

Performance of Employers in Primary Schools through Communication

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Effective Team working and Communication

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Assignment 1

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Introduction

Communication is the act of conveying meanings from one person or group through using mutually understood symbols, signs and pragmatics. It plays a vital role in our day-to-day lives and it not only helps to facilitate the process of sharing knowledge and information but it helps form and build relationships with people; socially and in the workplace. The significance of communication cannot be underestimated as every day we communicate with a lot of people, including our families, friends, co-workers and occasionally even strangers. In our personal lives, we need to communicate in order to deal with various problems and concerns of daily life. The content of communication can be categorised into ideas, concepts, facts, opinions, emotions and attitudes; these are all significant as it is the only way we can effectively work together on anything. There are various types of communication between people as well as teams, they are verbal, non-verbal, visual and written. It is crucial to communicate effectively in negotiations to ensure people achieve their goals.

Importance of Communication in School

Being able to communicate is vital when becoming an educator in school, good communication not only conveys information, it encourages effort, modifies attitudes and stimulates thinking. Without good communication, messages can become distorted and learning is suppressed. Effective communication skills that build a positive school environment are listening and self-awareness. However, it is not only about understanding and acknowledgement, it involves commitments. Educational leaders must be effective communicators with those whom they work with and must have a positive attitude towards each other, their students, and their school. While most of the work done by schools is focused on educating their pupils, many headteachers realise the importance of maintaining and consistently improving communication with parents. As a previous employee of a primary school, I will be discussing the different types of communication in a school environment and as a result, will conclude how the performance of the employers could be improved.

Verbal Communication in School

Verbal communication is an important aspect and is looked as a key strength in an individual. Strong verbal communication is very important to the to the management in the classroom in order to effectively show pupils what appropriate classroom behaviour means. There are quite a few ways to communicate with pupils around matters arising that can also be referred to as methods of classroom management, of resolving conflicts in class and of creating a positive leaning environment. Procedural talks and control talk matter are used in teaching simply because clear procedures, instructions and appropriate classroom behaviour are vital for pupils to learn accordingly. There are strategies used when trying to maintain classroom control and a good level of discipline and when this is put into appropriate action pupils benefit by being encouraged to think for themselves and contribute to class discussions and this all helps to build their self-esteem and self-confidence. Proper communication between the teacher and the pupil is the most important skill in teaching and if this relationship is well established, educational goals are easier realised and learnt with high quality. Verbal skills are generally divided into four parts, speaking, listening, reading and writing. Teachers should use words carefully in order to be successful in teaching as the power and impact of words is something that each teacher should be aware of and should avoid the misuse of negative words.

“Verbal and nonverbal communication among group members defines much team life. Individual goals, team goals, structure, and norms are evident in the communication patterns that develop among members. Tasks are accomplished and relationships managed through interpersonal

interaction. Yet not all communication is positive, and as a result team performance can be compromised.” (Griffiths, B.A and Dunham, E.B.)

Non-verbal Communication in School

Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions, gestures displayed through body language and the tone and pitch of people’s voices. These are all relevant when teaching in a school and these non-verbal signals can sometimes give clues and additional information over verbal communication. Using non-verbal communication can help pupils to convey information about their emotional state and can also help to regulate the flow of communication. According to a study by VO Griffin (1985) it is suggested that “The effective use of NVC in education is largely left up to chance. If a teacher does use NVC effectively, it is probably because he or she imitated someone else and/or has learned NVC by trial and error.” Teachers who deal with impressionable children who rely on communication to accomplish their tasks should be trained accordingly in the art of non-verbal communication as it is paramount for them to achieve as highly as they can.

Mehrabian (1968) found that 7% of communication is nonverbal. Voice inflection accounts for 38% of the message, and facial expression, including "body language," communicates 55% of the message. When vocal information contradicts verbal--words only, the vocal wins out. Garrison (1984) states that because 90% of the total impact of a message can come from nonverbal elements, sharpening NVC skills cannot help but make a person a better communicator. Boilean (1981) found that beginning teachers forget or are not aware of the power of NVC. Before a teacher says the first word, a message environment is created in the classroom by the desk arrangements, time structures, procedures for talking, and relationships among people. Additional nonverbal messages are sent by the way the teacher walks to the front of the room, his or her clothes, focus of eye contact, and distance from students. Because the spoken word in the classroom utilizes the nonverbal environment for context and meaning, a successful educator includes nonverbal and verbal elements which contribute to the total, complex communication system in the classroom (Boilean, 1981).

Personal experience in School

Through my own experience as a SEN (Special Educational Needs) Teaching Assistant, I worked with a variety of children with wide range of learning and behavioural difficulties. Depending on their age and individual needs, my usual day to day work with them would involve supporting their schoolwork in class, preparing learning resources, encouraging them to communicate with one another and also with other members of staff, helping them to understand instructions through repetition, re-phrasing or demonstrating. Other duties included supporting them in social activities, school outings, attending to their physical needs, assisting them in speech and language therapy sessions and providing feedback to teachers and parents. It was highly important to build relationships with the parents of these children as there are more difficulties involved and parents need to have the trust of not only the school but the chosen 1:1 support given. Through using effective communication techniques, I was successful in earning the trust of the children, parents and teachers through years of commitment to the school. With the children, I would use visual support systems such as visual timetables, prompt cards (cards with a picture, to remind the child what they are doing or will be doing after). I would also use tactile approaches including the use of real objects, practical activities, pictures and videos.

When determining the effect of the teachers’ verbal and non-verbal communication with the pupils I worked with as 1:1 support, I found that it was quite difficult for most teachers to engage with them as they were not trained enough or at all at coping in certain situations. There was not enough

knowledge about SEN children and coping strategies that enabled them to step in or help when certain situations occurred, for example a pupil became quite distressed over a dispute with another child and this escalated into a situation where the child needed to be removed from the classroom and taken somewhere else to calm down. The situation at the time had become quite serious and the safety of other pupils had to be taken into consideration, so the decision was made to remove the child. As the teacher failed to see the beginning of this confusion and panic, I feel this situation could have been avoided if the teacher had had more time to get to know the pupil and understood their needs in such a way where they could have noticed the signs of distress the child was trying to communicate earlier. Unfortunately, this was the result of this and as the child's supporter, the situation could have been diffused sooner had there have been more support given.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is fair to say that communication in primary schools is key to having a successful, happy environment to learn, grow and develop in. It is important for all teachers, staff members and pupils to have the respect and knowledge of understanding others people's needs in order to keep more control and crowd management over the pupils. However, overall general communication verbally and non-verbally is effectively shown in many different ways in school and children have benefitted by improved communication between home and school and this has helped children to learn and succeed at school. To ultimately improve the performance of these teachers, they need to have the knowledge of the child's life outside of school to truly understand the needs to the children that they are responsible for.

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