



Report

on

Effective Communication Skills

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Introduction:

Faculty Development Academy (FDA) organized a 3-day workshop on ‘**Effective Communication Skills**’ from December 21 – 23, 2022. This specific workshop was arranged as an advanced level course of ‘Noting and Drafting’ workshops that were scheduled in July 2022 for the Officers and Staff Grade employees of COMSATS University (CUI), Islamabad. There were 51 participants who completed the workshop successfully. Two sessions of 90 minutes duration were delivered each day. The workshop was conducted at Seminar Hall, EE Department, CUI, Islamabad. It started with the recitation of the Holy Quran. Ms. Aafia Malik shared the opening remarks with the audience and briefed the purpose of the workshop.

Session – I, Fundamentals of Writing:

The first session of the day was conducted by Ms. Saba Bahareen, a master trainer and an eminent speaker. The session started with an activity where she wanted to break the ice and made groups of three people each. The task given to all group



members was to find three things which were common in them. The idea behind this activity was to make the participants feel comfortable, so they may relate with one another positively. She highlighted the challenges faced by employees every day at their workplace. She took the input of participants and discussed their problems of day to day work life. Once, most of the participants shared their challenges and difficulties, the speaker pointed out that we not only need to work together on the behavior of students, but there has to be some anger management when it comes to the employees. Proceeding further, the domain expert linked the whole scenario with courtesy. Courtesy is a vital element which has to be practiced and applied in our

verbal and non-verbal behaviors. Showing politeness in one's attitude towards other makes things happen in an easy manner.

The domain expert furthered that one's politeness and civility appears in one's writing. The employees must practice the art of using polite words such as, please, sorry, thank you etc. These words always leave a positive impact and make the recipient feel comfortable and pleasant. Using positive and civilized language creates long lasting and beneficial impact. The speaker then emphasized on using gender neutral words e.g. chairperson, businessperson, workforce, foreperson etc. Using gender neutral words creates a non-discriminatory work environment. One must also practice the use of polite titles for ladies like Ms, Madam, instead of calling out their names. The resource person shared a handout for practice which asked the participants to pick out discriminatory language. This activity sensitized the trainees about the use of appropriate language.

The session was very interesting and illuminating. It evoked the participants' interest in learning.

Session – II, Grammar for Professionals:

Dr. Asif Javed assumed the charge of the workshop for second session. Dr. Asif Javed is a PhD in English. He holds 17 years of experience in teaching, administration and training. Currently he is rendering his services to CUI Islamabad campus. He involved the class and tried to know each participant and built rapport. Starting from the basics of English grammar rules, the speaker tried to



deliver the proper use of basic punctuations in the given time span. He began by delivering the basic concepts of Language and elaborated the uses of Commas, Full

Stop, Semi Colon, Colon, Exclamation Mark, Capital letters, and Quotation Marks. He showed the participants that how these basic punctuations can be applied in appropriate manner. Which punctuation may be used when there is a pause or little gap in a sentence, which point is suitable for the segregation of two ideas, and how to put a sentence or an idea to an end.

Similarly, what are the suitable punctuations while using interdependent or interlinked sentences or presenting some kinds of lists. Moreover, the domain expert emphasized on the proper and careful use of Capital letters. One must always be cautious while using the punctuations, because improper use of punctuations can change the entire meaning of a sentence or a message to be sent. Dr Asif also stressed about the proper use of homophones which is not given due importance in official correspondence.

Later the resource person shared a worksheet and this activity was a practical implication of the presentation shared with the participants. The participants were pleased with the session and there was an ambiance of increased learning and confidence.

Session – III, Customer Correspondence & Dealing; What’s your Communication Style:

The second day started with Ms Saba Bahareen’s session. She began her session by delivering the concept of Customer Correspondence. She said that writing reflects person’s attitude. Workplace communication has to be specific as it deals with specific people/audience with a specific format. It is preferred to have a positive rather



than negative writing style in formal correspondence.

Ms Bahareen suggested that one must not write anything when he/she is in anger or jubilant. If someone writes in these conditions, it is recommended

not to send such piece of writing to anyone. This is suggested because emotions are

never involved in official communication. The speaker elaborated that the writing style may differ from department to department. IT section's writing will be different from some other department's writing style. A specific department knows how and on what lines they have to work. A person from some other domain will not be able to understand their writing style.

