

EVALUATION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A PRE- SERVICE TEACHER COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME IN THE CLASSROOM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WEST BENGAL

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Abstract:

The purpose of the current study was to determine the efficacy of a program for pre-service teachers to strengthen their classroom communication abilities. One of the most crucial and unavoidable elements of effective teaching is communication, especially in the classroom. Learning can be soothingly smooth if the teacher can effectively communicate the material; on the other hand, if the teacher lacks communication skills, even though they are subject matter experts, they not only impede the learners' overall development but also slow down the learning process. In this article, evaluation on the effectiveness of a pre- service teacher communication programme in the classroom with special reference to West Bengal has been discussed.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Pre-Service Teacher, Communication, Programme, Classroom, West Bengal

Introduction:

Human communication occurs everywhere. It is present everywhere and has a significant influence on how communication situations play out. [1] The communication methods used in the classroom develop and maintain everything that occurs. Communication interactions between teachers and students are how lesson plans, instructional strategies, disciplinary tactics, and justifications and critiques of student work are all done. Although communication is dynamic and complex, if we carefully study it in "chunks" and apply what we learn to actual situations, we may learn and understand it. [2] A key component of the teaching and learning process is communication. Although having information is valuable in and of itself, there is no assurance that someone will be able to share that knowledge with others. The vital link between a knowledgeable teacher and a ready student is communication. The objectives of almost all curriculum frameworks and policy papers are to maximize human potential. The importance of communication is not openly emphasized in any of these publications, but it is obvious that it is a necessary component for passing any of the educational policy documents' milestones. In any educational context, communication plays a crucial and necessary role. As a result, formal education is not only required but also imperative. The job of the teacher has changed over time and will continue to do so. Now, the teacher is also a broker of experiences in addition to information. [3] Giving instructions is a way of fostering a learning environment. He is in charge of setting the tone in the classroom. An odd or ordinary personality produces erratic experiences, just as an appealing personality results in a good encounter. In order to control classroom dynamics, the teacher's personality and, consequently, his or her communicative competence are crucial factors. [4] In the twenty-first century, the teacher not only serves as a source of information but also as a performer, acting as a transformative force. But how can a performer (teacher) bring about transformation without possessing performing abilities (communication abilities)? Therefore, there is a critical need for intensive classroom communication skills training in institutions for pre-service teachers. [5] Establishing affective and cognitively efficient communication relationships with pupils is part of the process of teaching. Effective communicators also make effective teachers. These teachers are aware that communication and learning are inextricably linked and that learners' attitudes toward learning are a complicated sum of verbal and nonverbal cues regarding the subject, the teacher, and

themselves. Because they understand that teaching and learning are not always synonymous, these educators place more emphasis on what the students have learned than on what they have taught. They deliberate and plan what should be communicated as well as how it should be communicated. [6] These abilities and insights are not first produced organically. Therefore, those who choose the holy profession of teaching must have professional instruction in classroom communication. The desire to improve students' lives is the primary motivation for entering the teaching profession. But as time goes on, this sacred longing dwindles and eventually disappears. Because of this, many teachers view their work as a "burden." This fact is revealed in a variety of ways, but mostly through their verbal and nonverbal cues, particularly their postures, gestures, and tones of voice during classroom interactions. It is frequently noted that whatever he or she teaches is out of sync with his or her physicality. Simply put, a lot of teachers don't feel at ease in their own skin. [7] Due to many factors, they are restless, anxious, or confused. The instructor may have a lot of issues, but he or she should not knowingly or unknowingly [through words or body language] betray those issues in the classroom. Therefore, training in classroom communication should be provided, with a particular emphasis on nonverbal communication, to make teachers more aware of their body language in the classroom. Teachers must keep in mind that pupils have fears and whims while viewing things from their point of view. As a result, they have a shorter attention span than the teacher. In this challenging circumstance, the teacher must instruct in a way that helps the students feel engaged with the subject matter and eager to learn. [8] Whatever approach a teacher chooses, he must be prepared to present it with the necessary verbal and nonverbal abilities. Both the teacher and the students must be able to transmit and receive messages more correctly for effective and impactful communication to take place in today's classrooms. A competent teacher listens carefully—not just to the words that are said but also to the nonverbal cues that indicate agreement or disagreement, focus or inattention, interest or boredom, and the need to be heard. [9] Additionally, this necessitates investigation and comprehensive training for instructors in effective classroom communication. The researcher, who is also a teacher educator, hoped that this study would make a little addition to teacher education, particularly in the area of instructional communication, while also providing some deep professional satisfaction.

