**Classroom Communication**

**Introduction**

Classroom is a place intentionally created with the purpose of producing learning through meaningful contact or interaction among students, teachers, and the content to be taught. Here, teachers, students and contents are the three major components of any classroom. In order to make learning occur in a true sense, a student needs positive classroom environment consisting of cooperation, collaboration, joyfulness and fruitful communication. Classroom environment, in 21st century learning, incorporates 4 Cs including collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and communication. It is quite clear that communication has a vital role in learning and teaching. Teaching is considered to be communication and therefore, good teachers are always supposed to be good communicators (Mangal&Mangal, 2017). Communication, according to Edgard Dale, is “the sharing of ideas and feelings in the mood of mutuality.” Classroom learning, teachers’ effectiveness, students’ understanding, and their learning outcomes are mainly dependent upon the quality of communication taking place in the classroom. As communication is of great importance in classroom, it is necessarily required to understand what classroom communication stands for and what factors are responsible for affecting it.

**Classroom Communication:**

Etymologically communication came from a Latin root word ‘Communis’, meaning ‘common’. Hence, it stands for an act of sharing commonness or common understanding and experiences with others (Mangal&Mangal, 2017). Communication is a two way process which involves interaction between two or more persons. Communication is taken as “a complex, two-way and intentional process of passing the message from one end to the other using a channel” (Huddar, et al, 2006). This communication is life of a classroom without which existence of learning is not possible. Education with its corresponding activities and procedures of teaching and learning involves communication between teachers and students as channels for realizing the instructional objectives (Sampath, et al, 1984). “Communication in the classroom is to a considerable extent carried on through language-spoken and written with the former playing a relatively greater role” (Sampath, et al, 1984). It is well known that “an individual learns more readily from oral inter change of ideas than from reading the printed pages” (Kramer, 1947). Language is the primary means of communication between teacher and student (Bickel, 1985).

Communication always carries a purpose which is encoded in the message and transmitted to its receiver where it is decoded and feedback is given (Sampath, et al, 1984). Components of communication are senders (encoder), receivers (decoder), messages (signals), media or channel and feedback. The cycle of communication with its elements are reflected in the following figure\*:



\*Source: https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/effective-communication/0/steps/19738

In the context of classroom, senders, who initiate the message, are teachers and receivers are students who interpret or decode the message. Adding to it, message is content being taught in the classroom and channel might be any medium, tool or technique being used by teacher followed by feedback both from teachers as well as students.

It is a cyclic process where its completion depends upon the students’ understanding of the message or content in the form of their response as feedback. “In a classroom, the meaning of communication is related to the messages and counter-messages, which constitute the teaching-learning process which involves initiation, reception and response that serve as feedback” ( Jose, 2016). Kramer (1947) mentioned that no cycle of communication is complete until the speaker is assured that the idea he/she has expressed has actually been received by the listener. Classroom communication is not mere one-sided presentation of facts but it requires intercommunication between students and teacher along with its occurrence among students. There must be reaction and interaction with constant reciprocal feedback (Sampath, et al., 1984) which decides the level of realization of the purpose of communication.

Teaching and learning in classroom is a communicative process (Puro, P &Bloome, D., 1987). In the words of Howell & Howell (1979), “Communication is such an encompassing process that it filters through all human activities. No living person is unaffected by communication. Learning, at heart, is the expression of communication.” I. H. Anderson says that communication is the most effective tool for human survival. It works as a bridge of meaning between people. In classrooms, message is designed for the entire class consisting of a group of students from diverse background. The message maybe conveyed facial expressions, gestures, spoken and written symbols, body language and other forms of expression. Every medium has its own influence on messages to be sent. So, it should be used by the teachers in an effective and meaningful manner. A teacher should be good planner of communication in the classroom.

**Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication:**

A classroom with teachers and students interaction is considered to be effective classroom. It involves interaction or sharing of ideas or feelings among students and teachers with the purpose of learning. Whenever communication occurs, it is done in two form; verbal and non-verbal. Here, verbal communication stands for the form of communication in which messages are delivered verbally; either in spoken form or written form. It is further divided into oral and written communication. Oral communication is very effective in classroom and majority of classroom time, for verbal presentation, is devoted to this form of communication. It becomes easy to reach the students’ mind and quick responses are possible through it. Written communication is influenced by writing style, vocabulary, grammar and clarity of the language used. There are chances of editing and revision in this form of communication. It can be kept as record for future references. In classroom, generally, teachers use both oral and written forms together for better results.

