



RESEARCH ARTICLE



## PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF S3 (Students, Syllabus and Success)

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### ABSTRACT

Expertise in communication is a major concern in the global market. One who opts for a professional degree aspires to be recruited in an esteemed organization but it turns out to be a horrific dream sans effective communication skills. Thus it becomes extremely important to focus on an unavoidable ability that plays a vital role in the entire process of selection. Considering the relevance of Communication skills, it is being introduced in almost all the professional courses in one way or the other. But the question that perplexes us for the most time is 'whether introducing a subject is sufficient to satisfy the aspirations of a candidate and how far the current syllabus is successful to meet the present demands of the professional world.' Thus the present paper focuses on the utility of existing curriculum in context with the requirement of professional gurus. Here an attempt is also being made to find out the concrete solutions to the problems relating to the existing syllabi and its effective implementation with special reference to the technical institutes of Uttar Pradesh.

Keywords: Communication, ESP, Placement, Syllabus

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In the current scenario when people rush madly after pelf and progress it has become too difficult for the budding aspirants to survive in the battle. With an increase in micro specialization along with mushrooming of the institutions it has become more difficult for one to succeed in the professional domain. In an era of globalisation where the majority of people hold professional degrees the success mantras become more complicated, thus 'one who chants the mantras well is the one who succeeds.' Yes, here the chanting refers to the art of speaking. Nobody is an orator but everyone is gifted with the distinctive feature of articulation. So if one wishes to succeed in one's personal and professional territory, one need to be prepared to be at best in the art of communication.

Communication is an art, a special kind of skill that needs to be learnt. It demands rigorous practice and a flair for speaking effectively. Very few are born with the gift of gab but many have made their way to outstanding success through this unique skill. The aura of communication is undeniable. Through effective communication you not only rule the mind, but also touch the heart of a person. It plays a vital role in shaping your career, preserving your personal and professional rapport with others. The graph of one's overall success greatly depends upon his communication skills as it is truly said, 'one who communicates is the one who leads.' To enhance the writing and communication skills of students' Professional communication is being introduced as a compulsory subject in technical institutes of UPTU. The current syllabus of Professional Communication as prescribed by UPTU is as follows:

**PART-1**

Fundamentals of Communication: Technical Communication: Definition and features; Distinction between General and Technical communication; Language as a tool of communication; Levels of communication: Interpersonal, Organizational, Mass Communications; The flow of Communication: Downward, Upward, Lateral of Horizontal (Peer group); Importance of technical communication; Barriers to Communication.

**PART-II**

Constituents of Technical Written Communication: Words and Phrases: Word formation. Synonyms and Antonyms; Homophones; Select vocabulary of about 500-1000 New words; Correct Usage: all Parts of Speech; Modals; Concord; Articles; Infinitives; Requisites of Sentence Construction; Paragraph Development: Techniques and Methods- Inductive, Deductive, Spatial, Linear, Chronological etc; The Art of Condensation- various steps.

**PART-III**

Business Communication: Principles, Sales & Credit letters; Claim and Adjustment Letters; Job application and Resumes; Reports: Types; Significance; Structure, Style & Writing of Reports.; Technical Proposal; Parts; Types; Writing of Proposal; Significance; Negotiation & Business Presentation skills.

**PART-IV**

Presentation Strategies and Listening Skills: Defining Purpose; Audience & Local; Organizing Contents; Preparing Outline; Audio-visual Aids; Nuances of Delivery; Body Language; Dimensions of Speech: Syllable; Accent; Pitch; Rhythm; Intonation; Paralinguistic features of voice; Listening Skills: Active Listening, Passive Listening methods for improving Listening Skills.

