

COMMUNICATION: AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract- This paper examines communication as a means through which skills acquisition can be transmitted effectively to students of tertiary institutions so they can be equipped for self-reliance. Over the years, students at the tertiary level of education seem to be faced with problems of communication. Such problems affect their enthusiasm or motivation for purposeful achievement in the area of skills acquisition. Effective communication, therefore, is one tool, which this paper prescribes in the process of equipping students with the requisite knowledge for entrepreneurial training. Their ability to identify opportunities for self-sufficiency heavily depends on the extent to which the skills they have acquired are clearly manifested in their lives after schooling. Furthermore, communication will help the students to learn how to utilize the resources or knowledge they have acquired with a high level of innovativeness. This will ensure a better standard of living since jobs can be created and sustained by scores of graduates from the nation's tertiary institutions.

Index Terms— Communication, entrepreneurship, skills acquisition, innovativeness.

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication is very important to man. Through communication, man is not only able to overcome some barriers but also transfer information and ideas to other people. Language by itself does not constitute communication but when used as a medium, it becomes an important tool that helps its user in the effective dissemination of information and as well ideas, knowledge and instruction among others.

The role of language as a means of communication cannot therefore be over-emphasised since all human institutions survive by communicating. It is solely through communication that all vistas of human experience are shared, modified or changed and unity and understanding established.

From the foregoing, it is clearly understandable that communication can be an effective tool in the transfer of knowledge so that the development of entrepreneurship in tertiary institutions is made possible. One of the primary tasks of a teacher is to ensure that effective communication with his students in the classroom is established and sustained. The need for effective means of communicating information cannot indeed be over-emphasized for the fact that it is only when information is received and clearly understood that it can be subsequently be of any benefit to any learner clear and lucid manner to learners in order to avoid ambiguity in the process of training. Ambiguity is overcome when in the course of transmitting a message, the message content, reception and feedback are appropriately linked and accurately relayed to produce what may be termed a successful communication. In this paper, Little's (1977) definition of communication is adopted. *According to him, communication is how we share information; pass on what we know or what we want to know, (it) is the process by which information is passed between individuals and/or organizations, by means of previously agreed symbols.*

From the foregoing discussion, the paper highlights:

- i) The concept of communication,
- ii) Communication as a channel for entrepreneurial training, and
- iii) Barriers to communication

II. CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATION

There is no single all-encompassing definition of the term communication because communication theorists view it from diverse angles. According to Dance and Larson, (1976) there are over 126 published definitions of communication. For the purpose of better understanding of the term communication, in this paper a few definitions have been highlighted. However, it must be stated here that despite the numerous definitions given, each definition must be seen as complimentary, rather than contradictory to

the viewpoints of previous theorists. Although Little's, (1977) definition has been adopted for the purpose of this paper a few others were also analyzed. The word communication according to little (1977), Emery (1971) and Fissile (1992) is derived from the Latin verb "communicare" which means "to talk together, confer, deliver and consult with one another". Hesselgrave (1978) on his part maintains that the word comes from the Latin word 'communis', which means 'common'. Communication in the real sense involves "commonness" with someone. The "commonness" is achieved through mutually shared codes. A few definitions of the word communication was considered bearing in mind the root word, which every definition hinges on.

In the words of little, (1977), communication is how we share information; pass on what we know or what we want to know. It is the process by which information is passed between individuals and/or organizations by means of previously agreed symbols.

Little's definition underscores communication as a two-way process. In communication, information flows to and fro and this corroborates the said commonness between the message sender and the message receiver. This means that communication is interactive. Thus, in any tertiary institution, the teacher is expected to share information to facilitate skill acquisition by his students. Effective communication brings about the desired commonness of shared knowledge between the students and their teacher. It is important for the teacher to (Little, 1977), "pass on what we know ..." Communication only becomes effective when the teacher has the ability to effectively pass on what he knows to his students who in turn would demonstrate the knowledge they have acquired.

Where good communication takes place, it is possible to share information, knowledge, or idea. One person passes on something to another. The receiver, in the process, passes on something to the initial transmitter (speaker) who then temporarily becomes a receiver too. Through this process, the communicator (transmitter) and the receiver are able to interact with each other better.

Engel, (1980) perceives communication as the process whereby audience understanding is created when a message is sent by a communicator through the appropriate medium (channel). From the definitions above, it can be deduced that effective communication requires a conscious, indeed deliberate choice of medium of transmission. Engel, (1980) emphasizes that the medium that best suit the people involved in the communication, the place, and the purpose must be suitable if communication is to be effective. Relating these theories to the subject matter under review, it can be concluded that both teacher and students use communication for interaction. While the teacher's main task is to pass on ideas about the skills to be acquired, the students on their own part are expected to demonstrate their capabilities in relation to the entrepreneurship skills they have developed. Both the teacher and the students must understand the medium of instruction, which is English Language.

