

Importance of Intrapersonal & Interpersonal Skills to Make Work Ready Professionals

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Abstract

All humans are blessed with a special ability to communicate amongst themselves. In order to communicate effectively in corporate world, a set of skills are essential; hard skills and soft skills. The specialized and technical skills are called hard skills whereas the interpersonal skills are called soft skills. The importance of both the skills cannot be denied in education in general and in engineering in particular. The paper mainly focuses on Intra & Interpersonal Skills in engineering students in regards to English as the medium of communication. The students who have taken their formal secondary education in their regional languages find it difficult to communicate in English. In the absence of spoken English and knowing only the technicality of the language will never serve the purpose of learning. Hence in order to make future workforce more equipped and result oriented; English as a language is the most important and effective tool to achieve the target.

Keywords: Communication, soft-skills, hard skills, intra& interpersonal skills.

1. Introduction

All humans are blessed with a special ability to communicate amongst themselves. In order to communicate a set of skills are used; hard skills and soft skills. The specialized and technical skills are called hard skills whereas the interpersonal skills are called soft skills. The hard skills in communication may be the technicality of language where as the soft skills may be the use of language in a particular context and by using a particular set of vocabulary. Soft skills again have a number of other skills that are used in our day-to-day life. The importance of both the skills cannot be denied in education in general and in engineering in particular. Soft skills include a variety of academic and non-academic written and spoken communication, inter-and intrapersonal communication skills, critical thinking ability, an ability to work in teams and an ability to analyze.^[1]

Intrapersonal skills & Interpersonal Skills in engineering students along with English as the medium of communication is one of the most essential elements in order to make them employable. Unfortunately the students who have taken their formal secondary education in their regional languages find it difficult to acquire English and it becomes a formidable challenge for them to acquire English as their medium of instruction or everyday communication and a major hurdle in their progress after engineering. The hard skills too loses its charm in the absence of English as knowing only the technicality or theory without putting it to practice defend the very purpose of learning and employability though it. Hence both the skills should be mastered without any bias. The focus here is on these skills in regards to English as their second language and its importance in engineering education that can be enhanced and make the students employable as per the requirement of the industries.

2. Inter Personal Communication Skill

Engineering is an important branch in academic and a variety of skills are used to accomplish the degree in engineering; namely hard-skills and soft skills that would suffice our purpose. Hard skills often comprise of the technical knowledge based on theory and practical mostly imparted through books. Soft-skills can be inculcated through practice via academic and non-academic written and spoken communication, interpersonal and intrapersonal communication skills. English language may be used by the engineering undergraduates as the only language of communication in academic and industry. People with strong interpersonal skills mainly focusing communication in English tends to grab opportunities through their communication skills and are more successful in their personal and professional lives.

“Effective Communication is the ability to decipher ideas to others successfully and it is also essential to engineering students. Communication skills are the deciding factor to recruitment of professionals in industry as well as promotion within the organization. So career without this skill could be seriously impaired [2].

“People work well in a team or group, and with others if they have good interpersonal skills. Their effective communication helps them to interact within a group with great confidence be it their family, friends, colleagues, customers or clients. It is therefore very essential in almost all areas of life, work, education and socially.”^[3]

To master of all these skills it is essential to have command over language that would be used in the day-to-day communication profession. Hence it becomes more urgent and necessary for the engineering professionals to master English first as their working language.

Teacher is often a role model for students and can always encourage the students to speak in English, no matter how good or correct or bad or incorrect they speak. The students observe the teachers and follow him/her in all her style and language use. This proves to be a very effective way to improve the spoken aspect of language and even the body language for the learners of English as second language. Students particularly from the rural areas or who have taken their formal education in their vernacular can be benefited at large. The students particularly who have not got any opportunity to communicate in English can now imitate his or her teacher in the initial stages and gain confidence to speak.

The teacher can guide the student in a number of ways to improve upon their grammar and vocabulary and the choice of right diction. Many a time the students fail to understand the use of is/are while referring to common nouns like Police and Government. A well versed teacher comes to the rescue of the student with her proper usage. Students who are more involved in the classroom teaching tend to pick up the pronunciation after that particular English teacher. Her stressing of the vowel sound in the use of ‘Sheep’ from ‘Ship’; ‘live’ and ‘leave’; ‘except’ and ‘accept’ distinguishes it for the learners, making it intelligible for grasping the correct word and not the other similar sounding word or words. Hence the process of learning-teaching can be completed without any problem.

