# APPLICATION OF SOFT SKILLS TO DEVELOP EMPLOYABILITY AMONG ENGINEERING STUDENTS THROUGH ANDHRA PRADESH HIGHER EDUCATION ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILLS PROJECT (APHEECSP) - A RESEARCH REVIEW

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***Abstract:-*** Soft skills are essential for professionals to achieve the successful work place. This study examined how soft skills become gate wayfor employability and scaling their skills for professional improvement. This study adopted 220 engineering graduates with different engineering divisions of Rajeev Gandhi Memorial College of Engineering &Technology (autonomous)Nandyal.The data was collected based on questioner, the findings revealed that, the students have insufficient skills to gain employability. This study mainly focused and noticed that, the Government of AP implemented the Communication Skills Project in collaboration of British Council. The project consist the fifteen mentors during the train the trainer and students, and finally APTIS test for students based on CEFR levels. This effect mainly focused the employability skills. This study discussed how modules and handouts helped the learners to improve skills. These papers mainly focused and explain the Digital skills and Teambuilding skills through the project.

***Key words:*** **Soft Skills, Communication Skills Project, APTIS, CERFlevels.**

Introduction:

The Higher Education Department of India currently working to develop the skills to increasethe employability among graduates.The engineering education creates enormous job opportunities all over the world.According to India Skills Report 2017, India is generating 5, 10,000+ students from 29 states in engineering discipline. Today the emerging technology has been adopted by technical students, but most lack the communication and soft skills to grab the current job. The inefficiency of soft skills noted in the present survey among engineering graduates and it leads to unemployability.

The concept of engineering employability is not only levitating in India but also figured out in developed and developing countries like USA, UK, Malaysia and China. Therefore, engineering graduates need to equip more competitive skills to face the job market. In this study, we practical implemented the Communication Skills Project to III Year B.Techstudents for the academic year 2017-18. The Government of Andhra Pradesh implemented this project with collaboration of British Council.

The Andhra Pradesh Higher Education English Communication Skills Project (APHEECSP) has trained the Master Trainers in the Train the Trainer program for the twenty days and the Master Trainers trained the teachers of selected engineering colleges for two weeks. The project consistsof A1, A2, B1, B2 Levels of LEARN ENGLISH SELECT FACE-TO-FACE COURSEwith TEACHER'S BOOK and STUDENT'S BOOKLET.The trainer follows theTEACHER'S BOOK and student follows STUDENT'S BOOKLET.

The students and teachers books were designed by British Council.The course comprises 100 x 45-minute sessions aligned to the modules within Learn English Select. Some modules complement online sessions with a specific focus on soft skills and employability skills. Students requireat least sixty classes to appear for APTIS exam. The exam was conduct through online, for this every student must register with email ID in the beginning of the project. The course book contains 20Modules,each Module consists of five lessons, every lesson is related to working handout, and the handout generates ideas to complete the lessons sheets.  Every Module lesson contains introduction, key learning points, useful language, reflection (question related to lesson), and online resources. The handout helps the student with information, discussion, related tables, images, models and references. The trainer moves the teachers Teacher's book. These modules and handout help the students and trainer in the practical. Around 850 III B. Tech students have been registered for this course.

The Main Objects and Learning Outcomes of the Course:
Course Objectives
➢ To contextualize and deepen students' understanding of the key language learnt in the Learn English Select Intermediate course

➢ To practice this language in meaningful situations
➢ To raise awareness of and to develop key employability and soft skills

Learning Outcomes

➢ Speak English confidently within a workplace and employability setting
➢ Develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of key employability skills
➢ Talk confidently about their personal and professional skills and experience
➢ Leverage different routes into work (networking, social media, responding to job adverts etc.)
➢ Write and finalize a cv
➢ Prepare effectively for a job interview
➢ Understand performance reviews and their role at work
➢ Strength their team working and leadership skills

What is Learn English Select (LES)?

The British Councilwas developed this online course that help a job seeker and employees to hence their workplace English and communication skills. It provides high quality online learning exchanges with the experts of English.

