Enhancing Communication Skills Through Elcs Labs Of Gtu Affiliated Engineering Colleges In Gujarat : An Analysis

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Abstract: The rapid rising and development of information technology has offered a better pattern to explore the new teaching model. Using multimedia to create a context to teach English has its unique advantages. In language teaching and learning, we have a lot to choose from the world of technology: TV, CD Rom, Computers, the Internet, Blogs and Audio Cassettes,Power Point, Videos, DVD's or VCD's in past year, now including of them We have Language lab. English Language Communication Skills Laboratory (ELCS) plays a significant role to enhance the skills of engineering students. The infrastructural facilities provide in addition to the teacher resources to enhance the skills among the students at the foundation level of engineering first year students to make them compatible for 'industry ready'. This Analysis present the necessity of multimedia technology to language teaching,Uses of this technology, problems faced by using these technologies, It's Advantages, Scopes, Limitations with suggestions and Recommendations .   It also aims to make English teachers aware of the strategies to use it in an effective manner.

Keyword: ELCS Labs, Multimedia technology, communication skills, purpose, Advantage, Activity, Engineering students, Teacher's role.

INTRODUCTION:

The use of effective communication is an outcome of the language labs. Proficiency is of course, the matter of constant practice, endeavor and effort. This is not an easy task as there has to be required immense practice for developing communication skills of engineering first year students in the state. In terms of global scenario "Communication Skill" has been growing its prominence everywhere and the professional students of science and technology need to acquire these skills according to the global demands of the present century. The central idea of writing this research paper enhancing communication skills through ELCS Labs of GTU Engineering colleges in Gujarat. This Analysis presents the need of ELCS Labs and discloses various facts about the students learning communication skills in the state. There are 123 engineering colleges existed in the state.but still only some of the engineering colleges have applied ELCS lab for their students.It's desirable the new admitted students speaking local language needs to learn communicate in english through ELCS Lab. The ELCS Labs help the budding professionals to acquire relevant language skills affectively and certain measures are require to be taken by the university authorities to highlight the use and importance of the ELCS Labs for forthcoming times.

The Need of ELCS Labs :

It is required of any learner to have a good command of the language for communication purposes, with clarity and accuracy being vital for effective and efficient communication.The ELCS laboratory is very useful for assessing students' speech. It provides students with the technical tools to get the best samples of pronunciation of the language. The electronic devices used in the laboratory will stimulate the eyes and ears of the learner to acquire the language quickly and easily. The laboratory's collection is designed to assist learners in the acquisition and maintenance of aural comprehension, oral and written proficiency, and cultural awareness.   The language laboratory offers broadcasting, television programmes, web-assisted materials and videotaped off-air recordings in the target language. English Language Communication Skills (110002) is B.E. common core syllabus, a mandatory course for all the first year engineering and technology students affiliated to the GTU in Gujarat. The course aims to developing language skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing to the new students specially coming from Gujarati medium after 12th. Apart from "Enjoying Everyday English", a theory paper, ELCS plays a significant role in imbibing language skills and communication skills for the engineering students.

ELCS Learners Vs Normal class room learners :

Considerable change is found between the normal class room learners and language lab learners.

To find contrast on :

Normal class room learning is methodical and learning opportunities of communication skills is confined.
Students' acquisition of skills based on the environment of

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class room.
Time bounded teaching.
Testing and evaluation is based on the content.
Anatomy of the learner is confined.

Use of ELCS Lab with Teacher's Consol :

ELCS Lab can be used for teaching/learning through Teacher's consol and language learning software.It act as a platform for learning,practicing and producing language skills through interactive lessons and communicative mode of teaching.Learners can act and respond in a variety of ways at their own pace.Language lab may have the following objectives,purposes and functions to work upon.

OBJECTIVES :

Enhances learners' freedom of utilizing multimedia resources.
To develop and maintain good linguistic competence through accuracy in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.
To enrich the discourse competence, to prepare the learner to be able to produce contextualize speech and written text.
To develop pragmatic competence, to understand the grammatical form,function and scale of formality.
Encourages students to acquire language skills during the allotted slots of prescribed schedule. Provides ample opportunities to learn communication skills in different modules.

PURPOSE :

Teaching with software that is approachable pairing and grouping the students to facilitate group discussions,content authoring to create course material and tests.
Stay in control - Monitoring the students from the teacher's PC when they are on self learning.
Reinforce learning - Facilitating broadcast and sharing files from Teacher's PC to the other students workstation through audio,video and image.
To ensure the best learning result.

FUNCTIONS :

1.Live Audio and Video Broadcasting.
To broadcast live Audio and Video from any analog source i.e DVD,MP3 or CD etc.
To broadcast live Audio and Video from news and education channels of TV or Internet.

2.Monitoring the student's workstations.
To monitor student;s screen as whole also on individual basis from the teacher's workstation.
To take control or terminate applications on any students computer.

3.Speech drill exercise.
To practice voice based activities like speech drill exercise through model imitation,voice recording,voice graph and variable speed playback to neutralize accent and acquire fluency.
Exchanging dialogues.

