

# **MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT**

## **UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION**

**MRP (H)-1768/11-12/KABA048/UGC-SWRO**

**Dr. Rekha Kowshik.P.R**

Dept. Of English

### **Curriculum Design for Communication-skills for school teachers**

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Societal improvement depends largely on the level of education that it has. Teachers become a primary instrument in reconstructing society through education. No doubt there are numerous problems in society coming in its way but it is an acknowledged fact that a development of personality can take shape with a continuous effort on formal teacher training. Awareness about its necessity is also of primary importance.

When a survey of school teachers was undertaken by this researcher, it was found that there was a dire need for training in communication skills for teachers. Schools with a domination of the native language (i.e., Kannada in this case L1) needed teachers who were proficient in L2 i.e., English to teach subjects in English Medium schools. But the major handicap was that they lacked basic skills to communicate, be it in English or Kannada. Hence, the research problem came into existence to train teachers in communication skills. The next question facing the researcher was a selection of teachers. It was decided to target primary school teachers as real teaching takes place at this level. After this it was felt that a format or a

model for training had to be constituted and hence there arose a need to further the research problem to developing a curriculum for teaching communication skills for school teachers.

Three schools were selected with a semi-urban population and thirty teachers were selected for the training module. A module was created and put to use to see if it can be used on a larger scale in more schools. A brief evaluation of the training was also done and the results were noted.

There are numerous problems facing teacher training today. Economic problems like poverty, unemployment, contract employment and low pay scales are major deterrents for the success of any training. This has a direct effect on the motivational factor of the teachers for any kind of training. The attitude towards work culture needs to undergo a sea change. A shift in emphasis regarding training has to be introduced and more of vocational and technological inputs have to be generated if solutions have to be found. Teacher education curriculum has to shoulder the huge responsibility of promoting a new work culture with the right emphasis on freedom of adopting the appropriate teaching strategies for school teachers. There is a lag between the government designed curriculum and the teaching strategies the teachers/schools adopt. Unrealistic and impractical goals are a hurdle to achieve success. Often very little of what is in the curriculum reaches the stakeholders. The joy of teaching is missing because of clarity in communication. Rote learning seems to be the order of the day. Added to this there are so many social concerns which have to be addressed. Education must ensure a peace loving environment and teachers and students with their curriculum must contribute towards this end. This study therefore incorporated a cultural awareness angle to teacher training in communication skills and it was found there was tremendous positive response to this concept. The teachers were eager to share their cultural experience and information and

integrate it with their teaching modules. Communication skills for this, they found was of utmost importance and the participation was excellent.

### **Relevance and Significance of study**

A growing number of learners at the tertiary level require English for occupational and vocational purposes, as well as for general educational purposes. This has necessarily led to a corresponding increase in attention on syllabus design so as to provide appropriate teaching programmes to learners.

Specific communicative needs should be kept in mind for a successful syllabus design. Identification of the communication requirements, personal needs motivation; relevant characteristics and resources of the learner are some of the aspects which need a focus. It also includes investigating those of his "partners for learning". These refer to teachers, employers, administrators, family and friends and colleagues, and even those of material writers and textbook publishers.

The ability to communicate is the primary factor that distinguishes human beings from animals. And it is the ability to communicate well that distinguishes one individual from another.

The fact is that apart from the basic necessities, one needs to be equipped with habits for good communication skills, as this is what will make them a happy and successful social being.

In order to develop these habits, one needs to first acknowledge the fact that they need to improve communication skills from time to time. They need to take stock of the way they interact and the direction in which their work and personal relations are going. The only constant in life is change, and the more one accepts one's strengths and works towards

dealing with their shortcomings, especially in the area of communication skills, the better will be their interactions and the more their social popularity.

Good communication skills are skills that facilitate people to communicate effectively with one another. Effectual communication engages the choice of the best communications channel, the technical know-how to use the channel, the presentation of information to the target audience, and the skill to understand responses received from others. Self development, interpersonal skills, mutual understanding, mutual cooperation and trust is also important to set a complete channel of most effective and winning communication skills.

Importance of communication skills can never be ignored or neglected. These skills are the key to executing good management skills. The modern world today, calls for high scale effective communication skills in order to win the heavy competition in all spheres of life.

Teaching is generally considered as only fifty percent knowledge and fifty percent interpersonal or communication skills. For a teacher, it is not just important to give a quality lecture but it is more important for the presentation of a lesson or lecture in class. Communication skills for teachers are thus as important as their in-depth knowledge of the particular subject which they teach.

Teachers should be aware of the importance of communication skills in teaching. They must also realize that all students have different levels of strengths and weaknesses. It is only through communication skills that a teacher can introduce creative and effective solutions to the problems of the students. Thus, a teacher can enhance the learning process.

## **Course design**

The course was designed with 110 hours with 80 hours of theoretical Knowledge, 30 hours practical applications and 2 hours of final examination and evaluation.

## **Course Objectives**

The areas concentrated for the course content were as follows:

- Daily life interrogative and discourse capabilities
- Basic person and place descriptive abilities
- Number, time, quantity, and cost use
- Daily life receptive understanding skills
- Written usage to express situations, give instructions and explanations, communicate opinions, and narrate and comprehend stories
- Specific terminology use based on students' needs

## **Course Structure**

To incorporate these, the course was structured to include skills like

- . Listening Skills
- Descriptive skills
- English numeration
- Receptive skills
- Written skills
- Reading Skills
- Thinking Skills
- Study Skills

- Communicative activities
- Cultural Awareness concepts

This syllabus was drawn for finding the right application for teachers from various levels.

Three schools from semi-urban areas were selected and ten teachers from each were selected for the target group. They were trained with these modules and a brief evaluation was done at the end of the training.

Certain conclusive observations of the study are as under:

- The teachers felt the need to have communication skills as part of their training continuously.
- Thinking Skills and Study skills with components of problem solving and out of the box thinking were found to be very effective. The more the freedom for the teachers to experiment with the syllabi the better the results.
- The teachers were eager to share their cultural experience and information and integrate it with their teaching modules. Communication skills for this, they found was of utmost importance and the participation was excellent.
- There is an urgent need to evolve a culture-specific pedagogy  
Cultural practices such as story-telling, dramatics, puppetry, folk-play, community living, etc. should become a strong basis of pedagogy instead of using one uniform, mechanistic way of student learning. Cultural specificity should get embedded in the pedagogical practices which should be evolved for tribal, rural, urban communities and other ethnic groups.