Non-verbal communication is considered as receiving and sending of wordless messages without using any verbal means. It is always effective if incorporated with verbal forms of communication as it adds valuable information to the verbal messages. This form includes gestures, language of the eyes, body language, postures, tone of voice, facial expressions, etc. It can be used alone or along with verbal communication. These elements are more accurate in transmitting message. For example, if in a class, students are listening to a teacher who is continuously sitting on his/her chair and gives a lecture without moving hands or heads. It is not going to make any influence on learning of the content being taught. In other situation, if the same teacher stands and moves in classroom while giving lecture through various facial expressions and body movements, it will be more effective for learners. According to Peter F. Drucker, “The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn’t said.” It is evident through studies also that non-verbal communication is more effective in teaching and learning and it gives strength and extra effects to the verbal communication. In non-verbal communication, communicators’ appearance, body language and sound matter a lot in making students be focused and motivated for learning.

**Factors Affecting Classroom Communication:**

Communication is done with the purpose of exposition, persuasion and facilitation. Teachers communicate with students; students communicate with their peers and with the teacher. How teachers and students communicate with each other affects instruction (Puro&Bloome, 1987; Cazden, 1985; Green, 1983) and the whole teaching learning process.Classroom communication and classroom instructions are closely linked to one another. Classroom communication is dynamic, affected by culture and ethics, competence-based and is being transferred by media and technology. The effectiveness of classroom communication depends upon the successful transmission of message from source to the receivers. As communication has elements such as source, receiver, message, channel and feedback, factors which affect classroom communication are also associated with them. The factors affecting classroom communication are given in the following manner:

* Communications’ effectiveness depends upon the strengths and qualities of the source. Taking teachers as source or senders of message, communication is affected by their abilities to communicate effectively. The abilities such as content knowledge, self-confidence, behavior, personality, empathy, optimism, thinking ability, expression skills, communication skills, social sensitivity, beliefs, values, media utilization skills, attitude towards students, texts, and self attitude, etc. are important factors that affect classroom communication to the large extend.
* Considering the content of teaching and learning as message or symbol of communication in classroom, its features affect its quality. On the one hand, for verbal messages, factors are accuracy, precision, simplicity, clarity, appropriateness, imagination and originality along with its value for learners. On the other hand, non-verbal messages’ delivery speeds, proxemics, posture, gesture, body language, facial expression and emotions etc.
* Factors related to receivers or students are their previous knowledge, communication skills, age, sex, intelligence, self-esteem, motivation, readiness, needs, attitude, attentiveness, curiosity, emotional state, beliefs, values, interest, and aptitude which keep on affecting classroom communication. A teacher while communicating in the classroom needs to plan according to these factors. Listening skill is of paramount importance in classroom communication. So, students’ listening skill also affects communication taking place in the classroom.
* Factors associated to communication channel or media are its type and quality. Message will not reach to the destination effectively if proper media is not selected and used in the process. This channel work as a bridge between source and the receiver. Media maybe of verbal and non-verbal means. It may include face to face interaction, texts including graphics, and audio, video or digital media. Every medium has its own influence on the messages being sent. A teacher’s role is to plan, arrange and organize learning conditions in a manner that there is optimum communication of the content being delivered. He/she has to carefully select the media or channels for delivering his/her messages (Ray, 2012).
* Classroom environment also affects its communication. The communication is more effective if the environment is open, supportive, positive, devoid of noise and other distractions, environmental and physical comfort including seating arrangement, audibility and visibility minimum aural and visual distractions, etc. The positive creators must be retained and the distractors must be removed or minimized for effective classroom communication.

**Conclusion:**

On the basis of these discussions, it can be concluded that classroom is a small communication world (Jackson, 1968). Teaching and learning in the classroom occurs through communication between teachers and students through both verbal and non-verbal forms. The meaning is created through their interaction in communication rich environment. The effectiveness tends to increase with appropriate and judicious usage of verbal and non-verbal means in teaching-learning process. This communication is affected by several factors such as teachers and students’ abilities and personality traits, quality of message, selection and use of media and classroom environment. At the end it can be added that a teacher should use communication and its forms effectively in the classroom for more productive and meaningful learning.

