

Application of Bloom's Taxonomy as a Teaching Pedagogy for Communication Skills in Engineering Colleges

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to emphasize the usage of the Bloom's Taxonomy as a facilitator's tool. The concept is used for designing and delivering courses on communication skills in English. The paper examines the conceptual framework of Bloom's taxonomy and its objectives in today's education in India, especially in the areas of curriculum designing and practical aspects of delivering the course. The paper is based on the author's experiential learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

For decades until the early 90's, the prime focus of the industry/manufacturing sector was on hard skills, which were necessary for employees' performance at their workplace. With the advent of globalization and the concomitant demand for properly skilled employees, employers are faced with a problem: applicants for various jobs in their establishments lack two essential attributes—personality and soft skills—which make them unemployable. During this transformation phase of industries personality traits, communication skills and soft skills are playing a crucial role in securing careers in the public and private sectors. Good manners, pleasing personality, effective communication, aptitude for decision making, stability in behaviour, ability to think outside the context are some of the qualities expected of job seekers.

As an experienced teacher having been worked at several engineering colleges and presently working in a deemed to be University, the researcher has observed that the present English Language teaching methods and materials used in many universities and colleges appear to be wanting in adequate emphasis on the communication skills of the learners which have a significant role to play in building up their personality. Neither a single method nor even a concoction of methods seems to be suitable in achieving the desired objectives. The present paper seeks to establish that the adoption of Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy (2001 revised edition) method would enhance the learners' communication skills and soft skills and it could strongly influence learners' academic and professional potential to perform well at occupational environments, irrespective of the profile of their jobs.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many educational institutions follow different methods of teaching a curriculum of communication skills and soft skills. The researcher herself has taught such a curriculum in quite various ways. For many years, the

levels of learning have often been depicted as a set of steps, directing many teachers to encourage their students to reach the higher level of thought. However, Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy is a multifaceted model that classifies thinking according to six cognitive levels of complexity. In the 2001 revised edition of his taxonomy, Bloom changed the levels from noun to verbs. The levels are: remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate and create. A small dimension of change from noun to verb planned for university examiners "has been transformed into a basic reference for all educators worldwide. Surprisingly, it has been used by curriculum planners, administrators, researchers and classroom teachers at all levels of education." (Anderson & Sosniak, 1994, p. 1). The structure of the Revised Taxonomy Table matrix "provides a clear, concise visual representation" (Krathwohl, 2002) of the alignment between standards and educational goals, objectives, products, and activities.

Shields and Rangarajan (2013) and Granello (2001) also have made useful connections with respect to activities involved in "Benjamin Bloom's revised taxonomy of the cognitive domain". Furthermore, Apex Professional University (APU), Bangalore, is the first University to have recognized the importance and reliability of Bloom's Taxonomy method of teaching in different fields has been affecting a revolution in teaching methodology.

3. THE NEED AND STATEMENT OF AIM:

The implied argument here is that though Bloom's Taxonomy has gathered tremendous popularity across the world, yet it remains a relatively unfamiliar method of teaching in the Indian education setup. Therefore, the concern of the present study is to bring to light the importance of understanding the workings of the communication skills challenges at engineering institutions in India and to underscore the need to introduce the innovations in teaching styles by implementing, with region-/competence-specific adaptations, Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy method of teaching.

In the present paper, the researcher purports two things that are quite essential to understand the impact of the teaching learning process in engineering colleges. Firstly, the study must seek to define students' learning outcomes – the goals that describe how a student would be different because of a learning experience. And second, to measure if the content implemented to facilitate the learning is effective.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the present paper are to establish the fact that Bloom's taxonomy as a teaching pedagogy in engineering colleges which would ensure:

- i) to give a comprehensive account of Bloom's method;
- ii) to compare the method with existing methods and highlight the utility of the proposed method;
- iii) to examine whether the method can be applied in the Indian context as it is or whether it requires adaptations/modifications;
- iv) to show how the method can be employed at the various levels of teaching in the classroom,
- v) to devise learning tasks, evaluation procedures appropriate to the Indian context to enhance learning outcomes.

RATIONALE

Bloom's Taxonomy has assisted teachers of any subject in a big way to design instructional activities that cover the six levels of the hierarchy. It has also inspired others to offer their own 'take' on critical thinking. Unrau (1977), for example, believes that facilitators need to help their students develop a character to think critically, like:

- Imagining alternative solutions and perspectives
- Trying to persevere in acquiring and integrating knowledge
- Playing with ideas
- Evaluating the consequences of beliefs, decision, and actions
- Reflecting on one's own thinking and that of others to gain knowledge or oneself and others.

The researcher strongly believes that Bloom's taxonomy as a teaching pedagogy has tremendous significance in the Indian classroom in fulfilling the need of contextualized teaching and the need of using the linguistic system effectively and appropriately in concrete situations.

4. METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES TO BE USED

The researcher attempts to connect the Taxonomy as a teaching pedagogy for oral communication with the practical learning of the same. Therefore, the researcher has already designed a syllabus called **BUILDING BLOCKS FOR COMMUNICATION SKILLS** and an intervention method to teach the material to the first year B Tech students. The curriculum and the method aim to improve learners' self-awareness and to develop their interest to emerge as winners irrespective of their academic, social or economic background. Following is the table with a structure of teaching the aspects of language, considering the six levels in the taxonomy.

LEVEL	ATTRIBUTES	COURSE	OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY/ASSESSMENT
Remembering	Recall, visualize	For 1 year B Tech: Building Blocks for Communication Skills	By the end of the course, the students should be able to develop competency in human relational interaction	Connecting to appropriate language, style, tone and to help the students become effective communicators and productive professional.
Understanding	Interpret, demonstrate		Understanding situations and applying the strategies of speaking skills.	Using the techniques to demonstrate the ability to listen and respond to.
Applying	Solve, use		Apply principles, Strategies to know contextual meanings	Creating conversational dialogues
Analyzing	Separating, sifting		Analyze the audios and pronounce different	Creating conversational dialogues

			words	with proper intonation
Evaluating	Checking, experiment- ting		Evaluating the proficiency of speaking skills	Enacting in specific situations with body language practice and evaluating self in various situations
Creating	Designing, planning		Review	Faculty Review

CONCLUSION:

Exposing students to need based skills training is likely to result in enhanced communication skills and soft skills of the students for their employability and career growth. The present study asserts that innovative teaching style like Bloom's Taxonomy and motivating approach of teaching would surely enhance the students' language proficiency, body language and confidence.

5. REFERENCES

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