

**TECHNOLOGY AID BLOG FOR TEACHING COMMUNICATION  
SKILLS**

**Dr. Chetan Kumar Trivedi**

Assistant Professor  
Dept. of English,  
Government Engineering College,  
Vidyanagar, Bhavangar-364002

**Viki Modi**

Assistant Professor  
Department of English  
Smt. S. R. Patel Engineering College,  
Dabhi, Gujarat

**Abstract**

The Research paper attempts to endorse the fact that in view of the rapidly evolving technologies and the fluidity to teach Communication Skills. The research paper provides extensive popularity of technology in the modern era assigns some new roles and duties on the modern teacher. At present communication skills have achieved supreme importance as far as the employability of the engineering, management and marketing people are concerned. The various tools and applications offered by modern technology. It can promote the traditional teaching method to an advanced, effective, and interesting teaching method. The integration of technology in teaching technical communication activates their interest in learning technical aspects of communication. The various tools such as blog, audio-video aids, web browsing increase the productivity of teaching. Here the researcher explored the study of Blog as a part of technology for teaching Communication Skills.

**Key Words:** Communication Skills, Technology, Blog, Application

**1.0 Introduction:**

Technical communication is very important for the overall development of the engineering students. For their career advancement it is very essential to imbibe good communication skills. An average engineer spends about 40% of his valuable time in doing written and oral communication. Communication whether formal, informal or technical is a practical term and technology enables the instructor to generate professional communication skills among the students. The technology offers new ways of communication such as chat lines; where people from all over the world can chat in the virtual world. Similarly, blogging offers new ways of

expressing ideas. These modern ways of communication can be integrated in the teaching of communication skills in such a way that their linguistic knowledge as well as communication skills is enhanced. Language residue at the centre of communication and therefore, with the help of different technological tools such as software created for the teaching purpose can be of immense help.

It is very essential that they obtain accuracy in their writing as well as speech. Accuracy in terms of their punctuation, spelling and pronunciation is required from the engineering students. Moreover, some common errors such as incoherent writing, unclear subheadings, careless diagrams, and unwanted signals that impede the message should be alleviated.

The very important point is what kind of technical communication we are expecting and how can we help them to learn in a better way with the help of technology? On the basis of recent use of technology in the classroom is the only alternative to develop their skills. The contents are taught to engineering students are as follow:

- Basic of Communication
- Technical Reports
- Technical Writings
- Memorandum
- Letter
- Application Writing
- Completion of story
- Paragraph writing

Above these all point are required practical values and its integration of technology can be an interesting task as it will arouse curiosity among the students. PowerPoint presentations, overhead transparencies, and audio-video aids could be of great help. Teaching of Technical Communication is consisted of both explaining the theory of writing and enabling them to use it in practical writing. This will invoke a kind of curiosity as well as deepen their interest in this particular subject.

Technical writing requires sincere involvement from the writers as it is written for the practical purpose. Hence, technology can be a very helpful tool in not only teaching how to write effectively but also inculcating the sense of sincerity and honesty among them as they will be able understand their task appropriately.

The researcher will not be wrong if he says that teaching with the help of technology is inevitable in the modern times. Technical writing techniques include: researching, summarizing, designing pages, using visual aids, etc. It is clearly seen that technology proves to be the main source.

Moreover, to improve the skills of the students some activities that encourage the students to use electronic tools should be given to the students. An instructor can ask the students to choose a topic significant to their career area. The students have a exposure to use the web and any other internet applications.

## **2.0 Technology: A definition**

The Cambridge International Dictionary defines

“Technology” as “the study and knowledge of the practical use of scientific discoveries”

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines

The “Technology” as “systematic treatment of an art’ and “technical method of achieving a practical purpose.”

Thus technology in pedagogy as an umbrella term would include all the modern electrical and electronic gadgets like, audio/video recorders and players, overhead projector, LDC projectors, computers, mobile phones, etc.

But here I have looked at technology is considered as synonymous to computer applications and internet and provide online educational material through Blog. This makes it easier for students gather what they need exactly.

### 3.0 What is a Blog?

A Blog is a very simple webpage where the entries (or posts) are organized in reverse chronological order. A blog is usually open for publicly and many are free to create. From a teacher’s point of view, a blog can become a class notice board, an archive of links and documents or as a collaboration or discussion tool with his/her students. Blogs encourage students to write and to read on a topic they wish to comment on. As blogs are open to the world in the same way as websites, it is possible to allow comments from the readers and to get feedback.

