ORIGINAL ARTICLE

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ISSN: 2692-515-x, Impact Factor: 9.23

American Academic publishers, volume 6, issue 01,2026

Journal: https://www.academicpublishers.org/journals/index.php/ijai

TEACHING COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS IN ENGLISH.

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Annotation: As educators, most of us find it difficult to make our students especially from the rural areas to communicate in English. This article gives information about the various ways in teaching communication skills in English as a Second Language. It presents suggestions on some teaching techniques to encourage them to speak in English so that they can gain some confidence.

Key words: communicative skills, role play, films, turn-talking, reflect.

Excellent communication skills are necessary to succeed in any field. Whether you are a mentor, supervisor, career counselor, trainer or otherwise, teaching these skills to others provides them with a foundation to achieve career goals. While learning these skills takes time, best practices can help students quickly learn and apply them. With improved communication skills, students will have the confidence and knowledge to not only excel in the workplace but also to seek out jobs and perform well in interviews. Communication skills are the abilities you use to give and receive different kinds of information. These skills are essential when working with others, managing people and overseeing projects. Examples include volume, clarity, empathy, respect and understanding of nonverbal cues. You use these skills to communicate ideas, feelings, tasks and events. You can learn and practice communication skills. Students benefit from methods that give them hands-on practice, clear directions and the opportunity to reflect. Here are some of the best ways to teach these skills with several examples.

1. Role-play

Role-playing is a classic method for teaching communication skills. To use this technique, students act out skills after discussing them. For example, appropriate posture or body language. Role-playing should always focus on full group participation and mutual respect. Be sure to talk to students about how to be respectful audience members, and allow plenty of time for daily role-playing to help students get comfortable. Students will need to have patience and open-mindedness, as well as a positive rapport with each other. If you foster these skills first, role-playing can be a great way to learn communication abilities quickly.

2. Group games

Group games are an interactive, engaging way to teach verbal and nonverbal communication, persuasion, collaboration and relationship-building skills. Through group games, students learn to efficiently pass the information on to others. During games, you should watch closely, make notes and be prepared to share your observations with students so they can improve over time.

3. Films

A carefully compiled collection of film and TV clips is a great teaching tool. You can pause, discuss and replay clips. Video clips also make for great take-home work. Students can watch as many times as they like, write responses and share during the next class.

4. Introspection

Learning about interpersonal and communication skills often necessitates time for reflection and introspection. When students are learning about communication, especially those related to social and emotional health, provide ample time for structured self-analysis. Give

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students prompts to guide them as they contemplate. For example, ask them to think about communication methods that have worked well for them during difficult situations in the past.

Here are several additional introspection exercises you might consider:

Journaling
Drawing
Photography
Poetry
Lists
Stream of consciousness
Collages

5. Turn-talking

One of the most basic and helpful communication skills students can learn is turn-talking. During a turn-talking lesson, students will learn the difference between interrupting and interjecting. This is a critical skill people need to learn for negotiation, conflict resolution and idea-sharing. Students should also learn how to overlap in conversation cooperatively rather than competitively.

6. Asking questions

Productive conversations are created by asking and answering thoughtful questions. Asking open-ended questions can help move projects forward, encourage new ideas, solve complex problems and delegate tasks. However, learning how to ask those questions is a skill. Take time to teach students about open-ended questions and be sure to provide plenty of examples. You might devote an entire class unit to a lesson on questions, using role-play activities to help guide the discussion.

7. Record and reflect

Watching yourself is an effective way to learn communication skills. If you have the time and resources, ask students to record themselves having a conversation with someone else or in front of a mirror. Then, they should watch the recording and observe their verbal and nonverbal communication. Finally, they should take time to reflect on what they did well and what they can focus on improving.

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