The goal of the study was to give future teachers more effective classroom communication techniques. Since both verbal and nonverbal communication are crucial components of classroom communication, the emphasis was on their growth. The investigation also had the goal of ascertaining its own efficacy. The investigator also wanted to learn more about the potential scope of related future research projects. One of the goals of the study was to provide curriculum writers and syllabus writers with recommendations on classroom communication in pre-teacher service training. [10] As a result, the study's objective was clear. The researcher wished to evaluate the efficacy of a program on classroom communication skills for aspiring teachers. Thus, the researcher wished to make a contribution to the educational system, particularly to the preparation of future teachers. The students' learning experiences would be pleasurable and lasting if the teachers had the necessary skills to explain the material clearly.

Research Methodology:

Hypothesis:

To assess its viability, the following hypothesis was developed:

H₀= There is no significant difference in the pre-service classroom communication abilities between the control and the experimental groups before and after the program.

H₁= There is a significant difference in the pre-service classroom communication abilities between the control and the experimental groups before and after the program.

Study Design:

The current research was experimental. The investigator used a pre-test and post-test to deal with the concerned groups because of the nature of the current study. In this design, pre-tests for classroom communication skills were given to the experimental group and the control group. Regarding the communication skills training program in the classroom, the experimental group received special consideration. The both the groups were post-tested. Two

selected Institutes of Teacher Education in West Bengal were taken as the experimental group and the control group. For the present study, the experimental group and the control group consisted of the intact groups of Methods of Teaching of English, each.

Duration of the Experiment:

In the present study, the intervention programme (i.e., a programme for the development of classroom communication skills for the pre-service teachers) was carried out for nearly three months.

Population of the Study:

The population of the present study comprised all the pre-service teachers of all the Teacher Education Institutes in West Bengal.

Sample of the Study:

For the purpose of feasibility, two groups of pre-service teachers were selected. One group was the control group, and the other group was the experimental one. Purposive sampling technique was employed to identify the group.

Since the selected Teacher Education Institutes were of English Medium; the intervention programme was conducted in the English language only. Throughout the intervention, the Heads and Faculty members showed a willingness to make necessary arrangements and provided full support.

The purpose of the study was to develop classroom communication skills for the pre-service teachers. Since these pre-service teachers will take care of future of thousands of students in their career, they should be better equipped with excellent classroom communication skills. Besides subject knowledge, attitude to teach, concern for students, apt communication is the greatest asset to those who want to touch the heart by teaching.

Research Tools:

The following tools were employed to collect the necessary quantitative and qualitative data:

1. Tools used to collect general information about the participants
 - a. Information Schedule
2. Tools used to collect quantitative data
 - a. Both the Pre-tests and Post-tests of the control and the experimental group
 - b. Reaction Scale for the feedback of the programme
3. Tools used to collect qualitative data
 - a. Casual Observation
 - b. Anecdotal Records
 - c. Feedback from the Participants on a Continuous Basis
 - d. Portfolio for Each Candidate

Preparation of Tools:

Pre-Test and Post-Test

For assessing, whether there was any development in classroom communication for the pre-service teachers, a null hypothesis was formulated. To test this hypothesis, both pre-test and post-test for the control group and the experimental group were administered using 50 marks tests to assess the overall development in classroom communication in which 30 marks questions were multiple choice questions, and 20 marks questions were descriptive. As the investigator employed quasi-experimental design, there was no harm in using the same test as pre-test and post-test. Statistical measures used were Mean, Standard Deviation, Standard Error, and Mann-Whitney U. The statistical analysis was done both manually and on SPSS package on the collected data.

Casual Observation

Casual observation technique was used as a procedure to complement the data collected through other procedures. Using this technique, the investigator could analyze the process of the scheduled programme. The investigator could locate behavioural and attitudinal changes in the pre-service teachers as feedback to his/her intervention. Casual observation done by the investigator was without any pre-arranged schedules for observation and a scoring system. It was just to have glimpses of what was happening. The investigator as the full-time observer knew the intervention programme well so it was feasible for the investigator to locate and to note down actual behaviours of the participants –both verbally as well as non-verbally-regarding the intervention. Thus, casual observation provided the detailed and confidential record and a brief narration of the behaviour of the participants which was very useful in preparing an individual portfolio of each participant.

Anecdotal Records

Anecdotal records are running descriptions of the actual examples of typical behaviours of the participants as observed by the investigator. Anecdotes capture the richness and complexity of the moment as the participants interact with one another and with materials. These records of participants' behaviour accumulated over time enhance the investigator's understanding of the individual participant as patterns or profiles begin to emerge. Behaviour changes can be tracked and documented, and placed in the participants' portfolio.

