

Need For Adoption Of Digital Communication Skills In The Teaching-Learning Process Post Covid Crisis

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Abstract

Teaching is often perceived to be two halves; the first half is based on information whereas the other is predicted on communicational or interpersonal capacity of both the teachers and learners. It is necessary for a teacher not only to provide a good lesson but also to deliver the lesson efficiently in the classroom. Effective and productive communication skills in the field of teaching, institutional management and class engagement are very important. In a multilingual country like India, teachers have trouble determining whether to use English, how to use English with the combination of learner's first language, how to speak in student-friendly language and even their ability to communicate effectively.

For a while now, digital technology is transforming the way we communicate with each other. But in formal situations like work or school, one cannot be sure as to what form of communication is appropriate. It is thus wise to say that communication is just not about sharing information but rather creating it. There are many experts who have put forward some important points on what one should do when it comes to emailing, video-conferencing, and using the phone for business calls or voice mail.

There is need therefore to understand the importance of digital communication skills in education. Teachers will have to recognize that digital teaching has now come on front foot and they need to offer innovative and meaningful approaches to students in this form of education.

This study looks at digital communication as an important part of teacher's skills and its importance in today's times. The researchers have done the research based on survey study with samples from teachers, professors and subject experts who have used the online form of teaching. Based on the responses, the researchers have studied the importance of digital communication skills in teachers.

Keywords: *Adoption, Communication, teaching-learning, Digital Communication, Development.*

INTRODUCTION

The communication skills can be defined as the transmitting of a message, which describes communication skills as the delivery of a message involving a common awareness of the contexts in which contact occurs. Teacher's communication skills are also essential for a teacher in education (Khan, A., Khan, S., Zia-Ul-Islam, S., & Khan, M. 2017).

Communication is a two-tier process: interpersonal and mass. In modern India, the priority of experts tends to be mass media. Because of today's significant change in the country's socio-economic climate, an insight into interpersonal and organizational contact is necessary. The importance of cognitive skills can be understood as the transfer of knowledge affecting a shared perception within the situations in which conversations are performed. Saying its message delivery (Maharana, D. 2013).

Importance of Communication Skills

Today we agree that work that focuses on the implementation of this concept in the classroom will complement any curriculum advancement and not only explains the interventions introduced to implement changes but also the communication skills which teachers need to learn to ensure their students are achieving the expected goals (MORTIMER, C. A. A. T).

Teaching is a collaborative interaction that affects not only the child's learning but its personality. The teacher is now called a facilitator who supports a child's education in every possible way. He/she is known to be a mentor, teacher and student guide who helps the child to improve the cognitive.

In all facets of life, contact plays a critical function. This allows people to communicate and appreciate concepts as an aspect of any culture. This was derived from the word 'communications,' which means 'to exchange or distribute.' It plays a significant role in the growth of comprehension and relationships. Communication, which is the most powerful psychological device, can improve, to compromise and to have a permanent effect upon one's mind. Therefore, many confusions and disputes must be properly dealt with (Rawat, D.2016).

Listening as well as reading and writing require communication skills. An instructor must be highly trained in all these areas for successful teaching. Teachers with strong contact find it both smoother (Freddie Silver) and clear. To the teacher in the delivery of information, class management and contact with class members, good communication skills are profoundly essential. The teacher must teach students various ways of thinking effortlessly. A teacher must develop listening skills to inspire students and the manner they learn and line with their knowledge and abilities (Khan, A., Khan, S., Zia-Ul-Islam, S., & Khan, M. 2017).

In addition to this diversity of standards, the difficulty of language use in India includes a review of teachers' impressions of their communication abilities in English. The Indian government's apprehension about the wide variety of English teachers at the UG and PG levels in Indian universities is accentuating this situation.

To order for teachers and students of English to learn English speech and language most simply and easily the Government of India needs to help the teaching cycle of communication skills in English from the grass-root stage (Maharana, D. 2013).

Education is considered the most effective method of community improvisation, and contact plays a critical role in the cycle of education. Communication tends to transfer information, aside from the exchange of other concepts, thoughts and viewpoints from the sender (teacher) to the receiver (student).

Beyond the essential skills, good communication plays a significant role in inspiring students, in recognizing their problems and goals. While both verbal and non-verbal communication plays a vital role in the creation of a powerful teacher students' connection which serves as a platform for strong cognitive growth, and effective verbal communication contributes (Rawat, D, 2016).

