

# English for Employability

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## I. INTRODUCTION

English which was once the privileged language of white collared elite, has now become the language that connects people of different regions, cultures and nations. Since English has become a common language to the corporate world, the knowledge of English plays a vital role in deciding one 's employability. As multi-cultural and multi linguistic people are working in multinational companies, English becomes the language of communication. Any information can be transferred anywhere in English swiftly without any translation. People with high ability to express in English can go across nations and can easily settle down. If not, language will become a barrier to them. Even salutations and courtesies in English are considered very much essential to remain employable in companies.

## II. EMPLOYABILITY

The ability to use the language effectively in all situations is called employability. As the world becomes global market, the large part of technical and professional communication is through the medium of English language. One should make himself/herself fluently expressive both in written and oral communication. It is not necessary for an employee to make grammatically correct sentences when he writes or speaks. He should know how to use the language to communicate, convince and negotiate. In the corporate, employees are expected to be more communicative and interactive. The ability to apply one 's capability, communicative skills and interpersonal skills is called employability skills.

## III. DEVELOPING EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

What is employability? How to develop employability skills? —It is the ability to remain employable as a result of the relevant skills one possesses (Jyothi:2012). The so-called relevant skills should be acquired by the employees when they are students. In Universities and colleges, English classes can provide an environment to the students in gaining their employability skills. The underlying motivation behind every University in having English as a paper 'in the syllabus is that the students should be practiced to listen, speak, read and write the language in the classroom under the supervision of an English teacher. The English teacher will be facilitator and guide in providing pre-placement training to students in developing their career. The student will be given proper training in gaining the knowledge of English. Now the fact is that 75 percent of the population are literate and we have large number of English-speaking people. In this scenario, the ability to express fluently in both written as well as oral form of language is very much essential for career growth. The employability skills which include communication skills and soft skills are very much sought after in the corporate world.

## IV. DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Nowadays students with good academic records got rejected by employers at the time of interview, because they fail to master communication skills. They are able to articulate words but they fail in communication skills. Keith Davis says: —Communication is the transfer of information and understanding from one person to another person. It is a way of reaching others with facts, ideas, thoughts and values (Rizvi:2007). Communication takes place in two ways; verbal and non-verbal. Verbal communication constitutes oral and written form and non-verbal is gestures and body language. According

to Rizvi, —The communication process has five steps: ideation, encoding, transmission, decoding and feedback (2007:5). It is a dynamic interactive process where the sender converts some idea (ideation). The sender converts the idea into words or gestures (encoding). The message travels over channel (transmission). The receiver decodes the message (decoding) and responds (feedback).

The communication will take place in different forms, depending upon the sender-receiver relationship and communicative situation. Interpersonal face to face communication includes conversations, interactions and interviews. Group communication may be meetings, conferences, group discussions and panel discussions. Speaker-audience communication means speeches, debates, seminars, workshops and oral presentations. Telephonic communication involves personal interactions, business deals, and telephonic interviews. Written communication includes writing letters, reports, proposals, memos and e-mails.

#### V. ELIMINATE HESITATION IN SPEAKING BY CREATING INTEREST

The students should be motivated and created interest to converse in English. They should be made aware that they are in highly competitive environment where they should be able to analyze, organize and present essential details effectively. Practice should be given to students to initiate their ability to analyze, organize and present the targeted information effectively which is possible in all English-speaking classes. For instance, students may be asked to narrate a story or incident. When he/she tells the story, he/she will try to keep it composed, organized, and perfect. Many sessions may be allotted for such tasks, games and activities to eliminate their hesitation to communicate in the beginning. Emphasis on Standard Pronunciation When the students are initiated with interest to speak in English, the teacher should take up his role in correcting their mistakes in pronunciation. At this time, practice should be given to improve their listening. The students can be made to sit and listen to famous speeches of great orators. They may be taught to listen to the audio for the sake of language enhancement in the beginning and later it will lead to

improve their comprehension skill. It is enough if the students are very much attentive and interested in English speaking classes. This practice will help them in comprehending their text books, lecture classes and even technical sessions. It will sharpen their skills and stayed exposed. Hence Knowledge of English will definitely provide them academic and practical excellence. Vocabulary Building

In the beginning, the students are not aware of how many words they know in English. They will be using many words when they speak and write. They can understand or assume the meaning of certain words from the contexts when they read and hear. Vocabulary acquisition is possible in every English class room where contexts may be given to students and they may be asked to use proper words to fix in the contexts. Brown (2010) rightly said, —Proper learning takes place when learners are able to rightly decide the precise meaning of the word based on the context of its use. The students may be given exercises like conversations and explanations to build their vocabulary. Devika (2011) points out, —when students converse, they simultaneously indulge in the use of both the skills – listening and speaking, Conversation will make the students active both in listening and reading that —helps them speak, explain, support, question and agree to others in the group (Devika (2011)). Therefore, vocabulary acquisition will become accurate and long lasting. Depending upon the student's standard, the teacher can take up any strategy which will be applicable to the classroom.

#### VI. COMPREHENSION

Comprehension is based on the students 'prior knowledge with which he/she understands the text or speech. To develop skills that will help the students to comprehend texts, lot of reading exercises should be given to them. They should be able to recognize and understand the meanings of words given in the contexts. They should use their prior knowledge as an aid to read the text. Rizvi says: —Quick, efficient, and imaginative reading techniques are essential in order to achieve academic success, because academic performance depends on the quantity and quality of reading (2007). Reading makes the man perfect. The habit of reading should be inculcated in students and

further sessions may be allotted for more discussions and criticisms. Listening begins with physical hearing and taking notes of it which the students usually do it in the classroom. If the students are asked to interpret whatever he listens, he may not be. But continuous chances should be given to them to listen actively and react. Then the students will come up with different interpretations. He can recognize pauses, stress and intonations. Thus, the practice makes them perfect in course of time.