Data Analysis, Interpretation and Results:

To unearth the latent facts from the data collected for the research study, analysis of the data is a necessity. It means examining the data from as many angles as you can in order to discover new information and build links between the variables.

The data collected from the pre- and post-tests of the control and experimental groups, as well as the reaction scale, were quantitatively analyzed. This study produced qualitative data in addition to quantitative data, such as causal observations, anecdotal records, etc. Using

individual portfolio maintenance as a research technique, all the data gathered through observation during the implementation of the classroom communication development program was qualitatively examined. This method was used to evaluate the intervention program's success in improving students' communication skills in the classroom and determine whether it was consistent with the findings of a quantitative analysis of the data collected from the pre- and post-test results. Utilizing these individual portfolios served as indirect corroboration for the conclusions drawn from the quantitative data.

The goal of the current study was to assess the degree to which the implementation program has contributed to improvement in pre-service teachers' classroom communication abilities. The experimental group underwent the program for three months as part of the study's quasi-experimental design. Methods both quantitative and qualitative were used to collect the data. Results from the control group and the experimental group's pre- and post-tests were compared. It used the Mann-Whitney U test. A reaction scale was used to seek the further evidence regarding the improvement through the programme. Communication skills are qualitative by nature so qualitative techniques were also employed. The investigator carefully took detailed field notes, and since the sample size was small, the individual portfolio was prepared for each participant. Besides this, analysis of results of Practice Teaching Phase I and II was conducted to get external validation for the effectiveness of the programme. The results were based on the following analysis and interpretation:

- Quantitative Analysis and Interpretations of the Data Obtained Using Results of Pre-Tests and Post-Tests
- Comparison of the Experimental Group and Control Group in the Pre-Test and Post-Test
- Mann-Whitney U Test and its Interpretation
- Analysis of Practice Teaching Phase I and II
- Qualitative Analysis and Interpretation of the Data Obtained
- Individual Portfolio of Each Participant of the Experimental Group
- Analysis and Interpretation of the Casual Observation and Anecdotal Records
- Analysis and Interpretation of the Feedback Obtained Through Reaction Scale

- Statement-Wise Interpretation of Analysis
- Overall Interpretation of Analysis of Reaction Scale

Through the intervention program that was made available to them, the group experimental classroom communication skills have improved, according to analyses and interpretations of the data acquired in the current study utilizing various tools and approaches. Teachers who are adept at communication are a value to both the institution and society at large. The ability to communicate effectively in class is not only expected, but also necessary for the development of a culture that is rich in learning.

Conclusion:

In the era of globalization and societal transformation, where the world is in constant flux, the role of the teacher has also been changing. Earlier the teacher was largely the distributor of information but with the growing technology and complex social networking, s/he has to be now the dealer in experiences as well. It means now teachers are not only informers but also performers as their duty is not only to INFORM but TRANSFORM.

While positive transformation in students is a key goal of quality education and despite massive spending on teachers in teacher training (both pre-service and in-service), the results are not satisfactory. Moreover, that is some food for thought. Why after much efforts and expenditure, the result is not satisfactory? What are the key challenges in teacher-education which hamper the growth of teachers and eventually the quality of education? One of the factors is the quality of communication that teachers do in the classroom. If teachers are effective and efficient at communication coupled with their subject mastery, they can be the ultimate delight to the learners. On the contrary, the teachers who are incompetent to communicate their message effectively, are a liability to the institution.

Teaching implies touching learners' lives forever. When we really 'teach' with the heart and mind applying proper strategies, learning takes place rapidly and enthusiastically. THE BASIC DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GOOD TEACHER AND THE PRO- ACTIVE TEACHER

IS THE DEGREE TO WHICH HE/SHE IS READY TO CHANGE ONESELF. While dealing with the learners in the classroom, the teacher needs to carry a professional image with high-touch care.

Many a time it is not enough to have good feelings towards someone; we need to ‘show’ our good intentions to others. That is where the communication skills are required. Words are not enough to express our thoughts fully so we need a separate channel which can help us to communicate better. Nonverbal communication fulfils this gap. Mastery over both the verbal and nonverbal expressions are the assurance of success in any field. Polished personality with appropriate communication skills is not only desirable but also inevitable in the current times of information explosion –especially in the field of teaching.

The present work is an endeavour to ignite this consciousness among the teachers-to- be. The present programme was a tiny attempt to make the teaching community aware about the need and importance of the inevitable but often-neglected in professional preparedness, viz. communication skills.

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