### 4.0 Blog for teaching Communication Skills:

Huffaker (2004) recommends blogs for classroom use because they promote “self expression and highly personalized content”.

Blog creates a kind of atmosphere which facilitates communicative teaching, task-driven learning, situational learning, etc. It is indeed true that it stimulates the learning process. Though the use of PowerPoint presentation in the classroom is an innovative step, it does not amend the traditional classroom scenario where the teacher is at the centre and the student as a passive listener. But with the application of blog in teaching communication skills changes the whole scenario and the prominence is given on the learner autonomy.

The traditional definition of a blog is special kind of webpage consisting of regular entries or posts arranged in reverse chronological order – that is with the most recent post at the top of the main page. Typically, each post is a short piece of text, though images are often included, and generally entries contain links to other websites. It is this feature that sets blogging apart from traditional journal writing. If we apply this theory to the “Communication Skills for Engineering Students” blog that contains the total 26 posts of the important topics and out of 26 posts contains 7 images for better comprehension of the particular topic.

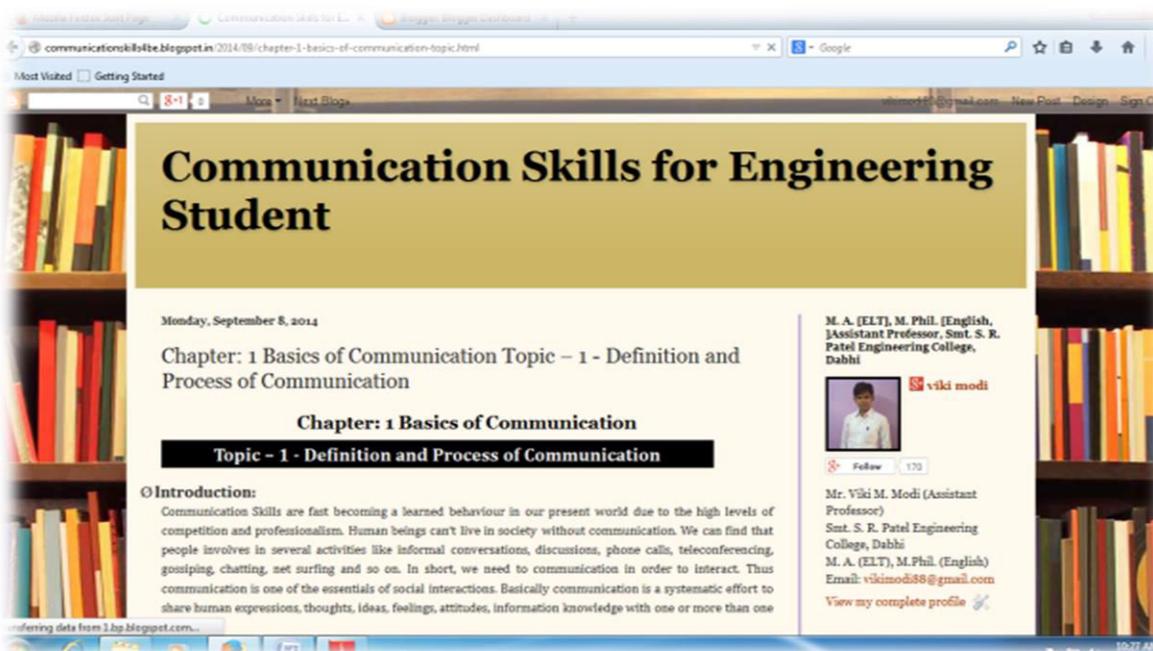
Technical communication is a practical aspect and hence, merely they have to be given a right kind of platform where they can present their skill. The platform can be found in the form of blogging where they can write online reports, letters, and other technical writing which can be assessed and viewed not only by the respective teacher but also by their friends and people from



all over the globe. Thus, blogs offer a collective way of learning where all the students share their different ways of learning.

Today the blog can be an effective tool for the development of communication skills among the students. Learners can either express ideas on blogs of their own or express views on others. They can participate in the discussions that are collectively maintained by the people in blogs. Here they can get exposure the restrictions imposed by the textbooks and teachers. There is a simultaneous development of both the ability to communicate effectively through virtual means of communication and the learning of English language.