#### VII. PRESENTATION SKILLS

Basically, the students admitted in professional colleges will be interested in proving their technical knowledge, experience and ability in the first year itself. But they do not know how to expose or express their knowledge and ability. They may be good at doing projects and have subject competence. But they should present it in such a way that it needs to be appreciated by experts. Rizvi points out, —In order to be an effective technical communicator, one needs to understand the process of technical communication (2007). It is a transmission of scientific and technical information which requires not only subject competence, but also linguistic competence and organizational competence. The students with subject competence should be motivated to have linguistic and organizational ability. They should be taught; how to analyze facts or information for clear presentation; how to use appropriate rhetorical devices to present scientific data; how to use graphical representations systematically; and how to organize information in a logical and structural way. This practice will provide them the ability to plan and execute their work in an effective manner which is one of the employability skills.

#### VIII. GROUP DISCUSSION

English is not getting you a job. But using the knowledge of English as a tool, a person can prospect more than an equally qualified person, depending upon their proficiency in English. In corporate sector, Group Discussion is used as a technique for assessing student-candidate 's personality for job selection. The selection committee will closely evaluate the candidate 's skills reflected during Group Discussion

and those who reflect their communicative skill, self-confidence and leadership qualities can be successful. Rizvi quotes, —Participants should know how to persuade the group members, how to reflect confidence while speaking, how to reflect leadership qualities, and how to make the group achieve its goals (1997:167). They should take initiatives, present their personal opinions confidently, develop their ideas logically, listen and respond to views by other members and should emerge as the natural leader of the group.

To bring up the above qualities in the students, they should be divided into groups and group activities may be conducted in classrooms. Every student can be allotted with roles and they should be encouraged and motivated to take it up challenging. They winning teams may be rewarded with prizes. Now the teacher is the facilitator to provide the students the qualities which involve assertiveness, self-confidence, objectivity, patience, persuasiveness, motivation and team spirit that are needed for possessing employability.

#### IX. WRITING LETTERS, REPORTS AND PROPOSALS

Obviously, education provides the means for the students to develop their employability skills and make them aware of these skills. They are capable of putting into practice their educational experience, technical knowledge, job searching experience, work experience, interviews and training programs. This large learning process provides them a climate to enhance their capability and employability. In business, everything is communicated through letters. The significance of writing letters is that the letters are considered as formal correspondence which will be documented for future references. So official written communications are to be preserved and documented. It is one the most important employability skills that the students should know how to draft formal and business letters. They can become a successful businessman if he knows how to get his work done through formal correspondence. He can show his mastery over things through his letters. Employers recruit people who can write formal communications in the form of instructions, recommendations, letters, reports, proposals, memos,

notices and other official documents. The mastery over these writing skills will help the person to conduct his/her responsibility successfully in their career.

#### X. RESUME WRITING

Employability has been defined as, ‘technical academic skills’, ‘process skills’ and ‘personal abilities’. One should exhibit these skills in a written format (resume), if he/she is likely to gain employability. Resume carries out one’s personality, employment goals and career aspirations which should be appealing to the employer. A resume should be prepared meticulously planned and cater to the needs of the employer. Rizvi says, —The success of employment search largely depends on a candidate’s ability to design a persuasive resume (2007:391). It is basically a professional employment seeking document that presents a summary of the candidate’s education, professional training, experience, skills, abilities, achievements and references. It introduces the candidate’s potential to the employers. So, the resume should be designed with a focus on readability and adaptation to the employers’ expectations. The design of the resume may vary from individual to individual depending upon the chosen profession.

#### XI. ETHICS AND ETIQUETTES

Ethics is a system of moral principles. It deals with values related to human conduct, with respect to the rightness and wrongness of certain actions and to the goodness and badness of the motives and ends of such actions. Etiquette is the customs or rules governing behavior regarded as correct or acceptable in social or official life. It is a conventional but unwritten code of practice followed by members of any of certain professions or groups.

The students should know professional ethics and behave gently to keep themselves dignified in their profession. The language English cannot be taught to the students excluding its customs and culture. The English classes teach them dress code, behavioral code, conduct, and punctuality. The student who speaks English for business knows very well the

ethics and etiquettes which are required employability skills.

#### XII. INTERVIEW SKILLS

One of the important deficiencies found in students nowadays is lack of interview skills. They fail to answer the questions asked by the employers at the time of interview. They have good academic records and excellent technical knowledge. But unfortunately, they are poor in communication skills. They fail to answer and fear what will happen if anything goes wrong. They will lose words and confidence. Such students should be identified and given orientation training on interview skills. Smartness should be exhibited at the time of interview. But students who excelled in communication skills will be very confident, bold and smart.

#### XIII. CONCLUSION

The ability to manage any situation or to face any consequences whether technical or official, the knowledge of English, the tasks, activities and exercises given to them in all English-speaking classes will facilitate the students a working practical experience which provides them positive attitude, interpersonal skills, willingness to learn, critical thinking skills, personal integrity, verbal and nonverbal communication skills, leadership skills and personal integrity. The teacher is not a teacher but a facilitator in developing all these skills in students when they are students. As an English teacher, one can adopt any strategy to motivate the students to acquire skills required for employability.

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