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The Importance of Communication in Our Life

Norlaili Harun

ABSTRACT

Communication happens every minute, every day in our lives. People cannot avoid from communicating with each other. Studying effective communication is essential because it can help us solve problems in our professional life as well as improve our personal relationships. It is believed that poor communication is the major cause of many problems and one of the ways to solve them is by effective communication. This paper intends to share with the readers the importance of communication. By studying communication we can improve the way others see ourselves and increase our knowledge about human relationships. Moreover, communication can also improve the way we see ourselves and teach us the importance of life skills. This paper has also listed down some factors that contribute to effective communication and also the advantages of effective communication skills. It is hoped that readers will try to learn to be effective communicators because by doing so many problems can be reduced.

Keywords: *communication, communication skills, life skills*

Introduction

Communication is very important in everyday life. Pearson et. al (2008) defines communication as the process of using messages to generate meaning. Without communication, people cannot understand each other. For instance, let's say you are a good manager, dedicated, and responsible but you do not know how to interact with your staff. When you give them work to do, they do not carry out the task up to your expectation. When you ask them, they say that they do not understand your instructions. Some of the workers say that your instructions are vague. They are not sure what exactly that you want them to do.

Another example, let's say you have given an assignment to your students and asked them to submit it in two weeks' time. However, when they submitted the assignment to you, you became very angry and frustrated because your students did not do as what you have asked them to. When you asked them what had happened, they claimed that you have not explained clearly and concisely what exactly that you wanted them to do.

Based on the above examples, they clearly showed that effective communication is vital in everyone's life. As Zalabak (2002) claims, in this complex and informative society, the key to organizational excellence is effective communication. No doubt, only with effective communication a lot of problems like miscommunication, misunderstanding of instructions, delay in work and other problems can be reduced.

In other words, when a person (sender) can communicate effectively to another person (receiver), and that person (receiver) can fully understand and carry out the task efficiently and effectively, the productivity of the company can be enhanced. This will

help solve or at least reduce a lot of problems that relate to the organization. Employees also can work in a harmonious environment and they will strive for the mission and vision of the company.

Factors that Contribute to Effective Communication

When you are interacting with other people, have you ever faced any problem in trying to make them understand your message/s? If you do, how do you manage the problem? Sen (2007) mentions that oral communication is beautiful because it involves not only words but also the voice that acts as a communication channel. She adds that good speakers are not born; they are made. Below are some of the guidelines that we can follow in order to be effective communicators (Noraini, 1997).

Be firm with your message(s)

You must be firm with what you have said. Sometimes people do not want to listen to you when they do not have any confidence in what you say to them. You must avoid using words like, “*I think* you have done a great job”, “*maybe* we can discuss the project next week”, “*it’s up to you* when you want to submit the report”, “*you know*”, “*I think so*”, etc.

Avoid using the word ‘if’ in your message(s)

When we communicate, without notice we always use ‘if’ in our interaction. The usage of ‘if’ in everyday communication shows that we are not confident enough. For example, you said to your students, “I am going to give you quiz one next week *if* I’m not busy”.

Beware of the language used in communication

When you interact with people, try to choose simple, precise, right words and also short sentences to express your ideas. By doing so, you will become more successful in expressing your thoughts. Try to avoid jargons - technical words that cannot be understood by some people. Use words that are familiar and easy for them to understand.

Moreover, be clever in choosing accurate language in communication. By doing so, our communication can be more effective, people can understand us better and our objectives can be easily achieved (Abdul Mua’ti @ Zambri, 2008).

On top of that, you can also become an effective communicator by avoiding intentional confusion, being descriptive, being concrete, knowing how to differentiate between observation and inference and demonstrating cultural competence (Pearson, et. al., 2008).

Advantages of Effective Communication

We have discussed earlier that effective communication is vital in our life. We also know that people can be good communicators if they take the initiatives to train themselves to be one. The ability to communicate well with people not only benefits them but also the speaker. Sen (2007) has identified some of the advantages of effective communication skills, which are:

- It leads to personal effectiveness.
- It leads to networking with other people.
- It helps to collaborate with others at the workplace.
- It influences motivation for enhanced performance.
- It builds better understanding between the boss and the subordinates.
- It creates better interpersonal relations.
- It increases the listening ability.
- It enables employees to appreciate the need for change.
- It creates better environment for knowing why there is resistance to change.

How Communication Can Enhance Students' Performance in Learning

According to Tailor (2000), communication is giving, receiving or exchanging information, opinions or ideas so that what is communicated is completely understood. An effective communicator is a person/sender who can make other people/receiver fully understand his/her messages (Abdul Mua'ti @ Zambri, 2008). For instance, as a lecturer your aim in class is not only to communicate with your students, but also, more importantly, to make them understand your message/s. This is very important to ensure that they perform well in class. Here are some tips on how effective communication can enhance students' performance in class:

Communication Can Motivate Students to Learn More

Motivation refers to the desire to communicate (Lane, 2008). For example, students who always ask questions in class are actually motivated to communicate in a competent manner. These students are always interested to interact with other people. They like to share knowledge, exchange ideas and improve their performance in class. For them, the more they communicate in class the more knowledge and skill they can acquire. Moreover, their level of understanding about the subjects being taught can also be increased.

Communication Can Improve the Way We See Ourselves

When we communicate, we are actually learning about ourselves (Pearson, et. al., 2008). Students who can communicate successfully with other people, whether in social interactions or in professional settings, are perceived to have more confidence in themselves. They also feel more comfortable with others' perception and they will have more positive feelings towards themselves. All these can lead them to be more successful in their personal life and career development.

Communication Can Teach Students about Important Life Skills

If students can communicate effectively in class, this will enhance their success in life. As Pearson, et. al (2008) mentions, studying communication involves students to learn about important life skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, team building and public speaking. Normally, in class, students are asked to answer questions, to provide reports, to offer explanations or to make presentations. Moreover, students are also asked to work in group projects, to solve problems and to make

important decisions. All these skills can only be achieved if students learn how to communicate effectively and efficiently

Conclusion

As a conclusion, a person in this world cannot avoid from interacting with other people. When we speak, we have to make sure that people can understand what we are trying to inform them. We have to learn the skills and techniques on how to be a good communicator. The ability to communicate effectively is actually a learned behavior (Sen, 2007). When we apply all the skills and techniques in our communication, we actually build better understanding with people around us. We must also know that communication does not only take place verbally but it can also take place nonverbally. If we want our messages to be understood and accepted we must put into account the gestures, voice, pitch, facial expressions, eye contact and also the body movement of other people. Failure to do so will lead to misunderstanding and communication breakdown.

Last but not least, the success or failure of our communication can also depend on the relationships of the person whom we are communicating with. Therefore, we must be aware of our relationships with the receiver of our message.

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