It consist of six interactive self – access courses charted level from A1.1 to B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).Each level consists of 8 modules with 5 units, for a total of 40 self-study lessons. Study is self-paced and time taken to complete each level will vary according to the individual learner.

| Level name | CEFR level | Hours of content |
|---|---|---|
| Beginner | A1.1 | 45 |
| Elementary | A1.2 | 45 |
| Pre-intermediate 1 | A2.1 | 45 |
| Pre-intermediate 2 | A2.2 | 45 |
| Intermediate | B1 | 55 |
| Upper-intermediate | B2 | 55 |

(Source: https://www.britishcouncil.ma)

The methodologyof LES is theory and practical based, it is designedto develop structure of the language, vocabulary and pronunciation as well as communication skills.

Practical Methodology of Skillsin APHEECSP:

The different methods have been used in this level to reach the employability in future. The B1 level mainly explore the employability skills, soft skills, digital skills, machine operating skills, emotional intelligence, CV writing, report writing, preparing for an interview, negotiations, product descriptions, presentations and meetings.This paper mainly focused and explains the Digital skills and Teambuilding skills through this course.

*Digital Skills:*

One of the key skills of this project is Digital Skills, these skills are essential for all engineering students. These skills can strength the electronic communication and tool that make the individual to equip for the latest work place communication, and increase the efficiency in the organization. The present Digitalized world needs a smart student for accessing the digital work place.
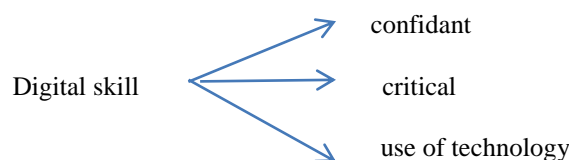
Advanced Digital skills:

- Emails
- Data Design
- Digital(Skype) Recruitment
- Data visualization / information transfer
- Presentations
- Web Development / Blogs
- Professional chats
- Virtual communication
- Social Media

These digital skills are connected to the four main interconnected areas of Authority Education, Job Training, Government, and Public Awareness and Community Programs. The application of digital skills is completely a practical approachthe learner'sshould expertise in all advance digital skills to fulfill work place requirements.These skills always take modifications and learners should all ways update digital skills. The application of this skill is based on student digital knowledge. The class room practical methodology for this skill by the trainer to students by assigningcomputer related work (LRSW skills), mobile accessing,E-mail writing, video marketing, presenting PPTs and social media language analysis.Thewriting and reading skills are the most essential to send the E-mails.

Through the modules semantics, grammar,sentence construction and punctuations may learn by the students while practicing the digital literary skills.The digital class room and communication skills lab isalso mandatory to practice all writing, listening, reading and speaking exercises. The digital skill shows the major comparison between advanced and developing countries with self-employability.

Digital Skill Competence:

Digital skill → confidant
→ critical
→ use of technology

*Teambuilding skills:*

Teambuilding is the key skill in the project because, to construct the rapport between the students to involvesand take action. According to the project resources https://goo.gl/T6Pgnh, the Human Knot Game may develop the rapport and confident between students. The activity required the ten to twenty students with three groups. It will take 10 to 20 minutes to build and to form the human knot.

This activity enhances mathematical, reasoning, problem solving, self-thinking, individual role and human interaction skills among the students.

A practical teambuilding approach in classroom



Figure 1: Holding Hands with Each other



Figure 2: Trying to resolve the knot



Figure 3: Bending, twisting, moving and untangling the knot



Figure 4: Completion of human knot

The activity of human knot is the best exercise to cultivate the students to understand team skills and strengthen the team to fetch the good result.Introducing this project to the technical students in A.P is the challenging prospect for British Council, conducting and implementing this project in Engineering Colleges is herculean task for trainer.

Conclusion: According to the Skill India Report 2017, Indian students have sound hard skills but the soft skills gap is not enough to expose to international work place. This project suggests the both rural and urban students to learn the employability skills in a practical approach. This paper recommends that, the activities of the project may inculcate in engineering curriculum.

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