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Enhance English Communication Skills of Engineering students using Technology

Abstract

Communication is one of the most significant skills required for any profession. In the case of Engineering and Technology, communication skill is playing a vital role. In India, although English is taught as a second language, it is used as the medium of instruction in all Engineering and Technology institutions. Teaching English is a challenging for the professional students. But, computers and technologies have made the task easier, interesting and rewarding. The use of technology to teach a language such as English is at a relatively early stage in India. Efforts are currently under way to incorporate modern communication and multimedia technologies into teaching English and other languages.

Technology is becoming an integral part of our life and more prominent in the lifestyles of younger generations who grew up and immersed in technology. As technological innovations become pervasive, their transformative power spreads throughout society, and that includes in education.

Key words: Communication skill, Technology, innovation, Profession.

English is a global language in the sense that it helps in interlinking the people in other countries of the world. Because of rapid spread of Industrial development, science and technology, international trade and commerce and the close inter dependence of nations, English has become a world language. The whole world has accepted English language as the business or corporate medium of intellectual exchange. English language is one of the most valued possessions of men. It acts as a repository of wisdom. Among all other languages English, the international language plays an essential role as a propeller for the advancement of knowledge in different fields and as a telescope to view the dreams of the future. Technology has become more vital in our everyday life. Students are benefitted from today's technological advancements in the four skill areas (Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing). All the four skills are equally important and proficiency is necessary to become a good communicator. Among the four skills reading and listening are receptive skills and writing and speaking are productive skills. Hermida, J. (2009, September). We are heading towards digital nation where we overflow with information; but reading is the main way to take advantage of it. Reading helps to discover new things, creativity and develops imagination power. Reading is very important for day to day activities. Muthaiyan M, D. K. (2016, May) Non readers are at great loss. To quote Francis Bacon, "Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man." Engineering is a multidisciplinary profession where engineers have to coordinate and communicate effectively with a diverse team, as well as express complicated concepts to a non-technical crowd.

Engineering student's success in the campus recruitment is generally based on their communication skills. For developing communication skill English communication lab plays very important role. An English Communication Skills Lab is a facility where a student can learn a language with the help and guidance of a teacher through a system, to improve his or her speaking listening reading and writing capacity. The Communication Skills Lab can

receive inputs from recorded tapes, audios and videos, CDs, etc. The lab develops among the students a habit of listening speaking, reading and writing with accurate pronunciation. Students can record their own voice and play back for self evaluation. It acts as a platform for learning, practicing and producing language skills through interactive lessons and communicative mode of teaching. Language laboratories are for drills and for listening comprehension. It is also used for consolidating the learning.

The Communication Skills Lab focuses on the production and practice of sounds of language and familiarizes the students with the use of English in everyday situations and contexts. It exposes the students to a variety of self-instructional, learner-friendly modes of language learning. To help the students cultivate the habit of reading passages from the computer monitor and providing them with the required facility to face computer-based competitive exams such GRE, TOEFL, GMAT etc..Students will learn better pronunciation through stress on word accent, intonation, and rhythm. Through this communication skill lab, students train them to use language effectively to face interviews, group discussions, public speaking and initiate them into greater use of the computer in resume preparation, report writing, format making etc... To maintain good linguistic competence through accuracy in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary and enrich the discourse competence, to prepare the learner to be able to produce contextualize written text and speech. In Communication Skills Lab students will learn English-Vowels, Diphthongs and Consonants phonetic sounds, Stress, Intonation, Debate, Role Play, Telephonic Conversation, Just a minute etc.

Mobile learning is the ability to learn anywhere and at any time using a portable electronic device. Social media is a collective of online communication channels dedicated to community based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration. Education system has developed rapidly, technology has invaded our life, everyone has smart phones these days using WhatsApp, Face Book, Twitter, Instagram, Hiker and Twitter and it influence more in

language usage. Language is an evolving tool. It is naive to think that the language of social media is not having an effect on the way we use English in day-to-day life.

There are hundreds of mobile phone apps available and it is possible to find free options suited to students on their budget. Here are top five free apps that students can use for extra practice. British Council apps offer a huge choice for smart phones. Students can look at the options on their webpage and download the apps on Google Play, Apple's App Store or using QR Code. Through these App students will improve their grammar and vocabulary. Duolingo is a wonderful app and it won the 'Best education start-up award'. It is designed like a game and is pretty addictive. It is free, contains no adverts and is very effective and it has no adverts and contains more than two hundred two-minute video lessons on variety of topics e.g., social English, business English, travel English, common mistakes in English, idioms and phrases etc. Powowbox is a multi- level game in English. Once downloaded, it appears as English tracker. The first three levels are free. We have to spot the mistake if we get it wrong, we will receive a clear explanation. It is funny and easy to play. Real English offers a variety of apps at different levels business and conversation apps had beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. The apps are free, but they contain adverts. Each app contains 20 lessons that focus on specific grammar/ and vocabulary areas. Each lesson is made up of five parts. Students regularly using this means they will develop their skill very easily.

Whatsapp is the most common App used between the students, it doesn't need to have computer, and it is attainable and doesn't cost much. It is the most common App to the students and they always have their mobile phones and smart phones in their hands, beside it is cheap to activate the App and through this App we start a group and upload video, audio, and even go for discussion also. The impact of using WhatsApp in education will enhance students learning of English Language skills. Maria (2016) in her study: *Use of Whatsapp to Enhance Reading and Writing Skills at Undergraduate College Level* showed that using

Whatsapp helps to motivate the learners to improve their writing skills, though it is considered the most difficult of the four language skills and learners respond better when technology, especially the internet, is involved in their language learning. The internet which is available on the mobile phones of almost all the students is highly a motivating tool for L2 learning. Whatsapp facilitate students' discussion, and helps students overcome their fear of using the language and develop their listening, reading and writing skills and helps the students to believe in their abilities and to have confidence and increase motivation towards learning.

Conclusion

The current rapid rise of mobile usage and computer are very useful for teaching and learning. It stimulates the innovative use of technology for better teaching and learning experience. Teaching through technology has positive effect not only on learning but also for students' motivation. The laboratory provides a platform for learning, practicing and refining language skills through interactive method of teaching. The laboratory collection helps the learners gain aural understanding, verbal and written proficiency. The language laboratory affords broadcasting, recorded audio and video lessons and Internet-assisted materials in the aimed language. In the present competitive era teaching English to the Engineering and Technology students is a great challenge. Communication skills among these students can be developed by rigorous training programmes and lots of practice work. It requires persistent efforts. Due to the unprecedented importance given to good communication skills, it has become imperative on the part of students to master them. As teachers of English, it is incumbent upon us to help students discover the astonishing power of the English language and it is our bounden duty to play a pivotal role in developing the four skills of English language among the students of Engineering and Technology. Communication skill lab is an

elevating tool in learning these important language skills through technology in the present generation. It will be more effective if Communication skill lab is introduced from the elementary level.

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