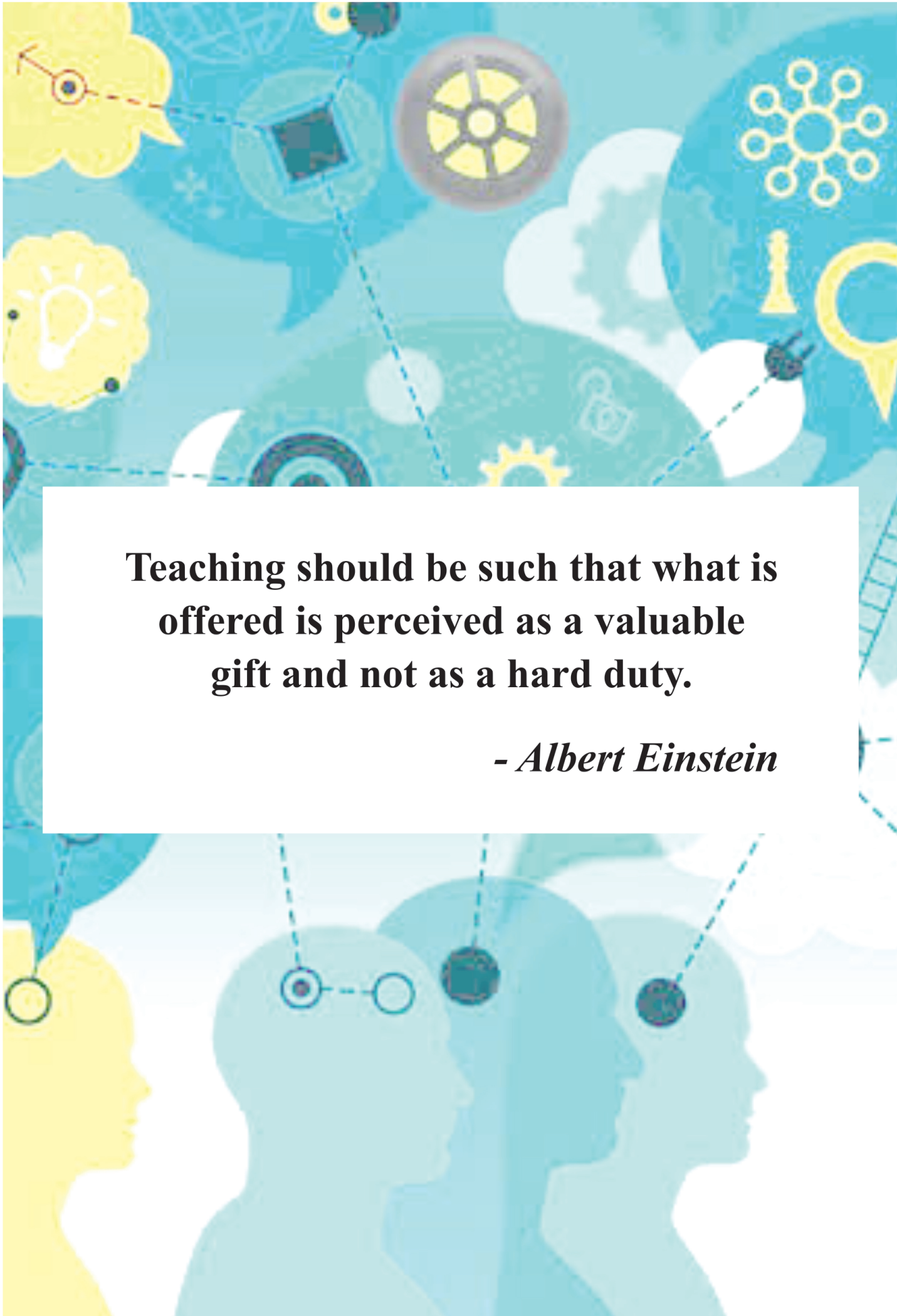




Teaching should be such that what is
offered is perceived as a valuable
gift and not as a hard duty.

- Albert Einstein

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MODERN SKILLS FOR MODERN TEACHERS

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From the Editors' Desk

Modern teaching and learning make the most of new and immersive ways to explore the curriculum. It nurtures a growth mindset in students, emphasizing future-ready skills to help them thrive in jobs not yet invented. It's unafraid to use new technologies and new forms of assessment to gauge student progress. Inspiring and motivating experiences are the lifeblood of teaching and learning. They're also at the heart of systemic transformation in education. Proficient educators are the driving force in modern teaching and learning. By personalizing learning pathways, they empower every student to reach their potential. The most successful strategies for creating sustainable teaching practices are to knit together online professional development with local and global communities of practice. Modern skills are about new approaches and tools. Modern skills help educators to unlock a students' sense of purpose and inspire them to achieve more. At the same time, students develop essential 21st-century competencies. The key to a transformed learning system is understanding students' strengths and weaknesses. The implication of modern skills in the teaching-learning process helps the students vividly outside their own experience. The webinar focused on these thought-provoking thrust areas such as Digital Pedagogy in the Era of Industry 4.0, Emotional Intelligence in Teaching and Learning Process, Transforming Leadership Skills – A Challenge or A Change Required, and Communication Skills - An Essential Tool for Moulding Modern Teachers. The editorial board is glad to bring forth webinar proceedings to disseminate knowledge, values and skills to all ignited minds. We are grateful to **Gateway Software Solutions, Coimbatore**, for their collaboration. We are indebted to **Sr.Landrada Centre for Research, St.Ignatius College of Education(Autonomous), Palayamkottai**, for rendering the support to publish the proceedings of the National webinar on “Modern Skills for Modern Teachers”.

