

Communication Skills: A Core Competency for Elementary Students

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Abstract:

Our odds of success in many areas of life have been connected to the phrase 'Good Communication Skills.' Our language is a communication system, a thought medium, a vehicle for literary expression, a social institution, a source of political debate, and an element in nation development. Language is a form of communication that allows a kid to reflect on the past, comprehend the present, and anticipate the future. Of all the languages spoken today, English deserves to be considered a world language. It is the most commonly spoken language in the world, with English reaching one out of every four people on the planet. It is increasingly critical for the student to have a mastery of English that allows him to express himself in speech or writing in a far wider range of circumstances. What is essential is that we in India place a higher emphasis on our pupils' communication needs at the primary level.

Introduction:

The primary purpose of an English language teacher is to help students develop the ability to communicate effectively in English. Learners should be able to communicate effectively in English outside of the classroom for purposes of study, job, or recreation. Outside of class, we communicate because we want or need to, focusing on information and ideas rather than language and employing a wide range of syntax and vocabulary. The classroom is, without a doubt, a very specialized venue for communication. Communication is commonly separated into four main abilities in language teaching: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As a result, it is critical to mimic this natural integration of skills in the classroom.

Effective listening and reading now demand the same level of concentration and mental work as speaking and writing. Two popular fallacies are that they are more "communicative" than receptive skills, and that they form the foundation of the learning process itself. These assumptions are understandable to some extent. Conversation combines the abilities of listening and speaking. Outside of the classroom, we constantly integrate or switch between abilities. It is critical to mimic this spontaneous integration of skills as much as possible in the classroom. Greetings, inquiries, instructions, explanations, tales, and so on are likely to be the most natural and generally effective listening comprehension practice we can deliver in the classroom. When we use English in this manner on a regular basis, we provide learners with significant, real listening exercise. It serves a specific goal, is centered on the content rather than the language, and can be fairly different.

As the course progresses, we can broaden the range of English we use and urge our students to use it as much as feasible. When students use English for most classroom objectives, both with the teacher and with their peers, their listening practice time increases dramatically. Pair and group work can also provide a lot of listening and speaking practice. However, such classroom listening is fairly limited. It is restricted to the teacher's and students' discourse, among other things. As a result, bringing recorded speech from the outside world inside the classroom in a range of voices and dialects is quite beneficial. All methods of hearing can be included in recorded texts.

Why Communication Skills are important to the students:

Communication skills are important for elementary students because they are the foundation for academic success, social-emotional development, and lifelong success.

- **Academic success:** Students with strong communication skills can express their ideas clearly and concisely, both verbally and in writing. This allows them to participate in class discussions, ask questions, and seek help when needed. They can also present their thoughts and arguments persuasively, which leads to better grades on presentations, papers, and exams.
- **Social-emotional development:** Communication skills are essential for building and maintaining relationships, resolving conflicts, and managing emotions. Elementary students who are able to communicate effectively are better able to make friends, get along with their peers, and cope with stress and challenges.
- **Lifelong success:** Communication skills are essential for success in all areas of life, both personal and professional. Individuals with strong communication skills are better able to build relationships, negotiate, and persuade others. They are also better able to work effectively in teams and solve problems collaboratively.

How to develop Communication Skills in Elementary Students:

Good communication skills are essential for success in all areas of life, including school, work, and relationships. Elementary school is a prime time to develop these skills, as children are learning and growing rapidly. There are many things that parents and teachers can do to help elementary students develop their communication skills. We can help learners understand what we say in English by simplifying our speech and using gesture or mime. We cannot so easily get them to express themselves in English. Conversation is difficult for many learners because it takes place in 'real time' and involves various skills. Public speaking inhibits people. While learning to speak foreign language, we inevitably make mistakes. For all these reasons we should create relaxed atmosphere, accustom the learners to listening and speaking in natural interaction. Organize pair and group work, and avoid any obsession with accuracy.

We should encourage incidental classroom speaking, giving learners the expressions they need, and exploit every opportunity for conversation. Some fluency practice activities can be repeated and developed without any specific language focus. Many speaking activities have essentially communicative not linguistic objectives. These include unscripted role-plays or simulations, problem solving / decision taking activities, discussions and debates, and group projects.

Writing is usually more grammatically complete than speech. While spoken communication is supported by tone or voice, gesture and context, written text has to communicate through language alone. This usually means more carefully constructed sentences and a great range of vocabulary and grammar. As a consequence, writing may often be more complex than speech. On the other hand, readers and writers can take their own time, for example, readers can reread difficult passages, and writers can plan and edit various drafts of a text. Reading has much in common with listening, but the text is permanent, which may make it easier to understand. As with listening, our expectations and world knowledge, as well as our knowledge of the language help us make sense of the text.

Learners should be discouraged from reading or translating slowly word by word. Skimming and scanning are two approaches to reading which can be very useful for specific purposes (getting a general idea, or finding specific information). Full reading comprehension, which is needed for serious study or work, requires more knowledge of the language and higher-level reading skills. Like listening, reading is usually approached in three stages: pre-, while- and post - reading. Reading in itself helps to develop the skills and language knowledge necessary for efficient comprehension. But most learners will read outside the classroom only if they have interesting texts available at their level. In order to develop the skill of reading properly among the pupils, the teachers should have a thorough understanding of factors that effects the development of reading skill.

