

Enhancing Employability Skills of Diploma Students with the Help of Innovative Curriculum of English

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Abstract:

Industries require talented and skilled technicians who can work with them under the terms and conditions provided by them and that too efficiently. However, they are not getting appropriate candidates in ample number, who can fulfill their criteria. On the other hand, a lot of technicians are roaming unemployed. Hence, educationists and academicians are required to brainstorm in designing innovative curriculum that can meet expectations of Industries, from students, as the curriculum plays a very vital role in the overall development of the students to make them employable. The present situation encouraged the researcher to trace out the affecting factors responsible for the gap between the abilities of the technicians at present to fit in the main stream and required eligibility and expectations of industries from the technicians. The present paper aims at recommending innovative syllabi of English in preparing future generation technicians with employability skills. The researcher has analyzed the curricula of diploma technical courses in Gujarat, which includes syllabi of English in Technical Education Board, Gandhinagar, Gujarat Technological University, Ahmedabad and C. U. Shah University, Surendranagar. The researcher will find out the gap in syllabi of diploma courses and suggest the effective curriculum, which will enhance the employability skills of the technicians.

(Key terms: Technicians, employability skills, innovative curriculum, overall development of the students,)

Introduction:

Industries require talented and skilled technicians who can work with them under the terms and conditions provided by them and that too efficiently. Communication skills and good English language are the basic and prime requirements for getting placed and even for

survival in a good industry. Employers expect the technicians to be hard working, stable, innovative, enthusiastic, confident, honest and sincere in work, positive in their attitude along with their good knowledge of their technical field. Molding of the mindsets and mentalities of the technicians becomes equally important along with enhancing their technical skills and knowledge. They expect the technicians to work continuously and constantly for required hours as per the situation and working conditions. In spite of a very huge lot of technicians passing out every year from various colleges and universities, employers are not getting appropriate candidates in ample number, who can fulfill their criterion. On the other hand, a lot of technicians are roaming unemployed. Hence, educationists and academicians are required to brainstorm in designing innovative curriculum that can meet expectations of Industries, from students, as the curriculum plays a very vital role in the overall development of the students to make them employable.

Problem Statement:

The problem statement of the present study is “Enhancing Employability Skills of Diploma Students with the Help of Innovative Curriculum of English”.

Definitions of Key Terms:

Enhancing: To develop somebody in specific field to get effective result.

Employability: An ability, which makes somebody, qualified for particular task or job.

Skill: An ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic, and sustained efforts to carryout complex activities smoothly and adaptively.

Innovative: Something additional in present system, pattern or idea.

Curriculum: A course of academics to nurture someone’s intellectuality in specific direction.

Objectives of Research:

- To contribute in present knowledge domain of education system.
- To find out the gaps in curriculum of English in selected universities of Gujarat.
- To recommend innovative curriculum of English for enhancing employability skills of diploma students.
- To provide the industry with appropriate human resources.

Literature Review:

The researcher has reviewed syllabi of B. Tech, B. Sc., Diploma Courses (T.E.B., G. T. U., C. U. S. U) for the present study. Apart from the said syllabi the researcher reviewed research works and literature on the present study which include the following:

The researcher has reviewed a chapter authored by Dr. Sara Lodge, University of St. Andrews. The primary focus was on the development of communication skills and certain

elements like students and faculty exchange programs in education have been incorporated to make the curriculum more effective. The researcher has taken in to consideration all the necessary elements incorporated and added certain new aspects useful for enhancing employability skills of the technicians. However, the researcher has not included any type of exchange programs in his study.

Dr. N. V. Krishna Mohan in his study entitled “*Enhancing the Employability Skills of Engineering Students through Effective use of English and Soft Skills*” focuses on effective elements to be incorporated in the curriculum such as analytical skills, problem solving skills, logical and coherence competence, higher order presentation skills and group discussion.

