

*Training Evaluation of an FDP on the topic “Effective Communication and Soft Skills” for
School Teachers: A Case Study of Vidyanand Bhavan School, Pune*

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0.0 Abstract

Vidyanand Bhavan is a reputed school in Nigdi, housing primary and secondary section and is managed by Satchchidanand Education Trust. The staff, teachers and management work in close union to uplift the organization towards greater success through various knowledge enrichment sessions.

Faculty Development Program is one such initiative to further boost the competency and skills of the efficient staff and teaching faculties of any educational establishment. An FDP for school-teachers was conducted from 3rd of April to 12th of April 2017 in the secondary school premise with the participation of the primary and secondary teaching staff. The topic of FDP was “Effective Communication and Soft Skills”.

The soft-skills trainer Ms Sreystha Beppari was assigned for the FDP. The FDP was evaluated on 12 all-encompassing parameters. On evaluation, it is found that the FDP was most successful & effective on all parameters of evaluation. The paper depicts the details of modules of the FDP and the analyzed details of training evaluation.

0.1 Keywords:

Communication, Soft Skills, School Teachers, Faculty Development Program (FDP), Training, Evaluation

1.0 Introduction:

Vidyanand Bhavan being a school of high repute wanted to incorporate English as a language of communication inside the school premise. Although the medium of instruction has always been English, yet the language was not usually spoken outside classroom. In order to bring in the change in the communication language and to make some of the staff members comfortable with the language, a 7-day training FDP was held in the school premise to achieve this objective.

Hence a specially designed FDP was carried out for Teachers of the School. Identification of the gaps was done from the viewpoint of effectiveness of teaching.

2.0 Topic of Faculty Development Program:

Teaching is considered as only fifty percent knowledge and fifty percent interpersonal or communication skills. It is only through communication skills that a teacher can introduce creative and effective solutions to the problems of students. Thus, a teacher can enhance the learning process. Depth of subject knowledge, positive motivation, effective body language, powerful communication, presentation skills, interactive and interesting sessions, voice modulation, sense of humour, understanding & encouraging the students, technical skills, professional competency, and so forth are needed for a school-teacher to be effective¹.

Students need teachers who patiently, yet firmly, explain guidelines, policies, expectations, requirements and objectives. Communicating with parents, manners and etiquettes, monitoring, reporting and discussing progress with students and parents, meeting academic objectives, etc are required for teachers to be effective².

Making boring subject interesting, using effective body language and presentation skills, showing compassion and care towards students, handling students' and parents' queries, complaints & negative feeds, being effective in written communication, following digital etiquettes etc are needed for a teacher to be effective³.

When dealing with the organization and execution of teaching in classrooms it is found that teachers who may or may not have the skills necessary to communicate with their students, skills that can facilitate or preclude fulfillment of the teaching proposal. The teacher's role in the classroom is now changed and teachers, in addition to their traditional practices, embrace a series of new discourses and new skills⁴.

3.0 Aim and Objectives of the FDP:

After a need-based analysis of the teaching staff of Vidyanand Bhavan School, a detailed module has been prepared with the consent, suggestion and approval of the School Principal. The aim and objectives of the FDP are as under:

3.0.1 Aim:

The aim of the training is to assist in the development of communication competence by providing information and practice sessions regarding different forms of business communication (special

focus on developing English language familiarity and use of the same as a medium of instruction in school) and their appropriate use.

3.0.2 Learning Objectives:

- Listening and responding with an open mind, in a more effective way.
- Using appropriate communication methods
- Minimizing communication barriers
- Using verbal and non-verbal messages appropriately
- Relating and networking with others at work
- Taking communication feedback
- Increasing language proficiency
- Developing speaking skills
- Maintaining manners and professional etiquettes
- Learning most important communication skills
- Developing writing skills
- Understanding rules of grammar
- Participating in role play and utilize the learning in daily interaction

4.0 Need for the FDP:

Enriching level of competency and comfort in English Communication.

