MAKING ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING A PLEASANT AND EXCITING EXPERIENCE FOR TECHNICAL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The technical students with true aptitude are endowed with remarkable intelligence and sharp insight. Others who enter into this field by other circumstances too develop the same in the course of time. Ultimately it leads to the fact that they grow and mould themselves to be highly sustainable and skilful individuals who can run our country into progress in this technical world. But the fact remains that these upcoming technical scholars falter in communicating in English. The amount of harm this disadvantage causes can be recognized only when one realizes the significance of English language in this era of globalization. English language which has acquired the status of international and universal language has proved itself as the tool of power and influence. It is an acknowledged fact that a person with excellent proficiency in English stand different from the rest as the highly promising candidate. Such a person is welcomed anywhere in the world and also will be proved successful. As we all know India is a land of natural resources as well as manpower resources. Indian manpower is well appreciated globally; but as mentioned above the only disadvantage of Indian professionals is their deficiency in English communication. In order to get global recognition Indian professionals or rather Indian technicians should develop an excellent communication skill. Indian technicians and engineers are the top personals of the USA, the super power country.

The exuberance in the immigration of MNCs is a special feature of the present India. But these MNCs are also in the look out of professionals with excellent communication skill in English to satisfy the global requirement. A combination of excellent professional and communication skills is the need of the hour for the Indians. It is a well known fact that Indian technical skill is in high demand all over the world. Hence, the area that needs to be focused is the communication competence of these technical scholars. It won't be wise to advise a technical expert to spend his valuable time to develop his communication skill in English. So the practical means is to make avail of the curriculum of the professional courses. Though many students and faculty members consider that there is no need to waste time on learning English, the irony is that most of the technical institutions are looking for innovative ways to make their scholars competent in English communication. For this they resort to

Language lab, soft skill training programmes and compulsory communication Skill syllabus in the curriculum. Now-a-days ambitious students look forward to admission in institutions where they can grow into competent communicators as well as professional experts. So it has become mandatory for Faculty members of English to make the teaching and learning of English as a pleasant experience for the technical students in order to make them competent in English communication.

The negative factors already existing in the teaching of English for technical students

1. Indifference and disregard of the science students towards English: It is a general attitude of the students who opt for professional courses to develop an indifference towards English subject since their focus is on the core subjects which enable them to excel in their professional score.

2. General belief among the students that English subject has no importance after school education. This makes them look at English subject with a kind of aversion which in turn mars the interest of the faculty members also.

3. Inherent fear and apprehension towards English subject: It is unexplainable why a student is generally so much afraid of English subject. More than the English lessons, the English grammar is a nightmare to a major number of students. This fear accompanies them till they come to an end of their studies.

4. The lack of required seriousness towards English Subject by the institutions of professional education: Though the significance of English is well known to all, the attitude of the management and the faculty towards the teaching facilities of this subject is acting as a catalyst to the student indifference to the subject. While the practicals, VIVA, Guest lectures, inter-collegiate activities and even the academic score have been given too much importance in other subjects, all these tools are given the least importance in English subject.

5. Incongruity between the faculty appointed and the subject: Usually the technical and professional institutions opt for Communication Skills for Professional/ Technical Course. This is a very apt choice but to handle this paper teachers from purely literature background are appointed. An expert in English literature and an expert in communication skills stand on two extremes in their approach. But an appreciable proportion of both the talents is the most welcoming criteria for a teacher of English for technical course.

Considering all the above mentioned factors one must see how to make teaching and learning of English in technical courses as a pleasurable activity. As long as the students feel drudgery in something, their innovative and creative mind will remain blocked. Hence it is the massive responsibility of the teachers, institutions and the curriculum designers to make every bit of effort and planning for the effective teaching of English in order to make it a useful and pleasurable experience for the students. Following are the areas suggested to be taken care of to develop an innovative and effective result in teaching of English for the technical students:

Suggestions for the effective teaching of English

1. **English syllabus for Technical Course:** As most of the Universities and institutions have opted, it should be "Communication Skills for Professionals/ Technical Students". The topics included should be purely meant for developing the proficiency in English communication both spoken and written. There is a wrong notion that without each and every bit of Grammar topics, the syllabus becomes incomplete. One must remember that a student comes for technical or professional course only after completing the 12th class successfully. They start learning English from their Kindergarten class. Almost 14 years they learn English, including literature, grammar and language. So let the syllabus for technical course be devoid of grammar topics. This doesn't mean that one can handle language efficiently without grammar. A thorough leaning of Grammar has already been done by the student. It is the responsibility of the teacher to brush up their knowledge of grammar through innovative ways instead of the stereotype classroom teaching. Let the syllabus be rich with activities that make a student proficient in speaking and writing English language with accuracy.

