CASE STUDY

AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION OF ONLINE FORUM MEDIATED COLLABORATIVE LEARNING OF SPEECH WRITING: A CASE STUDY

By

PUSHP LATA *

SUMAN LUHACH **

* Associate Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, Pilani Campus, Rajasthan, India.
** Research Scholar, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, Pilani Campus, Rajasthan, India.

ABSTRACT

Learning Management Systems (LMS) are being integrated in the curriculum by many educational institutions to extend teaching and learning beyond classroom. This paper is based on a case study exploring the integration of LMS Nalanda created on Moodle in Effective Public Speaking (EPS) classroom to give students an additional platform to practice, collaborate and discuss speech writing. Out of many teaching learning facilities available on LMS, the researcher chose online forum as a tool for giving additional practice in speech writing. This tool helped in enhancing learner centeredness on one hand and encouraged equal participation of all the group members on the other. The present paper looks at the researcher's observation of the outcomes of the integration process. One of the important finding was that students' interaction on online forums resulted in improvement of students' performance in speech writing. Higher participation, constructive feedback and community of practice resulted in enhancement in their speech organising abilities while preparing the speech draft. Vygotsky's Socio-cultural theory which holds active, interactive and collaborative role of learners in the entire learning process has been used as its theoretical basis.

Keywords: Collaborative Learning, Speech Writing, Online Forums, LMS.

INTRODUCTION

With the dawn of internet era, there are conspicuous changes in every walk of life and education is no exception to it. Educationists maintain that instructional technology is the key to quality education in 21st century [13] and a "new educational culture" [2] has been created where students have the ownership of their own leaning. Educators support online learning because of its unique abilities to provide students with enriched learning experiences, to extend learning beyond the classroom, and to support more successful differentiated learning strategies that personalize students' educational experiences [4]. As our students today have grown up with technology, they are referred as digital natives. Both learning paradigms and learning styles of these digital natives are significantly different [21]. They are very comfortable with the use of new technologies because they use technologies as integral part of their life. New Web teaching and learning tools are created at a fast pace to help better address the multitude of teaching and learning styles [22]. Incorporation of social networking sites, blogs, wikis, podcasts, discussion forums,

Skype, CD-ROM books, electronic books, and other technologies offer unprecedented opportunities to involve students in multiliteracy experiences in the classroom and beyond [1]. Both synchronous and asynchronous modes of technology add new dimension to teaching and learning. These tools also provide variety of materials for teaching and learning. Collaborative learning is one of the learning methods which is very much in vogue with these new technologies. Web 2.0 offers educators a set of tools to support forms of learning that can be more strongly collaborative and more oriented to the building of classroom communities [3]. In the past, collaborative learning activities have been restricted to full-time students in on-campus settings because of the logistical difficulties in finding time and space for students to work together [9]. However, little research has been done to determine how such learning environments can be created that can effectively incorporate online teaching and learning with traditional classrooms to enhance the quality of student learning. As online medium provides liberty to learners to work at their own pace and time and location,

collaborative learning can be fostered for both on-campus and off-campus students. The present study has taken up online collaborative learning through on-campus LMS 'Nalanda' for inculcating speech writing.

The early twentieth century educationist John Devey has been credited with promoting the idea of building cooperation in learning on a regular and systematic basis [6]. Collaborative learning is an approach to teaching that involves pairs or small group of learners in the classroom or outside the classroom so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information among learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others [18]. In collaboration, learning is not seen just as the product of one's individual efforts, but as deeply connected to the surroundings, tools and the overall context in which the learning takes place [5]. Creating a contextual environment is the basic requirement for communicative language teaching and the web 2.0 helps in building an online learning community which utilizes the platform to provide learning within a context which is a unique feature of classroom teaching.