5.0 Modules of the FDP

5.0.1 Communication Skills

- i. English communication: Communicating in English is a day to day need in schools. Any language is a matter of practice.
- ii. Grammar Basics (Revision): Overview of Grammar from simplest articles to complicated clauses is required as very often grammar is overlooked.
- iii. Anatomy of English sentence: Structure of English language, Subject-predicate, subject- verb agreement.
- iv. Different types of sentence construction: Simple, complex and compound sentences.
- v. Speaking in situations: Communication in day to day routine situations is required to be practiced.
- vi. Day to day expressions: Eg: Pleasure meeting you, Have a nice day, Hope you are doing good etc.
- vii. Extempore speech: For any teacher to possess ability to deliver extempore speech is must.
- viii. Elevator speech: How to create few impactful sentences when you are introducing yourself to a stranger.
- ix. Group discussions: Group discussions increase the possibility to arrive at consensus. It also takes the cognizance of opinions of all members of the group. The skill to actively participate in group discussion is must for a teacher.
- x. Writing exercises: Written Communication asks for more accuracy in comparison with verbal. The accuracy is from the viewpoint of specific words, proper grammar, sentence construction, tense, and so forth.
- xi. Report writing: Report writing is an inseparable part of academics. Proper format, contents, sequencing, etc must be followed.

- xii. Application writing: Writing from the easiest leave application to complicated applications such as sanctioning of financial grant, transfer requests, revival of appraisal etc.
- xiii. Notice writing: Communicating exactly what is meant is not an easy task especially when it comes to putting notice on the board. Contents of the notice must be to-the-point and well organized.
- xiv. Minutes of the meeting: Minutes of meeting is the result of decisions taken in meeting based on consensus hence drafting of minutes becomes crucial for any sector.
- xv. Speaking on given topics: This is much like extempore with the distinction that in extempore speech the topic is not known in advance; for speaking on given topic, the topic is allotted in advance which can be prepared.

5.0.2 Soft Skills

- i. Responsibility: becoming responsible for the task allotted and also be answerable for it. Taking complete charge of the actions and not involve into blaming others if anything goes wrong.
- ii. Accountability/ ownership of problem: Accountability is responsibility with ownership.
- iii. Importance of documentation: From maintaining the records.
- iv. Work place ethics: Educational establishments are the most ethical places where the ethical and responsible citizens are developed.
- v. Management in workplace: optimum utilization of the time at workplace. How to avoid distractions at work and be more productive in the given period.

- vi. Time management/time optimization: Prioritizing tasks and managing them within given time is time management.
- vii. Scheduling: Arranging the tasks in the available time.
- viii. Prioritizing: Arranging tasks from most urgent to least urgent and most important to least important.
- ix. Customer handling skills/PTM: Parents and Students are customers for any school in modern days. Hence dealing specifically with parents becomes a necessary skill and talent.
- x. Grievance handling: In case disputes and disagreements, skill of handling in the most tactful manner asks for grievance handling skills.
- xi. Handling work pressure: From the aspect of balancing work and life, ability to deal properly with work pressure settles the probable anxiety and stress.
- xii. Handling anger/frustration/anxiety: Ability not to get agitated, frustrated, angry, anxious is a rare skill to be adopted.
- xiii. Becoming productive employee: Working without any measurable and noticeable output is of no use. Hence being quantifiably productive is must.
- xiv. Team coordination: No work can be done alone. Team orientation in all tasks is must.
- xv. Pedagogy: The methodologies for recipients' comprehension should be the simplest and easiest understanding their level of acceptance. These methodologies are the Pedagogies which are required to be designed cautiously.

5.0.3 Teaching methodologies: For the Training session, following teaching methodologies

were

used: Lectures, Group discussions, Group activities, Role Play, Theme Play, Group Activities etc

6.0 Training Evaluation:

The measurement of success of any training program is known only after its evaluation. Hence the FDP mentioned in the papers was evaluated on different parameters. Evaluation had major dependency on the Trainer. Hence the Trainer Ms Sreystha Beppari is also evaluated for her training skills on various parameters.