**PART-V**

Value-Based Text Readings

(i) Humanistic and Scientific Approaches to Human Activity by Moody E. Prior

(ii) The Language of Literature and Science by A. Huxley

(iii) Man and Nature by J. Bronowski

(iv) The Social Function of Literature by Ian Watt

(v) Science and Survival by Barry Commoner

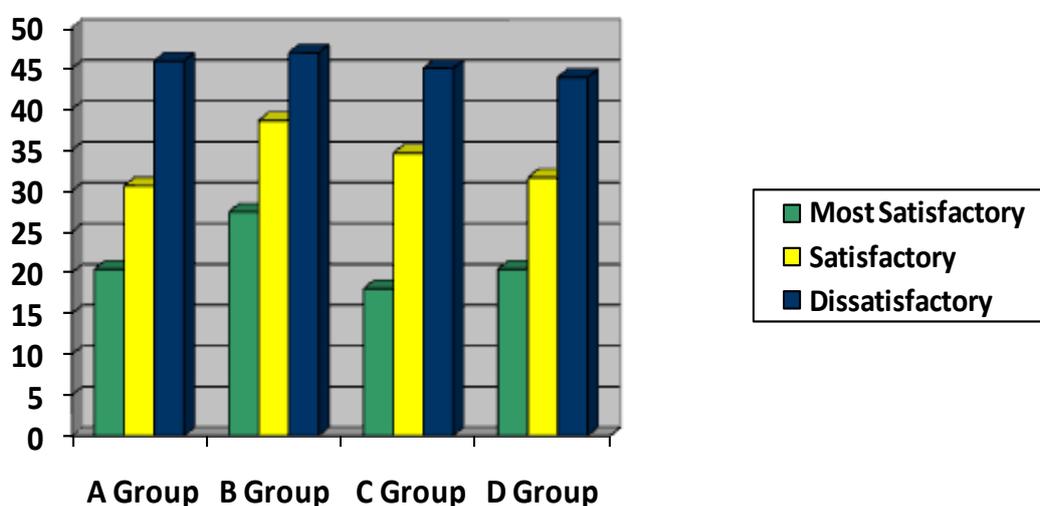
(vi) The Mother of the Sciences by A.J. Bahm

(vii) The Effect of Scientific Temper on Man by Bertrand Russell.'

I've been teaching Professional Communication for past ten years. My extensive teaching experience has made me to conclude the following in regard to the current syllabus of UPTU:

1. Unit 1 introduces learners to the basics of communication in order to expand their knowledge of communication process along with the brief introduction of the major hurdles of communication. It also gives an insight into the various channels of communication, helping a learner to differentiate between general and professional communication. One learns about the communication etiquettes through flow of communication and succeeds to develop good rapport with others after going through different level of communication. In brief it prepares a novice learner to understand the communication needs of the professional world.
2. Unit 2 aims at enhancing the vocabulary along with appropriate knowledge of Grammar as effective communication can't be possible without adequate knowledge of grammar. This section also introduces the learners to sentence construction and the different techniques of writing paragraph as it is an unavoidable factor in technical writing. Here one also develops the required skills for paraphrasing and effective writing.
3. Unit 3 has been designed to build up the writing skills of the aspirants as they learn to draft a proposal, report, CV, resume and other forms of technical writing. Furthermore, they realize the importance of business correspondence in the modern world. This section introduces the various official formats, along with the requisites of business presentation and negotiation skills. Here the students get a fair idea about the written communication process and learn the different strategies to cope with the existing intricacies of the specific field.
4. Unit 4 focuses on the use of technology and interview skills as it polishes the learners to behave appropriately in personal and professional life. They are introduced to the appropriate behavioral and physical aspects. They learn to speak effectively with the help of paralinguistic features of voice and different modes of delivery teach them to be a good communicator while opting for an appropriate medium as per the requirement of the situation. They also learn to value the time and space of an individual as it is of an utmost importance in the professional world.
5. Unit 5 introduces the specific essays of renowned authors to make them understand the requisites of writing and its effective implementation. It enlightens their world with an infinite knowledge and helps them to understand the different techniques of writing.