Collaborative language learning offers a truly conducive environment for autonomous learning of language [17]. Due to the move towards communicative language teaching, recent innovations in classroom practice have emphasized the value of collaborative learning, learner centeredness and autonomy and shared decision making in the classroom leading to a new education system with new pedagogy and learning strategies [12]. Collaborative learning, in fact, emerges when students are engaged in problem solving activities which demand interaction and co-construction of language and expression. Collaborative learning occurs when learners work together, brainstorm, discover the key concepts, and related information for themselves. The teacher plays the vital role in building and supporting peer-to-peer interaction and removing stagnation and blocks during the process of learning. He does not teach but encourages them, questions their process and monitor each others' reasoning as and when required. Collaborative practices are being increasingly advocated in second language classrooms largely in response to the collaborative potential of web 2.0 tools [8]. However, internet as a medium for communication, it does lend itself particularly to communicative and task- based learning [24]. Web 2.0 provides knowledge sharing, communicating, collaborative creation tools which have greatly improved learning activities [19]. The popular applications of web 2.0 such as social media, forums, blogging, wikis, and podcasting help in learner centred and active learning. Forums, blogs and wikis have been identified as the important web 2.0 tools for collaborative authoring/ writing. With online learning forums (OLFs), blogs and wikis learning does not stop after the class meeting is over but can be extended beyond class hours [10]. Thoughtful use of these tools can enhance effective instructional approaches that emphasise writing for meaningful social purposes, mastery of relevant genres, and development of students' academic language proficiency [26].

The present paper highlights how the online Learning Management System (LMS)- 'Nalanda' (based on Moodle) is being used for on–campus students in BITS, Pilani. Integration process is being illustrated in Figure 1, with researcher's observations about the integration. It provides observations about collaborative learning by the students i.e. the process of writing and discussion on the speech tasks given by the instructor and about the enhancement, if any, in speech writing abilities of the students. The theoretical construct of the study is Socio- Cultural theory and its major concept of ZPD. Group collaboration during completion of online forum speech writing task is the core issue of the illustrative research design. This study, therefore, takes a closer look at the online forum as a mediating tool in the process of collaborative learning task. The study reflects the researcher's subjective interpretations of the whole learning process.

Integration of Online Forums in Language Classrooms: An Overview

Andresen, 2009 sugested that, the process of discussions is a critical dimension of the learning process (Andresen, 2009). As discussion done on online forums is in the written form, there is a potential in the environment which needs to be explored more regarding acquisition of writing skills.

Online discussion forums provide an authenticity in writing and therefore serve as a meaningful supplement to the writing curriculum [20]. Discussion forums have been an integral part of many distance education programs and many online courses. But their employment as a supplement in the regular classrooms is rarely seen. Dengler (2008) favours active learning activities in the geography classes which were complemented by the consistent inclusion of an optional online discussion forum and concluded that it provided a more comfortable space for non-native English speakers to contribute to debates. Participation in discussion forums in a topic-oriented discussion that helps students to identify and solve problems related with their work, which can become a stimulus for the acquisition of the linguistic and communicative skills which the learner needs for his/her specific purposes [23].

In addition to writing done on blogs and wikis, language teachers have found that students benefit from the extra writing done in discussion forums and from its use to communicate meaningfully in real contexts [7]. Three objectives which are fulfilled in collaborative learning on online forums are: foreign language acquisition, communication skills enhancement and contents learning [15]. Through OLFs her participants have increased their level of confidence in using English to communicate with one another, something they could not achieve through face-to-face communication [29]. Online forums are integrated in the course English for Business and Accounting and came with the results, that its helped in developing students' linguistic competence, augmenting cognitive development, collaborative construction of knowledge etc [11]. The interplay between learners' Internet perceptions and their online participation in an online writing exchange program for nursing students [28], it was noted that students with more participation were more likely to make progress in writing fluency. The implementation of the online forums appears to provide reinforcement tasks to enable students practice their writing. Students could share their ideas and opinions in order to produce better quality writing as compared to if the tasks were to be completed independently [16]. Platforms like web forums, webinars, and bulletin boards in most Learner Management Systems (LMS) provide the additional platform for learning but are seldom utilized effectively to promote student interaction in language learning and acquisition [10]. The above review clearly indicates that whatever little amount of research done on the integration of forums in education is mostly in online courses but not in integration with classroom teaching. In the studies cited, almost all the studies show the integration of forums in some other streams like Geography, Nursing etc, which too in distance education or online programs. The genres of writing which have been included did not study the integration of online forums for speech writing as a supplement to the classroom learning for on- campus students.

The speech writing component can never be seen in isolation as only a writing activity. Writing the speech before delivering its gives the students an opportunity to draft their speech with proper content and arguments and then deliver the speech with perfection and conviction in the classroom. In the course of Effective Public Speaking, speech writing and speaking are seen as complementary to each other. Generally, classroom settings does not provide students enough time to practice writing the speech. It is always expected from the students to speak and perform in the classroom. So, the necessary time required by the students to practice, think over and organise their thoughts is generally not available to them during the classroom hours. So, the reason of integration of online forum for discussion is to provide necessary time to the students where writing process can be seen as an activity which promotes critical thinking and the final written product is the result of that thinking process and can be well communicated through public speaking. The present study is an attempt to integrate online environment in effective public speaking classroom as a supplement which give students an opportunity to discuss and practice speech writing with the convenience of space and time so that they can think critically and learn by doing and through peer feedback.

