

RESEARCH ARTICLE

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN INDUSTRY AND ACADEMIA: THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS TRAINING FOR THE PROSPECTIVE ENGINEERS

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ABSTRACT

Engineering students are faced with testing and challenging recruitment process in which they have to demonstrate their technical expertise employing effective English communication skills. In addition to, being good at English, they need to be conscious of the employability skills necessary at their future workplaces. English has been a central part of the Indian curriculum for decades, and it plays a main role resulting in job placements in well-known organizations. The increase in the number of engineering graduates has caused serious turmoil in the job market and the employability of graduates has become the core part in educational and industrial segment. In the present age, the job market in India is quite demanding and challenging as the engineering graduates are expected to possess the requisite employable skills when they appear in job interviews.

Keywords: Recruitment process; employability skills; engineering graduates; job interviews.

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This paper is an attempt to emphasize the significant role of employability skills training for the prospective engineers. Employability skills are very crucial in the existing global employment scenario. Engineering graduates discernibly need to have definite skills to help them acquire and simultaneously to put into practice the knowledge proficiently at working place. Today's highly technical and sophisticated jobs demand a highly professional candidate who can increase productivity and thereby increase the value of an organization (Busse, 1992). The engineering institutions will play a very imperative role in improving the employability skills in their students by providing certain courses, seminars, workshops, and industrial visits.

Despite the fact that various universities attempt to inculcate soft skills in their students, they hardly ever realize that there exists a gap between the skills they try to inculcate in their

students, and the ones that the workplaces really expect from their employees.

With the persistent impact of the global economy, a change in approach has come about in the dominion of industries because of the swift transformation in the work-ambiance with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Among the group of skills that are needed for this changing scenario, personality and soft skills, play a key role in the professional growth of a person. Communication skills both verbal and nonverbal, problem solving skills, interpersonal skills, task-related skills, time management, decision-making skills, motivation, flexibility, adaptability, positive attitude, creative thinking, team-building skills, planning and organizing, self-management are some of the key soft skills that the organizations expect from their employees. There is broad consensus on the value in developing certain skills in business undergraduates as a means of

enhancing their employability profile. These employability skills are sometimes referred to as professional, core, generic, key and non-technical skills and are inherent to enhancing graduate work-readiness (Yorke & Knight, 2004).

The phenomenal advancement in new technologies must be capable of moulding the university students to meet the global challenges which they may have to face at their workplaces. In addition to imparting knowledge, universities should also make their students more conscientious, become confident; communicate effectively, cultivate interpersonal skills, learn to work in teams efficiently utilize theory learnt in the classroom to the real world, and have an effortless transition from the educational world to the professional world. Taking into consideration of the fact that the widespread demand for soft skills has augmented significantly, it is now fundamental for engineering students to get hold of adequate employability skills, besides acquiring academic and technical knowledge. They have to recognize the stumbling blocks that thwart them from developing soft skills and make an effort to remove such impediments so as to come out of their university education with all those skills expected by their potential employers.

Employability skills are all about the capability of individuals to demonstrate their skills to the prospective employers and the capacity to accomplish organizational goals and objectives. Employability skills refer to explicit skills necessary for employment. These are the vital tools and traits requisite to carry out responsibilities at place of work. Nevertheless, some qualities such as communication skills, presentation skills, integrity, right attitude, and negotiation skills, can be taken as a few prevalent skills of employability skills. The industry demands new graduates who know the role they play in building their organizations, and have the practical skills to work efficiently in their positions. These are the skills, attitudes and actions that facilitate workers to cope with their fellow workers, supervisors and make precise critical decisions.

There is a strong need for responsiveness among the Indian graduates to know the

employability skills required by the worldwide talent market. We cannot hold accountable the graduates for this because it is obligatory to update the curriculum at regular intervals to provide the needs of the industry. In addition, there should be a long and sustainable plan to train our young graduates to raise their bar to attain jobs in the global talent market. It is crucial to increase the industry-academia contact. This will reassure regular source of talent to the global talent workforce. Enhancing the skills and making use of knowledge through specific training will enable the workers to execute their jobs in the best feasible manner, and that is the need of the hour.

If colleges yearn to progress the employability of their graduates, they have to spotlight on plummeting these important skill gaps through amendments in curriculum, instruction and practice. Organizations are using different modes of recruitment to attract quality talent to their work force. Recruiting students directly from engineering colleges is one of the most popular methods (Harvey, 2000). The academia is required to play a major role for the same so that graduates have to be able to formulate, explore, and resolve a real life problem using a set of engineering techniques. For these causes, configuring a four-year engineering curriculum that meets the requirements of most engineering students appears to be an increasingly indefinable goal. The institutions of higher learning around the globe also are very much alarmed on their graduate employment. They play major roles in increasing and enhancing the employability skills of their students by providing certain courses, seminars, workshops, industrial trainings, practical trainings etcetera. Employability upon graduation is a major priority for most of engineering students.

According to Mohammad (2004), new and fresh engineering graduates these days confront with more "challenges and competitions" in getting a job compared to previous graduates. He points out that the excellent academic degrees alone are inadequate as employers definitely require potential engineers for "competencies and capabilities" in generic skill since globalization

demands the companies to be more competitive in their management system. Engineering graduates are required to possess the employability skills to help them practice their knowledge and technical skills effectively. Zinser (2003) mentions that career and employability skills include areas such as managing resources, communication and interpersonal skills, team work and problem-solving and acquiring and retaining a job.

CONCLUSION

Engineering graduates must build up the necessary skills and attitudes to be geared up to work globally after graduation. Regardless of how many similar tracks and elective courses are offered, nonetheless, it will never be feasible to teach engineering students everything they will be required to know when they go to work. An enhanced solution may be to alter our importance away from providing training in an escalating number of specialty areas to providing a core set of science and engineering fundamentals, helping students integrate knowledge across courses and disciplines, and preparing them with lifelong learning skills. In other words, the focus in engineering education must shift away from the simple presentation of knowledge and towards the integration of knowledge. The professors must go further than the textbooks and break the impediments of teaching practice. If the English professors are acquiescent to the elements of the actuality of industry challenges, the gap between the student engineer's academic environment and workplace could be abridged and the employability skills of students will be improved.

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ABrief Bio of Author

Mrs.Vadlamani Padma, Assistant Professor of English Anurag Group of Institutions, Venkatapur, Ghatkesar, Rangareddy, Telangana. I have 18 years of experience in teaching at under-graduate level. Published papers in journals and presented papers in seminars and ELTAI International Conferences. Presently pursuing PhD from Sri Padmavathi Mahila Vishwavidyalayam, Tirupati. My area of research is ELT.