University of London, Career Groups introduced six weeks program named “*Enhance Your Career and Employability Skills*” wherein the focus is on how to make effective decisions about future career and how to take control of professional development by honing critical thinking and employability skills. The course was designed for students of all branches, regardless of discipline.

Reena and Rosalia Bonjour in their study of “*Teaching Communication Skills for Tamil Medium Engineering Students*” describe the development of teaching communication skills for engineering students.

Methodology:

The researcher has done an analytical and exploratory study of the syllabi of English prescribed in Diploma Technical Courses offered in Gujarat, which include syllabi of English in Technical Education Board, Gandhinagar, Gujarat Technological University, Ahmedabad and C. U. Shah University, Surendranagar. Analytical comparative study of the said syllabi would help the researcher find out the gap in syllabi of diploma courses wherein Gujarati is allowed as a medium of instruction accept for English and other subjects related to English which leave adverse effects on education in general and students’ employability skills in particular. The course contents of various semesters have been taken into consideration and analytical study has been undertaken by the researcher. The researcher will recommend and suggest the effective curriculum, which will enhance the employability skills of the technicians to fulfill the requirements and demands of the employers.

Discussion:

Before the establishment of Gujarat Technological University i.e. before 2008, all the diploma engineering colleges were affiliated to Technical Education Board, Gandhinagar. In the curriculum of Diploma Courses prescribed by Technical Education Board, there were two

subjects namely, Communication Skills and Human Resources Management where in English was taught.

Contents of the subjects are as follows:

Communication Skills (Credit- 4) Semester: 1

Sr. No.	Unit Title	Teaching Hours
1	Passages for comprehension	20
2	Short Stories	06
3	Grammar	10
4	Précis Writing and Comprehension of Unseen Passages	09
5	Conversation Practice	11
Total		56

The subject named Human Recourses Management (Credit 3 in Sem-3) included ‘Communication’ as a chapter (14 hours) that included Communication theory, Business correspondence, Official Letters writing, Resume, Meetings, and Group Discussion etc.

Contents of both the subjects were designed very carefully and accurately to improve the skills of the diploma students to make them employable. However, the time limit allotted for the completion of the syllabus was not enough, as most of the students were from the rural areas and rural background. Apart from the two subjects there were no other subjects where in students could learn English. Further, students were allowed to study their technical subjects in Gujarati Medium if they want to do so. The adverse effects of the above scenario were clearly visible on the employability skills of the students. There were no topics in the above syllabi for shaping the appropriate mindsets and mentality of the diploma students appropriate for industry and the competitive world.

After 2008 the Diploma colleges were affiliated to Gujarat Technological University, Ahmedabad. As per the curriculum of Diploma Courses prescribed by Gujarat Technological University, Ahmedabad, students were to be taught English in the first semester only. The syllabus of English included the following Units.

English: Semester 1, Credit 5

Sr No	Unit Title	Teaching Hours
1	Grammar	14
2	Comprehension Passages	7
3	Short Stories	7
4	Writing Skills i.e letter writing and dialogue writing	14
5	Speaking Skills i.e conversation Practice	28
Total		70

The syllabus of Contributor Personality Development included topics to mold the mindset and mentality of the technical students to make them employable. The syllabus included the following units:

Contributor Personality Development: Semester 2, Credit 4

Sr. No	Unit Title	Teaching Hours
1	Who is a Contributor	3
2	The Contributor's identity	3
3	Resume Building	4
4	The Contributor's vision of success	3
5	The Contributor's vision of career	3
6	The scope of contribution	3
7	Embarking on the journey to contributorship	3
8	Group Discussions (GDs)	4
9	Design Solutions	3
10	Focus on value	3
11	Engage deeply	3
12	Think in Enlightened Self-interest	3
13	Practise Imaginative Sympathy	3
14	Demonstrate Trust Behavior	3

15	Interview Skills	4
Total		48

Students were taught the above subjects in Sem 1 and Sem 6. Rest of the semesters had no other subjects where in students can learn English. Even in Gujarat Technological University, Diploma students were allowed to study their technical subjects in Gujarati. In the above syllabi the communication theories have been completely excluded.