Theoretical Construct

Vygotsky (1978) asserts that learning occurs within a social context and that interaction between learners and their

peers is a necessary part of the learning process [25]. From a Vygotskian perspective [30], cognitive development is studied by examining the processes that one participates in when engaged in shared endeavours and how this engagement influences engagement in other activities. The present study examines the online forum mediated learning process of students who are engaged in discussing the nuances of effective speech writing and how this mutual interaction in the written form influences their individual writing and spoken skills. The tasks which integrate speaking and writing are more conducive to L2 learning than isolated writing [27]. Vygotsky believes in the centrality of language as a 'tool for thought' which means language is a means of mediation in mental activity [14] and this language mediated learning emphasises the use of expressive talk, expressing writing, peer collaboration, and meaningful problem solving tasks [26]. New forms of online communication, are a medium of written as well as spoken communication and can be incorporated for creating a zone of proximal development (ZPD) for language learners which further helps in reaching potential levels of development as suggested by the ZPD—what children can do with assistance in contrast to he actual level which child can demonstrate alone or perform independently. In the present study, forums have been integrated with the classroom teaching in the Effective Public Speaking course in order to create the ZPD which may be favourable for learning speech writing with a leading aim of better speech delivery in the classroom. Effective writing and speaking both require good organisational and critical thinking abilities which can be worked upon only by providing a relevant contextual support where learners can come together, interact and reflect upon.

Integration of on campus LMS 'Nalanda' with Classroom Teaching

Speech writing is an integral part of the Effective Public Speaking (EPS) course being offered at BITS Pilani to the first year degree students as an elective and the students enrolled in the course are systematically trained for writing effective speeches. The classroom activities in the course mainly consist of lectures by the instructor and of the oral

assignments to the students. It is felt that time constraint of the classroom is depriving students to have enough practise in writing. During the lst semester of the academic session 2011-12, for teaching speech writing by using online forum was used by the researcher after seeking formal permission from the instructor. For this purpose, the class of 42 students was divided into 6 groups and 6 different speech writing tasks were posted on the forum. This was done to intensify the speech writing practice by students so that they are able to develop skills of organising a speech well with a better expression. Capitalising on the techno- friendly attitude of the students the teacher believed that forums would provide students a platform to experience speech writing in a new light and subsequently they would regard it as a meaningful task. The rationale behind having a forum assignment was to make students feel comfortable to express themselves in written English. The main aim of this paper is to share the researcher's experience, as a task initiator and observer, of the whole process and mark out the learning outcomes and challenges during the learning process. The stepwise integration of the forum on 'Nalanda' with the classroom teaching is shown with the help of the Figure 1.

As it has been mentioned the forums were integrated with the classroom teaching of speech writing, the figure shown consists of two learning modules for the on- campus EPS students: the Classroom module and the Forum module on LMS 'Nalanda'. The instructor, in the classroom, teaches students the basics of speech writing- its importance in day to day life, outline preparation, how to write an effective introduction and conclusion, different types, importance of
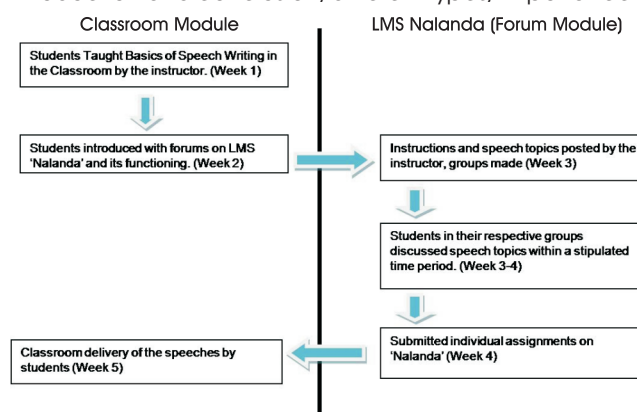

Figure 1. Integration Process of Online Forum with Classroom Teaching

thesis statement internal preview, use of rhetoric etc. Emphasis is given to teach students the importance of drafting an effective speech before delivery. For this, practicing speech writing within groups is facilitated on online forums. Students were acquainted with the basic functioning of forums through proper instructions in the classroom and they were asked to visit 'Nalanda' regularly in order to check the assignments and tasks given. The instructor posted the details of the speech topics to be discussed, made groups and set a time limit for the discussion for one week. After the discussion is over, students were supposed to submit their final individual assignments on 'Nalanda' which were later on accessed by the instructor for evaluation. Finally, students were required to practice the speeches written by them and deliver in the classroom. This was the whole integration plan briefed in the figure above.