**Objectives:**

The main objectives of this module are to acquaint the students about the:

1. conceptual understanding of communication and classroom communication;
2. meaning of verbal and non-verbal communication;
3. effectiveness of verbal and non-verbal communication; and

factors influencing classroom communication.

**Glossary**

1. **Classroom**: Classroom is a place intentionally created with the purpose of producing learning through meaningful contact or interaction among students, teachers, and the content to be taught.
2. **Components of Classroom**: Teachers, students and contents are the three major components of classroom.
3. **Etymological Meaning of Communication**: Etymologically communication came from a Latin root word ‘Communis’, meaning ‘common’. Hence, it stands for an act of sharing commonness or common understanding and experiences with others.
4. **Communication**: Communication is a two way process which involves interaction between two or more persons. Communication is taken as “a complex, two-way and intentional process of passing the message from one end to the other using a channel” (Huddar, et al, 2006).
5. **Components of Communication**: Components of communication are senders (encoder), receivers (decoder), messages (signals), media or channel and feedback.
6. **Classroom Communication**: “In a classroom, the meaning of communication is related to the messages and counter-messages, which constitute the teaching-learning process which involves initiation, reception and response that serve as feedback” (Jose, 2016).
7. **Medi**a: Media are meant for broadcasting and transmitting information that are considered as carriers of messages from some transmitting source to the receiver of the message.
8. **Verbal Communication**: Verbal communication stands for the form of communication in which messages are delivered verbally; either in spoken form or written form.
9. **Non-verbal Communication**: Non-verbal communication is considered as receiving and sending of wordless messages without using any verbal means.
10. **Factors Affecting Classroom Communication**: Communication is affected by several factors such as teachers and students’ abilities and personality traits, quality of message, selection and use of media and classroom environment.

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

1. What are the major components of a classroom?

Ans: Teachers, students and contents are the three major components of classroom.

1. What elements are important for 21st century learning and classroom environment?

Ans: Classroom environment, in 21st century learning, incorporates 4 Cs including collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and communication.

1. Define classroom communication.

Ans: “In a classroom, the meaning of communication is related to the messages and counter-messages, which constitute the teaching-learning process which involves initiation, reception and response that serve as feedback” (Jose, 2016).

1. What is the etymological meaning of communication?

Ans: Etymologically communication came from a Latin root word ‘Communis’, meaning ‘common’. Hence, it stands for an act of sharing commonness or common understanding and experiences with others.

1. What are the basic elements of communication cycle?

Ans: Components of communication are senders (encoder), receivers (decoder), messages (signals), media or channel and feedback.

1. Explain verbal communication and its type.

Ans: Verbal communication stands for the form of communication in which messages are delivered verbally; either in spoken form or written form. . It is further divided into oral and written communication. Oral communication is very effective in classroom and majority of classroom time, for verbal presentation, is devoted to this form of communication. Written communication is influenced by writing style, vocabulary, grammar and clarity of the language used.

1. What is meant by non-verbal communication? Give examples.

Ans: Non-verbal communication is considered as receiving and sending of wordless messages without using any verbal means. This form includes gestures, language of the eyes, body language, postures, tone of voice, facial expressions, etc. It can be used alone or along with verbal communication.

1. How do qualities of source or teacher affect classroom communication?

Ans: Communications’ effectiveness depends upon the strengths and qualities of teachers as source. Communication is affected by their abilities to communicate effectively. The abilities such as content knowledge, self-confidence, behavior, personality, empathy, optimism, thinking ability, expression skills, communication skills, social sensitivity, beliefs, values, media utilization skills, attitude towards students, texts, and self attitude, etc. are important factors that affect classroom communication to the large extend.

1. How do students’ qualities affect classroom communication?

Ans: Students’ previous knowledge, communication skills, age, sex, intelligence, self-esteem, motivation, readiness, needs, attitude, attentiveness, curiosity, emotional state, beliefs, values, interest, listening skill and aptitude keep on affecting classroom communication. A teacher while communicating in the classroom needs to plan according to these factors.

1. What factors, associated with classroom environment are affecting its communication?

Ans: Classroom environment also affects its communication. The communication is more effective if the environment is open, supportive, positive, devoid of noise and other distractions, environmental and physical comfort including seating arrangement, audibility and visibility minimum aural and visual distractions, etc. The positive creators must be retained and the distracters must be removed or minimized for effective classroom communication.

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