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EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION: AN ESSENTIAL SKILL FOR TEACHERS*** Stella Rajakumari C**** Assistant Professor of Mathematics, St. Ignatius College of Education,
Palayamkottai– 627 002, Tamilnadu, India.***** Dr Jani V*****Assistant Professor of Mathematics, St. Ignatius College of Education,
Palayamkottai– 627 002, Tamilnadu, India.***ABSTRACT**

Communication is the basis of teaching - listening, speaking, reading, presenting and writing. Teachers who enhance their communication skill can efficiently instruct, advise and mentor students entrusted in their care. Additionally, teachers must communicate well to effectively work with colleagues and keep administrators informed on student progress. When parents call, visit or send an email, teachers must be skilful at responding to questions verbally and in writing. Fundamental to teacher and student success is the teacher's ability to communicate effectively with students, parents, and colleagues. Teachers must have good communication skill to help their students to gain academic success. Communication skill also enables the teachers to further their careers in education. The use of efficient communication skill enriches the learning process of the students. Good communication skill also helps in the career mobility of the teachers. Hence this paper analyses the importance of effective communication for a teacher and some strategies for effective communication in the classroom.

Keywords: Communication, Essential skill, Strategies, Teachers

Introduction

Every individual uses communication to communicate with one another. Even animals have their style of communicating with other animals. Not a single person in this world can survive without communicating. Communication refers to the exchange of thoughts and ideas to convey information. Communication is a two-way course that includes vocalization as well as a gesture. The purpose of communication is to express one's beliefs, ideas, thoughts, or needs with clarity to cohere and have a mutually acceptable solution. One should not underestimate the power of good communication skill. Even before the invention of language, facial gestures, hand gestures and body language were used to converse with each other. Good communication skill is necessary for all walks of life. The lack of good communication skill would affect the personal as well as professional life of a person. A teacher who communicates effectively with the students can inspire them to learn and participate in class. Teachers' active participation in a facilitated workshop can improve communication in their workplace. As a facilitator, teachers need good communication skill and should identify dormant participants and encourage them to raise their views that might help other participants. All this is impossible unless the facilitator has incredible communication abilities with a natural empathy towards the participants.

Effective Communication

Communication is a vital element in the classroom. Successful teaching requires only 50% knowledge and 50% communication skill. As a result, a teacher should be proficient in all four modes of communication - listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The teacher should also know how to make use of these skills effectively in a school environment. Being able to do this will have an impact on the academic success of the students. It will enhance the teacher's career success as well. Also, the teachers benefit by good communication skill from three different areas i.e., when communicating with students, parents, and colleagues.

(i) **Teacher - Students Communication:**

Teaching becomes effective with good communication skill. In turn, students will make more academic progress. Studies have found that interactive and engaging teaching environments formed by able teachers determine the success of students. The teaching styles and learning environment indirectly influences the academic performance of the students. Additionally, communication with students can positively affect their perceptions of school, their role in the classroom, themselves and their abilities, and their motivation to succeed. Therefore, effective communication between teachers and students is of great value. It allows the teachers to execute their job well with positive results from the pupils. An added benefit is that the students can use the teacher as a model for improving their communication skills, which are crucial for their development and future learning.

(ii) **Teacher - Parents Communication:**

Parent and teacher communication is largely important since the child's time is predominantly between school and home life. Hence the teacher must need to communicate effectively with the parents. It may include communication through phone calls, emails, and in-person meetings. So, it is necessary of the teachers to be skilled in both verbal and written language. Communication with the parents should be clear and diplomatic. Failing to communicate well with the parents could lead to doubts on their part about the teacher's ability to teach and possible complaints as well as a lack of understanding of their child's performance and educational needs.

(iii) **Teacher - Colleagues Communication:** Teaching is not an independent work; it requires collaboration. Teachers must use good communication skills in staff meetings and training sessions. They must be able to lead gatherings, present in front of varied audiences, and give feedback to other staff could illustrate to colleagues and superiors that the teacher is a good candidate with communication skills which helps even for promotion.

Effective Strategies for Effective Communication in the Classroom

There are many strategies that the teacher should use to make the pupils listen to the class. Effective communication also depends on our context. Some methods to bring out effective communication between both the students and the teachers are in the following.