2. **Selection of Teachers:** The teachers selected for teaching English for technical students should be highly proficient in English communication. A very good exposure to the use of computer and browsing should be mandatory. Should be well aware of the current political, social, global, national and educational situations. A good proficiency in communication, a good knowledge of the subject and a good aptitude with creative and innovative views are the qualities essential for an English teacher of Technical students.

3. **Teaching Methodology:** As it has mentioned above, lets avoid the stereotype methodology of the teacher reading and explaining everything, and the students remaining as passive listeners. Lets respect them as adults and listen to their preferred

method of learning instead of imposing our methodology on them. Instead of teaching, lets implement interactive sessions in the class room. Let the teacher introduce a topic of current importance and give a briefing. After that make each and every student express his or her own point of view on that topic. Each student should be called to the front of the class and should be asked to express his/ her point of view. Teacher can move on to GDs, Debating, JAM, Turn Coat, Extempore Speech, elocution, Role play, Dialogue making and Presentations. Let the topics be of interesting nature. Give preference to the students to suggest topics. Give them instant topics to discuss and write down notes in group and to present it to the class in groups. To give a sandwich effect, technical communication can be introduced. If it is announced 'letter writing' or 'Report Writing', the feeling of boredom will linger in the classroom. So introduce a situation, and ask the students about the communicating strategy and then to write it down. Never give one topic for the entire class. Divide them into small groups and assign different topics for each group. The teacher shouldn't be a strict disciplinarian instead should be a bit tolerant and appreciative towards the slight distractions or chatting of the students. The approach of the teacher is very significant in getting the work done effectively. Show interest in them, involve a bit in their chat and wisely lead them to the work assigned. Basically each and every student of this age likes to perform in front of the class and to get appreciated. So the teachers' role is highly significant here. While doing these writing and speaking exercises, their grammar part will automatically get strengthened. Sometimes a bit of guidance may be needed from the teacher.

4. **Use of Technology:** It is a world of technology we are living in, and the tools of technology are irresistible to the students irrespective of age and course. While the society blames the technology for distraction of their students and youngsters from their responsibilities, it is high time the educationists should start exploiting this computer mania of the students for their own betterment. Many institutions install language lab for effective communication. It is good. A creative teacher should use the computer and internet for the above mentioned class room activities. Since the students are so fond of working with the computer and browsing, make them prepare the topics in the class itself using the system. Write ups on literary people, literary works, current issues, book reviews, social or historical events, latest developments etc can be the topics to work upon. In between they may jump into face book or such other portals, but without getting angry, the teacher must bring them back to the work highlighting the time schedule. Each slot should be divided to introduction of the activity, gathering and organizing data and

presentation. Each of these sessions should be strictly followed to the time slot. It would be good to have consecutive 2 or 3 periods for English on a day. One group of 25 students is the ideal number for Lab class. The individual guidance, attention and work done can be given a better performance in the theory class.

5. **Evaluation strategy:** Reward is a guaranteed expectation for any individual who has put in an effort. A teacher who is generous and alert about appreciating good effort will be always looked up by any student. A teacher must follow positive reinforcement method. Never should a teacher criticize a student negatively in front of the class. Any gesture that hurts the self respect will never be tolerated by an individual. Nobody in the world wants to perform badly in front of a group and to get a negative comment. If something goes wrong in the performance of a student that must be purely accidental or due to some genuine reason. So the teacher should try to highlight whatever positive things there were. Then discuss the negatives in person in privacy with true concern. Let the score in each performance be announced in the same class. An accurate recording of the score of the students in every performance and its transparency to students will make the students more interested in the subject, in the teacher and in the performance also.

Conclusion

Once when a teacher succeeds in bringing the students to this mood of interest towards the subject, the aim of teaching and learning English becomes an interesting and pleasurable activity. By the time they complete one year of their professional course, there would be tremendous improvement in the confidence level, personality, knowledge and communication competency. Such a community of the upcoming professionals would be the true leaders who uphold the glory of our motherland in the Universe as the ideal country.

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