



## The Effect of Classroom Communication on Students' Academic Performance

### ABSTRACT

*This study explores the outcome of classroom communication and students' academic performance. The present study involves two trainee teachers who are classified as excellent and average in their respective sections. Specifically, the researcher is interested in observing or perceiving the classroom communication practice of the selected two trainee teachers involved and the effects it has on the students' academic performance. The conclusions of the study show that both trainee teachers are equally good in their classroom communication practice. There were no significant effects of classroom communication and students' academic performances in the two sections involved. Though, students and trainee teacher in both sections agreed that effective classroom communication is important in ensuring that teaching and learning take place.*

**Key Word:** *Classroom Communication, Academic Performance*

### INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning need communication. **Ornstein** (1990) indicates that most classroom activities involve communication. Effective classroom communication guarantees that learning takes place. Thus, all fundamentals elements of communication such as verbal and non-verbal communication within the classroom setting should be observed. For instance, it is important for a trainee teacher to produce different volumes, tones and inflections while delivering his lectures. According to Lang, **McBeath & Hebert** (1995), a trainee teacher should not slip into a monotone during class lessons. Different tones and inflections are useful in attracting students to focus on the lectures conducted. Non-verbal communication is also a fundamental criterion for class lectures. A good communicator should be able to express non-verbal cues well. Lang, **McBeath & Hebert** (1995) specify that basic nonverbal skills include the awareness of eye contact, facial expression, motion, gestures, signs, movements, physical contact and silence. Diverse gestures and expressions may indicate different meanings. Therefore, it is vital for an educator to possess such knowledge and skills in order to communicate better with the students and to take charge of the class as a whole.

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

There are circumstances in which trainee teacher of Amity B.Ed. College, Bharuch fail to deliver their practice teaching class lecture effectively, efficiently and excellently due to their inability to communicate efficiently. There is no assurance or declaration that trainee teachers who are well-versed in their respective and individual fields can communicate effectively to their students. They might find the encoding process or procedure rather difficult.

In such situation, thoughts and ideas may fail to materialize into spoken words. The possibility is that such thoughts and ideas fail to be converted into something expressive, evocative and meaningful. Then there are trainee teachers who are unable to recognize students' communication panaches and this would hinder effective teaching and learning as well. Additional problem is the inability of trainee teacher to identify the nonverbal behaviour of students and this would result in the failure to comprehend the needs or requirements of their students.

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The present study aims at comparing or associating the effects of the classroom communication practices of an excellent or outstanding trainee teacher of Amity B.Ed. College, Bharuch with that of an

average one. The purpose of the study is to observe differences in patterns and communication practices between an excellent or outstanding and an average trainee teacher and to see if any relationship exists between their classroom communication practices and students' academic performance. Specifically, this study addresses four important aspects,

(a) The nature of students' talk in the classroom in both classes conducted by the excellent or outstanding and the average trainee teacher,

(b) The nature of trainee teachers' talk in both classes conducted by the excellent or outstanding and the average trainee teacher,

(c) Students' academic performances from the classes of the excellent or outstanding and the average trainee teacher and

(d) The nature of students' perceptions pertaining to the importance of classroom communication in the classes belonging to the excellent or outstanding and the average trainee teacher.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present study addresses the following questions:

1. Is there a significant difference between the classes of the excellent or outstanding and the average trainee teacher in relation to the nature of students' talk in the classroom?
2. Is there a significant difference between the classes conducted by the excellent or outstanding and the average trainee teacher in relation to the nature of trainee teachers' talk?
3. Is there a significant difference in the academic performance of students from the classes conducted by the excellent or outstanding and the average trainee teachers?
4. How do students' from both the excellent or outstanding and average trainee teachers' classes perceive the classroom communication practices of their respective trainee teachers?

## **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

The following hypotheses (alternatives) were tested in relation to the four questions above:

1. The classes of the excellent or outstanding trainee teacher have more students' talk compared to the classes of the average trainee teacher.
2. The excellent or outstanding trainee teacher is better in his communication skills compared to the average trainee teacher.
3. There is a significant difference in students' academic performance between the classes of the excellent or outstanding and the average trainee teacher.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A mixed or diverse method procedure was used in this survey and observation was employed throughout the study. The survey was important to find out students' perceptions, observation and insights relating to classroom communication, and its necessity and importance for academic performance. Classroom observations were necessary to investigate the classroom communication practices of trainee teachers and students.

Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) was used as the main tool in this study. Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) is an effective instrument usually used to evaluate classroom interaction.

**Esler and William** (1983) studied teaching behaviours and their relationship to student performance by using Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC) as their main tool. The survey was another tool used in the study. In such a study, a survey is essential as it could be used to analyse

the perceptions of the students regarding the needs and importance of classroom communication. A questionnaire was also used for this survey.

### DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study involved trainee teacher of Amity B.Ed. College and students of the Government Secondary School, Kansia, Ankleshwar, Gujarat. The subjects of the study comprised trainee teacher of Amity B.Ed. College, Bharuch and students of the Government Secondary School, Kansia, Ankleshwar, Gujarat. Therefore the outcome of the study can only be generalized, widespread and indiscriminate to trainee teacher of Amity B.Ed. College and students of the Government Secondary School, Kansia, Ankleshwar, Gujarat or to others who are in a similar situation.

### DISCUSSION

Is There a Significant Difference between Classes conducted by the Excellent or outstanding and the Average trainee teacher in Relation to the Nature of Students' Talk in the Classroom?

A comparison of students' talk (response) shows that the students from the excellent trainee teacher's class (section 7) responded with more occurrence compared to students from the average trainee teacher (section 4). The results (Table 1) show that there is a significant difference between classes under the excellent or outstanding trainee teacher and those under the average trainee teacher in relation to the nature of students' talk (response) in the classroom. ( $t = -2.49$ ,  $p = 0.038 < 0.05$ ). This shows that the excellent or outstanding trainee teacher's class provided better responses i.e. students' responses to the trainee teacher, compared to the average trainee teacher's class.

An assessment of the students' talk (**initiation**) shows that students from the excellent or outstanding trainee teacher's class initiated communication more frequently when compared to students under the average trainee teacher. Even though students who were taught by the excellent trainee teacher initiated more communication than students who were taught by the average trainee teacher, the results ( $t = -1.26$ ,  $p = 0.245 > 0.05$ ) show that there is no significant difference between both classes under the excellent and those under the average trainee teacher in relation to the nature of students' talk (**initiation**), that is talk initiated by students in the classroom.

**Table 1**

**Independent sample t-tests for difference of means in students' talk (response & initiation) by trainee teacher**

Students' Talk	Section	N	Mean	s.d	df	t	Sig. (1-tailed)
Response	Ave (4)	5	30	12.22	8	-2.49	0.38
	Excel (7)	5	52	15.79			
Initiation	Ave (4)	5	2.0	2.35	8	-1.26	.245
	Excel (7)	5	7.2	8.96			

\* Significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$

Is There a Significant Difference between Classes of the Excellent or outstanding and the Average Trainee teacher in Relation to the Nature of Trainee teachers' Talk? Trainee teachers' talk (response) shows that the average or outstanding trainee teacher provided more responses compared to the excellent trainee teacher (Table 2). But the results ( $t = 1.40$ ,  $p = 0.174 > 0.05$ ) show that there is no significant difference between the classes of the excellent or outstanding and the average trainee

teacher in relation to the nature of trainee teachers' talk (response), that is accepting feelings, praising and encouraging and accepting or using the ideas of students.

On the other hand, the excellent or outstanding trainee teacher asked more questions in class compared to the average trainee teacher. Still the results ( $t = -.807$ ,  $p = 0.443 > 0.05$ ) show that there is no significant difference between both classes of the excellent and the average trainee teacher in relation to asking questions in class.

**Table 2**

**Independent sample t-tests for difference of means in trainee teachers' talk (response), asking questions and trainee teachers' talk (initiation)**

Trainee Teachers' Talk	Section	N	Mean	s.d	df	t	Sig. (1-tailed)
Response	Ave (4)	15	7.33	8.96	28	1.40	.174
	Excel (7)	15	3.53	5.58			
Asking Question	Ave (4)	5	24.4	9.86	8	-.807	.443
	Excel (7)	5	30.2	12.68			
Initiation	Ave (4)	15	257.67	322.69	28	-.198	.845
	Excel (7)	15	235.87	279.02			

\* Significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$

Trainee teachers' talk (**initiation**) shows that the average trainee teacher initiated communication more compared to the excellent or outstanding trainee teacher. But the results ( $t = .198$ ,  $p = 0.845 > 0.05$ ) show that there is no significant difference between both classes of the excellent or outstanding and the average trainee teacher in relation to the nature of trainee teachers' talk initiation.