The researcher is an Assistant Professor in engineering college and he created his own blog for his 1<sup>st</sup> Semester students to provide online educational material. On his blog there are



regularly more than 120 page viewers that the researcher found and total 6000 around page viewers. The blog used by many other engineering college students as an anonymous visitor. You can copy and paste the following URL in your browser to visit the blog:

[communicationskills4be.blogspot.com](http://communicationskills4be.blogspot.com)

*(The above blog address is as of 22 November, 2014)*

However, the role of the researcher as a teacher is as a facilitator is essential. He has to monitor and supervise the blog everyday in such a way that they function in the right spirit. The researcher gives some project - based or task - based works that can encourage students to use blog as a communication tool. In fact, the students can easily understand the process of communication which starts from encoding of the message to decoding of the same. Moreover, such activities on the blog will help them learn the different tactics of writing. More significantly, blog can be an important tool in so far as theoretical discussions on Communication Skills and their practical application into virtual world are concerned. In their reflective way of learning they can discuss the theoretical aspects such as the types and levels of communication skills, formal and informal way of communication and so on.

### **5.0 Incorporating Blog for Teaching Language Skills:**

As you already know the four language skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing) very important for an engineering students. The virtual world provides multiple opportunities to enhance their language skills. The Researcher created the blog especially to improve reading and writing skills.

Writing skill is a key skill as far as written communication is concerned. Written communication includes writing of various reports, technical proposals, letter writing, and so on. Online publishing blog is help to develop the writing skill. Technology makes writing interesting and easier. The blogger should be conscious about their writing, because they know their writing is going to be viewed by public. Here an instructor has to monitor their discussions and guide them if necessary. Similarly, there are multiple options available in the blog that can help develop reading skill. Online reading is becoming more and more popular as people tend to read material from web sources.

### **6.0 Advantages of using above said Blog in Education:**

- Using a Blog makes education focused on demand.
- Using a Blog helps students learn anytime and anywhere.
- Using a Blog encourages learners to work / learn continuously.
- This blog helps people reflect and think critically.
- With the help of this help improve communicative competencies.
- The research created the blog to develop initiative and creativity.
- The blogs helps people learn to work with people.
- Blogging encourages students to experiment with other media.

### **7.0 Barriers of Blog:**

- The researcher may have difficulty in assessing student participation in the weblog.
  - Another source of disadvantages would be computer illiterate users.
  - Learning and educational weblog should be hosted in private server, so that they do not show neither advertisement not banners.
  - System administrators tend to be restrictive in uploading the comment and posts.
  - The blog is publically, it may suffer infestations, people that try to create disturbance by posting messages that are inflammatory, insulting, incorrect or out of topic.

### **8.0 Conclusion:**

The main contribution of this research comes from a review of the researcher's own blog not so extensive literature existing on blog included in this research it is own experience. From the experiment and experience the research sought many benefits for both teachers and students, although a careful use of these resources is needed in order to avoid technology misuses. Consequently, it can be found that technology can play not only a vital role but also a revolutionary role which replace the traditional or orthodox method of teaching with the modern and innovative method.

### **Work Cited**

Mora Sergio Lujan and Susana de Juana-Espinosa. The Use of Weblogs in Higher Education: Benefits and Barriers. 1 – 10. Web. 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2014.

<<http://desarrolloweb.dlsi.ua.es/blogs/pdf/use-of-weblogs-in-higher-education-benefits-and-barriers.pdf>>.

11 advantages of Using a Blog for Teaching. Slide share. Web. 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2014.

<<http://www.slideshare.net/frankcalberg/11-advantages-of-using-a-blog-for-teaching>>

National Centre for Technology in Education. Blogs. (2008). Web.

Ford Peter. Reflections on the effective use of blogs in the classroom. Council of Europe Publishing (2007): 7 – 13. Web. 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2014.

Introduction to Blogging. (Dec 2010): 1 – 5. Web. 08<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.

Bharvad Rajesh. Using Technology to Teach Communication Skills. ELT Weekly: India's First Weekly ELT eNewsletter 1.27 (July 2009): 31 – 38. Web. 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2014.

<<http://eltweekly.com>>.

Ansari Mohammad Shaukat. Implications of Technology to the Teaching and Learning of English as Second Language. ELT Voices – India: International Electronic Journal for the Teachers of English 2.1 (February 2013): 1- 12. Web. 18<sup>th</sup> April. 2012.

<[www.eltvoices.in](http://www.eltvoices.in)>.