USING REAL-WORLD SCENARIOS TO TEACH INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN ENGINEERING ENGLISH COURSES

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Abstract: *Interpersonal communication is a crucial skill for engineers, enabling them to collaborate effectively, present ideas clearly, and engage in problem-solving discussions. However, traditional English courses for engineering students often prioritize technical vocabulary and grammatical accuracy, overlooking the socio-pragmatic aspects of communication. This article explores the benefits of integrating real-world scenarios into Engineering English courses to enhance interpersonal communication skills. It discusses various pedagogical strategies, including simulations, role-playing, case studies, and industry-based projects, highlighting their effectiveness in preparing engineering students for professional communication challenges.*

Introduction

Engineering is a field that requires not only technical expertise but also strong communication skills. Engineers must engage in discussions with colleagues, present findings to clients, and participate in cross-disciplinary collaborations. Yet, many engineering students struggle with interpersonal communication, particularly in real-world professional settings (Darling & Dannels, 2003).Traditional English courses in engineering education often focus on technical terminology and report writing but fail to address crucial interpersonal skills such as active listening, teamwork, negotiation, and persuasion (Nelson & Stolterman, 2012). Using real-world scenarios in language teaching can help bridge this gap by providing students with authentic, practical experiences that mirror workplace interactions.Many engineering graduates enter the workforce with inadequate communication skills, leading to challenges such as:

- Ineffective teamwork and collaboration
- Miscommunication in technical discussions
- Difficulty in explaining complex ideas to non-technical audiences
- Lack of confidence in professional interactions

Engineering English courses must, therefore, go beyond traditional approaches and incorporate real-world scenarios to enhance students' interpersonal communication skills.Interpersonal communication involves the ability to exchange information effectively, adapt to different audiences, and use appropriate discourse strategies. In engineering, this skill is essential for:

- **Team Collaboration:** Engineers often work in multidisciplinary teams where clear and effective communication ensures project success.

- **Client and Stakeholder Interaction:** Engineers need to convey technical information in a way that is understandable to non-engineers.
- **Problem-Solving and Decision-Making:** Effective discussions lead to better problem identification and resolution.
- **Presentation and Persuasion:** Engineers must often justify decisions, secure funding, or explain designs in presentations and reports.

Developing these skills through real-world scenarios in the classroom can better prepare students for professional environments.To enhance interpersonal communication skills, educators can integrate the following real-world teaching approaches:

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Role-Playing Professional Interactions</td><td colspan="2">Simulating workplace conversations allows students to practice professional communication in a controlled setting.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Technical Meetings</td><td>Students take on roles such as project managers, engineers, and clients to discuss technical issues.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Job Interviews</td><td>Practicing interview techniques helps students articulate their technical skills confidently.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Negotiations and Conflict Resolution</td><td>Students role-play scenarios where they must reach agreements on engineering solutions.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Industry-Based Projects</td><td colspan="2">Partnering with engineering firms or using simulated projects allows students to experience professional communication firsthand. Activities include:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Client Proposals</td><td>Students create and present project proposals to mock clients.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3"></td><td>Technical Documentation</td><td>Writing reports, specifications, and email correspondence based on real engineering projects.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Team Presentations</td><td>Group projects where students collaborate on designing a product or solving an engineering problem, presenting their findings to the class.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">These projects encourage collaborative learning and improve technical presentation skills.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Video-Based Learning and Analysis</td><td colspan="2">Using videos of professional engineers in workplace interactions helps students observe and analyze effective</td></tr>
</table>

	communication strategies.
	Show TED Talks, technical presentations, and recorded engineering meetings. Assign students to identify communication techniques, such as clarity, tone, and body language. Use video simulations where students record their own presentations and receive peer feedback.
Case Study Analysis	Analyzing real engineering cases enhances both technical knowledge and communication skills. Students can:
	Read and discuss industry reports on major engineering projects. Identify communication breakdowns in real-world engineering failures (e.g., the Challenger disaster, Boeing 737 MAX crisis). Present solutions to hypothetical engineering challenges, focusing on clear and structured explanations.
	Using case studies in Engineering English courses exposes students to authentic discourse patterns and professional communication strategies.

To conclude engineering students must develop strong interpersonal communication skills to succeed in their careers. Using real-world scenarios in English courses offers a practical, engaging way to enhance these skills. Strategies such as role-playing, case study analysis, industry-based projects, and video-based learning provide valuable exposure to workplace communication norms.To ensure successful implementation, educators should:

1. Select industry-relevant scenarios that reflect real engineering challenges.
2. Encourage active participation through interactive and collaborative tasks.
3. Provide structured feedback and opportunities for self-reflection.
4. Integrate communication skills training within technical coursework.

By adopting these approaches, Engineering English courses can better prepare students for the communication demands of the professional world.

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