Senior clinicians and health service executives typically attribute their performance to their efficacy as communicators. Students studying for medical professions should not only learn the scientific and clinical terminology required to deliver effective health care but must also be great communicators. Health education aims to fulfil this need by offering a detailed and portable roadmap for allied medical students to master the necessary communication skills (McCorry, L., & Mason, J. 2019).

COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR A TEACHER

Positive Motivation: This is one of the main qualities an instructor can have. Students have different interests and expectations with respect to topics in a class. It is also the teacher's task to generate excitement and interest for a subject in the mind of the students. It is also the job of teachers to remove fears and inhibition for a subject.

Effective Body Language: It is the most important instructor talking ability. A clear body language accompanied by communication competence is a healthy practice. It will give the minds of the students a long-term and rich experience. So, lectures by teachers are generally more engaging and informative. In fact, during a lecture, a speaker will preserve his/her speech, pitch, sound, and rhythm.

Sense of Humour: The significance of this element has been routinely underestimated. Students enjoy the learning-process more when the element of humour is involved in teaching.

Understanding the Students: Teachers should acknowledge and promote students' engagement, also encourage open contact. The development of a dialog rather than a monolog should be emphasized. Therefore, it is often prudent to hear the views of students before addressing some form of problems in the classroom.

Team Formation: A classroom can be broken into small teams and students should be encouraged to approach the teachers and discuss any problems if they have. Such a method would not only improve classroom engagement, but also teacher-student relation.

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Technical Skills: Teachers must always be up to date with all new educational tools, such as the use of smartphones, online conferences and the Internet. It allows students to be involved in the process of smart studying.

The future of every country is a well-learned student and hence, teachers' position in then society is so important. Generations of young people are deeply affected by a teacher/mentor. A student should be predicted cumulative gains if teachers add appropriate value to contact skills. It is therefore necessary for communication skills to become the core element of a skilled teaching capacity.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR TEACHERS:

The capacity of a teacher to interact efficiently with students, parents, and peers is extremely important for teachers' and student' achievement. Teachers must have the ability to interact effectively with their students in order to help them excel. To advance their education careers, teachers do require strong communication skills. Teachers cannot reinforce the learning process and their professional stability without strong communication skills. Teachers must have strong communication skills so that their students can listen to and communicate accordingly.

Individual and Group Teaching

A teacher needs to know where his/her student stands and what it takes to work on and will have strong listening skills. A teacher must be straightforward and precise while describing a topic to a student. You cannot twist the subject, annoy your students and make it hard for the student to explain what you mean. You must change the student's personality in a positive manner and ensure that the vulnerability of each student is dealt with. Through having strong presenting skills, a professional teacher of communication will turn a dull topic into an interesting and engaging one.

Caring in Communication:

An ideal facilitator should exhibit compassion and concern in words and his/her body language while interacting with their students. They ought to partner with students to make sure that their students succeed in everything they do and inspire them constantly to do better in their lives academically, morally, personally and socially. Teachers need to understand their students' anxiety and uncertainty and must be there to help, guide and empathize with them.

A sensitive and effective way to communicate with parents

Another important role of a teacher is to ensure they acknowledge and discuss the progress of their students with parents in writing and during teacher-parents' meet. A parent deserves to know the actual state or progress of their child. Hence, how a facilitator explains it matters a lot and his/her constructive feedback also gives him confidence that their opinions can be communicated positively, however, at the same time, negative feedback should also be shared with equal candidness. A report should be correctly and adequately conveyed to the relevant individual.

To ensure the school is doing well, you must listen, learn, debate and develop outstanding teaching strategies.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES

Communication has become an inseparable part of human life. In addition, it is not only confined to any sector but that, 85 percent of your career progress comes when you possess enough soft skills and abilities, and rest are other necessary skills, such as family, technical, business and others. The way you communicate and connect with others plays a significant role in your everyday performance.

Here are a few guidelines that help you become an excellent communicator,

1. Have a proper body language
2. Frame your views
3. Try to understand, not just to listen
4. Get to know your audience before you communicate
5. Ask open-ended questions
6. Always be honest

The Merriam-webster dictionary describes communication as a means to convey or share information, ideas, emotions, feelings, etc., to others, or to use words, sounds, signs, or actions. Although contact is of various kinds, it is necessary and important to properly use it. Communication talents are also a more refined interpretation of the idea of contact. You require excellent listening skills as well as other talents to become a

professional.

