



Hindi Vidya Prachar Samiti's

HINDI VIDYA PRACHAR SAMITI'S COLLEGE OF LAW

(Affiliated to University of Mumbai & Recognised by Bar Council of India)

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Ref No.

Date 21/2/2023

Report: Certificate Course in Public Speaking and Communication Skills

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As Plato put it, "Rhetoric is the art of ruling the minds of men." Public speaking is an undebatable and vital expertise required for every skilled legal counsellor. Developing powerful oratory skills is a necessity for those who aspire to achieve success in the legal field. Similarly, gaining the confidence to face and address a group of people is a necessary quality that everyone needs during professional and social interactions. With the aim of improving students' public speaking skills, Hindi Vidya Prachar Samiti's College of Law offered a 30-hour certificate course in Public Speaking and Communication Skills. This was an activity-based course which was conducted from 1 February to 17 February 2023. The course focused on achieving an understanding of the influence of confidence and clarity during public interactions and attempted to help them overcome stage fright. The course was conducted under the guidance of the principal, Dr. Madhura Kalamkar and was designed, delivered, and coordinated by Ms. Asha Selvakumar.

Day 1

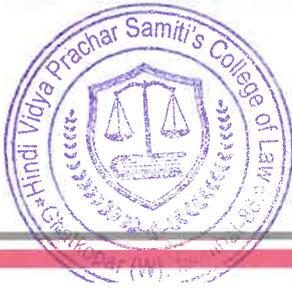
Topic: Non-Verbal Communication

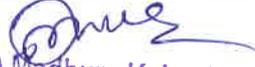
Non-Verbal Communication constitutes approximately 70% of the communication process. Thus, the importance of understanding non-verbal cues were highlighted through activities where students communicated only through gestures, face expressions and eye contact. Participants were provided with a list of items which their peers had to guess only through gestures. While some of the items could be guessed easily through universal gestures, some were complex and required more time to be identified. Nevertheless, students could guess most of the items elucidating the fact that communication can still happen through non-verbal cues in the absence of words. They also took a quiz in order to comprehend and interpret the body language. The participants understood how everyone uses body language in different ways for communication. However, there are some common cues to interpreting what someone communicates. Even though it can be challenging to read body language, it is an important skill to advance in one's career. Thus, while communicating, it is important to understand what someone says verbally and non-verbally.

Day 2

Topic: Phonology

Correct pronunciation of words is crucial to convey the intended message to the listener. Therefore, students were taught to read phonetic symbols and understand the various sounds in the English language. Phonology refers to the study of the patterns of sounds in a language and across languages. They were introduced to the different IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) symbols: 24 consonant sounds, 12 vowel sounds and 8 diphthongs. After gaining




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familiarity with the symbols, they attempted to transcribe words into phonetic symbols. They learnt how some words can look completely different from their actual pronunciation; how phonology can help create differences in meaning within a language. This will not only improve clarity of the message but also make oral communication more effective. It is also important to note that phonology also helps in learning and understanding a language efficiently. Understanding the different sounds helps one understand the pronunciation of various words and thus enhance the impact of the spoken message.

Day 3

Topic: Importance of Coherence

Coherence is the logical arrangement of ideas in speech or writing. It is important to link ideas in a talk and smoothly connected with another sentence. A coherent speech is one that ensures smooth flow of ideas which are connected and logical. To elucidate this concept, students were divided into various groups and were asked to collect sentences pasted in different corners of the room. The sentences were jumbled but word make up a paragraph that would carry meaning if arranged the right way. They were then asked to arrange them in a logical manner which made sense and conveyed a clear message. It was a challenging task as participants were given no idea about the content and thus had to put in a lot of thought to complete it. For good communication, a message should follow a logical structure. All ideas should be well connected and relevant to the critical point. This concept of logical linking of ideas is known as coherence. Organising a message logically from introductory statements to the conclusion will ensure that the message is coherent. When the ideas flow neatly from one end to another in a proper sequence, the overall message becomes easier to follow and recall.