Research Question

Does collaborative learning on online forums help students in better speech organisation and consequently better written and spoken performance?

Method and Data Collection

The study employs a case study research method to explore EPS students' development in speech writing and speaking through the online forum discussions. Data was collected in the form of content on the discussion platform and final individual speech assignment. The researcher along with instructor observed the whole interaction and the changes in the students' level of performance. The contents gathered from the online posts and the individually submitted assignments and the classroom performance of the students served as the data for this study.

Findings and Discussion

Online forums were integrated with the classroom teaching to extend interaction among learners and the instructor beyond the classroom so that the ZPD for students could be extended as part of collaborative learning process and make the learners to go beyond the prescribed classroom learning zone. The major findings of the direct observation by the researcher are discussed below:

Participation and Performance

It was observed that students got a good writing practice while participating in the forum discussions, which were often ignored by many students as the course, has emphasis on speaking. It helped students improve their performance through better expression first in the written assignment and finally in the spoken. This is quite evident in the graph shown below. The students of group 'A' which was one of the most collaborative group, benefited from the online discussion. In the final performance, all the seven students in the group were almost at par which was not the case during the classroom assessment of the students before the integration of forum discussion. In order to find out the relationship between the participation level and performance of the group, participation is measured as total number. of posts of the group (assuming it as an indicator of collaboration, interest and active nature of the group) and performance of the students is measured by the marks they get in the assignment after the discussion on online forum. Two groups have been chosen for analysis- group A and group B. Graphs have been drawn to show the relationship between number of posts by the individual members in the group and marks obtained by them in their finally submitted individual speech assignments.

The number of posts and the marks obtained by the members of group A is graphically represented in Figure 2. It depicts that variation in level of participation is greater than the marks obtained by the students. Table 1 shows that total number of posts by the group is 92. Though all students have not contributed equal number of posts, as shown in Figure 2 and Table 1) but it can be deduced that group was

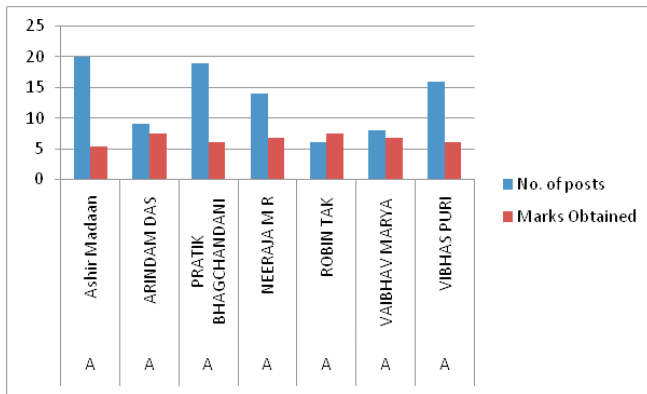| Group	Name	No. of Posts	Marks Obtained
A	ASHIR MADAAN	20	5.25
A	ARINDAM DAS	9	7.5
A	PRATIK BHAGCHANDANI	19	6
A	NEERAJA M R	14	6.75
A	ROBIN TAK	6	7.5
A	VAIBHAV MARYA	8	6.75
A	VIBHAS PURI	16	6
	Total no of posts	92	
	Avg	13.14285714	

Table 1.Overview of Group A's participation and Score

Figure 2. Group A's Performance and Participation Indicator.

interactive enough and had an elaborate discussion on the topic which is required by the students to have a comprehensive knowledge on the topic being discussed. This can be seen in Figure 3 where the variation in the marks is negligible. Students are almost at par with each other and scored almost equal inspite of differences in their participation level. But overall the group is very actively involved in the learning process and it benefited all the students in the group. The graph below shows little variation in marks obtained.

In contrast to Group A, in Group B, which can be seen from Table 2 and Figure 4, that total number of posts are 41 which is half of group A. It shows that group was not as actively involved in the discussion and learning process as it was in group A, and there is also difference in their final performance which is shown with the help of marks scored by the students. The variation of marks can be seen in the graph in Figure 5. The difference between highest and lowest marks is 4.75 which was 2.25 in Group A. 5.25 marks is the lowest score in Group A but it is 2.75 in Group B.

