



IMPORTANCE OF READING AND WRITING FOR ENGINEERING STUDENTS IN THEIR TECHNICAL JOURNEY

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ABSTRACT

English being a universal language, communicating in English is very much essential for those who wish to excel and grow professionally and academically. Communication skills are more essential these days amidst the phenomenal developments in science and technology. For engineering students, it is a need to master communication skills because they are responsible for the continuous growth and advancement of a society and nation at large, technically. Although the major tasks performed by engineers are technical in nature, their accomplishment depends extremely on the effectiveness with which they assimilate or disseminate technical information. Thus an engineer should be excellent in both reading and writing skills. Reading is vital because an engineer has to read a variety of texts – it may be a short e-mail, a voluminous book or a lengthy report. Similarly the purpose of any professional writing is to communicate specific ideas through clarity, understanding and right usage of words. A person who possesses proficiency in reading automatically becomes a prolific writer.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is an organized attempt to share our experiences, ideas, thoughts and knowledge with one or more persons. It takes place continuously. Language has been used by man as a means of communication since time immemorial. Communication includes all the four skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking.

English being a global language, communicating fluently in English has become mandatory for those who aspire to communicate well in the professional and academic areas. All the four skills are equally important and proficiency is required to become good communicator. Reading and listening are receptive skills. Writing and speaking are called productive skills. Engineering is a multidisciplinary profession where engineers have to coordinate and communicate effectively with a diverse team, as well as express complicated concepts to a non –technical crowd.

IMPORTANCE OF READING

Reading is fundamental to function in today's world. It is very important for day to day activities like reading instructions on a manual, on a medicine bottle, reading sign boards, reading directions during travelling, reading pamphlets and the list is infinite. Again, if a person has the flair to read, he can develop himself. Now-a-days books, magazines, journals and even the internet are great learning tools which require the ability to read and understand. Hermida, J. (2009, September). We is heading towards digital nation where we overflow with information; but reading is the main way to take advantage of it. Reading helps to discover new things, creativity and develops imagination power. Muthaiyan M, D. K. (2016, May) Non readers are at



great loss. To quote Francis Bacon, "Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man."

A DEFINITION OF READING

"Reading is the process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form via the medium of print" (Urquhart & Weir, 1998:22) or "Comprehension occurs when the reader extracts and integrates various information from the text and combines it with what is already known" (Koda, 2005:4)

IMPORTANCE OF WRITING

Writing is important as a job skill. It is the fundamental basis upon which a person's work, intellect and learning are judged – at professional and personal levels. Good writing skills can help a person to be more capable and credible than his counterpart who often has grammatical errors and typos. Naturally good writing skills are essential when a person's job involves writing, be it any field – engineering, medical, teaching, journalism or any other profession. A profession which requires written communication, obviously writing skill becomes essential. Rus, D. (2015).

Writing skill is an important part of communication. Good writing skills help a person to communicate his message with ease and clarity. A poor writer creates a negative impact on his readers. A single mistake in a spelling can change the whole meaning - for example message and massage. Moreover a writer can express his feelings and thoughts to the people in a relatively permanent form. Good and impressive writing builds a bond between a writer and a reader. Thus a person with good writing skills is usually seen as more reliable and credible. It is aptly said – "A pen is mightier than a sword".

METHODOLOGY

The method chosen by the researcher is survey- questionnaire method. The researcher chose this method for the following reasons:

- Data produced is based on real world observations.
- Primary sources –straight from the horse's mouth.
- Copes well with big population.
- Analysis becomes easier.
- Results can be obtained faster.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method is a blend of both quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative method will help the researcher to involve a good number of samples from final year engineering students irrespective of their branch. The qualitative method will make room for the study and analysis of the responses of the samples in depth.

Sample Size



The sample size is 500. The research work is limited to engineering colleges of Palghar district, Maharashtra, which comprises of five engineering colleges. The final year students are about 1000 in each college. Therefore, 500 samples are very much justifiable which means 10% of the population.

Tools

The data collection instruments used in this study includes:

- Socio -demographic proforma which contains questions related to their parental background and academics.
- Questionnaire on Reading and Writing.
- A technical passage for reading.
- To write about the topic "My College" in their own language.

Questionnaire will be based on close ended questions. Rating scale will be of three point and the questions will be answered in yes, no and to some extent.

Findings

Reading skills

Fluency in reading is defined as the ability to read with proper speed, pronunciation and pause/punctuation.

A technical passage will be given to each of the students and they will be asked to read aloud. The researcher will listen to each student and give remarks accordingly. A student should be an expressive reader. The researcher shall evaluate every student on the following parameters:

Voice Modulation, Pronunciation and Pause/ Punctuation

An expressive reader possesses proper speed and voice modulation. He goes up at the starting of a sentence and down at the end. The change in pitch helps a listener to understand where the ideas begin and end. An expressive reader stresses the words properly – sometimes louder and sometimes softer to create impact. Further, he takes proper and appropriate pauses wherever required – big ones at the end of a sentence, smaller ones in between, after commas.

Voice modulation (VM)

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| S (slow) | denotes average |
| M (moderate) | denotes excellent |
| F (fast) | denotes very good |

Pronunciation (PR)

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 8+ mistakes | denotes average |
| 4-8 mistakes | denotes very good |
| 0-3 mistakes | denotes excellent |

Pause and punctuation (PP)

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 8+ mistakes | denotes average |
| 4-8 mistakes | denotes very good |
| 0-3 mistakes | denotes excellent |



Writing skills

Similarly, each student will be asked to write about hundred words in their own language in the space provided. The topic will be 'Your College'. The researcher will assess each student and give remarks accordingly. The researcher shall evaluate every student on the following parameters:

Spellings, Grammar and Punctuation

Spellings

They are very important for vocabulary and for expression. Spelling is a mark of education. If there is one spelling mistake in a sentence or error in a word, the entire meaning changes: For example – message and massage. A writer should be very careful with his spellings.

Grammar

To quote Jana Johnson, "Grammar lays the groundwork for effective communication. Just as an improperly configured telephone wire can cause static during a phone conversation, improper grammar can likewise affect the meaning and clarity of an intended message". A sentence should be properly constructed with the help of parts of speech, tenses and other basic fundamentals of grammar.

Punctuation

Punctuation is one of the most essential aspects of written English. It renders meaning to the written words. An error in punctuation can convey a completely different meaning to the one that is desired. A classic example is – A woman without her man is nothing. Now, one can find how the meaning changes because of punctuation.

A woman, without her man, is nothing.

A woman: without her, man is nothing.

So, one can observe how punctuation makes the same sentence mean two exactly opposite things. Thus, punctuation marks are very important in writing and all the more to convey the correct message.

Spellings (SP)

8+ mistakes denotes average

4-8 mistakes very good

0-3 mistakes excellent

Grammar (GR)

8+ mistakes denotes average

4-8 mistakes denotes very good

0-3 mistakes denotes excellent

Punctuation (PU)

8+ mistakes denotes average

4-8 mistakes denotes very good



0-3 mistakes denotes excellent

CONCLUSION

Reading and writing skills are indispensable for effective communication. In other words, English is gaining impetus in the global world. It is so because in today's world, the job of the professionals is to communicate all the time. The need and requirement of communication skills can be measured from the fact that engineers spend most of their time in communicating with their team members, seniors or juniors. Even, during placements, the first thing a company looks forward, while selecting a new recruit is, the candidate's proficiency in communication skills. In fact, it is very much essential and required to concentrate on building language competency among the students to help them achieve their goals and reach the zenith of success.

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