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An extra-edge: necessity for employability

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ABSTRACT

Present scenario clearly projects the doubtless set up of students sprouting out with perfect academic skills. Yet the spot light is on employability skills. Though a few institutions produce the students eligible, it is always a query whether they mould them employable. The burden or the blame cannot be always on the part of students but it is the responsibility of the teachers as facilitators to fill-in this gap. As communication skill is one among the necessary, it is apt to link English language with the same. This paper is an attempt to bridge the role of an English language teacher with that of frequently censured employability skills. It is always traditional in the classroom setup to get along with syllabus whereas it is quite miserable that students fail to get along with the skills that would make them employable. A few notable ideas are discussed in this paper for the English language teachers to put in an extra edge, which facilitates the students to make them employable, by linking the necessary skills on the grounds of English language.

Key words: Role of ICT, ICT in Curriculum, Employability.

1. Introduction

The employers expect a few appropriate qualities in the employees for the job which we call as employability skills. A recent report by NASSCOM and McKinsey predict that India will suffer a large number of unskilled workers in the next decade which would leave a huge number of shortages of skilled workers in many industries. The students sprout out as graduates with perfect and decent academic skills as well. But they are jobless and the employers get cold feet for job offer due to some gap. This gap is found with the lack of employability skills. This paper speaks about the role of English language in terms of employability. It is also a glance on what are the necessary measures taken and should be taken for the upgrade on the grounds of English language for employability.

2. Education and Employability

The skills that are required to make an individual employable or to gain employability are called employability skills. Employers scale a set of skills that are wanted from the employee along with subject and technical skills. Current employers do insist on these skills from their employees which now a days have become a necessity. Education in the current scenario has just become a mere business like any other. Present decades paved enormous way for the growth of the education system. Though there are a few reputed institutions which do keep up the value of education by and large, a few are down with a stumbling block. People look up to it as a place for skill formation. Education is the one which is necessary to bring out one's innate ability says Swami Vivekananda. If so, it the basic work of our educational system to cull out the necessary ability to form an individual as a holistic person. When we talk about education, it comprises English language too. Language has now attracted many and they turn towards it with an eye forward for their formation. English language, as it grows day by day, the disciples too are found growing day by day either by quantity or by quality. The few mending institutions are the service providers for this quality of students to sprout out with the necessary skills. Though the range of employability skills that various employers expect vary in its apparent level, the foundation could be confined to language skills, soft skills and technical skills. Language skills can be further divided into spoken and written which comprises of communication skills and presentation skills. Soft skills include the various skills that would make people appealable. The technical skills differ from discipline to discipline based on the nature of work. English language plays a vital role in this context as English is considered to be the second

language in India. This official status is what makes people to worry about if at all they fail to cope up with the language. Hence language should be taught in a better way than adapting to the conventional methods of teaching language. As this paper talks about bridging the left out gap between language and employability skills, it is right to speak about intermediate and advanced learners of language. Intermediate learners are the ones who are much considered upon and advanced learners to a certain extent as they too sometimes fail to expose and make use of their capabilities appropriately.

In India un-employability is more than Unemployment. Chiseling employability skills would surely lead people to get rid of unemployment. Though India leads the list by producing large number of graduates every year, which is twice as much as US and thrice than UK, a recent survey found that around 60 % of Indian graduates are jobless. English Language teacher trainers from India have a wide scope all over the world. Considering these several issues and facts, English language teachers are thus responsible for moulding the students employable.

3. The range

The range of these employability skills which we discuss so keenly, vary on the three planes which are mentioned. They are language, soft and technical skills. Based on these three major aspects, we can derive to various employability skills. Few among them are listed down in a table:

Skills based on Language	Soft skills	Technical skills
Communication	Analytical ability	Depends upon the nature of work a candidate does.
Presentation	Problem solving	
Fluency in language	Negotiation	
Office skills (resume writing, memo, mail etc.)	Leadership qualities, adaptability team work etc.	

English for employability sets a ray of light on the works that English teachers ought to do. "Command over the English language is perhaps the most important determinant of access to higher education, employment possibilities and social opportunities" (A report by National knowledge Commission 2009). As we come to understand the role of English in employability, it is the role of the English language teachers to enhance the graduates to get them employment. This formation should be started early when they pursue their graduation as they would get adapted to the work place environment. Though academic skills also count, a little bother is enough as the graduates who sprout out are excellent with their academic skills. English language teachers should break in the conventions of teaching grammar provided their management system is flexible enough for the betterment of the students. Activities which teacher trainers handle were spoken for a decade and more are without any growth in their development. These activities should be conducted, provided the task or the outcome would be drawn from the students. As institutions have headed towards the outcome based language teaching, the time is perfect enough for language teachers to make a change. The traditional methods of teaching language would never help a college student. There are vacancies galore in several sectors which are waiting for appropriate candidates. The secondary tier cities where there is a wide scope to get employed, have in them the graduates who are city cultured. To these people, the traditional and ritualistic approach of teachers would never help them to get along with. Even few students from these places, though have their capacity, they fail to

perform as they are very much confined and restricted in the teacher centered classroom. The academic scenario should pave way not theoretically but practically too to make students employable. English language teachers have their freedom as their content is not in a small frame but in ample which they can use in a prudent way, sticking to employable tasks and making the students to adapt the skills as well as the syllabus.

4. A need for change

The colleges in Tamil Nadu and few other states, be it engineering or arts, the general English subject they have deal only with the theory part of their textbooks. The textbook itself hardly has the content that could be helpful for them when they face the competitive world. For example, the annotation part of exercise which appears in every textbook and in question paper is of little use for their real life game. Instead, a textbook that contains content that would deal with all the necessary skills, as it already is in several educational institutions could be considered in a wide range – implementing them in maximum number of colleges as possible. There are many initiatives taken by the government for this enhancement.

- The twelfth plan of Tamil Nadu government (2012-2017) had proposed and follows the curriculum for strengthening the training and quality of faculty, establishing high skill training centres etc.
- An initiative of ICTACT by government of India and Government of Tamil Nadu conducts various training courses like English courses, IT and soft skill courses in various colleges which allow students to appear for NAC tests i.e. NASSCOM Assessment of Competence in collaboration with NASSCOM (National Association of Software Services Companies).
- VISION 2023 which states the strategic plans for development by Tamil Nadu state government focuses to skill and train twenty million people with an emphasis on employability. The objectives ranges from large scale skill development training programme focused on the unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workforce. It also reaches to concentrate on train the trainer programme which is a step to enhance the teacher trainers who are the actual conveyers of knowledge.
- Many such initiatives work for the betterment for employability.

5. Conclusion

Apart from these initiatives the fact lies in the palms of the English language teachers to put in the extra effort to cover all the employability skills by bridging the same with that of the pedagogies in classroom. English language trainers are the ones who train the students of ICTACT for their employment. Strict classroom teaching of English with conventional methods and pedagogies are to be replaced by innovative way which many of the young teacher trainers have in them. These are all possible with an “Extra-Edge” in all dimensions which takes English to other realm of English for Employability.

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