

ENGLISH IN PLACEMENT PROCESS FOR ENGINEERING STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT-The paper is an insight on employability skills and role of English in it. The paper advocates on how important is to have a separate training department apart from engineering English to train students exclusively for campus placements. The paper is an attempt to discuss the issues in preparation for campus placements and how to cope with it. The paper discusses on how an engineering student has to be competent to get a job with good salary and how he has to prepare himself.

Key words:employability skills, communication skills, interview process, cross learning, negotiation skills, group discussions, career, competency, language proficiency.

Introduction

The role of English in business world is well-known and to handle international business deals English language skills play a vital role (M. Pandey & P. Pandey, 2014). English and engineering studies go hand in hand, both are interrelated and interdependent. English complements the technical knowledge an engineer possesses. Communication skills helps engineers to succeed in career and flourish in their job. English is unabated and absolutely necessary for a person to grow and establish in global job market. Good communication skills accentuate and boosts the level of confidence in people and helps them to establish themselves in their career. Engineering curriculum helps aspiring engineers to understand this better.

Engineering studies

Engineering is the second most favourite subject in India, with 8 lakhs engineers passing out of colleges every year. There is a saying that engineers run the world, as they are the inventors and executors of new technologies in the market. Engineers and engineering studies are considered to be most lucrative field. Students who study engineering are mostly very passionate about their field of study and when they implement their knowledge in their work it makes their job interesting. During the period of study in the college, engineering curriculum tries to blend English in the syllabus. Engineering students are consistently learning English either as a classroom study in the form of engineering English or in the form of lab in communication skills lab. Understanding the importance of English, Anna University in Tamilnadu has introduced a curriculum where English is given in one or other form to engineering students in every year. English language and engineering studies go hand in hand as it is important for an engineer to rely on English to communicate the knowledge he possess. Flawless communication gains an edge over others for engineering students to grab attention and constantly maintain it and make people listen to him. In order to rule the world its important for an engineer to communicate better. Communication is the most powerful weapon one possesses to use effectively, and engineers need it the most, that's the reason why engineering studies makes English the most integral part of learning. Engineering English is capsulated with keeping LSRW pattern in mind, and the communication skills lab as well is established along with LSRW, incorporates the requirements needed in placement process like group discussion, mock interview, etc.

Job market and fresher's opportunities

There are many surveys which represent the wide gap between unemployment problem in the country and the under employed companies. Many companies and HR people always complain that they are not able to get the right kind of resource suiting their requirement. On the other hand, many surveys and authorized bodies have confirmed that only 25 % of 8 lakhs engineers passing out every year, are suitable for employment. Job market is very volatile in the current economic scenario. Job market is all about disruption innovation and changes. The demand from the job market is huge and students aspiring to get jobs have to equip themselves. A fresh aspiring engineer is expected to possess clarity in his technical knowledge and the only way he would be able to assure others about his capabilities is through his communication skills. Globalization has provided engineers with ample job opportunities and has created venues to expand his horizon in international level. An aspirant engineering graduates need to learn skills pertaining to job interviews, presentations, group interaction, and telephone and teleconference communication. According to Riemer (2002), a global engineer must cross national and cultural borders and only English language skills can help the engineer to break those boundaries. English communication skills come handy in such opportunities. One has to be good not only in spoken English but in written as well, as all the internal communication inside an organisation happens only through mails on day to day bases. There are different kinds of opportunities a fresher candidate presented with in today's placement scenario, utilizing the opportunities depends on how much a fresher has tried to equip and prepare respectively. There are campus placements, vendors and consultants who hire, there are referral opportunities where already working employ refer others.