“Teachers and young students are bounded by good communication that helps in improving the performance in examination of the students. In a survey at The William T. Harris School, some parents of the students were interviewed. As per the data collected and interpreted; it was found that the parents found the teachers very good in the classroom setting. The communication that takes place between the teacher and the students tends to enhance the performances of the students in their examinations. Followed by this survey the parents admitted candidly that they just not trust the publicized rankings of the teachers;

however for their surprise the scores of their wards and their impressions about the teachers had strong resemblance.”^[4]

As far as the pronunciations are concerned many are of the opinion that it hardly matter as how one pronounces a particular word as English is not our native language. But contrary to this view one must keep in mind the very purpose of leaning gets defended and should try to reduce the differences, as it matters in learning if it doesn't matter to an individual to pronounce 'Honour' as (ONOR) - /'ɒnə/ and Heir to (EIR) - /ɛ:/.

Another example can be cited in the choice of words. The use of right word in the right place is often neglected by the speaker and learner of English as second language – ESL. Instead of reduce, if decrease is used it may change the whole gamut of learning, inspite of the fact that both are synonyms. Learning of English as a second or foreign language; many strategies are to be adopted and interweaving of many such components help in mastering the language. The learners of EFL can use it is best to master these strategies and use them wisely in the process learning a foreign language. The most difficult and challenging part of learning a new language is vocabulary. Memorizing, retaining the words often play crucial role in learning of English as a foreign language and using vocabulary aptly is a very difficult task on the part of EFL. Nevertheless the learners make use of specific vocabulary learning strategies which are more related to the learner inner abilities and capabilities. On the other hand it is also true that if the learner has inter-personal skills more dominant and uses them logically, he/she normally make use of those strategies more aptly than a normally social person with less interpersonal skills.^[5]

Example: The medicine reduces the infection within hours.

The sales of medicines have decreased.

Another syntactic error can change the complete meaning of the sentence. The native speaker of the language use language without fear of the syntax but the learners of English as second language often get confused in the use of correct preposition, articles or punctuation etc. A single comma changes the complete meaning of the sentence. The examples below can suffice the purpose of understanding syntax first and then its application.

Example: Correction in Preposition:

1) Have you decided of what you want?

Have you decided what you want?

2) Is he married with her?

Is he married to her?

3) I am married with three kids.

I am married, with three kids.

4) She has married **with/to** an American man.

She has married an American man.

* (No preposition should be used here).

Nevertheless preposition is often used in the above cited example and can be an error. But such errors can be rectified if the learner of English uses or listens the near to appropriate if not the most appropriate English as the second language learner.

A greater fact is that the teacher influences the speech of the learner so much so that the students even tend to follow the same accent that of a teacher. Hence more accurate use of language along with up to the mark pronunciation can help in enhancing the leaning-teaching process for both and the teachers and students can be benefitted by their close observation during teaching and learning process, which serves as an apt example of the use of interpersonal skills in communication.

Secondly it is observed through various studies that the interaction between a teacher and the students is much influenced than taught. This influence is a slow but very effective process. The teacher's nonverbal and verbal behavior, outside of class room interaction and the students' level of motivation and proficiency is much persuaded by the teacher which results fruitful in the teaching learning process.

The same idea explains by Henry Ford: "The secret of success in life, it lies in the ability to put yourself in the other person's place and to see things from his point of view –as well as your own."^[6]

Yet another very powerful tool that is normally used is nonverbal communication which serves as a bridge between a teacher and a student is affection, willingness, sharing and attitude of a teacher towards the students. All these enhance the teaching-learning process and use of interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills become an effective instrument without actually bringing it on the scene. The concept of "immediacy" is the recognition of physical, emotional, or psychological proximity generated by positive communicative behavior in the pedagogical relationship between teachers and students. In instructional communication, interpersonal communication are of tremendous help in the teaching –learning process.^[7]

3. Intrapersonal Communication Skills:

There are certain things that cannot be seen but felt, for example emotions like love and fear, relationships and teaching cannot be seen with the bare eyes. They are made visible either through interpersonal or intrapersonal communication. Such emotions are felt and the end result is derived by the net result or outcome. This is also true in the teaching learning context. The interdependency is the manifestation of such intrapersonal communication. As far as the teaching of English is concerned most abstract nouns may be linked to intrapersonal communication. It mostly attributes to self talk which can also be used in learning and teaching purpose.