This was a very enlightening session and deeply involved the participants. The resource person shared tips and tricks for effective writing and continuously emphasized on improving the official communication.

Session – IV, The Art of Listening & Non-Verbal Communication – Body Language:

The second session on the same day was also delivered by Ms Saba Bahareen. She linked the first session and continued her talk by elaborating that writing is a reflection of one's personality. Even a single word shows the attitude of the writer. As most of the participants deal with students, it is always better to listen to the audience, the students. She furthered

that even if you are not able to solve their problems, you must listen to their queries, as listening works as healing. When you encounter troubled



students, talk to them about their issues and listen carefully to them so that you may fulfill their requirements. Try to be empathetic rather than being sympathetic. It is always recommended not to involve ego element.

The domain expert showed a video to the participants for clarifying the concept of empathy and sympathy. Moreover, she made groups and gave some scenarios to the participants for role plays in given scenarios. Different situations were given to different groups where they had to act according to the given scenes. The situations

were related to several daily life workplace issues which are faced by either students or their parents. Everyone participated in the activity and thoroughly learned and enjoyed from this practical implication.

Session – V, Emotional Awareness (EQ);

The third day started with Dr Asif Javed's session. He began with sharing the basics of communication skills. Effective Communication Skills involve not only writing and speaking, but it is greatly related with reading, listening and expressing as well. Dr Asif elaborated that how a person can communicate without writing or talking to someone. There are several ways of doing so. A communication that involves eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, postures, and body language is known as non-verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication plays a vital role in connecting to people. This specific language bears no words, but conveys messages or signals in variant styles.



Many a times, people make images of some other person and act according to that image without being flexible. There has to be a margin given to everyone and no such stubborn images shall be made in our minds. The speaker conveyed that in official correspondence, one must not make judgment about any other person. In order to have a healthy and pleasant work environment, everyone must adopt the better ways of non-verbal communication.

He emphasized the significance of EQ and illustrated its' role and impact on human life, growth and adaptation. Emotionally intelligent people identify personal as well as

others' emotions efficiently, and grow well in their lives. EQ can be enhanced with the help of conscious effort, training and modeling.

The participants were requested to make efforts to change their undesirable behavior. They were encouraged to adopt easy and adaptable approach which results in a healthy work environment. This could be done by allowing personal space to people for adopting different learning styles.

Session – VI, How to Mitigate Crisis:

The last session of the workshop was delivered by Mr. Laeeq H. Jaswal, In-Charge FDA. He addressed the participants and boosted their morale by saying that everyone is a 'superman' but that superman has to come out from within oneself. He affirmed that the super-person surely lives inside every person, but we have to wake this character up at the times of need. He advanced his presentation and advised that one has to be a problem-solver rather than being a problem-creator.

He quoted few incidents from within the university and discussed about the steps taken in those times. There were surely loop holes due to malpractice of crisis management. When some crises occur, poor practices turn a



person into a villain rather than being hero. He emphasized that we must be trained in a way that when crises happen, we are programmed to take constructive steps. One must be able to understand that whether he/she is required in such situation or not.

There are several types of crisis and each needs a separate plan. Occurrence of crises may lead to enormous disasters, if not handled properly. It becomes very expensive for any organization if proper measures are not taken during crisis. Poor crisis

management may lead to severe financial loss, and may put the life of public and organization's reputation at stake.

Every organization must prepare Crisis Management team who is responsible to deal with unforeseen circumstances. These members must build a trust factor with everyone so that during critical times, people are ready to trust them and their decisions. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) should be designed for this team. A presence of such team will be beneficial for the organization.

The session was highly appreciated and applauded by the participants. Question answer session held at the end and the resource person satisfied the participants by answering their queries. Participants showed their keen interest to learn about the topic.

Closing Ceremony:

At the end of the workshop, Closing Ceremony was held. Ms Aafia Malik from FDA conducted the closing ceremony. She presented her gratitude to all resource persons on behalf of FDA. She addressed the participants and appreciated their active interest and involvement in the workshop. Two of the participants represented the group's views and reflections. They were all appreciating the content, delivery and impact that the resource persons made upon them. They appreciated FDA for arranging this workshop skillfully. Mr. Laeeq H. Jaswal, In-Charge FDA addressed the group as well. He applauded participants' commitment and keenness for learning and active participation. He congratulated the trainees on completion of the workshop.