As per the curriculum of C. U. Shah University, Surendranagar, Diploma Technical Students are to be taught English in the first and the second semesters only. Rest of the semesters had no subjects in the curriculum to improve their employability skills. Here also the communication theory, letter writing, Professional Etiquette etc. have been excluded. The syllabi of English in the first and the second semesters include the following Units.

English, Semester 1, Credit 3

Sr. No	Unit Title	Teaching Hours
1	Grammar	20
2	Writing Skills (Paragraph)	08
3	Reading (Short stories)	18
4	Speaking skills	14
Total		60

English, Semester 2, Credit 3

Sr. No	Unit Title	Teaching Hours
1	Grammar	20
2	Writing Skills (Essay, Notice)	08
3	Reading (Technical Passages)	18
4	Speaking skills	14
Total		60

Findings:

On the basis of the analysis of the above syllabi and researcher's practical experience of almost 9 years in the same institute with different syllabi and different students, researcher has found the effects of the above discussed scenario. The effects are of adverse type that put

hurdles on the way to enhance the skills of the diploma students. The findings of the study are as follows:

- 1) In all the three curricula, students get an opportunity to learn English and improve their employability skills for max. 2 semesters.
- 2) Number of hours allotted are not enough as most of the students come from Gujarati medium.
- 3) Students get chance to study their technical subjects in Gujarati and for almost 4 semesters they don't get exposure to English language classes.
- 4) Where ever Communication has been made a part of other subjects like Human Resources Management, the students neglect the chapter and try to exclude it from their studies.
- 5) Teachers of English cannot keep in touch with the students throughout their diploma course.
- 6) Students neglect English as a non-technical subject because it is not included in the syllabus of all the semesters.
- 7) After the first semester students come in contact with English language and Teachers of English in the final year. During the rest of the semesters students forget English and the task of Teachers teaching English becomes tough in the final semester.
- 8) In the final semesters students take more interest in projects and technical subjects so they remain passive in the subjects like Contributor personality Development.
- 9) The gap of almost four semesters becomes a hurdle in the process of enhancing employability skills of the students in all the above discussed curricula.
- 10) None of the above curricula are complete that include all the required topics to enhance employability skills.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

In all semesters of all the diploma courses (or at least in 4 semesters), English Language and other subjects related to Employability skills must be included to improve the quality of the future generation technicians and to enhance their employability skills to fit in the competitive industrial world.

Recommended syllabi are as follows:

Semester-1, (English).

Sr. No	Unit Title	Teaching Hours
1	Grammar	20

2	Writing Skills (Paragraph)	08
3	Reading (Short stories)	18
4	Speaking skills	14
Total		60

Semester- 2 , (English).

Sr. No	Unit Title	Teaching Hours
1	Grammar	20
2	Writing Skills (Essay, Notice)	08
3	Reading (Technical Passages)	18
4	Speaking skills	14
Total		60

Semester- 5. (Communication Skills)

Sr. No.	Unit Title	Teaching Hours
1.	Fundamental Concepts of communication	05
2.	Writing Skills	28
3.	Job Oriented Communication	25
Total		58

Semester-6 (Contributor Personality Development)

Sr. No	Unit Title	Teaching Hours
1	Who is a Contributor	3
2	The Contributor's identity	3
3	Resume Building	4
4	The Contributor's vision of success	3
5	The Contributor's vision of career	3
6	The scope of contribution	3
7	Embarking on the journey to contributorship	3

8	Group Discussions (GDs)	4
9	Design Solutions	3
10	Focus on value	3
11	Engage deeply	3
12	Think in Enlightened Self-interest	3
13	Practice Imaginative Sympathy	3
14	Demonstrate Trust Behavior	3
15	Interview Skills	4
Total		48

After studying the above subjects at least in four semesters in the diploma course, the students will be more employable. They will be able to fulfill the requirements and demands of the industry and present competitive world. Thus, they will be trained in the real sense of the term.

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