APSS1L01 Tomorrow's Leaders

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Term Paper

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Effective Communication is an integral quality of being an effective leader. This quality has a high level of influence on the success of a person. For instance, according to Martin and Ciurzynski (2015), around 180000 people die a year in the United States and a majority of these deaths occur due to miscommunication between healthcare professionals. Being equipped with good interpersonal communication skills could not only help avoid such situations but could also improve the productivity of the group of people someone is working with. Through this essay, I will be discussing effective communication and one of its models, the application of the discussed model in my profession, my strengths and weaknesses pertaining to effective communication, and finally I will look into how I could improve my communication skills in my daily life.

Communication is the exchange of information, ideas, and messages between a group of people. In order for this exchange to happen effectively, the two parties of the conversation-- the speakers and the listeners-- must play their active roles. For the listener, that would be to pay attention and attempt to understand the subject of the conversation. While for the speaker, their role would be to attempt to efficiently deliver a message. This could be using verbal, non-verbal, or graphic forms of conveyance (Fielding, M, 2006). Regardless of the medium of communication, as long as both the recipient and the speaker comprehend the content of the information to be the same, it could be considered efficient.

A particular model that would come tremendously helpful in the field of Computing and AI, my discipline, would be the REPAIR model. Oftentimes, Computing and AI professionals are required to work in teams of people for better distribution of work and different skill sets. However, with groups of people may come conflict. The consequences of such conflict may result in tension, stress among the employees, distraction, and thus, inefficient completion of work. The REPAIR model suggests a method to combat this inconvenience. The REPAIR strategies are 'Recognise the problem', 'Engage in productive conflict resolution', 'Propose

possible solutions', 'Affirm each other', 'Integrate solutions', and 'Risk taking'.

The first strategy to the REPAIR model is to fully perceive the problem. It is crucial to completely comprehend the exact issue in order to fix it. Identifying the issue could be done by investigating what exactly the complication is and the cause of it. Then, one could further analyze the consequences and the effects of the dispute between the individuals.

The second strategy involves taking part in constructive conflict resolution. Although conflict is often associated with negative repercussions, there are many positive effects of it as well. Such conflict could result in new ideas and could be key to creativity. Some ways we can engage in productive conflict resolutions is by practicing using the 'I-message' strategy (GoodTherapy, 2018), active listening, finding common ground, and by being more sensitive to the context of the dispute (Deutsch, M, 1994).

Following engaging in productive conflict resolution, the next strategy would be to propose possible solutions. This is the stage when both parties can collaborate with one another and discuss their views on the matter. Here, the parties act as a team to come up with ways to solve the identified issue. After doing so, the parties could affirm each other by sharing positive words, approval and appreciation. This would improve the connection between them.

After analyzing the feasible solutions to the given issue, the next strategy they may use is to integrate the discussed solutions. They could start to take steps to bringing the solutions to life in their day-to-day activities. Further, they may be more risk-taking and open to new possibilities and responsibilities. They may need to make some changes and there may not be a prospect of positive feedback. However, they could be more open to these changes with a positive mindset.

Being a student of Computing and AI, in my future career, we would often have to work in teams. For instance, in software development, we work in teams during the design process to discuss the best possible design for the software from different perspectives and backgrounds. During the development process, we work together to collaborate our skill sets and knowledge using different programming languages. Similarly with the testing, deployment and management stages of the process.

With so much interaction being necessary, we often may get into arguments and misunderstandings. We may not all agree on the same terms owing to our different experiences that led us to forming different opinions. This may lead to a break from the flow of work. Given

the tight internal deadlines professionals may have, such breaks would not be ideal as it would not enable the work to be completed smoothly and efficiently. Hence, we could use the REPAIR strategies to swiftly move on from the conflict and keep up the work. In fact, using the second strategy, 'Engaging in constructive conflict', could also bring in more innovative ideas to the table.

However, it is not easy to communicate effectively. Especially when communicating during conflict. Personally, I find it quite challenging owing to my lack of experience with dealing with disputes appropriately. Although stating the different strategies to relationship repair may seem direct, there are other factors to consider. These factors include the influence of emotions such as anger, frustration, and anxiety. Such emotions cloud people's judgment which may result in them not acting according to reasonable thought. They could act recklessly and illogically in order to support their intense emotions.

I find that when I am the one to blame for the issue, it is a little hard for me to accept my faults. During constructive conflict resolution, I try my hardest to push for my viewpoint even though I may know it is not the best or could be better. Although eventually I am able to come to terms with accepting other people's perspectives, the time that it takes for me to acknowledge the faults in my ideas may anger the other party. They may not be happy with how I don't naturally recognise their opinions to be as important as mine. I may not be able to set our viewpoints on the same level because I start my justification by assuming my perspective is accurate and does not necessarily need to be changed.

Additionally, when it comes to risk-taking, I think I am hesitant. Right after discord, taking new steps and making changes may be a little intimidating. I find that I tend to return to my comfort-space after such a conflict with other people. I also find myself to be doubtful about my ability to take on new responsibilities. This may dilute the objective of the dispute as the change is not being brought to action.

At the same time, during disputes over a disagreement and the need for change, I find that I am good at expressing my standpoint. I am able to completely explain my side of things and convincingly justify them when my perspective is correct. I try to express my thoughts reasonably, politely and completely. I do this by organizing my message into what exactly I think needs to be changed, why I think change is necessary, how the current situation affects me, and how a change would benefit me. This allows me to wholly convey my message without needing to go back and correct my prior statements.

Some measures I could take in my daily life to combat my difficulty with accepting criticism, is by avoiding rushing with my reactions. When faced with criticism, I could listen attentively to what other people say, and could try to notice if there is anything I could learn from what they are suggesting. When I find their thoughts to be unjustified, I could ask the other party to further explain their ideas. Before I turn down other people's suggestions, I could take a little bit of time to evaluate whether their point is "valid or unjust" (Beagrie, S., & McAvoy, J, 2007). Being more enthusiastic to improve and resisting the urge to argue could also aid me to deal with the issue.

I could deal with my tension of taking risks by understanding the objectives of these changes and new responsibilities. Once I completely understand why it is necessary, I could use it as motivation to work on them further. Furthermore, with practice, I could eventually learn that my intimidation was not necessary and that escaping my comfort-space in such ways would benefit me and the people around me. Hence, trying to be more initiative in my day-to-day activities and in group settings would allow me to overcome my intimidation of change.

Effective communication is key to harmony among people. Whether it is communicating with customers, other companies or with your own teammates, communicating your thoughts effectively will help improve the efficiency of work done. Working on such skills is equally as important as learning the technical skills related to work as without proper communication, we may lose out on a lot of opportunities that come our way.

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