

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING MATERIALS TO MAKE GRADUATES OF ENGINEERING EMPLOYABLE

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Abstract:

Syllabus Design and Materials Development in English Language Teaching for Engineering students play a vital role to make them employable at the end of their Engineering education. During the past three decades, especially since the emergence of the New Generation industries with their demand for engineers with delivery-related skills and customer-service orientation, there has been a proliferation of engineering colleges in our country producing thousands and thousands of engineering graduates every year. However, a vast majority of these graduates are found to be unemployable. According a NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Services Companies) report, less than 20% of our graduates are employable and even fewer are industry-ready. Whenever an interface takes place between educational institutions and industries, the representatives of the latter never fail to make the point that the skills of our engineering graduates, especially communication skills, are by and large inadequate, and that even if they manage to get a job on account of their preparation for job interviews, most of them soon lose their jobs owing to their inability to cope with the job requirements. And hence, there is a need for change of syllabus of English Language for engineering courses.

INTRODUCTION

Professional courses such as B Tech and B E make such heavy demands on the students that only those who have very good academic skills can negotiate with the rigours of the task routinely assigned to them. Possessing good academic skills can help obtain an engineering degree, but this alone does not guarantee a successful career in today's world. Today's engineering graduates are also expected to be industry ready. To be industry-ready, a student has to have a good command over soft skills, which includes, among other things, good communication skills, leadership qualities, and the ability to work in a team. In today's globalised workplace, good communication skills often translate into effective communication through English.

The task of helping the students acquire the academic and the soft skills is invariably assigned to the English faculty in colleges engineering. Hence, the English curriculum in the engineering and technology programmes is expected to be shaped by the role assigned to the English faculty in technological universities. In the absence of a course in English that helps the target group acquire key language and communication skills in the domain of engineering. And gives them adequate, focused practice in every communication in English to carry out a number of functions ranging from rapport-

building to getting things done, the engineering graduate will end up as yet another instance of the Indian university's failure to prepare its students for work and life. Often, the English department has to take the blame for this unhappy situation, where the knowledgeable young graduates become unemployable due certain crucial gaps in their education.

For instance, "Innovate with English" the text book, prescribed for the students of Gudlavalleru Engineering College, equip teachers of English to deal with the challenging task assigned to them. The book aims at helping the teacher provide his/her students plenty of opportunities to acquire the four language skills, namely Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills. It uses a process- based approach to teaching the skills: students are familiarized with the different stages of reading, writing, listening and speaking through a careful selection and graduation of texts and tasks. For instance, the difficult skill of writing is simplified to a considerable extent in being broken down into each of the four language skills are highlighted through tips and tasks. Life skills such as social etiquette, rapport building, and positive aggression are reinforced in being made the contexts for skills development, and these alternate with domain- specific inputs.

Only those situations that the students are likely to find themselves in have been chosen in an effort to facilitate maximum learner participation in the activities. Wherever the students may not readily perceive the immediate relevance of the activities/tasks, attempts have been made to make the language inputs memorable through the use of humour. Common errors made by Indian learners of English have been used as the criteria to choose the items of functional grammar presented in the book.

The end-of-unit summaries that the students are required to prepare/fill in aim at two important pedagogic goals: reassuring the students that the task/activities have definite learning objectives, and suggesting that the students, as adults, should take charge of their own learning.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To equip the students with common employability skills (the skills required for gaining employment and performing successfully in different careers) which can enable them to perform communication tasks of increasing length and complexity.
2. To develop in them the interactional communication strategies and social graces which have the potential to add to the effectiveness of professional communication

COURSE OUTCOMES:

Upon successful completion of 'Professional Communication,' the students will be able to:

1. Speak with a reasonable degree of fluency and accuracy in professional communication situations (such as arriving at a consensus through discussion, making a presentation, and taking part in a telephone conversation);
2. listen to short audio and video clips in native English accent (British and American), and gain both understanding of messages and sensitivity to native- speaker accents;
3. read fluently, comprehending texts of different kinds using multiple strategies and higher-order skills;
4. produce written discourses of different kinds; and
5. guard against grammatical errors Indians typically make in their speech and writing in English

TESTING SCHEME**INTERNAL (40 marks)**

Average of two tests: 10 marks

Two mid-term tests: 30 marks (75% marks of the best scored mid-term test and 25% marks of the least scored mid-term test)

EXTERNAL (60 marks)**Functional English (LAB)****A. GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

a. Functional English (Lab) seeks to develop in the students the communication strategies and social graces necessary in order to function effectively in social and other situations in which they may be called upon to speak in English.

b. It seeks to develop in them a greater awareness of English pronunciation and improve their pronunciation skills through focused practice with the sounds of English and intonation patterns to enable them to speak in English with a reasonable degree of intelligibility; and

B. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

a. To develop in the students the confidence, communication skills, and fluency necessary to give short impromptu speeches in English and take part in conversations in various contexts in English b. To help them use communication strategies, including conventions of politeness and courtesy in speech, in conversations in different contexts. c. To help them recognize and practise the vowel and consonant sounds of English through teaching with visual aids in the communications laboratory and through practice in the language laboratory d. To help them learn phonemic symbols from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) for the limited purpose of being able to check the pronunciation of words in a dictionary. e. To help them use the principles of stress, rhythm and intonation in their speech f. To help them overcome to a great extent the regional peculiarities in their pronunciation in order to increase intelligibility g. To help them develop fluency in their oral reading (i.e. reading a text aloud smoothly and effortlessly with appropriate pauses, stress, and intonation)

C. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of Functional English (Lab), the students will be able to:

a. give short impromptu speeches with confidence and fluency b. take part in conversations in different functional contexts using English following appropriate communication strategies. c. use conventions of politeness and courtesy in speech and enhance the effectiveness of their communication in English d. articulate the sounds of English (vowels, consonants, and diphthongs) with accuracy e. check the pronunciation of words in a dictionary using their knowledge of phonemic symbols. f. pause at appropriate places in their speech in English, enhancing thereby the comprehensibility of their communication g. speak English with adequate attention to stress, rhythm, and intonation h. speak without their pronunciation being marred by regional peculiarities, achieving thereby greater intelligibility in their communication with non-Telugu speakers of English m. read out a text fluently with appropriate pauses, stress, and intonation.

Conclusion:

The above syllabus for both theory and laboratory and unconventional testing pattern will give an extra edge to the students of engineering in developing the necessary skills for employment.

References:

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