A child is considered under achiever if his reading ability is not on par with his intelligence. Under achievers read slowly when compared to intelligent children. Intelligence plays an important role in intensive and extensive reading. Individual differences play a major role in affecting reading skill. All children differ as much mentally, emotionally and physically. The emotional imbalances among the pupils affect their reading

habits negatively. Some pupils who are shy and submissive face difficult to read aloud before other children. Emotional factors affect a lot in development of reading skill. In general emotions are the product of perception. The care of an emotion is feeling. Some students are very active and others are inactive to read. Emotions are the prime movers which affect reading skill. A teacher can play a vital role in development of reading skill among pupils. Factors such as classroom organization, methods, reading habits, library facilities are needed to develop reading skills. Hence the teachers should provide good environment for the pupils to read. Teacher has to encourage the pupils to do intensive and extensive reading. The physical factors which are within the individuals are vision, hearing, speech defects, vocalizing, word by word reading, word blocking, word analysis. The physical factors, affect the reading skill. Poor vision is a distinct handicap in reading. Ability to hear sounds accurately is essential for learning reading skill. Unless the child hears properly, we cannot expect him to be an efficient reader; lastly speech defect is a prominent type of motor in co-ordination often associated with reading inefficiency.

The teacher should identify the physical problems of pupils and help the pupils to overcome them. Thus the teacher should cultivate correct speech habits among the pupils right from the beginning. Then only students will acquire the skill of reading properly. Writing is the language skill used least by the most of the people. It is also a skill usually learnt formally at school, and not handled well by many people, even in their mother tongue. It involves low level skill hand writing or typing, spelling, constructing grammatical sentences, punctuating) and high level cognitive skills (gathering ideas, organizing and sequencing, structuring, drafting and editing). Most writing in elementary English courses is largely to consolidate language learning. This can be developed at higher levels into the composition of written texts (for example stories, letters, and reports).

A little real composition can be started at lower levels with activities such as parallel compositions, parallel letters, and picture compositions. Composition work at higher levels can involve the whole class, or working in pairs or groups, as well as working individually. We have to involve learners in the correction of their own errors. In our everyday use of language, we are continually integrating the language skills or switching from one skill to another. It is best to reflect this integration when teaching a second or foreign language. The integration of skills can be the basis for whole lesson plans. This is usually done by building the plan around a theme. Course books often provide good material for this, which we can adapt or supplement in order to relate the theme more directly to our learners.

We could get the learners to discuss and then write compositions about possible solutions to the problems that they intend to deal with. We could ever organize a public meeting simulation, with the learners playing the roles of moderator, city mayor, head of police, head of the public transport, president of the Drivers' Association, and president of the School parents' Association. One activity that can form a good basis for integrating skills is a project. The learners, working in groups choose a topic they are interested in, and develop an extended piece of work, perhaps in form of a poster or a set of posters. Most teaching of a specific skill involves the use of other skills. Whole lesson plans can integrate skills around a single theme or topic. Group projects also involve the use of all the skills. Integrated skills lessons, and projects can be very interesting, enjoyable and satisfying for the learners. In the current environment, where English language is ruling the world of technology and administration, increasing number of students are voluntarily learning English, with several students opting to study in English medium schools /colleges.

Assessment of Communication Skills in Elementary Students

Communication skills are essential for success in school and in life. Elementary school is a critical time to develop these skills, as students are learning to interact with their peers, teachers, and other adults in a variety of settings. There are a number of ways to assess communication skills in elementary students. Some common methods include:

- **Observation:** Teachers can observe students during class discussions, group projects, and other activities to assess their communication skills. They can look for evidence of skills such as listening attentively, taking turns, speaking clearly, and expressing ideas thoughtfully.
- **Self-assessment:** Students can also be asked to reflect on their own communication skills. This can be done through surveys, interviews, or journaling.
- **Performance tasks:** Performance tasks allow students to demonstrate their communication skills in a real-world context. For example, students could be asked to give a presentation to the class, write a persuasive essay, or participate in a role-playing exercise.

When assessing communication skills, it is important to consider the student's age and developmental level. Elementary school students are still developing their communication skills, so it is important to be patient and supportive. Here are some specific examples of assessment activities that can be used to assess different aspects of communication skills in elementary students:

Listening skills:

- Ask students to listen to a story or passage and then answer comprehension questions.
- Have students participate in a listening activity where they have to follow instructions or complete a task based on what they hear.
- Observe students during class discussions and group projects to see if they are listening attentively to their peers and teachers.

Speaking skills:

- Ask students to give a presentation to the class or to a small group.
- Have students participate in a role-playing exercise or debate.
- Observe students during class discussions and group projects to see if they are speaking clearly and expressing their ideas thoughtfully.

Writing skills:

- Have students write a persuasive essay, a creative story, or a descriptive paragraph.
- Ask students to write a summary of a book or article they have read.
- Observe students' writing in their other classes to see if they are using a variety of sentence structures and vocabulary.

Nonverbal communication skills:

- Observe students during class discussions and group projects to see if they are making eye contact, using appropriate facial expressions, and maintaining good posture.
- Ask students to participate in a nonverbal communication activity, such as charades or a game of Simon Says.
- Have students reflect on their own nonverbal communication skills by asking them to think about how they use their body language and facial expressions to communicate with others.

It is important to note that communication skills are not static. Students develop new communication skills as they mature and have new experiences. Therefore, it is important to assess students' communication skills on a regular basis to track their progress and identify any areas where they may need additional support.

Conclusion:

The language used for communication is primarily determined by the communication topic, the relationship between the people in the act of communication, the medium of communication, the context/situation, and the intent. Facial expression, body posture, gestures, eye contact, and personal appearance are examples of non-linguistic skills. An excellent public speaker, group discussion leader, and anchor all make good use of conference skills. Role play can be used to teach students the skills required for participation in seminars, conferences, group discussions, and anchoring.

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