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## THEORIES OF CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION AND FUNCTIONS - CONCEPT, NEED AND IMPORTANCE IN INDIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS

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### Abstract

Communication is a very important component of the teaching profession. Without it, it would be impossible to teach or learn. Classroom communication is a positive, purposive and pragmatic in nature, it is a systematic and planned activity in secondary school classrooms where is an excellent learning place of communication in which children where teachers spend hours communicating with students to share information and knowledge in educational institutions. Learning in classrooms occurs through and is embedded in the interpersonal communication between teachers among students. It is negotiated by teachers and students as they act and react to each other through their verbal and nonverbal behavior as well as effective communication possible through mathematical, information, and free press and social responsibility theories in secondary school classrooms.

**Keywords:** Classroom Communication, Secondary School Classrooms and Classroom Communication Theories.

### Introduction

Communication in the classroom whatever age we are, we go to school to learn and nomatter the type of student, learning depends on good communication. Take a moment to think about your experiences as a student in the classroom, students everstruggle to understand with the instructor and some of the barriers in communication perhaps the teacher are very strict and made you fear punishment maybe the environment in the classroom too competitive and that made it hard for you to ask questions. In that situation after having studied the meaning, the process, and the techniques of communication, it is reasonable to examine various theories of communication which are directly or indirectly related to education. As mentionedearlier education is a process of communication and to understand this process for its further development it is necessary to study the relevant theories of communication. We do not intend to propagate those theories nor shall we explain them from the viewpoint ofthe discipline of communication. Rather we shall touch upon such aspects of these theories as have relevance toeducational practices. What follows is a brief descriptionof four theories - two of which are directly related to education (viz. mathematical theory, and information theory), and two of which have only an indirect bearing on education (viz. free press theory and social responsibility theory).

### Concept of classroom communication

Classroom communication is an interaction between the teacher and the students in the classroom through verbal, nonverbal and written. As the social needs insist that we share our thoughts with others. It motivates, informs, suggests, warns, orders, changes behavior and establishes better relationships, to make interaction meaningful and make oneself understood.

Classroom communication theories educational implications are essential for close, sympathetic relationships in the society and for transformation of men, material and thoughts from one place to another. In a classroom, the meaning of communication is related to the messages and counter-messages, which constitute the teaching-learning process. This involves initiation, reception and response that serve as feedback.

### Need and Importance

In secondary school classrooms, when communication is an effective, both the student and the teacher benefit. Communication makes learning easier, helps students achieve goals, increases opportunities for expanded learning, strengthens the connection between student and teacher, and creates an overall positive experience. Classroom communication functions along with classroom communication theories are promoting teachers and students' effective communication skills in secondary school classrooms. After having studied the meaning, the process and the techniques of communication, it is reasonable to examine various theories of communication which are directly or indirectly related to education. As mentioned earlier education is a process of communication and to understand this process for its further development it is necessary to study the relevant theories of communication. We do not intend to propagate those theories nor shall we explain them from the viewpoint of the discipline of communication. Rather we shall touch upon such aspects of these theories as have relevance to educational practices. The following brief description of four theories:



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**1. Mathematical theory:** It is an influential 1948 article by mathematician Claude E. Shannon. It was renamed The Mathematical Theory of Communication in the book; a small but significant title change after realizing the generality of this work. The early theoretical bases of communication owe much to the views held by Shannon and Weaver (1949) known as the mathematical theory of communication; their views are based on developments in electrical systems and electronics. For them, the main channels of communication were telephone cables and radio waves. The communication process is divided into components like the source, the transmitter, the signal and the receiver. The channel is the medium that sends information from the sender to the destination by means of signals. For example, in a conversation the sender's brain is the source; the voice mechanism produces signals through spoken words and transmits it through air (the channel) and the receiver decodes the message from the signals.

Though originally applied to the fields of engineering and mathematics, this theory has been widely applied to the broader field of human communication. This mathematical theory of communication has greatly influenced present day educational thought and practice. We may examine a few of its educational implications as follows.

An educational implication in classroom, in the processes of teaching and learning, information is passed on from the teacher to the learners. Usually, one teacher may communicate with 50-60 learners at a time. In larger classes she may communicate with 100 learners. Thus, the number of people involved in a particular situation of educational communication could not be more than 101 persons. The mathematical theory of communication helped in enlarging this number, as it helped in improving the electronic media through which information could be distributed to large populations and so the monopoly of a few in relation to educational transactions was successfully overcome. With the help of developed communication technologies, information became more widely used and effective. Besides print material, other mass communication technologies like radio and television broadcasting came to be used for quick transmission to the audience learners. Moreover, video and computer technologies have questioned the role of the teacher as the sole authority in the teaching-learning process. Now, satellite technology has considerably overhauled and improved the process of instructional technology.

**2. Information theory:** The mathematical theory gave birth to the information theory of communication which views communication as the procedure through which one mind affects another mind or, to put it differently, the procedure for conveying a message meaningfully to the person for whom it is meant. It is a theory of transmitting signals, viz., written language, spoken words, body movements, etc. At the source one message is selected out of the many available ones in any of the available forms to be transmitted to the receiver. Provision is also made for feedback in many forms that flows from the destination back to the source, helping the communicator correct the subsequent output.

The term 'message ' or 'information ' is not confined to news or facts, or to whatever is taught in the classroom, but also covers any content that reduces the uncertainty-and disorganization of a situation. It may even include opinion, emotion, motivation or persuasion. It even goes beyond words to include silent gestures which are called 'forms'.