It shows that variation in the performance of the students within a group increases as the participation by the group
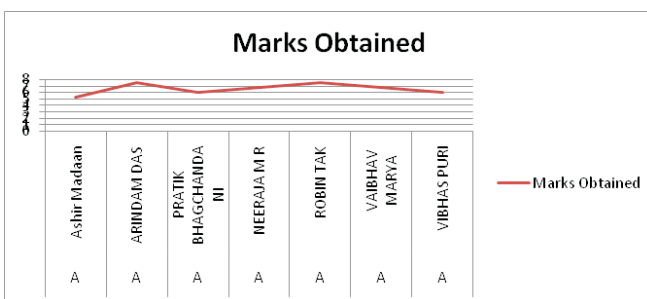
as a whole decreases. It can be interpreted from this relationship that learning has taken place when whole group puts efforts and leads to the learning of every individual in the group.

Constructive Feedback Mechanisms

During the online interaction, students cooperated with each other in their respective groups for carrying out the task of drafting a well organised speech. An excerpt from group C is cited below which was asked to prepare a commemorative speech by an army commandant after being reported of some Indian soldiers missing due to an avalanche in Siachin Glacier as shown in Figure 6.

Group	Name	No. Posts	Marks obtained
B	NAVDEEP AGGARWAL	5	6
B	SHREYA JAIN	9	7.5
B	ANKUR TIWARI	3	4.25
B	MS.SUSHILA KIRODIWAL	2	3
B	UTTAM KUMAR	7	2.75
B	CHILUKURI ANURAG	9	3.5
B	BHANDARI KIRTI SHIVPRAKASH	6	6.75
	Total no. of posts	41	
	Avg.	5.857	

Table 2. Overview of Group B's participation and score
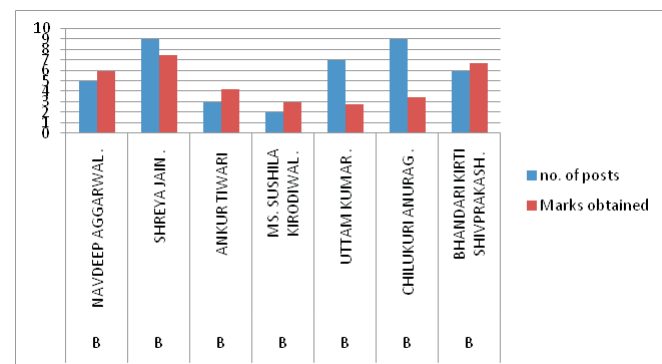
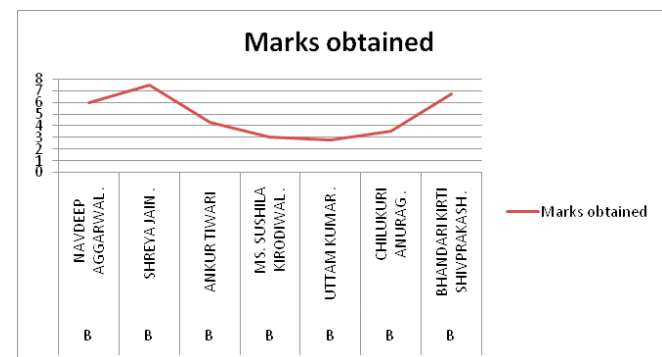Figure 4. Group B's Performance and Participation Indicator

Figure 3. Group A's Performance

Figure 5.Group B's Performance

Figure 6. Speech Writing-Group C

The speech was required to highlight the importance of life of each soldier for the country and what measures can be taken to combat such unexpected natural disasters in future. Anmol Aggrawal started the discussion thread with the introduction of the speech. Adesh, another member of group C suggested an effective attention grabber to motivate the soldiers. At this, Pranav shows the doubt that this can be deviating for the soldiers. Indroneil tries to justify Adesh's stand that the step is necessary to first boost up the confidence of the soldiers. Comments and counter comments by the group members helped them to think about the appropriate content for the kind of speech required to be framed.

Similar feedbacks were given regarding the proper internal preview, main body contents and conclusion. This peer feedback mechanism created a real community of practice and helped students attain refinement in speech writing.