**Methodology:** B.Tech second year students of various colleges affiliated to UPTU were divided into four groups. Thereafter they were asked a definite set of questions to get to know their opinion about the existing syllabus, their overall experience and the potential solutions to improve the current syllabus as ultimately it all relates to the professional success of the students. The result of the said interview was very surprising as it is quite clear from the following diagram:



**Issues:** After interviewing the students of various colleges of UPTU in relation to the effectiveness of the present syllabi I've concluded that 'though the course has been designed with utmost care to enhance the writing and communication skills of the learners but it fails to achieve the set goals up to some extent.' The reasons for aforesaid are as follows:

1. Unit 1 is a bit lengthy. It introduces a variety of topics to a novice learner, thus, making it difficult for them to understand it at the first instance.
2. Most of the students who hail from UP board fail to understand the difficult topics and lag far behind in the race to learn communication skills as their major concern shifts from developing communication skills to qualify the paper.
3. The subject is being introduced in first year where students don't have prior knowledge of the subject. They misinterpret it as English, being taught in prior classes, and by the time they realize the fact it gets too late. They feel under pressure and most of the time goes away in preparing notes and understanding a given topic. Thus, it turns out to be a theoretical class only.
4. Unit 2 mainly focuses on word power and use of Grammar with no definite guidelines. It again turns out to be futile as amidst vast area of lexicon and rulings the learners get confused. They develop lack of interest and even the teachers fail to guide them in connection to the same.
5. Unit 3 deals in technical writing but instead of focusing on enhancing the practical knowledge of learners it lose its way in dealing with formats and structure only. As most of the time the focus remains on definitions, types and structure.
6. Unit 4 introduces paralinguistic features of voice including stress, pitch, and rhythm. But it again turns out to be theoretical topic in absence of the practical knowledge as most of the teachers remain in a hurry to complete the syllabus that results in their negligent attitude towards practical training.
7. Unit 5 introduces a set of difficult essays that reminds the students of their English classes followed by the Board exams. Thus, it results in the reading of chapters and preparing notes to qualify exams.
8. In connection to the language lab there is an acute shortage of infrastructure and trained faculty in most of the colleges so it fully mars the purpose of language training.

**Suggestions:** On the basis of students' feedback I've figured out the following potential solutions depending upon the feasibility of implementation:

1. Professional Communication should be made a compulsory subject throughout so that the difficult topics can be taught at a later stage and it'll also be helpful for the students as they will get more time to enhance their communication skills resulting in an increase in their success rate.
2. A specific text book relating to vocabulary building should also be introduced and the main focus should be on improving the knowledge of relevant terms relating to their field as asking the students to learn innumerable words to enhance their vocabulary is highly inappropriate.
3. Proper infrastructure should be ensured in all the affiliated colleges to facilitate both the teachers as well as the learners.
4. Instead of imparting theoretical knowledge, research papers, dissertation writing should be assigned to students so that they develop necessary skills needed for professional success.
5. Some provision should also be made in the syllabus so that the students take up some project work in communication under the guidance of their respective faculty members.
6. Presentation classes including specific topics should be made compulsory to prepare them for real life challenges and the Departmental Heads should be involved in such activities so that to guide the students in their respective field.
7. The main focus should be on ESP (English for Specific Purposes) as it'll certainly help the students to develop essential communication skills.

8. Creative Writing can also be included in any of the units to provide a platform to the students with a literary bent.
9. Thorough training of Teachers is a must as nothing would succeed without competent teachers. In the words of Seshadri, 'Most teachers of English in our schools are products of our university system. Obviously our departments of English don't equip them with the kind of skills needed to teach English.'
10. Communication classes should be digitalized e.g. through Power Point Presentations the students can develop necessary skills for effective presentation.

#### CONCLUSION

English has a dominant role to play in the global market as success remains next to impossible without adequate knowledge of English (if not proficient). Thus, the responsibility of placement should be shared by all. Along with the necessary amendment in the current syllabi we should make it our motto to enhance the communication skills of the budding aspirants with main focus on the appropriate use of English language. Collective efforts on part of all the faculty members can certainly help the students to achieve the desired result resulting in an overall growth of nation.

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#### About the author:

Dr. Mallika Tripathi is an exceptional educationalist and a freelance writer with a distinguished career of over 12 years. She is currently working as Head, Department of Humanities at FGIET, Raebareli. She is an academician, freelance writer, honorary legal consultant, poetess and above all a much sought after humanitarian. She is a strong believer of the fact that knowledge has power to bring about a revolution in the society. Her slogan is, 'True success lurks in the nobility of head & heart.'