Here are a few effective communication strategies that you need to follow.

1. Silent Treatment
2. Emotional awareness
3. Asking questions
4. Choice of language
5. Listening
6. Have a good sense of humor
7. Feedback
8. Smile
9. Observation
10. Honesty
11. Reading
12. Speak equally
13. Stress management
14. Never stop learning

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR STUDENTS:

A student continues to learn how to talk at home but speaking in a formal setting is another ball game. At the training, the student knows how to cope with peer problems and how to respond, taking others into account. A student must learn communication skills because it supports them in the long run. Life of a student is a foundation and thus how we interact with them influences their professional interactions. In order to strengthen their communication skills, a teacher must consider all the language skills, such as reading, writing, speaking and listening and devise outstanding teaching strategies.

Emphasis on reading

The reading practice in a student's life has always made his/her academic journey smooth in terms of comprehending the language. In addition to comprehension, focus and concentration are the other key elements which add to the benefits of reading. A student can effortlessly apply the knowledge gained from reading along with a wide range of vocabulary (words) and grammar in their academic as well as professional life. Reading as a receptive and productive skill needs sincere attention and should not be taken for granted.

Emphasize on writing to communicate well with words

Writing has often been considered a challenging task for many, however, this being an indispensable part of one's academic as well as professional life, it is often observed that students have trouble writing their assignments or projects almost all their academic lives. Therefore, it is a must to introduce the students with all the important aspects of writing since the beginning of their studies, including the difference between formal and informal writing.

Emphasize on presentation and speeches:

Majority of students are often seen to avoid speaking on any formal occasion. It may be due to lack of interest, fear, less confidence, nervousness, or other such factors. Being a beginner, it is important for a student to participate in as many speaking activities such as, role plays, presentations and speech-based exercises as possible in order to gain confidence and speak without any hesitation.

Emphasize on Listening skills

A teacher should be able to listen to and monitor the students' discussions and should also be vigilant enough to address students' comprehension skills. It is evident that a good listener always becomes a good speaker. If one listens to the speaker attentively, he/she can easily understand what they expect and plan their dialogue accordingly.

Master the techniques that can help in developing the skills:

A student should never be scared to express himself/herself or run from any casual or formal discussion. If it's a school/college or even a group of friends, they need not to hesitate to bring their thoughts forward. The more they look back, the more concerns they will show in the future. Therefore, it is a teacher's responsibility to involve them in classroom activities, and students should also get involved more with their peers and be a part of a culture where each subject can be addressed, and the academic level strengthened. Try to interact in all the ways in order to master the language!

Introduction to Digital Communication Skills

In 2020, when pandemic hit the entire world; it became pretty evident that most of the daily communication will now be converted through digital medium. Digital technology has transformed communication. Especially in academia, teachers now have to adopt to different digital technologies to keep the students up-to-date with the syllabus without faltering their academic progress. So clearly in this scenario, the importance of digital communication skills comes into picture.

Teachers want to hear from students. They want students to feel comfortable to ask for help. Ask questions in class, and get involved in classroom conversations. Unfortunately, many students struggle with speaking out;

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they become too nervous to answer or feel embarrassed asking a question. To create a feeling of support in the classroom, fostering communication is key, especially when the communication is digital.

Digital learning is becoming an increasingly popular option in modern education. From full digital courses, to classes held remotely, through to activities within the classroom setting moved online. But communicating effectively in digital learning environments can be difficult. Especially when the transition to digital learning has been sudden, or is unplanned. Making such a huge overhaul is a frustrating and confusing experience for the staff, the students, and their parents. But digital learning communication can be made easier with the right resources. This paper tries to define this digital communication process and a need to adopt the rightful skills for teaching through online medium.

The different tools which can be used in the digital classroom are:

1. Messaging
2. Audio-Video Interaction
3. Social Media
4. Virtual Classrooms
5. Multimedia Presentations
6. Online Discussions

Research Methodology

In the present study, the researchers have studied the implications of growing digital technology post covid-19 pandemic and how it has affected the branch of academics and teaching as well. The researchers have tried to define digital communication skills in the field of teaching and how teachers need to adopt them in the coming future.