"Intrapersonal skills are those communications skills that happen within a person's own mind, and are not interpersonal skills i.e. interactions with other people or personalities. Many a times a positive internal dialogue that occurs in within the mind and initiates an appropriate reaction and attitude as far as Intrapersonal skills are concerned. Intrapersonal skills are also used to sort out and evaluate situations and proposals with the help of meditation, prayers, reaction, visualization and affirmations. Intrapersonal skills are most known to have the capacity to create an awareness of the inner dialogue that takes place within a person's mind."^[8]

There are many who happen to read aloud and repeat things after someone or after one's own self. Such learning is often self motivated and yields good results. While dealing with English language the recitation of poems and songs help in rote learning. This method helps in retention of learning the rules of spelling, grammar and apt use of vocabulary while answering an exam

It is also applicable for the students too, be it from the fraternity of Engineering or from any other pedagogical learning. The students are the future managers and if they are appropriately groomed there are high chances that they lead the organizations or their own business in the right and fruitful direction. This would lead to accomplish all good that is expected from education be it engineering or any other stream, as it is the sole purpose of education. Moreover a proper channelizing of the personality with the help of these skills will always yield results beyond our expectations giving respite to the anxieties that prop up in the absence of or the failure of communication. And in regards to English as it is the only

language of communication. Another important analysis of intrapersonal skills is given by Cox wherein he conducted a study of selected business managers and found that communication was reported to be the greatest hurdle by 80% of the respondents.^[9]

He further explains with the help of an organization setup: For effective decision-making, it is necessary that managers, who are far removed from actual operations, develop adequate information channels. Moreover, as a manager's wide span of supervision influences numerous individuals and activities, an information bottleneck will adversely affect a wide area of productivity, morale and profit. As most of the links in the communication chain are obtained in the managerial group, a lot of distraction, confusion, delay and allied problems in work settings may stem from breakdowns in intra-management communication. Last but not least, as managers themselves have needs for communication and understanding, like other members in the organization, intra-management communication is required for its own sake, besides being a mean of informing employees.^{”[10]}

These skills often allows students to view themselves as a behavioral entity with intuitive, adaptive, and independent nature that is often more result oriented than just going by the norms of the society. They are more proficient in examining and controlling things around them and also the very reason that they create a ripple in the society with their extra ordinary thinking.

Both these skills are a part and partial of Soft Skills which are essential for everyone in business or on job. Nonetheless it could be summed up that anyone interacting with other person in any situation should make or know soft skills. It's often interpreted that only person in job requires such skills and that too they have to be trained to perform as per the requirement of the companies which may vary from one to another, depending on what type of company it is and exactly caters which specific sector. This may be true to a certain extent but not the whole truth. Soft skills are required in almost all walks of life. For professionals it needs to be honed and perfected to be successful. Soft Skills play important role in one's success in life as well as in profession. “It depends – every employer seeks a different mix of skills and experience from a prospective employee. Nonetheless what the company demands consistently: Soft Skills.”^[11]

The fact that an amalgamation of the interpersonal and intrapersonal is what gives and edge over other skills and soft skills are nothing but an intrigal part of all the set skills. More often it is found that a highly skilled person is in high demand everywhere; that includes soft skills too.

There are many advantages of intrapersonal communication skills. Almost all the great personalities across the world have had very defined sets of these skills and the use of these skills has marked them differently. The talent these personalities exhibit in decision making is what normally that fails a commoner in his thinking or his behavior. By honing the skills one can definitely achieve what one wants, be a student or a corporate personal. Hence it becomes more important to introduce these skills to the engineering students in particular and others in general.

Uses of Interpersonal & Intrapersonal Skills in Communication:

- It is very helpful in communicating within the group
- It helps in maintaining amiable relation within the group
- It boosts the confidence of the person involved in the group
- A proper understanding is maintained amongst the members
- Quality of work can be improved
- It helps in developing Positive attitude in the individual

- It helps in the overall development of the organization and the individual
- It abridges all the communication gap within the origination and amongst the individual
- It leads to progress both of the individual and the organization.

Conclusion:

It would be fruitful to utilize both interpersonal skills and intra personal skills for the benefit of the individual and the organization. It cannot be denied that an intermingling of both the skills help in developing a personality and thereby making future workforce more equipped and appropriately skilled to get the targeted result. English as language is the most important and effective tool in communication and it cannot be denied that and appropriate knowledge of the language helps in achieving the target. Institutes need to change their focus from traditional method to English based soft skills to make students employable.

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