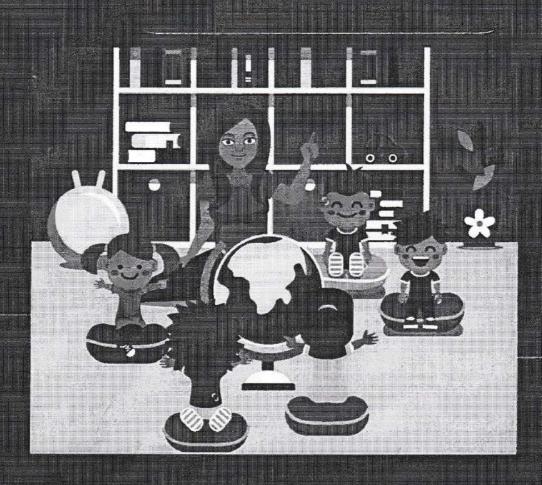# ST. XAVIER'S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (AUTONOMOUS)

(Re-accredited (3rd Cycle) by NAAC at 'A' Grade with CGPA: 3.67)

PALAYAMKOTTAI - 627002.

PRODUCING EMPLOYABLE TEACHERS:
PROSPECTS, CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

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Barriers to Effective Human Communication

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Introduction

Communication is a general phenomenon. Wherever life exists, communication also exists. Keeping in mind the changes that take place in the corporate world, communication has become an important tool in the management analysis. Communication has become a vital aspect of the managerial process. In fact, success of any business depends upon a proper communication system.

Definition of Communication Skills

✓ Communication skills includes lip reading, finger-spelling, sign language; for interpersonal skills use, interpersonal relations.

✓ Communication skills is the ability to use language (receptive) and express (expressive) information.

Barriers to Effective Human Communication

Communication is the key factor in the success of any organization. When it comes to effective communication, there are certain barriers that every organization faces. People often feel that communication is as easy and simple as it sounds. No doubt, but what makes it complex, difficult and frustrating are the barriers that come in its way. Some of these barriers are mentioned below.

Physical Barriers: Physical barriers are often due to the nature of the environment. Thus, for example, the natural barrier which exists, if staff are located in different buildings or on different sites. Likewise, poor or outdated equipment, particularly the failure of management to introduce new technology, may also cause problems. Staff shortages are another factor which frequently causes communication difficulties for an organization. Whilst distractions like background noise, poor lighting or an environment which is too hot or cold can all affect people's morale and concentration, which in turn interfere with effective communication.

System Design: System design faults refer to problems with the structures or systems in place in an organization. Examples might include an organizational structure which is unclear and therefore makes it confusing to know who to communicate with. Other examples could be inefficient or inappropriate information systems, a lack of supervision or training, and a lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities which can lead to staff being uncertain about what is expected of them.

Attitudinal Barriers: Attitudinal barriers come about as a result of problems with staff in an organization. These may be brought about, for example, by such factors as poor management, lack of consultation with employees, personality conflicts which can result in people delaying or refusing to communicate, the personal attitudes of individual employees which may be due to lack of motivation or dissatisfaction at work, brought about by insufficient training to enable them to carry out

particular tasks, or just resistance to change due to entrenched attitudes and ideas.

Ambiguity of Words/Phrases: Words sounding the same but having different meaning can convey a different meaning altogether. Hence the communicator must ensure that the receiver receives the same meaning. It would be better if such words can be avoided by using alternatives.

*Individual Linguistic Ability:*The use of difficult or inappropriate words in communication can prevent people from understanding the message. Poorly explained or misunderstood messages can also result in confusion. We can all think of situations where we have listened to something explained which we just could not grasp. Interestingly, however, research in communication has shown that confusion can lend legitimacy to research when persuasion fails.

Physiological Barriers: Physiological barriers may result from individuals' personal discomfort, caused-for example-by ill health, poor eyesight or hearing difficulties.

Presentation of Information: It is also important to aid understanding. Simply put, the communicator must consider the audience before making the presentation itself and in cases where it is not possible the presenter can at least try to simplify his/her vocabulary so that majority can understand.

Tips for Improving Communication Skills

*Empathy:*Empathy is trying to see things from the point-of-view of others. When communicating with others, try not to be judgemental or biased by preconceived ideas or beliefs - instead view situations and responses from the other person's perspective. Stay in tune with your own emotions to help enable you to understand the emotions of others. If appropriate, offer your personal viewpoint clearly and honestly to avoid confusion. Bear in mind that some subjects might be taboo or too emotionally stressful for others to discuss.