This theory emphasizes communication networks in which data are organized, ordered and related and such similarities and connections are shown as had previously not been perceived. Physical tests can be applied to verify predictions. This theory is heuristic, for it has led to new and previously unknown facts and methods. Chute (1987) adapted the Shannon-Weaver model by adding examples of message transmission media. While retaining the basic form of the communication, Chute suggested that various media could potentially serve as the 'source' in a communication process. Chute's model is perceived as the initiator of interactive communication. Wagner (1994) stated that the models developed by Schramm and Chute can be used to help distance educators to conceptualize the mechanics of interactive telecommunication.

An educational implication in classroom, the information theory of communication has greatly contributed to the process of teaching-learning in terms of the effect of the teacher (or even of print materials) on the minds of the learners, and the process of feedback being provided by the learners to the teachers to improve teaching, and also by the teachers to learners for effective learning. Feedback in the classroom can take many forms including negative ones such as puzzled looks or signs of boredom like yawning which inform the teacher that the point at issue needs further clarification or that it is time to move on to another topic, or perhaps to stop teaching for the moment. Similarly, feedback in the case of distance education should be used to improve upon all the sub-systems - administrative, academic and industrial.



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**3. Free Press Theory:** Free Theory indirectly influence the system of education in terms of the sociology of education. The free press theory originated from the libertarian theory of Siebert and others, which emphasized the freedom of printing press and its liberation from official control in the seventeenth century, and this is considered the main legitimizing principle for print media in liberal democracies. Simply, this theory says that an individual should be completely free to express himself, and should not be forced to suppress students' feelings and emotions. They are free to give information to the press and to publish whatever she likes. This is one of the fundamental humanrights.

Students are free to express themselves as long as that expression does not harm others, and the press is a means of arriving at the truth and control of the press leads to the hiding of facts. On the other hand, the press is to be made free to the extent that it does not go against the nation. It should be free ' from unreasonable censorship but must be answerable to law.

Educational systems are indirectly influenced by this theory, in the sense that it helps the system of education through free press to bring the reality close to the learners in a learning society, and to make them aware of their rights as well as responsibilities. The aim of education is to bring about the socio-economic and political development of the nation, and a free press accelerates this process.

**4. Social Responsibility Theory:** The social responsibility theory originated from the 'Commission of Freedom of the Press' in the United States. This theory demanded that the media - print and broadcasting - have a social responsibility and must be answerable to society through various kinds of democratic procedures. It reconciles three divergent principles, viz.

- individual freedom and choice
- media freedom and
- media obligation to society

Media is to be self-regulating within the legal framework of a nation along with its obligation to society, and it should avoid anything that might lead to violence or communal disturbances.

The contribution of this theory to education can be summed up thus tries to develop moral ideas and values among individuals, to provide more and correct information to them and to ensure progressive social development; and in this task the social responsibility theory of communication helps much in terms of media responsibility in transmitting correct information to all citizens who are learners and in the process of developing their moral values.

**Functions of classroom communication**

Communication in our lives or in any profession is meant to serve a set of four functions. The functions are understanding and insight, persuasion and influence, promoting learning skills and initiate and maintain relationships.

**1. Understanding and insight:** Teachers teach in order to assist their learners understand subject content as clearly as possible. The idea that a learner ought to develop deep insights regarding what they study is key. Deep learning is different from surface level learning. In addition to understanding content, teachers and learners need to understand themselves and each other. Teachers use their understanding of learners to deliver content in ways that meet individual needs. Both teachers need to also understand their environment as this understanding is also suitable for effective learning. Using communication to ask questions that foster reflection is useful in promoting understanding.

**2. Persuasion and influence:** The whole process of teaching and learning is one of trying to influence another person. Teachers try to persuade learners and every teacher will influence their learners whether they like it or not. The important question then becomes: what do you say or do in your classroom in order to create a positive influence. Persuasion can take the form of direct words used intentionally to get a learner to do work, answer a question, change behaviour and so forth. Learners need to teach explicitly how they can use communication to influence the teacher, other learners and others in the community. Writing is also a powerful way of influencing others. You may want to think about this: How can your learners write with the intention to persuade and influence (you the teacher) and other relevant audiences? Can you think of how writing influences the examiner when grading tasks?

**3. Promoting learning skills:** Traditionally, teaching has been more about the teacher dominating the classroom with teacher talk. Today emphasis is shifting on helping learners become responsible for their own learning. Learners develop their learning skills when a teacher allows them time to speak more, read texts and discuss in groups as well participate in writing tasks that involve summarizing key ideas from what the teacher says or from their reading. Effective communication is a strong enabling factor for learning so the teacher should promote the communication skills of learners. Modeling the learning behaviour you would want your



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learners to copy is very important. This is done by how you research for new ideas and how you ask questions that require serious attention from learners.

**4. Initiate and maintain relationships:** Classroom teaching is interpersonal as well as social in that learners learn best when they have a strong sense of belonging. The teacher should be interested in using communication to promote a social climate where learners work collaboratively. Every learner should feel valued and respected by the teacher and other learners. You can imagine a classroom where positive human connection was absent. Learning would not occur. Communication in this case should minimize the need for competition and focus on care and support for others. Within this function many educational goals can be supported such as unity, love, cultural diversity, integrity, etc. These functions apply in many different areas of human endeavor and as such communication skills are regarded as top on the list of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills Every education system is now challenged to see to it that their development.

### Conclusion

In classroom communication purpose, the mathematical theory of communication helped-in enlarging this number, as it helped in improving the electronic media through which information could be distributed to large populations and so the monopoly of a few in relation to educational transactions was successfully overcome. The second communication theory has greatly contributed to the process of teaching-learning in terms of the effect of the teacher (or even of print materials) on the minds of the learners, and the process of feedback being provided by the learners to the teachers to improve teaching, and also by the teachers to learners for effective learning. The third and fourth free press and social responsibility theories indirectly influence the system of education in terms of the sociology of education.

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