For this study, a survey was done and samples were different professors, teachers, subject experts who have an experience in online teaching. The researchers tried to understand the difficulties faced by the teacher during online teaching and what the future of digital teaching-learning is.

A total 10 questions were asked and 23 samples were collected in the online survey. The analysis and conclusion was based on the above responses and secondary sources – books, articles, research papers, etc.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To evaluate the need for digital communication skills in the teaching-learning process for the development of the students' excellence post the covid-19 pandemic

Analysis

In the survey all the samples have taken online classes. The entire study based on the need for effective digital communication skills becomes relevant since teaching through online mediums has become the need of an hour.

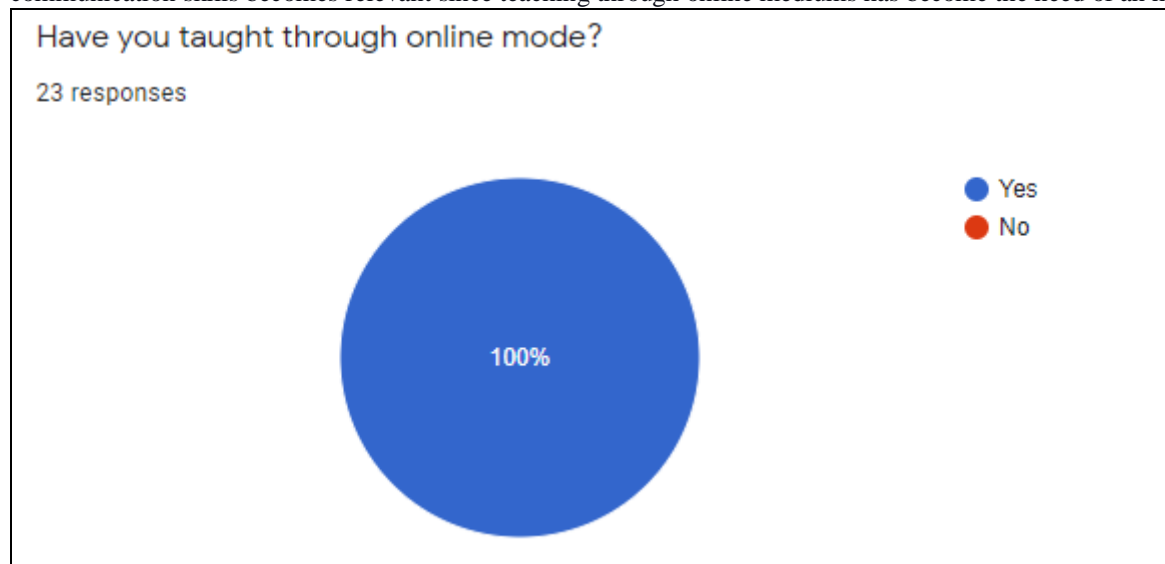


Figure 1

The samples were asked if they use type of tools or innovative learning processes while teaching online. Most of the samples answered that they use online platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, etc. But other than this, interestingly, teachers have also used tools like Padlet, Mentimeter & Visual Labs; tools which make the session interactive and you get direct answers from the students. Teachers have also tried to use audio-visual lectures which might make the student want to watch it like any other video and make the teaching effective. Teachers

have also continuously kept tabs on the progress of the student by conducting daily online activities or a Google form test.