The classroom environment must also be conducive if the learner is to readily acquire any skill. The ultimate goal of communication is to create understanding because when a message is sent and understanding is achieved and the desired effect produced in the receiver, it is said communication is effective.

From the few definitions, it is clear that communication is an interactive activity through which participants, using mutually shared verbal and non-verbal codes, share information, ideas and attitudes that allow them to acquire skills, thereby demonstrating the competence to explore opportunities for entrepreneurship. Learners can get involved in developing their immediate community after their schooling. At the tertiary education level, good communication by the facilitators of knowledge acquisition (the teacher) will definitely help students to acquire entrepreneurial skills that will help them to become self-reliant after completing their studies. When educational institutions in this country are able to produce self-reliant graduates, the task of nation building would be better focused, and easier since the graduates will be job creators and not job seekers. In essence, functional education would be better achieved.

III. COMMUNICATION AS A CHANNEL FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING

Communication begins as soon as there is need for one individual to pass a piece of information to another individual. The greatest worry of any tertiary institution teacher is how to fully translate ideas to the learners in such a way that such ideas are used by the students to develop their abilities to properly manage and induce change. Another preoccupation of tertiary education teachers is to improve the standard of living of the country's citizenry as well as promote national development.

Communication serves as an important medium for training students in the areas of skills acquisition, competent adult role performance, and societal value orientation. Albach (1982) opines that communication enlarges a child's knowledge, experience, and imaginative understanding of the world, which he or she lives. This opinion is in tandem with the concept embedded in the National Policy on Education NPE, (2004). The country's national aspiration can only be achieved through an education system that provides opportunities for the promotion of self-reliance through entrepreneurship.

The essence of effective communication in the tertiary institution is to educate or inform students. Formal education is only possible through communication, whether spoken or written. Although, there are several purposes of communication, this paper focused on communication as a way or means for educating or training students for entrepreneurship in tertiary institutions.

Teachers in any institution, be it at the primary, secondary, or tertiary level need oral communication in order to impart knowledge to students. Oral communication implies communication carried out by way of a spoken language. Through speech, people communicate with one another and attain a level of awareness, which surpasses the mere use of body language. Good use of speech between two people enables complex ideas to be reasonably expressed and understood.

As was stated earlier, Little's, (1977) definition of communication has been adopted as the working definition for this review. According to Little, (1977) *communication is how we share information; pass on what we know or what we want to know. It is the process by which information is passed between individuals and/or organizations by means of previously agreed symbols.*

Little's definition of communication points out that communication is a two-way process. This shows that communication involves a sender of a message and a receiver. However, the fact that message is sent and received does not automatically translate to an understanding of the intended purpose of the sender's message. This implies that a message passed across may not be accurately interpreted by the receiver and when such a situation occurs, the desired response is not obtained. It is only after the receiver has acted appropriately in response to a message that it can be said that communication has taken place. For effective communication in tertiary institution, there are certain factors that the teacher needs to take into consideration.

Many communication theorists argue that communication is a process. They mean that communication is a continuous sequence of actions carried out throughout a lifetime. The essential variables in a communication process are spelt out in the Berlo's model (1960). The theory is known as S-M-C-R (Source-Message-Channel-Receiver).

Source: This is the originator of the message who may be an individual. This is the stage where the idea for the process of communication begins. In this paper, the source can stand for the teacher who conceives or has the ideas or information on skill acquisition for entrepreneurship and wants to communicate it to the students.

The stimulus that the source sends or transmits to the receiver is the message. The message is the idea, thought communicated. Messages are normally encoded or decoded according to the symbol previously agreed to. Based on the subject of discussion the message could stand for the ideas, thoughts, information on skill acquisition for entrepreneurship in tertiary institutions.

The other process includes the channel. It is a medium, the means by which a message gets to the receiver. The medium of communication adopted in this writing is the oral communication. The receiver is the targeted audience or person or group who receives and responds to the message. Every message is meant for someone. The receiver here refers to the students who receive the teaching from the source. Another variable in the process of communication is the feedback. This is the reaction to the message. Effects are the changes in the receiver's behavior as a result of the message transmitted. His interpretation and understanding of the coded message determines how effective communication has taken place. Feedback is the reaction to the message. It may be positive or negative. When exchange of communication continues, it produces interaction as both the encoder (teacher) and decoder (student) swap roles in the process of composing messages. Feedback provides a means of telling a sender (teacher) that the message has been received, understood, and interpreted correctly. This is a very crucial stage in the process for communication and more so for a student of a tertiary institution.

