

Communication Activities for Partially English Proficient (PEP) Students in Engineering Classroom

Dr. D. JAICHITHRA

*Associate professor, Department of English,
SMVEC, Puducherry*

Abstract

Communication is an art which becomes everyone's buff as it is essentially required to survive in this competitive world. It is the toughest task of the communication skills trainers to progress the LSRW skills of the learner. Students of second language learners who are partially English proficient felt shy to speak in front of other students who are better in their communication. Their medium of study in school days and less exposure to the English language would be the reason for their least performance in communication tasks. Being an engineer, one should be good in exploring ideas to others, so that their talent will be recognized by others. Most of the industries, IT sectors expect good speaking skill among its employers. Schools & colleges should enunciate the English competency skill among the students to shine in the corporate sectors as well as in the future world. The activities planned in the classroom should be in such a way that it should kindle the student's interests to speak. In this paper, I would like to suggest few activities to be conducted in classroom especially for the engineers which are different from the conventional activities.

Key words: *Communication, activities, personality, enhance, interview skills, narrative techniques*

Introduction

We are living in a society where the best communicator in English is viewed as a high professional. Engineers will get offers to go onsite in their career where English language plays a pivotal role in succeeding their career. Skilled professionals with good communication are expected by the recruiters. For the second language learners who are partially proficient in English language, it is a tougher task in fulfilling the expectations of the companies due to lack

of communication. Even though they are technically sound, they are not able to excel in their field due to the absence of communication skill. It would be better to segregate the communication challenged students from the classroom and conduct the communication activities so that they feel comfort to speak. In this paper, I have suggested some of the communication activities to be conducted in classroom to enhance the communication skill of students.

Communication Activities

A) Mock Press

The students are asked to choose a personality of any field or any profession of their own and have to assume themselves as the personality. Once if they have chosen the personality, they have to think and recollect some information about the person for 3 minutes speech.

After the confined time duration, the participant has to speak about the chosen personality without revealing the person's identity. Others have to listen and identify the person. By keenly observing the information of the speaker, the rest of the class prepares the relevant questions to be asked to the participant. At the end of the participant's speech, the listeners should arise minimum 5 relevant questions to the chosen personality. This technique advances the student's immediate responding mind set. This approach transfers the thinking ability of one's mother tongue in to the international language. There are no constraints in answering the questions as well as right or wrong answers. This task enhances the students' skill of tackling the questions and develops the ability to speak. The performance session begins in which one after another should participate in the task. In my experience, this task received warm welcome and good response from the students.

B) One liner

An individual student can perform at a time. Students are asked to frame single catchy sentence that should narrate the central core of the story. They are asked to write the topic on the black board. For E.g. **Father went, Flag came.** This line depicts the visualization of a soldier or an army person and also a father of a son, who lost his life in the war and returning home as a dead body with unfolded flag on his body.

E.g. **Bathroom attached, Family detached.** This says, in the present scenario, houses are constructed with attached bathrooms but the families are detached; mostly people are leading a nuclear family.

The students can share their own experience or by narrating a story or by saying a real life story of a person related to the one liner they framed. This task enhances one's imaginative skill along with narrative techniques.

C) Presentation (Core Companies)

Each student is assigned individual core company for presentation. They have to prepare 15 slides consisting of:

1. Name of the company with its logo
2. Infrastructure of the company
3. History of the company (Origin, Branches, CEO)
4. Nature of work in the company
5. Educational Qualification required to be recruited in the company
6. Recruitment process
7. Annual package
8. SWOT Analysis of the company

Suppose, if the class strength is 60, they will come to get knowledge about 60 companies. This kind of presentation upgrades the students' mindset to fix their determination and work diligently in order to get placed in their dream companies. And also they could come to know the expectations of the multinational companies to get placed in it.

D) Mock Interview

Students should prepare their resume' and display it on the screen through the projector. In this activity all the students except the interviewee can act as the HR. The participant should tell self introduction as it is the first and the foremost question asked in almost all the interview panels. Later, by seeing their Resume' the participant will be posed questions from

the areas of Interest, Co curricular, Extracurricular activities, Project, skills, personal traits etc., mentioned in the Resume'. This activity gives good exposure to the participants to tackle the questions in an efficient manner. The art of questioning skill is also enriched among the students. In order to raise questions to others, they refer HR questions and also prepare technical answers for the technical questions. This task removes shyness, fear, tension in facing the interviewer and also they feel free to converse.

E) Forum

General topic is assigned for open discussion in the classroom. The topic may be from current controversial issues or argumentative topic. Any students can share their valuable ideas, views related to the topic. This provides an opportunity for the students to agree or disagree other's point of view. This activity makes the session interactive and involves the entire students in the class to partake in the event. And also develops a healthy discussion among the students.

F) Contemporary Issues

Students are asked to choose any current issues from the society. They have to speak about the issue and suggest some ways to overcome the problems. This enhances the students' logical way of approaching the problems and providing solutions to it. It develops one's problem solving skills.

G) Instructions

Students are given instructions to draw diagrams using mathematical symbols and signs without showing it to their neighbors. Once if they complete drawing, they are asked to write instructions for their drawing. During the performance, a student with a partner is selected by the faculty handling the class. For e.g. Students from the I row and the last row have been chosen as a team by the staff in charge for performance. One student has to stand in front of the class facing the peer group, has to give instruction for the picture he has drawn and another student has to go near the board and draws the picture by listening the instructions of his teammate. If he draws the

picture correctly, it depicts that he is good in listening and another person is good in giving instructions. If it goes in the contrary way, feedback will be given to the participants by the classmates and the staff in charge for rectification.

H) Replicating the listening content

The tutor has to read a short story with message or short poem, or any message with morality. The students have to listen with full attention and reproduce it in their own words without losing the original message being read by the staff. This activity assists them to comprehend the message in their mother tongue and aides the art of communicating the listened message to others.

Conclusion

Along with the traditional communication tasks like Debate, Group Discussion, Extempore, Presentation, Conversation, the above suggested task would surely enhance the communication skills of the students. Student's mindset of criticizing inefficient speakers should be changed instead; they could encourage and speak to them in English that really acts as a boosting factor in them and do drastic changes in their communication skill.

References

- *50 Communication activities by Peter R Garber, Ice breakers and Exercises, 2008*
- *Active Listening 101: How to Turn Down Your Volume to Turn Up Your Communication Skills, by Emilia Hardman, 2012*
- *Art of Interview, An easy approach to success in all interviews by H.S. Bhatia, Ramesh publishing house, 2016*
- *The Communication Activities for adults by Felicity, Llewellyn, Jayne Comins, Judy Offiler, 2017.*