The students' final examination grades for Introduction to Sociology (SOCA1010) were used as an indicator of students' academic achievement. Students in both sections performed equally well in the final exam. This is shown in Table 3

**Table 3**

**Is There a Significant Difference in Students' Academic Performance in the Classes of the Excellent and the Average Trainee teacher?**

Academic Performance	Section	N	Mean	s.d	df	t	Sig. (1-tailed)
Response	Ave (4)	52	60.92	9.92	101	.788	.433
	Excel (7)	51	59.10	13.36			

\* Significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$

The results ( $t = .788$ ,  $p = 0.433 > 0.05$ ) show that there were no significant differences between the classes of the excellent or outstanding and the average trainee teacher in relation to students' academic performance.

How Do Students' of both the Excellent or outstanding and the Average Trainee teacher Perceive the Classroom Communication Practices of Their Respective Trainee teachers?

A survey was conducted with the main aim of gathering students' opinions regarding the importance, rank, status and prominence of classroom communication. The survey was divided into five different dimensions. The five different dimensions were students' views of trainee teachers' response in the classroom, students' views of trainee teachers' initiations in the classroom, students' views of their classroom communication practices, students' views of ideal classroom communication practices and students' views of the effects of classroom communication practices.

The present study showed that almost all students in both sections agreed to the importance of classroom communication. They believed that trainee teachers should be able to communicate effectively during lectures. Being an exceptional communicator is an indicator of an outstanding trainee teacher.

The study on the effects of classroom communication practices indicated that the majority of students in both sections agreed that they attended lectures regularly. But the students of the excellent trainee teacher were more motivated and believed that they benefited more from the lessons compared to the students of the average trainee teacher.

Even though most of the items asked in the survey favoured the excellent or outstanding trainee teacher, still, the results of the final examination indicated that there was no significant difference in terms of academic performance among students from both sections.

## CONCLUSION

Numerous studies have been conducted or showed in relation to classroom communication practices. The present study showed the importance of integrating and assimilating the needs of classroom communication and students' academic performance. Even though there was no direct correlation between effective classroom communication and students' performance, two-way communication in the classroom is essential, needed and important in assuring, promising and guaranteeing that effective teaching and learning can take place. It is very important for teacher education institutions of learning to improve communication practices among trainee teachers. More studies in the area of classroom communication, with specific focus on ways to stimulate students' communication during class lectures should be carried out in order to improve teaching and learning practices.

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## QUESTIONNAIRE OF STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION

**Objective:** The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify the perception of students regarding the importance of classroom communication. This questionnaire would serve as indicator of students' expectations in relation to classroom communication.

**Instruction:** Please answer the following questions as sincerely and as honestly as possible. Circle the relevant option that reflects your opinion.

**Key:** SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; NS = Not Sure; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Sr. No.	Statement	SA	A	NS	D	SD
1	My course instructor speaks clearly in class.					
2	My course instructor acknowledges students ideas during class.					
3	My course instructor praises students' ideas during class.					
4	My course instructor frequently asks questions to students during class.					
5	My course instructor provides responses to students' questions, ideas and comments.					
6	My course instructor promotes two way communications during class.					
7	My course instructor encourages students' participations during class session.					
8	My course instructor uses body languages (body movement, body postures etc.) and eye contacts during class.					
9	My course instructor teaches the lesson effectively to students during class session.					
10	My course instructor communicates effectively with students during class session.					
11	I attend my class sessions regularly.					
12	I always feel motivated to attend my class sessions.					
13	I frequently ask questions during class session.					
14	I am always involved in classroom discussions during class session.					
15	I believe in the importance of two ways Communication in class.					
16	I believe that the course instructor should be able to encourage students' participation during class session.					
17	I believe that the course instructor should be able to communicate effectively in class during class session.					
18	I believe that a good communicator is an important indicator of a good course instructor.					
19	I really think that my class is interesting and I benefit from the class lessons					

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