The parameters for evaluation of the FDPs were as under:

1. **Training Relevant to Teachers' Needs:** Training must be relevant to the teachers' needs.
2. **Sufficiency of Length of the Training:** Length/ Duration of Training should be such that the inputs of training should be well-grasped and the interest in it remains alive.
3. **Well Organized Contents:** Contents should be sequenced well so that it develops clear understanding step-by-step.
4. **Encouragement by the Trainer for audience participation:** Communication can be learnt by practice hence the training asks for participative learning. For active participation, trainer's encouragement through interesting class assignments plays a major role.
5. **Effective Training Modules:** Training modules should encompass the contents in the most effective way.
6. **Listening of problems and offering solutions by the Trainer:** Trainer is expected to listen, understand and provide proper solution to the trainees.

7. **Involvement of the whole class in role play and group activity:** Concept understanding requires involvement of participants. This can be achieved by role plays and group communication activities.
8. **Presentation technique of the Trainer:** Effectiveness of training depends on Trainer's presentation techniques such as use of teaching aids, technology, pedagogy, influential communication, voice modulations, effectual verbal and non-verbal cues, explanation skills, empathy with trainees, impactful power-point and so forth.
9. **Subject knowledge of the Trainer:** Knowing the subject and its contents in depth are must for the Trainer.
10. **Trainer's Involvement in the training:** For increasing the involvement of trainees, Trainer should herself be involved in the training and providing training whole-heartedly.
11. **Trainer's Motivation and Encouragement:** Trainer must have ability to motivate trainees to be participative, active and responding throughout the program.
12. **Satisfaction with the Training:** The ultimate effect of any training is the satisfaction out of it.

7.0 Observations and Findings:

The evaluation of the FDP is done on above parameters. The feedback was filled in by 30 Teachers who attended. Observations and Findings based on the feedback are as below:

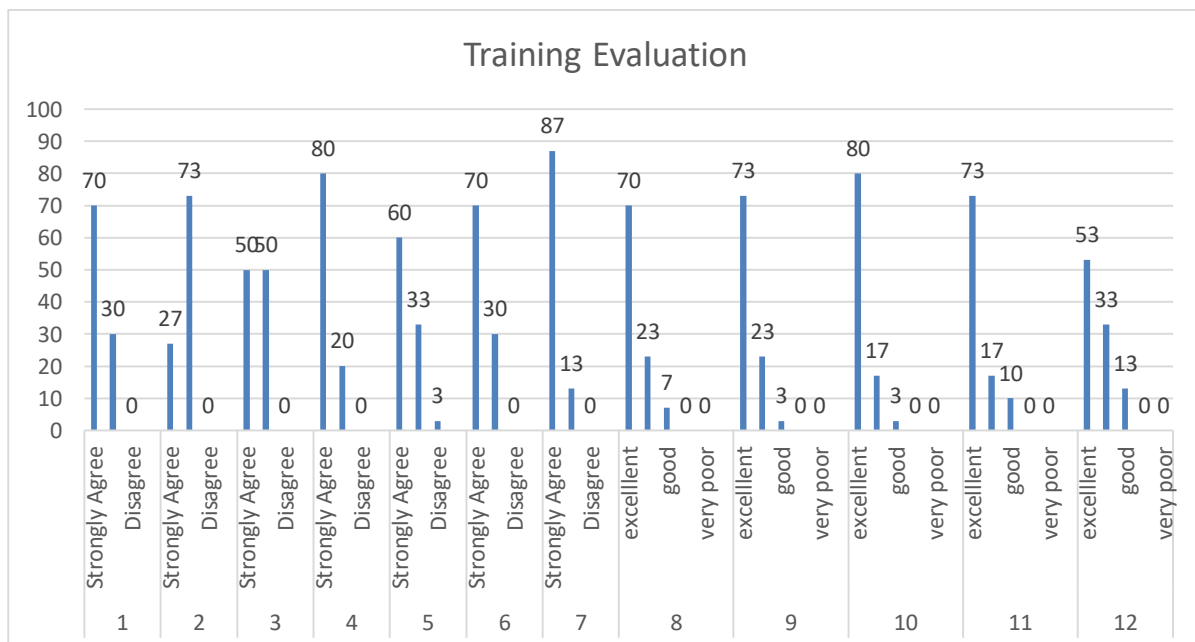
- i. Amongst parameters for Training Evaluation, the parameter 'Trainer involved the whole class in role play and group activity' is weighted the Highest by the Trainees.