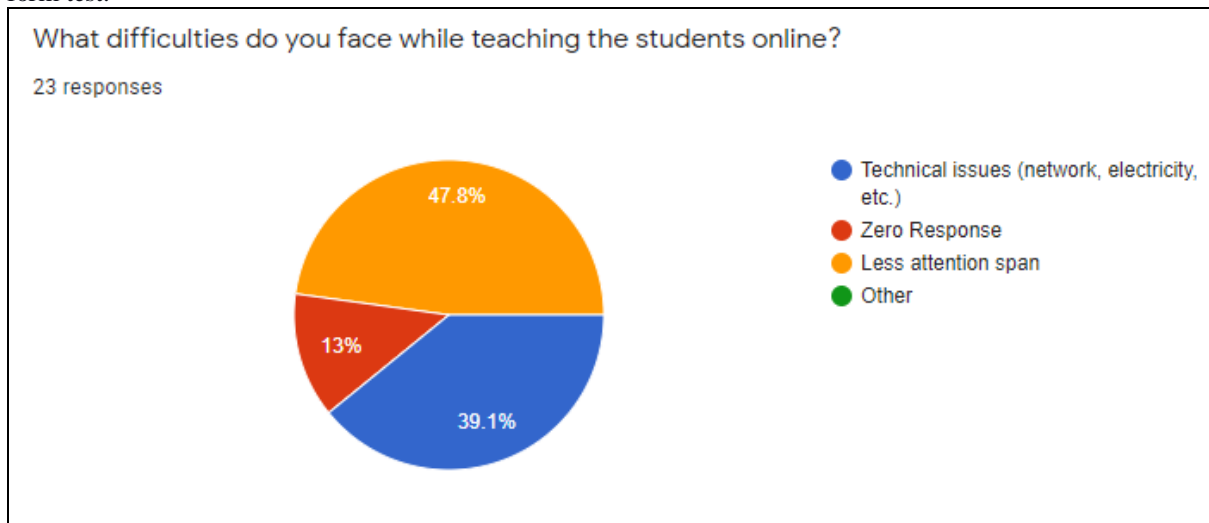


Figure 2

In spite of all the above mentioned tools and techniques, there are a lot of difficulties and challenges faced by the teachers on a daily basis while teaching online. Out of the 23 responses 13 percent of the samples mentioned students to be non-responsive while attending the lectures, 39.1% face technical issues like network problems, power-cuts, etc. while teaching and 47.8% answered that the students have a low attention span while attending online lectures which makes digital communication an integral part of teaching methodology.

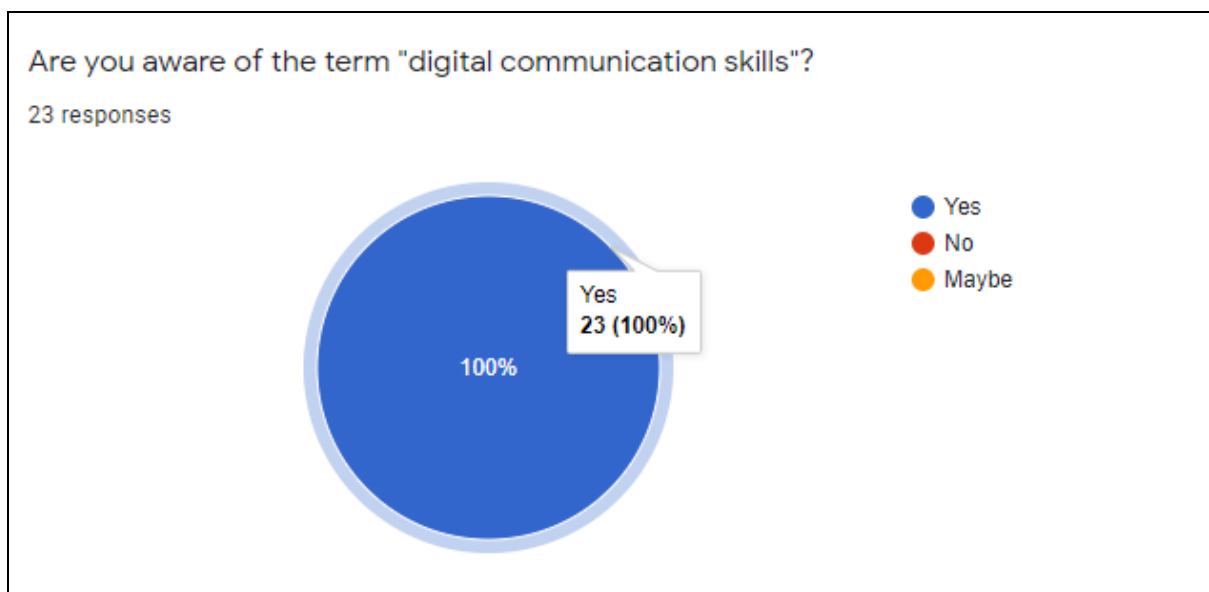


Figure 3

All the samples were well aware of the term "Digital Communication Skills". In spite of this many faced the problems of not communicating with students fully through online mode. This makes adopting different patterns and techniques to digital teaching all the more important in future.