1. Create a conducive learning environment with nurturing relationships

A good teacher-student relationship has an impact on the class engagement, participation, and achievements of the students. These supportive relationships may invalidate the tendency for low-income students to have poorer school outcomes. Communication develops a supportive learning environment. A teacher should get to know the students and show them that they are safe from judgment or humiliation in the classroom. A teacher should make efforts to learn the names of the students early and use them often. The teachers should be open and available for students to come and talk with them about any complications, and be empathic and caring when they interact with them whenever they like. Additionally, the teachers should recognize that some students do not feel comfortable talking before the class. When such students need to participate, the teachers can use scaffolding (such as sentence starters) to make them feel safer involve in talking and participating in other activities. However, it is unnecessary to force them to participate. Most quieter students have excellent listening skills and are learning just as much as the others, despite not sharing their thoughts.

2. Group Discussions

Group discussions contribute to making the classroom a more comfortable environment. By working in small groups, students share their ideas without difficulty and improve their communication skills. These activities further allow them to ask questions and get feedback on their work from the teachers. They lead to effective communication between the teachers and students and a better understanding of the lesson. It also benefits the academic development of the students.

3. Gesture

Communication is not only verbal but also non-verbal. The teachers should ensure that the signals they give through their body language are positive, confident, and engaging.

For example, making eye contact with students when talking to them shows that the teacher is supportive and attentive. The teacher should make eye contact when presenting to the whole class. It motivates the students to pay attention, helps them to learn, and makes them feel involved. Gestures can be made use of while teaching to emphasize words. It increases the interactivity of the lesson, making it more visually captivating and more memorable. The teachers should keep their arms open and not fold them, use smiles, nods, and thumbs up to encourage students when they participate. To remove the barrier between teachers and students, the teacher can move around the classroom while teaching. It gives the students less opportunity to zone out or get distracted.

Body language is also crucial when dealing with negative behavior. To avoid being confrontational, teachers should ensure that they do not stand directly above or in front of a student, point, or invade their personal space. The teacher should get down to their level and talk about the student's behavior or speak to them outside the classroom to avoid drawing too much attention. They should keep in mind that the behavior of the student is also a form of communication.

4. Active listening

The 'listening' component of communication should not be overlooked. Over 60% of all misunderstandings result from poor listening. Practicing good listening in the classroom is beneficial in two ways. Firstly, the teacher will become a model for the students, who will improve their listening skills, and thus retain lessons better. Secondly, by using active listening, the teacher can correct misunderstandings and extend learning, resulting in a better education for students. Active listening involves listening carefully to what students say, checking to understand them correctly (for example, repeating what you think they have said), building on their ideas, and challenging or questioning them. It is the best approach to foster understanding in the classroom and is an excellent example of effective communication.

5. Critique

Giving comment is also a needed component of communication in the classroom. Positive feedback (i.e., praise) builds students' confidence by making them more likely to believe that they can succeed and helps create a supportive environment and increase academic success. The teacher should also use positive feedback to modify students' behavior: for example, praising a student for having their hand up is likely to cause the students around them to stop 'shouting out' and copy good behavior, to receive compliments themselves. However, positive feedback can damage learning when used without being deserved or used too frequently. Phrases such as 'good job' or 'beautiful' may not motivate students because they do not understand what such compliments are specifically for. Over-praising can cause children to lack interest in situations when they do not receive praise. As a result, we should give specific, deserved positive feedback, use the student's name, explicitly state what they are doing right, and thank them enthusiastically. Finally, the teacher should also be willing to receive comments from the students on the lessons they teach or their teaching styles. It shows that the teacher values the opinions of the students. It also increases communication between the teachers and students and helps them to improve their teaching and the students' learning.

6. Sense of humor

The use of humor in the classroom has increases learning, self-motivation, and positive relationships between students and teachers. It establishes a rapport with the class and keeps them interested in the

lesson. For example, the teacher might tell jokes or humorous anecdotes, give examples from light-hearted personal experiences, or laugh at students' puns. However, the teacher must ensure that negative humor in which students feel demeaned or embarrassed is averted. The teacher must avoid humor that is either irrelevant to the lesson, disturbing, violent, sexual, or forceful. Only continue to use humor that has received a positive response from the class (such as laughing).

7. Digital skills

Using up-to-date teaching aids such as computers, e- Content, e- instructional modules, videos, and online resources is another way to keep students engaged and reinforce their understanding. It can also increase the effectiveness of our communication with students with different learning styles, who may benefit more from online resources than more old-fashioned ones.

8. Be intelligible

Good communication and good teaching are about understanding a subject or topic. For this reason, the teachers should always be unambiguous and adapt their words to the students. They should write lesson plans to ensure that complex ideas are broken down into simple, logical parts for the students to understand. They should also simplify their words while interacting with the children after presenting the lesson. For example, the teacher may wish to check that their teaching was clear by questioning the students or requesting summaries of the subject in their own words.

Conclusion

Communication plays a vital role in every individual's life specifically in that of the teachers. Therefore, to make a difference in the life and career of the students, teachers need to improve their communication skills. One should not underestimate the importance of effective communication in the classroom. Communication skills do not mean speaking in an excellent language without any grammatical errors. It involves minute things which one would not have noticed. It also brings an impact on the minds of the students. It can impact the students' academic progress, self-worth, perceptions of school, and the teachers' career. Using communication strategies mentioned above could allow teachers to become a more successful teacher who better meets the needs of the students.

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