Placement process for freshers' recruitments

Every company has its own criteria for fresher's recruitments which is framed according to the requirement of the company. The base criteria for these placement process for all the companies are same. Even before a student sits for a campus process one has to prepare resume to face the campus. Resume preparation is an art in itself. A resume speaks volumes about a candidate and candidate's calibre. A person with strong written communication skill can create a resume which would speak for the candidate

before the candidate speaks. The resume writing demands high skills from the candidates which a candidate has to nurture in self through communication skills. The campus selection process comprises of online test, which consists verbal as part of the question paper, which is grammar basically. The second round is predominantly group discussion, where a candidate's communication skills, coherence in speaking and spontaneity is checked, which deals with spoken English. The third stage of the process is technical interview, where a student with the use of communication skill have to convey the interviewer about his technical skills and convince him to see the technical expertise and the job relevance he would be hired for. Sometimes the companies also would like to assess the written communication skills and in this regard, students are asked to write an essay or email as a paper pen test. The last stage of the process is HR interview, where again a student is analysed and tested for the soft skills, negotiation skills and communication skills. Students in each stage have to use English language with a command in it to flourish in these interviews. Each stage of the interview expects students to be proficient in all the four elements LSRW, of the English communication skills. Along with it students have to be proficient in grammar as well. Few companies have sectional cut off in these test and verbal section carries more weightage than nonverbal section. Group discussion in the campus process is considered to be rejection process as it helps in mass elimination of candidates in interview process. One needs to possess good command over language along with negotiation skills to win over in the group discussions. Engineering students have to accept the changes in the job market and prepare themselves according to the expectations from the companies from a fresher and equip themselves.

Preparation needed for campus placement

It is merely impossible to prepare oneself for campus interview in overnight. Students have to start their preparation from the first year of college. It's a gradual and steady preparation which leads to success in the form of job offer from a reputed company and good salary to kick start career in a secure way. The preparation for campus placements starts from enhancing communication skills. It is important for an aspiring engineer to have a good command over language so that it could be used in various situations during placement process. Learning grammar is one mandatory factor for clearing verbal test in placement procedure. Reading and listening skills enhancement helps in writing comprehension questions. Spoken English communication is the key ingredient to clear campus placements for engineering students. Group discussion, technical interview and HR interview results for a candidate is completely decided by the communication skills and the ability to express it convincingly to win over the HR. Candidates aspiring to get into multi national companies and work with global work force, have to adapt to cross learnings which is made easy and comfortable if one has strong communication skills.

Lacuna in preparation for campus placements

Students need an intense preparation with the focussed mind when getting ready for facing campus interviews. Most of the times students fail to understand that there is a difference between preparation for their academic exams and campus placements tests and interviews. Following are few major reasons for the lacuna in the preparation for the campus placements from students end :

1. No set syllabus exclusively for placement training.
2. Placement training are employability skills don't come under prescribed syllabus.
3. Lack of training departments in college .
4. Lack of exclusive staff members for placement training programmes
5. Lack of student comprehension preparation for placements
6. Focus on scoring cgpa's than learning skills.
7. English is treated as subject to score marks .

These are the few reasons behind the lacuna in the preparation which has to be given due attention by the English teachers, college management and curriculum makers.

Students have to lack the exposure in company's expectations from a freshers and methodologies follow the methodologies and preparing for campus placements

Bridging the Lacuna

It is important that students staff members and college administrators understands the importance of placement training .It is the need of the hour that engineering colleges go beyond syllabus and take measures to make their students industry ready. It is important that student should be briefed about the importance of placements and preparation for it. students have to be given insights on differences between the preparation for academic subjects and placements on the other hand colleges can train English staff members exclusively for placements and placements classes could be included in the curriculum. It is important that students and staff understand the blend of curriculum and placement preparation and non teach students only from scoring points.It is important for an English staff member to explore the different subsets of ELT which has to be used in training students for campus placements.

CONCLUSION

Career and are the main aim why a student takes up engineering course, it is the responsibility of teacher and management to give a clear picture on the campus preparation , expectations from the companies and to make them industry ready .A student also have to go beyond curriculum and classrooms to equip himself and instill skills beyond curriculum to become industry ready

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