For a teacher to pass across his ideas successfully, he needs to deploy good oral communication skills to achieve his purpose. It is possible that he might go to the class and not impart the knowledge about the opportunity of entrepreneurship because he failed to make conscious effort in judging in advance the impact of what is about to be said, and in monitoring the receiver's feedback to assess how the message is being received.

For communication to be said to be successful, the response of the receiver (student) must be almost identical to the one intended by the teacher (transmitter). Also, for the communication to be fully effective, the two-way action and reaction requirements must be met to obtain the feedback required from the receiver (student) to the transmitter (teacher). The feedback enables the teacher to judge the students' reaction and where possible, modify his message so as to meet the students' communication need. One great advantage of spoken communication is the speed of feedback since in spoken communication the student can question the teacher so as to clarify issues that are not clearly understood. The student can then, in the same context, supply the response needed by the teacher. Communication therefore enables the teacher in the tertiary institution to inculcate, in the students, the required skills for entrepreneurship. Students on the other hand are expected to pay attention to the instructions given and interpret them correctly as intended by the teacher so that they can acquire the skills training.

Teachers and students need effective communication in order to succeed. A teacher needs to imbibe oral communication skills through a mastery of the mechanisms of speech, articulate message presentation, a mastery of the subject content and present ideas effectively so that the students on their part can learn. Students need to master listening skills in order to succeed in skills acquisition. They must be attentive and learn to give correct interpretation to all facets of communication, be they visual, sign, or gesture so that they can benefit from interactions with their teachers and hence acquire the knowledge they require for entrepreneurship.

If there is a breakdown in communication, this will impede effective learning and skills acquisition, which are to equip the students and help them to develop entrepreneurial skills.

IV. BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

It is commonly said, "the message sent is not always the message received". This means that during the process of communication, the message sender most often does not get the intended feedback owing to some barriers. For example, noise is considered a barrier. Noise refers to any interference which hinders reception and understanding of a message. It is anything which disrupts the process of communication. Auditory noise is a type of noise that affects the ears. Communication activity can be disrupted by sounds that affect hearing. In some tertiary institutions, classrooms are located by the highway. Learning activity is

interrupted by noise produced by engines of vehicles and the blaring of horns. In such classes, impact knowledge is hampered and communication breakdown can be experienced.

Ambiguity is another major cause of communication breakdown. Sometimes the message sender uses under-statements or words that can be subjected to several shades of meaning by the receiver. At other times, the sender does not pronounce the word correctly. The receiver may respond by giving different interpretations to the message and he may not particularly be sure of the meaning intended by the sender. Bearing this in mind, teachers in tertiary institutions should communicate in good language and use words and expressions that are not incomprehensible to the students. This will facilitate learning and encourage the development of ideas about entrepreneurship. This may occur when there is transfer of aggression from teacher to the students in the classroom or vice versa.

Another barrier to effective communication is absent-mindedness or inattention. Communication becomes ineffective where the receiver only hears but does not concentrate on the message. When the receiver is also pre-occupied with his own personal interest or problems, which may weigh heavily on his mind such that he pays little or no attention to what is coming from the transmitter leads to breakdown in communication.

Selective perception is another obstacle that affects effective communication. The receivers in the communication process selectively see and hear on their needs, motivations and other personal characteristics. Receivers also project their interest and perceptions into communication as they decode them. Thus, a wide divergence between what the transmitters means and sends and what eventually the receiver hears and decodes.

Sometimes some communicators use high-sounding words or abstract ideas which the receiver does not understand. Where a communicator is self-centered and wants to be seen as one who is not only proficient, but also has the ability to manipulate the language communication is likely to be a barrier. This may lead to students' inability to acquire the skill required for entrepreneurship. The teacher in the tertiary institution can only be an effective agent of transmitting entrepreneurial skill to his students when he is able to overcome all the barriers to communication.

V. CONCLUSION

From the discussions above, it has been established that communication is a catalyst for skills acquisition. Effective communication motivates innovativeness and creates the desire for entrepreneurship in students of tertiary institutions. It can therefore, be convincingly concluded that communication can create ingenuity, hence the conversion of ideas that can manifest as jobs and gainful employment for the teeming youths who graduate from tertiary institutions.

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