- ii. Amongst parameters for Training Evaluation, the parameter 'Length of the Training' is weighted the Lowest by the Trainees. Trainees wanted the training to be of more duration than 7 days.
- iii. 70% participants strongly agreed that the Training was relevant to his/ her needs whereas 30% were agreed the relevance to their needs.
- iv. 27% trainees strongly felt that the length of the training was insufficient, 73% also supported that the time was insufficient.
- v. 50% strongly agreed and 50% agreed to the well organization of training contents.
- vi. 80% trainees got encouraged for participation by the trainer; additional 20% also got encouraged but slightly less.
- vii. Only 3% trainees felt that the training modules were ineffective whereas 97% mentioned that the modules were highly effective.
- viii. Overall not a single trainee rated FDP poor or very poor. 53% rated it as excellent, 33% very good and 13% good.
- ix. The trainer was also rated on different parameters for her ability to understand problems and offering solutions, making trainees involved in participation in group activities and role plays, presentation techniques, subject knowledge, involvement in training, motivation and encouragement. The Trainer has been rated with top ranks on these parameters. There is not a single parameter by any trainee on which trainer is rated poor or poorest.
- x. On 'listening to the problems and offering solutions' 70% trainee rated the trainer as excellent and 30% rated good.
- xi. On 'involvement of the whole class in role play and group activity' 87% trainee rated the trainer as excellent and 13% rated good.

- xii. On 'presentation techniques' 70% trainee rated the trainer as excellent, 23% rated very good and 7% rated good.
- xiii. On 'subject knowledge' 74% trainee rated the trainer as excellent, 23% rated very good and 3% rated good.
- xiv. On 'her involvement in training' 80% trainee rated the trainer as excellent, 17% rated very good and 3% rated good.
- xv. On 'motivation and encouragement by her' 73% trainee rated the trainer as excellent, 17% rated very good and 10% rated good.

The Chart below indicates the overall evaluation of the Training Effectiveness by Ms Sreystha

Beppari. 12 Parameters of Evaluations are as mentioned in 6.0 above:



8.0 Conclusions-Training Evaluation:

- i. Only 1 (3%) trainee felt that the training modules were not effective whereas 97% trainees were fully satisfied with the training modules.
- ii. On the other parameters-Training Relevant to Teachers' Needs, Sufficiency of Length of the Training, Well Organized Contents, Effective Training Modules, Involvement of the whole class in role play and group activity, Satisfaction with the Training-all trainees were 100% satisfied.
- iii. On Trainer's Evaluation on the parameters-Encouragement by the Trainer for audience participation, Listening to problems and offering solutions by the Trainer, Presentation techniques of the Trainer, Subject knowledge of the Trainer, Trainer's Involvement in the training, Trainer's Motivation and Encouragement-all trainees were 100% satisfied.

9.0 Conclusions-Overall:

- i. The teaching and non-teaching staff participated with full enthusiasm and took part in all the activities willingly.
- ii. The participants were extremely lively and jovial. Their eagerness to learn and improve is commendable.
- iii. Teachers gave suggestions from time to time and initiated points to discuss during sessions; which benefited the overall team.
- iv. They took ownership of the situation and willingly came forward to initiate English speaking inside the campus. They were very helpful in terms of maintaining the decorum of the training sessions and helped encouraging fellow participants who were uncomfortable to speak.

- v. The training concluded with an assessment of the participants. Motivation was provided to those who are willing to improve.

10.0 Suggestions and Recommendations:

Following suggestions and recommendations are made on the basis of open ended questions asked to the trainees on feedback of training:

- i. The enthusiasm of the participants demands a special mention. They are very willing and open to change. The team is an example of a highly motivated workforce which is an asset for any organization.
- ii. In order to keep up the spirit and motivation, a follow up session is recommended by the trainer.
- iii. Such activities can be conducted every quarter as a pep-up.
- iv. Teachers with strong leadership skills can be asked to organize in-house training sessions for the fellow teachers to help motivate those who are willing to learn but very hesitant to initiate the learning.

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