Encourage: Offer words and actions of encouragement, as well as praise, to others. Make other people feel welcome, wanted, valued and appreciated in your communications. If you let others know that they are valued, they are much more likely to give you their best. Try to ensure that everyone involved in an interaction or communication is included through effective body language and the use of open questions.

Learn to Listen: Listening is not the same as hearing; learn to listen not only to the words being spoken but how they are being spoken and the non-verbal messages sent with them. Use the techniques of clarification and reflection to confirm what the other person has said and avoid any confusion. Try not to think about what to say next whist listening; instead clear your mind and focus on the message being received. Your friends, colleagues and other acquaintances will appreciate good listening skills.

Be Aware of Others' Emotions: Be sympathetic to other people's misfortunes and congratulate their positive landmarks. To do this you need to be aware of what is going on in other people's lives. Make and maintain eye contact and use first names where appropriate. Do not be afraid to ask others for their opinions as this will help to make them feel valued. Consider the emotional effect of what you are saying and communicate within the norms of behaviour acceptable to the other person.

Treat People Equally: Always aim to communicate on an equal basis and avoid patronising people. Do not talk about others behind their backs and try not to develop favourites: by treating people as your equal and also equal to each other you will build trust and respect. Check that people understand what you have said to avoid confusion and negative feelings. Encourage open and honest feedback from the receiver to ensure your message is understood and to avoid the receiver instead feeding back what they think you want to hear. If confidentiality is an issue, make sure its boundaries are known and ensure its maintenance.

Attempt to Resolve Conflict: Learn to troubleshoot and resolve problems and conflicts as they arise. Learn how to be an effective mediator and negotiator. Use your listening skills to hear and understand both sides of any argument - encourage and facilitate people to talk to each other. Try not to be biased or judgemental but instead ease the way for conflict resolution.

Communicate Effectively: Do not say the first thing that comes into your mind but instead take a moment and pay close attention to what you say and how you say it. Focus on the meaning of what you want to communicate. Aim to increase understanding by considering how your message might be received by the other person. By communicating clearly, you can help avoid misunderstandings and potential conflict with others. By speaking eloquently you will come across as more intelligent and mature. Also be aware of the messages you are sending via non-verbal channels: make eye contact and avoid defensive body language. Present information in a way that its meaning can be clearly understood. Pay particular attention to differences in culture, past experiences, attitudes and abilities before conveying your message. Avoid jargon and over-complicated language; explain things as simply as possible. Request clarification if unclear about a message. Always avoid racist and sexist terms or any language that may cause offence.

Use Humour: Laughing releases endorphins that can help relieve stress and anxiety; most people like to laugh and will feel drawn to somebody who can make them laugh. Don't be afraid to be funny or clever, but do ensure your humour is appropriate to the situation. Use your sense of humour to break the ice, to lower barriers and gain the affection of others. By using appropriate humour you will be perceived as more charismatic.

Maintain a Positive Attitude and Smile: Few people want to be around someone who is frequently miserable. Do your best to be friendly, upbeat and positive with other people. Maintain a positive, cheerful attitude to life: when things do not go to plan, stay optimistic and learn from your mistakes. If you smile often and stay cheerful, people are more likely to respond positively to you.

Only complain when absolutely necessary: People will not be drawn to you if you are constantly complaining. If something makes you angry or upset, wait for a few hours and calm down before taking action. If you do complain, do so calmly, try to find some positive aspects to the situation and avoid giving unnecessary criticism.

Rules for Effective Communication

i.   Listen carefully when others are clarifying their thoughts. Don't interrupt others in-between.

ii.   Do not speak too fast. Slow down while speaking.

iii.   Speak clearly. Your pronunciation should be loud and clear.

iv.   Make eye contact with whom you are speaking. This increases chances of mutual agreement.

Conclusion

Communication skills is generally understood to be the art or technique of persuasion through the use of oral language and written language. To understand the basic of communication skills, one needs to understand that communication is one of those words that is most hyped in contemporary culture. It includes a large number of experiences, actions and events; also a variety of happening and meanings, as well as technologies. This, means that every platform for communicating is a communication event. This includes formal meeting, seminars, workshops, trade fairs, etc. Then there are the communication media such as radio, TV, newspapers, etc. The communication technologies include pagers, phones, etc.

The communication professionals include advertisers, journalists, camera crew. The process of understanding what is in the minds of others when expressed and making the others understand what we express.**KISS** principle in communication: Keep It Short and Sweet

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