Research Paper   **English Communication Skills**

Role of English Language Teaching to progress Placements in Engineering colleges at Mumbai

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ABSTRACT

Placements play a vital role in the future career of students. The colleges are known for placements rather than the academic performances. The parents as well as the students aspire to take admission to renowned college and the reason behind this is not about the quality of education but for the placements provided by the college. A college is known by the placements offered to its students.

Mumbai- the city of dreams: attracts aspiring candidates planning to become engineers in the hope of getting better placement. Due to Central Admission Process(CAP) round ; students from Mumbai, suburban and rural area get admission to the colleges listed. Very few lucky candidates make up for the college chosen. While maximum candidates are left with no options other than joining the college provided by the Central Admission Process. As a result, the crowd in the engineering colleges in Mumbai is a mixed one with urban and rural candidates. Also, many candidates are from the remote places of Maharashtra.

The colleges cater students with good technical skills in their core field. Less or no importance is given on the individual's knowledge of English Language. Though these students are efficient and skilful engineers in the future, but they lack the soft skills of speaking English; which is required to face the outside world and the human resource people of that particular Industry visiting the campus.

This paper discusses about the role of English Language Teaching in achieving their goals to offer good job opportunities to the students in college.

KEYWORDS | English Language, Placements, Opportunities

Background

Mumbai - the city of dreams: attracts aspiring candidates planning to become engineers in the hope of getting better placement. Due to Central Admission Process(CAP) round ; students from Mumbai, suburban and rural area get admission to the colleges listed. Very few lucky candidates make up for the college chosen. While maximum candidates are left with no options other than joining the college provided by the CAP. As a result, the crowd in the engineering colleges in Mumbai is a mixed one with urban and rural candidates. Also, many candidates are from the remote places of Maharashtra.

Problem related to Students

The students joining Engineering colleges in Mumbai face many problems. Firstly, the new environment that they face. Secondly, taking time to adapt to the new urban life that they are experiencing. Thirdly, their fear of communicating in English fluently. Fourthly, Losing confidence to see the urban crowd and feeling inferior physiologically.

While the college academically caters students with good technical skills in their core field. Less or no importance is given on the individual's knowledge of English Language right from the beginning. Though these students are efficient and skilful engineers in the future, but they lack the soft skills of speaking English; which is required to face the outside world and the human resource people of that particular Industry visiting the campus or off campus.

Being a technical college, it pays more attention towards the technical skills aspects than English usage. Colleges produces engineers but they lack proper knowledge of good English. Burdened with more than 48 subjects in 4 years of Engineering, the student hardly spares time for his English language improvement for his future development. Though Mumbai

University has implemented English Language Teaching i.e Communication Skills as one of the theory subject in first year engineering, it has some drawbacks. Students study this subject for the sake of passing the exam only. The student hardly remembers the lessons taught in first year for the coming years because of being theoretical in nature.

Problem related to Colleges

Now a days, the colleges are becoming popular for the type of placements it provides to the students. The colleges appoints placement officer to look for placing the students in good companies. But the resultant is that the students are not able to get through the screening process of Interview. After getting negative feedback about the students and their performance in the campus interview, most of the colleges hire English Language trainers for preparing the only for interviews. The trainer is hired for few sessions like a week or so.

This roughly prepares the student to face interview. As placement process has different screening tests like Aptitude test, Group discussion, technical round, personal interview etc. Many are unsuccessful in cracking Aptitude test which comprises of technical as well as English test based on grammar and vocabulary. For any competitive exams, practice is a must. The colleges are not able to provide ample of practices which should begin right in the first year of engineering due to the over burdened syllabus.

UGC and AICTE audits the Engineering colleges for English Lab which can help students to acquire the knowledge of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills through special Software prepared for English language learning. Unfortunately, the syllabus does not mention any practical hours to be given to English Lab. It just specifies the practical for public speaking and extempore.

In third year of Engineering too, Mumbai University has introduced English Language Teaching in form of Business communication and etiquettes. It caters with group discussion and Interview techniques. Again, here the syllabus does not tell anything about the practical hours about English Language Lab. The resultant is that the software is installed for mere audit purposes. It is well agreed that Technical colleges have more load than senior colleges with more number of subjects to cover. But the University experts should consider the great concern of the students who remain unpolished due to English speaking skills in the industries later.

Problem related to Industries
Mr. A D Shahane, Vice President, Corporate Training – Technical, Larsen & Toubro, Mumbai put emphasis saying, Engineers play an important role in nation building by contributing to the organization. With changing industrial scenario, organizations now need fresh graduates not only good technical skills but also with good English language. They become job ready much faster and with minimum support. They also achieve higher levels of success as entrepreneurs. As English Language Teaching was not covered in colleges, bigger organizations who had infrastructure and facilities used to put their fresher's through training, while others who could not do so, suffered.

Many organizations plan to collaborate with other countries for projects. They need to meet the client and present the organization. It becomes very difficult for an individual to express himself with mere technical knowledge. If he is not able to put up well with the English language skills, clients won't feel enthusiastic to join and work in collaboration. Hence, many organizations are losing the client and revenue which India would have got otherwise. The Indian engineer is not able to present their products and services properly to its clients.

Aspiring Minds, a leading employability credentialing firm has revealed that only 18.43% of all engineering graduates are eligible for a software engineer's job in India. And the worst part is that such incompetency has nothing to do with their engineering skills: it's their proficiency in English language & soft skills which makes them lose out on opportunities.

As per their study, 97% of Indian engineers cannot speak English, which is one of the mandatory requirements for working in any software or IT firm. In fact, 67% of all engineers do not possess any English language skills (reading, speaking, comprehension), which are required for a high-end job in business consulting, software, IT and other knowledge economy jobs.

Analysing the shocking results, Aspiring Minds CEO & Co-founder Himanshu Aggarwal said, "The low employability among engineering graduates is a cumulative outcome of poor education standards and higher demand of skilled employees thereby creating a drastic skill gap in the country."

UB Desai, director of IIT Hyderabad said, "Over the years, the focus in the education system has shifted to chemistry, maths and physics. Focus on soft skills has reduced. Students may lose out on good job prospects as many companies come to campuses for global positions."

Solution
Mumbai University should prepare such syllabus of English Language Teaching for Engineering colleges that will benefit student's for life time. It should seriously work on the load distribution of English Language Laboratory so that lakhs of amount invested for the betterment of the students can be utilised at the best. Keeping in mind the mixed crowd of the college, the University should work on practical implementation of English Language Teach-

ing. Practicals for English Learning should be like usage of English language for day to day life, common errors while speaking. Face to face communication exercises should be planned for the improvement of students especially for vernacular medium and people coming from rural and remote part of Maharashtra. The colleges along with the training placement officer should work on the mass problem of students of making them confident right from the beginning of the semester because English is more of speaking than learning. Also, University can implement English Language Teaching in every semester for atleast two hours practicals for each branch in Engineering. This will help the graduates to gain more scope for employment in future.

Conclusion
The colleges can expect progress in better placement rate in the coming future, if it implements English Language Teaching for engineering students in every semester. This will make them more confident and fluent in speaking English. The students will also get opportunity to join branded industries as they would be imbibed by technical and English language learning skills which is the need of the hour.

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