

Using Twitter to Teach Business Communication

Teaching the 7 C's of Communication

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ABSTRACT

In the age of constant information bombardment from different mediums, it is of utmost importance for the communicators to be clear, concise, correct, complete, coherent, concrete, creative and courteous while communicating with others. Communication often remains incomplete when the message of the sender does not reach the receiver in the same form and intention in which it was sent. The barrier to communication occurs due to an inappropriate understanding of the 7 C's of Communication namely Clarity, Conciseness, Concreteness, Correctness, Coherence, Completeness and Courteousness. This paper aims at teaching the 7 C's of communication in the age of Mobile Mediated Communication (MMC). The present paper uses Twitter messages to explain the 7 C's of Communication. The paper tries to throw light on the fact that the teachers while teaching Business Communication can use Twitter messages as an educational tool.

Keywords: Twitter as an educational tool, Business Communication, 7 C's of Communication

Introduction

It is important to be an effective communicator whether it is in business or in personal life. In the age of information bombardment where every moment we are loaded with a lot of information, empowering the students with the skills of effective business communication is of utmost importance. Due to the constant use of mobile phones and information overload, the attention span of most of the students (who will be a part of the workforce in a year or two) has markedly decreased due to constant distractions. It has been observed in many research studies that attention span has significantly shrunk in the past decade. Due to the decreased attention span, it is difficult for teachers to arrest the attention of the students in the classroom. So they need to

devise new ways to teach to increase student engagement. Today, most of the students in the classroom are digital natives and most of the teachers are digital immigrants. As digital natives, the majority of the students are visual learners. If we want to bring out any change in the classroom, it is important to bridge the gap between the digital natives and the digital immigrants. So in today's classroom, the plain chalk and talk method will not be useful to adopt as a teaching methodology. We need to complement it and should explore new ways of teaching Business Communication in the classroom to the Digital Natives. Thus, the classroom teaching should be according to the Learning Style of the students so that they are able to process and retain the information taught in the classroom.

Teaching Business Communication

Business Communication (BC) is a mandatory subject at the undergraduate level in Savitribai Phule Pune University. The core objectives of this subject are firstly to acquire and develop effective communication skills for business correspondence, to provide knowledge of various media and to develop business communication skills through application. The researcher decided to undertake an experiment to explore new ways of teaching Business Communication concepts. So the researcher decided to take up the topic of the 7 C's of Communication namely Clarity, Conciseness, Concreteness, Correctness, Coherence, Completeness and Courteousness which is an important topic. Being a teacher of English Language and Literature for more than a decade and a half, the researcher observed that most of the teachers who teach Business Communication complain that it is very difficult to arrest the attention of the students while teaching this subject as the students find the subject very dry. It was also observed that most of the students look at this subject only from the point of view of getting marks in the examination. They do not find interest in learning Business Communication for life. Thus, when they graduate they have an 'A' grade in Business Communication subject but they cannot apply the core principles of Business Communication in practical situations.

Research Questions

Following research questions were kept in mind while conducting this experiment of teaching the 7 C's of Communication namely Clarity, Conciseness, Concreteness, Correctness, Coherence, Completeness and Courteousness by using Twitter as a tool.

- Is it possible to create interest in the students to teach 7C's of Communication?
- Can digital immigrants teach digital natives?
- Can Twitter be used as an educational tool to teach business communication in general and 7C's in particular?

Literature Review

After studying the literature on using Twitter-based instruction or using Twitter as a teaching tool in the classroom, the researcher analysed that most of the research findings suggest that the use of Twitter in the classroom improves engagement and learning, it makes classroom sessions enjoyable thereby increasing retainability. Some studies also suggested that Twitter-based instruction increases motivation and improves the overall learning experience. Most of the research done on using Twitter in the classroom is based on using Twitter at a personal level by the teachers in the classroom and thus is self-reports.