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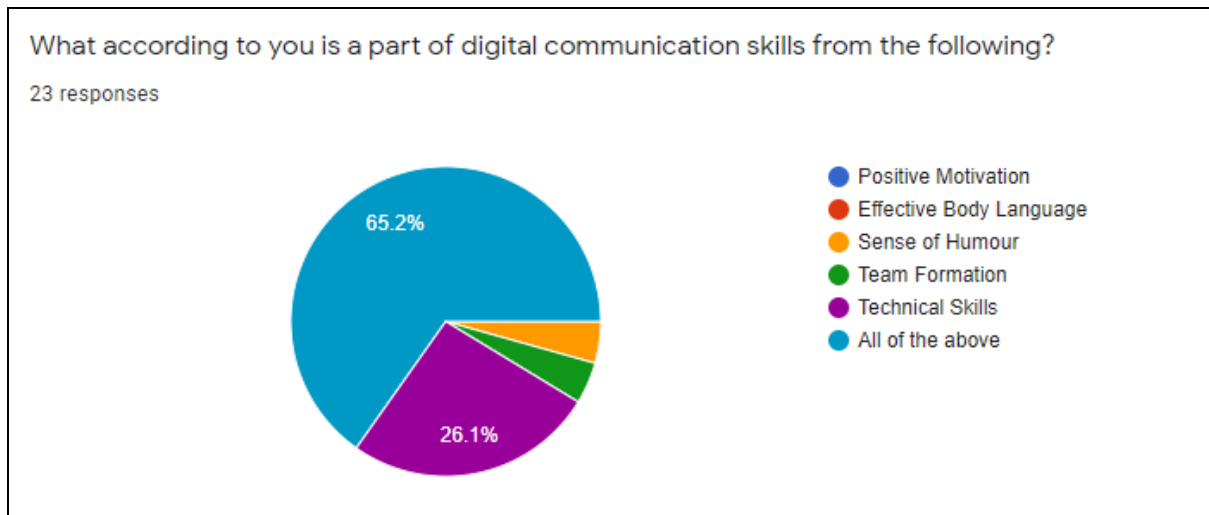


Figure 4

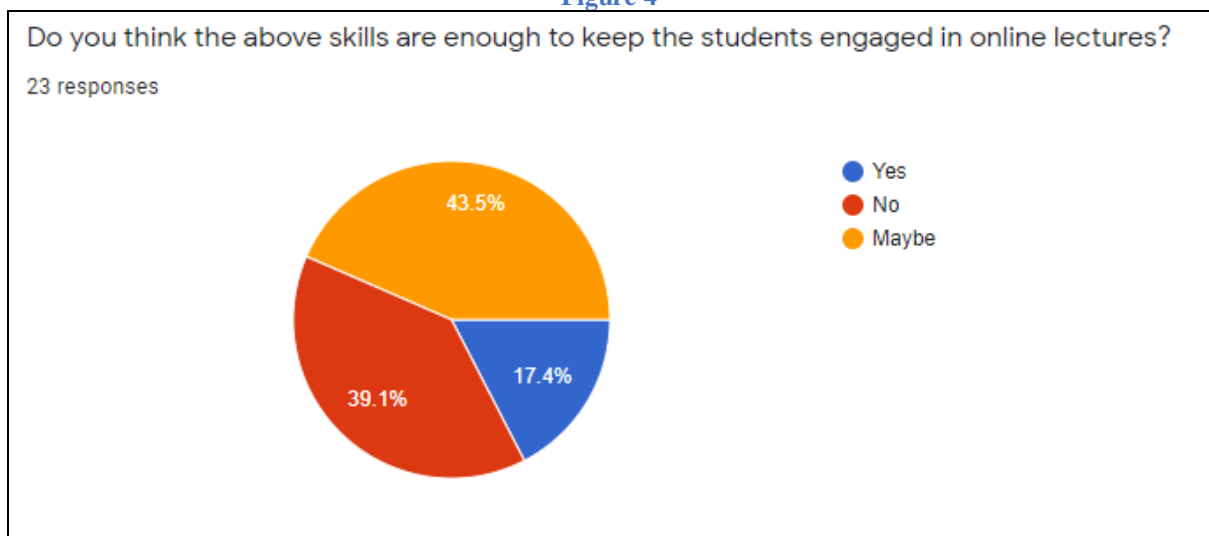


Figure 5

The samples were also asked to choose among the above options as to what constitutes under digital communication skills according to them. Incidentally, 26.1% believe that technical skills are a big part of digital communication while 65.2% believe that not only technical skills but digital communication is a mixture of positive motivation, effective body language, sense of humor and team formation. But still only 17.4% believed that these skills are enough to keep a student engaged in online lectures while 43.5% answered a “maybe” in the question.