Focus on Higher Order Concerns (HOCs) while Writing

Higher order concerns in Speech Writing comprise of thesis statement, proper analysis of the audience before deciding the content so that it fulfils the intended purpose, then organising the content into logical order by making a proper outline for the speech and development of thoughts with suitable examples, illustrations and other necessary details. It was observed that Collaborative learning among the group members through forum discussion fostered the development of critical thinking, clarification of ideas, in-depth analysis, evaluation of others' ideas and critical reflection among students which helped them focus on HOCs of speech writing. Out of the six groups, group F was one of the active and most collaborative groups. Their topic was to address the victims of a massive earthquake in the district. The first student in the group to start the discussion was Sugandha Saboo. She started with a speech outline which was appreciated by Yash followed by some suggestions like he suggested that rather than emphasising on the loses in the introduction it can be placed in the main body. In the introduction, examples from the past on how people have faced similar natural disasters and stood up even after the effect of the disaster was severe can be given. Further, Mehak who joined late in the discussion suggested to give an appropriate topic to the speech and gave some motivational quotes for the speech and a revised outline. Yash is convinced with Mehak but asks her to change the position of giving internal preview of the speech and suggests giving it just after the thesis statement. In the group, it can be seen that Yash's contribution in critically thinking over the contributions made by the group members is valuable as he gives important suggestions regarding whether they are related to content, organisation or the overall structure of the speech, as shown in Figure 7. (See excerpts from discussion of group 'F' is shown in the appendix).

Complexities Involved

One of the major problems with groups was, that all the groups were not equally collaborative. It has been discussed in the participation and performance section that Group 'A' and 'B' have a big contrast in their levels of

Re: Outline of the speech

by KOTHARI YASH CHANDRESH . - Monday, 16 April 2012, 12:16 AM

The outline seems good, I would just like to add on with a few points -

1. The efforts so as to restore the communications can be mentioned because after an earthquake communications restoration is a major issue.

2. I feel that before we mention the efforts which are being taken so as to restore normality in the district, we can emphasis a bit on the loses which we have incurred in terms of life, property and other assets so that people feel the speakers awareness about the issue, and even the speaker would be able to create trust amongst the victims for the actions being taken.

So rather then emphasising about the loses in the introduction one can say it in the main body.

3. In the introduction before we start with the main body we can give examples from the past that how people have faced similar natural disasters and stood up even after the effect of the disaster was severe.

These three points for now, would keep on adding.

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Figure 7. Overall Structure of the Speech

participation. This affected their final performance because the lesser collaborative groups had lesser interaction and thus proper ZPD was not developed which was necessary to have appropriation of speech writing. How to ensure almost equal collaboration is a major challenge. Another difficulty observed in the discussion process was that sometimes many sub threads were created in a group due to which students felt deviated and without giving justified ending to the running thread of discussion they jumped on to a new thread. One more major problem in the process was that a few students didn't take the discussion task seriously and remained lurkers. How to motivate such students was again a problem which needs enquiry.

Conclusion

The study discusses the researcher's observations from a single class over a period of six months and it shows that groups which participated more had higher learning and consequently better performance. A similar study on a larger scale or a longitudinal study is further required to validate through quantitative and qualitative analysis. Measures to ensure higher and almost equal collaboration among students within a group and among the groups are needed to be taken. One important observation which sustains the interest of the teacher and motivates to continue the integration of online forum with classroom teaching is the constructive feedback mechanism which

certainly works on the higher order skills of learners and enhances autonomous learning.

Appendix

Group F:

Outline of the speech

by SUGANDHA SABOO . - Sunday, 15 April 2012, 03:58 PM

Introduction
I. Stating a few facts about the earthquake that hit the city
II. Sympathize with the people and let them know that we understand their losses and they are not alone in this tragedy.
Body
I. Work in progress
A. Search and rescue operations
B. Infrastructure restoration
II. Help in various forms
A. Help in the form of medicines, food and clothes.
B. Rehabilitation camps
III. Announcements
A. Compensation packages- different categories
B. Central package, State package and various International helps.
Conclusion
I. Appeal to the people to come forward for the help of those affected and help each other's way out of it.
II. To reassure once again that they are not alone in this tragedy and they will be given every possible help by the government and administration.
PS: Any comments and suggestions regarding the outline are most welcome.

