

Employability- Skill Enhancement through the Study of English Literature

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ABSTRACT

Learners today are more interested in fixing their financial comfort zone. As a result, the relevance of the Humanities and the Social Sciences is being raised. Both the job seekers and the job providers today need the basic employability skills like critical thinking. Study of English literature known for its creativity, language and concepts can be used in cultivating the generic skills. The conscious facilitators can cultivate these skills through the innovative pedagogy and evaluation techniques

KEYWORDS

Financial; Critical thinking; Pedagogy.

The study of English literature in India has its roots in the British colonization of the country. Though the literature of once our rulers, it is one of the most creative and richest literatures in the world. Once purely British, this literature now has its continental identities like American, African, Australian Indian etc. As discussed in *Provocations* (1993) the scholarly book edited by Sudhakar Marathe, Mohan Ramanan and Robert Bellarmine on The teaching of English Literature in India one can see the phases of English literature teaching here. The recent Shakespeare's 400th anniversary activities displayed Indian love for Shakespeare and English literature. However the majority of the Indians today study English literature mainly to improve English language skills rather than its aesthetic pleasure. Under the fully stereotyped study, the learners attend the classes; take down the notes, use guides and bazaar notes. They appear for written examinations and write the answers stored in their memories and get the degree.

The objectives of learning as stated by the quality catalyst NAAC given in the SSR manual (2012) is to make the learners think critically that is an essential employability skill for career of learners. My hypothesis is that the study of literature in general and English literature in particular can be done from this angle to sustain its significance. Creative English literature pursued with different genre of literature and the literary theories is a treasure house of Employability Skills. As a result the innovative teachers have every opportunity to change the pedagogy to develop the skills the life today demands. This paper is based on my practice of developing these skills published in the *Voices* 250(2016) by the IATEFL UK.

Employability skills explained:

Employability skills are defined as the skills that can make the aspirant employable and they are the competencies one develops during one's lifetime through the sources like education, training,

interests, life experiences etc. They are called; life skills, core skills, generic skills key competencies, transferable skills or the essential employability skills. In a very useful English text book for graduates *Count Down* (2012) published by Orient Black Swan, there is a special chapter on the Soft skills. Communication skills, creative and critically thinking are the major employability skills along with the other skills like self-motivated, problem solving, team working, lifelong learning, negotiation skills etc.

Need for the Employability skills: Amrita (2013) while discussing the need for the soft skills in Higher Education writes: Today, academic excellence is increased, but its salutary effect in human behavior is decreasing. With increasing competition in every walk of life .They complement a person's professional skills and affect his or her performance at work, relationships with colleagues and career prospects.

Employability Skill Cultivation: The conscious faculties of English literature can strengthen the much needed spoken and written communication skills by preferring participative learning to teacher- centered lecture method. Language through literature should be the common practice because the abilities of graduates in English literature in functional English are questionable! Instead of providing readymade material the concepts like brain storming to make the learners think rather than just accept the faculty opinion and reproduce them in the written exams can be practiced. Organizing the focused group discussion on the point of view of the writer in the text one can arrange debates to build the thinking capacity among the learners. Above all, understanding the creative use of language helps the learners in making them the creative learners. The facilitators can motivate to read the original texts instead of refereeing the books on the text. When Shakespeare

himself invited to share his creativity by titling the play *As you like it*, why should we not practice such out of the box activities in addition to the completion of syllabus and preparation for the written exams?

There is a lot scope for innovative Evaluation techniques like conversion of the text, application based evaluation through open book examinations and playing with writer's creativity to boost the learners' creativity. Study of Humanities could be used for the creative thinking to make the careers follow the learners rather the learners follow the careers. The indispensable employability skills can be cultivated among the learners through different curricular and co-curricular activities. The teaching methodologies and evaluation techniques can be perfectly utilized in developing these skills.

Conclusion: Most of the Indian learners pursuing conventional degree courses realize the significance of the employability skills after getting their degree for rote learning and the learners pursuing English literature are not an exception. Study of English literature in majority of the cases treading the rut of rote learning to pass the written examination to get a degree is purely examination oriented. As a result the skeptics have started questioning the relevance of the subject. The researcher strongly believes that it is high time to make the study of English literature life and career-oriented while appreciating its beauty.

The employability skills are experiential skills and they should be developed naturally and consciously under the innovative facilitator to make the learner independent, reflective and responsible individual. The innovative faculties of English literature by following modern teaching techniques can foster some of these important generic skills among the learners. It is time we disrupt the set patterns of teaching learning and

evaluation or give a touch of added value to the study along with the routine.

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