In actuality, there are two types of digital skills which need to be mastered digital hard skills and digital soft skills. Hard skills include the know-how of the various digital platforms across internet and World Wide Web and building your digital self-confidence. But teachers need to effectively work on digital soft skills which are more complex and less tangible where there is a need to communicate confidently, clearly and successfully through various online platforms.

The samples were also asked if they have attended any workshops or refresher courses to enhance their online teaching skills to which 15 responded in yes and rest in no. Here, it is clear that a proper training programme or faculty development programmes are a necessity to enhance the digital soft skills of a teacher rather than technical skills as to understand how to engage a student positively in an online lecture.

The respondents were also asked to give an idea of theirs as to how they can make online mode of teaching effective to which many interesting responses were captured. Many samples believed in healthy discussion groups, interactive sessions and activities connect emotionally to a student to encourage him or her for active participation in the discussion. Many answered that effective team-building activities and exercises are a key to making the lecture engaging. Collaborative space for student will bring out a sense of initiation automatically is what the samples said. Also, content should be presented in different styles, effectively making full usage of multimedia technology which might make the lectures engaging and interesting.

Lastly, the samples were asked why there is a need for effective digital communication. Following were some of the responses:

1. Digital is superior to traditional mass media in its ability to underpin and enable participatory communication.
2. It allows communication participants to effortlessly be part of and influence the dialogue, and to contribute and be recognized through co-creation and visibility
3. It enables the creation of platforms and environments where communication participants can share ideas collaborate and engage in joint action with likeminded peers.
4. The two-way and real-time nature of digital allows communication participants to engage in ways that meet their needs and desires, at a convenient time and place.
5. The pandemic was a surprise, and there could be such surprises anytime. Digital is the new today; we have to have effective digital communication skills to survive as trainers.
6. As per the pandemic situation it's a need for today's world, no doubt Digital platform will be the mainstream in coming future.
7. There's no need. It is just a scam (honest opinion). Video recorded lectures are better alternative than online monologs.
8. Because not everyone is technologically advanced to use the tools available for the smooth functioning of classes and sessions.

In today's times, students are now getting more practical and empowered by online and digital methods. In this new setting, the teacher is no longer the sole custodian of learning process. Therefore, there is a need to adapt to the new change and become digitally self-sufficient and adopt different digital hard skills and soft skills.

CONCLUSION AND SCOPE OF STUDY

Communication determines who you are in all ways and stages of your life. It is an ongoing learning and skill mastery process. You should learn from your past errors, note your errors and do check how you can rectify them. Do not take this sort of contact lightly because it will mess with your future. Communication skills are necessary to learn so that you can communicate effortlessly and effectively.

Worldwide, there is an urgent need to streamline digital communication and smart teaching with a future interconnected classroom, where learning can happen in different regions and in real time. To make this dream a reality, there is a constant pressure on every institution in the world to bring in the necessary technology inside the classroom.

Students who were once limited to learning about professions and other cultures by reading textbooks or watching videos, now have the ability to communicate and collaborate with their global world. Teachers are using Skype, Google Hangouts, Zoom and other free video conferencing tools to bring a special guest, or even a new cultural community, right to their classrooms. Students are safely communicating and collaborating with other students in their community and around the world in a controlled digital environment, by posting video messages and leaving comments, using digital tools like Flipgrid, Padlet, and Dot storming.

Since more and more of these digital tools are being created and brought into our classrooms, it is important that both teachers and students have a solid understanding of how to stay safe online. This paper delve into the changes of traditional communication skills in traditional teaching pedagogy to the present day situation of digital classrooms where there is a need for adoption of different digital technologies as well as digital soft skills. There is a need to clearly implement workshops and courses for teachers to understand digital communication skills and then use them in their lectures to keep them engaging.

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