Re: Outline of the speech

by KOTHARI YASH CHANDRESH . - Monday, 16 April 2012, 12:16 AM

The outline seems good, I would just like to add on with a few points -
1. The efforts so as to restore the communications can be mentioned because after an earthquake communications restoration is a major issue.
2. I feel that before we mention the efforts which are being taken so as to restore normality in the district, we can emphasis a bit on the loses which we have incurred in terms of life, property and other assets so that people feel the speakers awareness about the issue, and even the speaker would be able to create trust amongst the victims for the actions being taken.
So rather then emphasising about the loses in the introduction one can say it in the main body.
3. In the introduction before we start with the main body we can give examples from the past that how people have faced similar natural disasters and stood up even after the effect of the disaster was severe.
These three points for now, would keep on adding.

Re: some more poitns that i want to add
by AVINASH KUMAR . - Monday, 16 April 2012, 01:44 PM

1- In Conclusion part we can use an inspirational quote with which the victims of the calamity can connect themselves and their present situation

*in conclusion , we can also tell people to be prepared for the events that might follow an earthquake like aftershocks, landslides, and tsunami(depending upon geography of the region)

2-In main body , apart from telling about the plans of restoration and what is going on, we can tell them about what work has already been done so that they can have more assurance and trust in the speaker

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Re: Inspirational quote
by SUGANDHA SABOO . - Monday, 16 April 2012, 02:18 PM

Hi   Avinash,

I   agree   with   your   both   points.

Here is an inspirational quote which is apt to the situation and will boost the moral of the people-
"From great hardship comes great strength"
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Modified outline
by MEHAK MITTAL . - Monday, 16 April 2012, 05:03 PM

Hi, all
Sorry for joining late in the discussion. Everyone is giving very good points. I would just like to add more and arrange all of them in a better order.
An eye catching *topic* can be given to the speech. May be:
Responsible champions against earthquake
Introduction:
    1. As stated by Yash to grab the attention of people we can site few examples from the past where people have come together to rebuild their community and didn't fall in despair.
    2. Yash, I feel it's ok to talk about the facts related to earthquake that has hit the district (suggested by Sugandha) in the introduction part. It will help in building speaker's credibility
    3. May be we can talk about an emergency response planned by government which will provide relief to majority of people in order to talk about audience's immediate interest.
    4. Now, we can talk about thesis statement so as to declare our belief. Something like:
Together we can rebuild our city and make a better place to live in.
    5. At last the speaker can give an internal preview by telling them about what all he will be talking in his speech i.e. earthquake relief methods and importance of being united during hard times.

Body:
I guess it will be better if we'll group all our relief strategies under four kinds of responses. Most of the points will include the sub points suggested by Sugandha
    I. Economic reconstruction
            A. Infrastructure restoration
            B. Communication facilities
            C. Sanitation facilities
            D. Packages
                    ? Compensation packages- different categories
                    ? Central package, State package and various International help.
    II. Educational resource
            A. Soft infrastructure for the school
            B. Disaster management training
    III. Emergency response
             A. Help in the form of medicines, food and clothes.
            B. Rehabilitation camp
    IV.   Other kinds of response

            A. Search and rescue operations
            B. Electricity and water facilities
            C. Accounting for the employment of youth
    V. Work in progress (it will cover work done till now as said by Avinash and immediate next step to be taken in consideration)
Conclusion:
    1. We can restate thesis statement and ask them to write their suggestions on the proposed plan. Ensure them to change the plan if majority of them are not comfortable with it.
    2. Summary of main points to as to boost them up.
    3. End with an emphatic clincher as suggested by Avinash.
Sugandha suggested a very good quote. I would like to give one more
"We have a plan.
We have the capacity.
We just need your help to do it."
I guess everyone's points are covered. You guys can add if missed out any. Keep adding new points and your suggestions. 😊

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Suggestions
by MEHAK MITTAL . - Tuesday, 17 April 2012, 10:48 AM

Hi all,
Everyone is suggesting very good points.
Building earthquake resistant buildings (said by Ramya) can be covered under search and rescue operations of other responses.
We all are talking about training that should be given to the people during any natural calamity. I feel all those points can be covered in disaster management training. But we are giving a lot of weightage to the point of disaster training and our speech is about measures taken by governing body and encourage people to be motivated. So, we have to be precise in talking about training people for such kinds of disaster. May be it will be better if we talk more about the measures taken by government and how to keep them united.
I guess Aditya disaster relieve camps will be same as rehabilitation camps
Now coming to Avinash's point of establishing speaker's credibality. I guess it will be better if we do it in introduction part. We have to be precise in speaking about it. May be we can talk about its scale, loss of lives, some more facts and effect on general public. Good quotes have been suggested by you to end with a bang. 😊

Re: Suggestions
by KOTHARI YASH CHANDRESH . - Tuesday, 17 April 2012, 11:25 AM

Hello everyone,

I would like to support mehek's point that we are sort of deviating from the topic by talking about the long term training and not about the immediate causes of the earthquake and its effects. I feel the more importance on short term steps and measures taken.