4.Group discussions.
To bring the students into random or standard groups to conduct group discussions and role play form their workstations.
Live recording of discussion content each group so that teacher can provide feedback on their performance.

The problems encountered by the teachers in ELCS :

To promote and enhance communication skills among the students of engineering first year, the teacher has to be equipped with the thorough knowledge over the subject and be able to equip with comprehensive language needs of the students. Apart from that the faculty members need to have a comprehensive idea about the language needs of the learners.From college the demerits may be :

Internet facility and regular updates of software is not provided in ELCS labs of colleges.
The prescribed practice hours are not adequate.

Advantages of the curriculum of ELCS labs :

Avoids the monotony of theory classes.
Language lab develops phonetic and spoken English skills with RP (Received Pronunciation) among the students of engineering.
Develops the technique of accent, speaking with clear syllable division.
Enables the students' spoken skills with proper stress and intonation.
Develops students' abilities in making the conversation, dialogues and participating in the role-play activities.
ELCS Labs focus on the oral presentation skills with eloquence and spontaneous speaking skills with extemporal levels.
Provides various topics to develop the skills of speaking in JAM (Just A Minute) sessions.
Essential skills like participating in the debates and group discussions will be developed.
ELCS Labs enable the students to enhance their skills in information transfer and telephoning skills.

Apart from these skills the ELCS labs incorporate the students to develop their skills. The skills related to soft skills like argumentation skills, problem solving, conflict management skills are need to be developed among the students of engineering first year since the foundation level.

ACTIVITY SCOPE IN ELCS LABS :

The scope of activities may be categorized into three levels
1. Individual activity - S.D.(Self-Description), JAM (Just A Minute session), Oral presentations,prepared and extempore, Describing objects - persons-places etc.
2. Pair activity - Exchange of dialogue, Role-play, Telephoning conversation.
3. Group activity - Debate, Group discussion, Seminar, PPT (power point presentation), Conferences .

Limitations and confinement of the role of teacher in ELCS Labs :

ELCS Labs undoubtedly play the significant role in enhancing the communication skills but the teachers role is

determined by the various aspects as he/she should able to suggest the standard and useful software contents of the related contents based on the syllabus in the curriculum.

The faculty should be highly resourceful for the larger benefit of the students in promoting communication skills.

The teachers are also need to be trained properly for the use of all the features of the labs.

They should be required to know the needs of the learners and recommend the software (language software agents) to bring necessary changes according to those requirements. Technically savvy.

Encourage learners towards learning contents with passion, also required to make them realize the importance of ELCS Labs.

Motivate the students towards learning and use the skills appropriately after teaching-learning sessions of the ELCS labs.

Limitations and confinements of the students participating in ELCS Labs :

The problem towards enhancing communication skills through ELCS is the involvement of the learners' abilities and level of retention is poor due to the following reasons.

Lack of co-ordination and understanding between teacher-students.

Lack of self-motivational skills.

Lack of awareness.

Lack of knowledge and foundation.

Lack of knowing the need of learning.

Teacher's steps towards motivating and encouraging enthusiasm among the learners is not fulfilled.

Guidelines for Effective Learning :

Traditional Learning Environments	Progressive Learning Environments
Teacher centered instruction	Student centered instruction
Single sense stimulation	Multi-sensory stimulation
Single path progression	Multi-path progression
Single media	Multimedia
Isolated work	Collaborative work
Information delivery	Information exchange
Passive learning	Active/exploratory/inquiry based learning
Factual knowledge-based learning	Critical thinking & informed decision making
Reactive response	Proactive/planned response
Isolated, artificial context	Authentic, real-world context

SUGGESTIONS FOR ENHANCING COMMUNICA TION SKILLS THROUGH ELCS LABS :

Apart from the statement of the problem, a few suggestions are proposed to develop communication skills for the students of engineering under the GTU affiliated colleges in the state are -

To conduct remedial sessions for ELCS Labs.

To train up the students regularly even after prescribed hours of instruction.

Make Language clubs.

Encouraging students towards e-learning.

Exchanging of the groups from one college to other college.

Recommendations to set up Language Labs in colleges :

Language lab softwares : Renet, Aristoclass, Hiclass, Globarina, Console OCL- 908W, Histudio MHi Tech ETC.

Language Labs : Conventional Laboratory, Lingua Phone Laboratory , Computer Assisted Language Laboratory , Digital language lab, Multimedia Hi-Tech Language Laboratory.

CONCLUSION :

Enhancing communication skills through ELCS labs of GTU Engineering colleges in Gujarat: An Analysis - discloses several facts related to ELCS labs in developing communication skills among the students of engineering first year shows a detailed analysis of advantages of the English language communication labs in providing communicative abilities among the students studying first year engineering in the state. The purpose and strategy are clearly explained how ELCS Labs can be helpful to solve the communication problem of the students.The faculty of English language is expected to play a lead role as a counselors, communication experts, and soft skills trainers. The students need to grow passion for learning and imbibing communication skills to excel in their careers.

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