Many studies suggested that bringing Twitter-based activities into the classroom increased the motivation of the students to learn a particular course or topic and also made the class an enjoyable experience. The faculty also felt motivated to teach with the help of Twitter. (Elavsky, Mislán, & Elavsky, 2011; Feliz, Ricoy, & Feliz, 2013; Kassens-Noor, 2012).

The students were seen participating more in the classroom thus making the session interactive. (Ricoy & Feliz, 2016; Yakin & Tinmaz, 2013). The student engagement increased as the students started understanding how Twitter works. (Mercier, Rattray, & Lavery, 2015; Osatuyi & Passerini, 2016).

The review done by Malik, A., Heyman-Schrum, C. & Johri, A. ‘ Use of Twitter across educational settings: a review of the literature.’ Int J Educ Technol High Educ 16, 36 (2019) is a great resource to know which kind of studies were conducted across educational settings to understand the use of Twitter as a learning instrument.

After reviewing the literature the researcher felt that there were a large number of studies conducted in applied sciences and not many in the field of Commerce. As the researcher was finding difficulty in bringing motivation, engagement and retainability while teaching business communication to Commerce students, she decided to use Twitter in the classroom as a learning instrument to see if the same results are replicated.

Experiment

- It was decided that two teachers will teach the 7C's of communication to SY B.Com. A and B Division. One of the teachers will teach both the divisions in a traditional way i.e. by just explaining the theory and reading from the text.
- After two months the researcher will organise two sessions with the students on the same topic by using ‘Twitter’ to teach the 7C's of communication to see if there is any change in retaining and applying the information.
- The students will not be informed that they are a part of the experiment.
- To start with the students will be asked some direct questions on 7 C's and Twitter.
- The 7 C's of Communication will be explained to the students with the help of

‘Twitter’.

- The retention of the learned information will be checked by giving them an oral and a written test after a month on the topic of the 7 C's of communication to check if they can retrieve the learned information.

What is the 7 C's of Business Communication and what is Twitter?

The researcher started the session by asking the students some basic questions on 7C's of Communication. Out of a group of 60 students, only a few students were able to tell no more than three C's of Effective Communication, though they had studied this topic in the classroom and also had attempted questions on 7 C's of Communication in the internal examination just a few weeks ago.

Secondly, the researcher asked the students about Twitter, whether they use Twitter in their day to day life to read and follow their idols or if they have a Twitter handle and they tweet regularly and so on. To the researcher's surprise, only a few students out of 60 were aware of something called ‘Twitter’. Most of the other students said that they had only heard about Twitter and they were aware of other social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook and Whatsapp. The researcher also asked the students about some National and International news to check their general understanding of current affairs.

Though all of them were Generation Z and true digital natives, it was a surprise for the researcher to understand that the students did not know much beyond Facebook and Instagram. They were not using technology for self-directed learning. The researcher instead of starting the

session by explaining the 7 C's which were explained to them two months ago by a different teacher in a traditional way decided to bring the students on the same page by telling them about What is Twitter, How to use Twitter, How to have one's own Twitter Handle and glossary of Twitter. The students were also briefed about the National and International current affairs so that they will be able to understand the context of the tweets which were selected to explain the 7C's of Communication.

Twitter Example Selection

While choosing the tweets for teaching the 7C's of Communication the following points were kept in mind by the researcher:

- Three tweets were chosen to explain each 'C' of communication. For example, 'Correctness' was explained by choosing three such tweets where the tweet has incorrect information or fact due to which the communication has failed.
- Tweets were chosen from different fields like Politics, Sports and Movies.
- The tweets chosen for the experiment were of celebrities from different fields or from well-known organisations.

7 C's explained

To start with, the researcher explained to the students all the 7C's of Communication namely Clarity, Conciseness, Concreteness, Correctness, Coherence, Completeness and Courteousness so that they will be able to understand the violation of a particular 'C' in the tweets.

Samples of Examples used in the Classroom:

CORRECTNESS

The following example illustrates the importance of Correctness in communication.

Amitabh Bachchan



T-828 - Mary Kom !! wins her boxing bout insured a Bronze! What a story ! A Mother of two from Assam creates moment of pride for India!!

