be taken in to consideration that most of the students hesitate to participate in the communication activities. Therefore, curriculum should be designed to highlight the increasing importance and a great need to learn English and its related skills in the global arena. By arranging talks of eminent personalities from engineering

field and CEO's from corporate sectors, student will come to know about the industries needs and challenges that today's engineers have to face.

Therefore, the curriculum should be framed in such a way that it should give full scope to interaction; person to person communication. Further syllabus should be directly link to real life situations as this will create a desire of participation and feeling of belongingness to real life situations. The curriculum will be more effective if it trained the students in listening and speaking skills rather just on reading and writing skills. Training in listening and speaking skills will make students capable for on- campus recruitment. Thus this highlights the role of English language teachers. The teacher's role is to help the students in overcoming the fears about communication and motivates them in creating positive attitude towards communication skills and its related activities. As R.Miller rightly pointed out that today teacher's role is not just limited to class room teaching only but as facilitator or motivator who will motivate the students to interact freely and express themselves without any hesitation barriers. Presentations, group discussions, debates, role plays are of great help to boost up the confidence of students.

Lastly, there is need to blend technology in communication. The revolution in information and technology has completely changed the way we communicate with others in the professional world. As the world of business is becoming more

competitive and result-oriented, the technical communication skills is becoming more important day by day. We prefer teleconferencing, videoconferencing, and voice mail for our communication. Therefore, while training students for effective communication, current technology should be fully used to make them more professionals. Students should be fully trained to use Web page design, graphic design, word, excel and PowerPoint. All this will help them to make their oral presentation effective.

2. Conclusion

Thus it can concluded, effective communication is very essential for professional success of the modern engineer. The present engineering curriculum needs to focus more on communication skills rather only on technical skills. Besides technical skills, effective communication skills are essential for successful career of the students. Thus universities recognizing the necessity of communication skills need to make suitable changes in the curriculum. At the same time teachers should take this as a challenge and help students to discover the great power of the English language.

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