Also i feel that mentioning about earthquake prone buildings wont make a sense now, because immediately after the earthquake people wont be thinking of rebuilding there houses. They will be much more concerned about their and their relatives safety and the basic amenities like food, water and medicine.
Also mehek i feel your idea of giving and internal preview is good, but should be done at the starting. We can end up with giving an internal summary so as to remind once again of the steps they should take so as to keep themselves safe and help others and the government restoring   the   normal   activities.
And i feel instead of giving a title to the speech we could end the speech with a motivating statement and it can be the same as you mentioned - Responsible Champions against Earthquake.

Re: Suggestions
by MEHAK MITTAL . - Tuesday, 17 April 2012, 11:36 AM

Hey, Yash
The point of earthquake prone buildings can be mentioned in search and rescue operations. We can just mention it without giving much emphasis. But ya,as u said we should talk more about short term measures. It's always better to give internal preview just after Thesis statement in the introduction part itself. 😊
Now, coming to the title part, it is better if our speech has a topic or title. It will give more clarity to our audience and increase their interest. If our title and ending is up to the mark, it will fulfill the purpose of our speech.
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Re: Suggestions
by MEHAK MITTAL . - Tuesday, 17 April 2012, 12:16 PM

One more point. I feel communication and sanitation facilities should also come under other kinds of responses.

Re: Suggestions
by MEHAK MITTAL . - Tuesday, 17 April 2012, 12:20 PM

We can club all these facilities together under basic facilities in other kinds of response.like this:
Other kinds of response
A. search and rescue operations
B. basic facilities
        1. communication
        2. water
        3. electricity
        4. sanitation
C. youth employment

Re: Introduction
by SUGANDHA SABOO . - Tuesday, 17 April 2012, 12:54 PM

Hi all,
I completely agree with Yash and Mehek that we sort of deviated from the topic in between by giving more emphasis on long term measures of disaster management plans. I personally expected that after an excellent outline compilation by Mehek, we could have started making the speech by working on the introduction, main body and conclusion one by one. Nevertheless, I have come up with my own introduction trying to cover all the points mentioned by Mehek in her outline for the introduction part. Also, I have also comeup with a new title and thesis statement apart from the good ones already mentioned by Mehek. So, the introduction goes on like this-
Title- **"Our fightback against Nature"**
Introduction- "Good morning (evening) everybody, this morning (evening) I want to extend my deepest condolences and unwavering support to all the survivors, and to friends and families of all those affected by the Monday's terrible earthquake (*connecting to the audience*). The devastating earthquake which hit the city at 9.05 a.m. in the morning at a reictor scale of 8.5 is reported to have a death toll of 967, no. of missing 1270 and no. of injured 3075. Indications are that 20,000 people are left homeless, with 7000 houses destroyed and an additional 13500 damaged (*attention grabber and also stating these facts will establish speaker's credibility*). By now are efforts are focused on certain urgent priorities of rescuing those trapped beneath the debris and to deliver the humanitarian relief of food, water and medicines to the survivals of the earthquake (*attending to audience's immediate interest*). Friends, the coming days pose a big challenge in front of us. While the nature has taken much from you, it can't take your survival spirits. **We have a city to rebuild, we have people's livelihood to restore, we have a community's confidence to inspire** (*thesis statement*) and we will live up to these challenges. Today, I want to update all of you with certain facts and figures of the damage caused by earthquake and also will give you an insight to the ongoing programmes and also the future plans to contain the damage, recover and rebuild. Also, I will talk about the cooperation that we are expecting from your side to achieve our common goal (*internal preview*)
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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr. Pushp Lata has been associated with Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani since 1994. She did her P.G.D.T.E. from CIEFL, Hyderabad, and Ph.D. from University of Rajasthan. She has got various articles published in various anthologies and attended various conferences and workshops. She has published four books with well-known publishers like Oxford University Press and Prentice Hall of India. Her areas of interest include Public Speaking, Soft Skills, Technical communication, Linguistics, Business communication, and English Language Teaching.

Suman Luhach is a Research Scholar in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, BITS Pilani, Pilani Campus. She has obtained M. Phil. in English (2009) and is UGC NET qualified. Her interest areas are ICT and ELT, and Contemporary Literary Theories.