



## Value of Skill Based Teaching and Higher Education

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### Abstract

*Pandit Jawaharlal rightly said, "English is the window to the world". English became the tool that opens windows to the world, expands our minds to the latest technologies and unlocks doors to opportunities. This is not a sudden ascent of English to this position, but a gradual change. It is being used for more distinct and varied purposes than before. English in Indian is not just a language to be learnt but the base for whole learning process at all levels starting from schools to Universities. As all other professional courses are adapted to the present day's industrial needs, so is English language. In addition to the above changes, the competencies which are expected from global professionals, particularly of technical and business fields have changed the boundaries of English – learning processes. The object of this paper is to suggest the value of skill based teaching in order to instill interest among students in learning English for equipping them with the essential skills. It enables and enhances learner's proficiency in the use of English language as a means of self-expression in real life situations. The teacher has to introduce the skill based teaching in the classroom that means teaching all the language skills weaved in one activity, is an accepted panacea. Introduce the activities which aim to motivate and meet the needs of the learners.*

**Key Words: Teaching, Learning, Value, Professional Student**

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### Introduction

The last few years have witnessed an unprecedented rise in the number of skilled professional in India, employed by both local and multi-national companies. With the whole world becoming one global market and result-oriented, professionals are facing new challenges in effective communication every day. Students of professional colleges require an ever-increasing range of skills to maintain relevance with the global environment of the new millennium. So, proficiency in English enables the individuals to land better jobs in business and industry. That is why, there is a great demand for English and it has a lot of “surrender value”. It provides good social status in the community and we need English in the present day context to be the bridge between us and the outside world. F.G. French said, “By accidents of history and by the rapid spread of industrial development, science and technology, international trade and by something like an explosion in the speed and ease of travel and by the factors which have been broken frontiers and forced nations into closer inter-dependence English has become a world language. It has opened world-wide chances for employment.”

The target students for any professional course are young adults. The teachers are expected to act as facilitators and pave way for ‘experiential learning’. When the technology is changing at such a rate, we as teachers have a great role to play. We need to update ourselves with the changes in technology on a regular basis. One has to remember that “to teach is to learn again.” As you see from Figure the mirror image of “teach” is “learn”. If the teacher ceases to learn he/she do not dare to teach. A good teacher should always be a good student throughout his life.

Thus the old Techniques for handling language classes are out of place. New and innovative techniques are to be adopted as per the needs of the professional courses. The teacher has to be skillful enough to shift the responsibility of learning from the teacher to the learners and facilitate the process. If the teacher adopts the skill based teaching it not only be easy to the students to learn the language but also instill interest among the students to attend the classes with enthusiasm.

The classroom has to be changed from teacher-centered to learner-centered. According to Combs (1976) the classroom environment has to be changed, to create an effective learning situation in the classroom. Pedagogue must help learners come out of all inhibitions. In skill based teaching activities must be designed to involve the students and facilitate interaction. This method of teaching demands active participation from the learners.

The above table clearly shows that students are very much interested to interact with one another in the class. Teachers have to be creative in generating appropriate activities as per the skills the students are to learn in the course. They need to design activities which can engage the students both physically and mentally. It should be a source of motivation for them.

### **Objectives:**

- To make the learning easy and instill interest among the students
- To make the students to think creatively
- To remove the fear of speaking before the people
- To improve their LSRW skills
- To make them employable

The teacher has to take the role of a Guide, facilitator to help the students to overcome the barriers of learning English. Every teacher has to remember what Francis Bacon said, “Reading maketh a full man: Conference a ready man: and Writing an exact man.” The teacher has emphasize the same on the students particularly, professionals who have to be precise and exact in their expression. The teacher should put their efforts to improve the learner’s abilities and skills by giving them enough practice as ‘Practice Makes Man Perfect.’

Generally students say, ‘Mam I can read but not accurately. I can write but not correctly. I can listen but can’t understand properly. I can speak but not fluently.’ All these problems are interrelated. The only thing the students have to do is acquire mastery over the four skills. In

the skill based teaching the teacher has to introduce some activities to make the learners to learn LSRW skills.

### 1. Audio clips:

In this activity the teacher play an audio clip of conversation to the class. After that she/he may ask the students to summarize the conversation.

### 2. Shrinking Story:

This activity improves the Speaking + Listening comprehension + writing skills of the student. Teacher has to select one small story. In this activity the teacher has to select 5 students among the class and asked to leave the class. The rest of the class is read out a story twice and after the second reading they have to make a summary of the story. Then the first student asked to come in and listens to the story once and he has to reproduce the same. The second student is also called in and listens to the story. The rest of the class note down which of the important points are mentioned. Student 2 tells the story to student 3, student 3 to student 4, and student 4 to the last one. Student 5 tells the story to the class.

Using their notes, the students who were listening and observing, report on the changes in the story. Then the original read once again.

The teacher has to select a small story with confusing names, things and places. For instance, "Mr. BejanDaruwalla and his wife Roshini along with his two children Reshma and Rashmi arriving at Bangalore from Mumbai by flight No. IC370 at 7.30am. They are being met at the airport by their estate Manager Rustom Shapunji, who will take them in Mercedes at 10:30am via Cunnigham Road, Longford Town, Trinity Circle and Arugodi to celebrate Rashmi's birthday."

When I conducted this activity in my class I observed so many changes in the story like Daruwalla changed into daruwaja, Shapunji changed into shampooji, Arugodi changed into Pakodi etc. These kinds of activities improve their listening ability.

### 3. Consequences:

It improves the skills of Speaking and thinking creatively. The teacher has to organize Groups of 3-6 students. The teacher gives each student an action card. Each group should think of the short term and long term consequences the action may have. The group leader has to note down all the consequences. Then the groups exchange the cards. They groups discusses the

consequences of each action. Finally after the discussion each student has to give a presentation. For instance:

- A 48 hour working week is introduced
- Robots can perform household duties
- Man can also get maternity leave
- A lorry driver dumps a thankful of poisonous wastes into the river near the town

#### **4. Iceberg or Onion:**

It improves both writing and speaking skills of the student. The teacher has to organize the students in pairs or groups. They will discuss the following questions.

Some people think that culture is like an iceberg, other people think that it is like an onion. If culture is like an iceberg what is below the water and what is above? If culture is like an onion, what are the different layers?

#### **5. Describing People / Place / Things and Pictures:**

Students need art of describing to be the best they can at describing their best qualities; particularly in highlighting their key strengths. The teacher will give some hints to the students then students have to describe the people/place/ things and pictures. For instance if we give these kind of pictures shown in the figure not only motivates them but also gives the scope to think.

#### **Conclusion:**

To conclude, I found it profitable to use the skill based approach to teach integrated skills as most of the students became motivated and friendlier to use the language quite fluently. The teacher must be a researcher and also a learner. Other roles assumed for teacher is needs analyst, counselor, and group process manager. He or she must be a good motivator because motivation accelerates language learning. Sense of humor and presence of mind are two important characteristics of good language teacher. Teacher should have good attitude and aptitude as well. According to Shiv Khera “the best teachers will not give something to drink, they will make you thirsty. They will put you on a path to seek answers.” The value of skill based approach is very helpful to stimulate the ability of the professional students to converse freely. Students will come up with their innovative ideas. This kind of teaching / learning

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integrated skills through skill based approach takes the “pain” out of teaching any language and makes learning to communicate effectively a “pleasure” for the student.

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