T 828 - Mary Kom !! Wins her boxing bout, and insured a Bronze! What a story! A Mother of two from Assam creates a moment of pride for India!!

In this Tweet, Amitabh Bachchan, the legendary actor congratulated Mary Kom for winning the boxing bout and insuring an Olympic medal for India. He incorrectly wrote that Mary Kom is from Assam whereas she is from Manipur. Due to this mistake, Bachchan had to face a lot of backlash from the Northeast. Though Bachchan congratulated Mary Kom for her achievement but due to the incorrect information regarding Mary Kom's home state he had to apologize for his gaffe. And due to the inexactness of information, the tweet was not able to achieve effective communication.

Amitabh Bachchan



T-828 - Sorry correction Mary Kom is from Manipur not Assam apologies!!

Example 2



In this tweet, the then Minister of Sports, Vijay Goel wished track and field athlete Srabani Nanda ahead of her event in the Rio Olympics 2016, but incorrectly used the image of Dutee Chand, the Indian professional sprinter.

In this tweet due to using incorrect name the entire message lost its meaning and became incoherent. As the sports minister of the country he or his team (which manages his tweeter account) was expected to know who Srabani Nanda is. Using a wrong photo was not taken lightly by many twitter users and they pointed out the mistake and Goel had to face lot of criticism.

Thus, Correctness is extremely important while communicating in business communication otherwise it might have serious repercussions as it happened in the case of Vijay Goel.

Example 3



Narendra Modi
b@narendramodi 12 Feb 2016 "Happy birthday @ashrafghani. Praying for your long life & exceptional health and a joyful journey ahead".

In this tweet Prime Minister Narendra Modi wished his counterpart Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani three months before his birthday.

Though it was an error, Ashraf Ghani, in a sportive manner tweeted back, "Greetings from Munich, Mr PM. Although my birthday is on 19th May, I'd still like to thank you for your gracious words".

Thus, one has to be sure of the 7 C's while getting involved in any kind of communication, whether formal communication or informal communication. These were some of the sample examples which were selected from Twitter for explaining the violation of the 7 C's of communication (in this case correctness). The students responded positively to the use of Twitter for explaining the concept of the 7 C's of Communication.

Limitations

There are always some limitations to every experiment or study. In this experiment, the researcher felt that the main limitation was the fact that it took a long time for the researcher to prepare for these sessions. Finding out the best examples which should be relatable for teaching 7 C's of communication namely Clarity, Conciseness, Concreteness, Correctness, Coherence, Completeness and Courteousness was a time-consuming task.

FINDINGS

It was observed by the researcher that most of the teachers who teach Business Communication complain that it is very difficult to arrest the attention of the students while teaching this subject as the students find the subject very dry. So the researcher wanted to explore emerging trends of teaching business communication in the classroom to create interest among the students. An experiment was undertaken by the researcher to use Twitter as a tool to teach the 7 C's of Effective Communication. After

conducting the experiment of using Twitter as a tool to teach the 7 C's of effective communication, the researcher concluded the following:

It is possible to teach the 7 C's of Effective Communication with the help of Twitter. The students were interested in learning Business Communication the Twitter way. The students showed their enthusiasm by active participation in the class. They created their handle on Twitter and brought back many examples of the gaffes made by business organizations and celebrities on Twitter. Thus, the students were not just interested to learn with the help of Twitter but were also able to understand and remember the 7C's of effective communication. The student's engagement in the classroom increased and they found the use of Twitter to teach Business Communication relevant. Hence, the researcher concluded that the students who are digital natives can understand better if examples from the digital world are used in the classroom instead of the regular textbook examples. Incorporating Twitter as an educational tool in the classroom was taken by the student in a positive way. It was observed that the digital gap between the Digital immigrants (teachers) and Digital Natives (students) could be bridged if the students are taught in their learning style using technology. The researcher also observed that most of the students who were Digital Natives did not know much beyond Facebook and WhatsApp. Thus, there is a need to introduce new digital sources for learning in the classroom.

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