Day 4

Topic: Structuring a Speech

A good speech has various ingredients like correct pronunciation, grammatical correctness, coherence, and intonation. In addition to this, a persuasive speech also demands an effective structuring and placement of ideas. The ideas that need to be conveyed should be arranged logically and in a sequence that places emphasis on the most crucial aspects. They were introduced to effective concepts to make their speech more impressive: (i) Primacy and recency - people easily remember the first and last things they hear in a series. Thus, it is important to have a high energy start and a final recap and review of one's speech. (ii) Surprise - most people tend to remember things that are different, new, or unexpected. People will remember your speech for much longer if it is novel and untraditional. (iii) Repetition - people remember things more if they are repeated and therefore it is important to recap and review the main key points of your speech more than once to ensure your audience can remember them. Through activities, students understood how listeners often remember the first and the last parts of a message, and unique or



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novel ideas and concepts. So, a powerful introduction and a strong closing makes a speech more compelling and memorable.

Day 5

Topic: Listening Skills

Listening is one of the most essential soft skills. It indicates a person's ability to receive and interpret information conveyed in the communication process. Active listening also helps in reducing misunderstandings, building empathy, limiting judgements, improving relationships, increases productivity, enhances leadership skills and providing appropriate feedback. To become a good speaker and communicator, one needs to develop effective listening skills. Students were introduced to the meaning and significance of active listening in social and professional interactions. They were provided with tips on how to be a good, attentive listener with tasks that required them to put into practice what they learnt. They were asked to summarize lengthy passages after attentively listening to them. This task required them to stay focused on the message and distinguish between the main and subordinate ideas. They were also given some situational problems in order to boost critical thinking and listening. It required them to carefully listen and analyze the situations and think about probable solutions for the same.

Day 6

Topic: Eliminating the Fear of Public Speaking

Public speaking refers to oral communication to live audience, often a larger group of people. However, the fear of facing the audience or crowd can lead to nervousness and significantly impact the message delivered. Glossophobia, or a fear of public speaking, is a very common phobia and one that is believed to affect up to 75 percentage of the population. This could range from slight nervousness to extreme fear; however, its impact can be reduced by following some techniques and a lot of practice. Students were introduced to situations where they often encounter anxiety and were asked to list the steps that they would take in each case. They were then given tips to overcome the same: preparation, practice and impressive content. To get them initiated, they were asked to deliver a mock speech. They were asked to share a few lines about themselves to the group to understand the factors that cause fear or anxiousness during public speaking. This helped them become more aware of individual problems while addressing the audience and understand ways to eliminate them.

Assessment:

Students were evaluated on the concepts that were discussed in class throughout the course. Students were assessed on five different criteria: Phonetic Writing, Reading Skills, Note Making, Group Discussion, and Active Participation in class with on-the-spot assessment method. Under Phonetic Writing, students were given a list of words and asked to identify the correct phonetic symbols and transcription. As phonetic transcription notes the way the spoken words are



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pronounced, it is a valuable aid in improving pronunciation. It helped them learn and pronounce words accurately and thus improve their reading and speaking capabilities. For Reading Skills, students were asked to read aloud extracts from short stories and novels. This helped them understand how emphasis placed on particular syllables or words, and the rise and fall of pitch used in speech changes the impact of the message. Note making helps in improving focus, attention and organization skills, boosts comprehension, retention and effective listening. Students were given extracts and speeches on which they were asked to take notes. This helped them prioritize important information, listen, and read attentively, and enabled them to structure and organize information convincingly. For Group Discussion, participants were given topics related to everyday life situations and were asked to share their viewpoints in a coordinated and polite manner. This introduced them to public speaking and the difficulties they might face while working as a group. The discussions also compelled them to be attentive listeners and understand conflicting viewpoints.

Outcome:

The course received an overwhelming response from the students as they actively participated in the various activities and tasks assigned throughout. Participants shared their appreciation through positive feedback as they looked forward to similar activity-based courses in the future. A total of 28 students completed the course successfully and were awarded e-certificates. The course helped the participants understand the nuances of communication beyond words. It boosted their non-verbal communication, aided in mastering concise pronunciation, comprehending information, logical and coherent communication and overcoming fear of speaking in public.



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