

Language Activities to foster Engineering Students for writing skills

Heera Rajwani

Noble Group of Institutions, Junagadh

“The thing that gives me and has always given me the most happiness in life, is writing.

The mind celebrates a little triumph every time it formulates a thought”

Emerson

Language is not merely the medium of instruction at all levels of education; it is the medium of one's growth and development. It provides capacity for preservation and communication of intellectual life. It also facilitates the individual to have fresh and free thinking and research. In education it is supposed to communicate knowledge and in general life it is the instrument to acquire knowledge and information where as it is the primary need of the child

Language learning is learning of skills means to get mastery over English language skills, or to do expertise. In the present time there is a rising trend of showing communication rather than mere practice of linguistic forms. But we have to be careful because texts are made of sentences putting together for communicative purposes. That is, one cannot make bricks without straw and you cannot build houses without bricks. So to begin writing is important to know the function like Advising, Reporting, requesting, complaining and so on. By knowing the function means for what purpose it is going to be written. Normally students don't like writing skill.

Four reasons why students dislike writing are:

1. It leaves as more permanent record of prophecy than speaking; so it seems a threat for them.
2. Students feel that they lack sufficient knowledge of the language.
3. Students believe that writing must be grammatically correct.
4. They think that formal correctness must be achieved at their very first attempt.

All these reasons are due to the inappropriate way of teaching this skill. So in order to achieve the understanding of various kinds of activities first it is very necessary to understand what is writing as a skill. Writing skills are those needed to compose meaningful text of sentence length

or longer, communicating ideas, messages and information in understandable words and language for a variety of audiences.

The need of writing skills,

Every business whether big or small, has to maintain contacts with its suppliers, customer prospects, government departments and the like. In his regular work businessman has to exchange information of varied types with different parties. Making soliciting enquiries, placing orders for goods; acknowledging and executing orders; granting or applying for credit; sending statements of account to debtors; requesting for settlement of accounts; complaining about dealer mistakes in supply of goods; making adjustments for customers' grievances; canvassing for the firm's new lines of goods or ideas and lot of such matters require written communication. So it is very necessary for an engineering student to adopt it and practice it. Still it is not developed as it should be in the students.

Generally the child speaks as he listens and he writes as he speaks. So the listening and the speaking skill are at the base of the writing skill. In the development of language skill we can say that writing skill is the complete skill. Today, the students of engineering college excel in their respective branches but they are lacking in writing a simple leave application. They are unable to write a proposal. They even don't know the writing ethics. Whenever they are asked to write a business letter they write with ambiguity. In order to pass the exam they need to develop the writing skills. There are so many purposes of writing skills. For such reasons some techniques are found to eradicate these problems. It is necessary to list out those factors responsible for the inappropriate writing skills. The following factors are responsible for incorrect expression in writing.

- The knowledge of Syntax
- Medium of learning
- Lack of confidence
- Low motivation Level
- Lower level of learning

Looking to the above mentioned factors we can eradicate them with some of the techniques and methods.

As the students' level of motivation is low then we should do some motivational activities to make them get ready for learning. We must train out in such a manner that they write their language with correct expression.

Medium once adopted in schooling cannot be modified but in place of that we must show the students the role models whose medium of learning was not English still they are masters of English. This will automatically create self confidence also. Even the lower level has personal appeal. So it is a tough task to convert lower level of learning into higher level of learning. Still there are various activities to foster writing skills of engineering students. There are certain tricks, activities, language games and warm up exercise to make the engineering students to get ready to write. Here we are going to suggest some of the language activities to develop writing skills.

Language activities and games

Language activities and language games stimulate the students to start writing. Even in their mother tongue they can start. Slowly we can lead them towards the English writing skills but through these games and activities only. These activities can boost and inspire. With the activities a student can learn with fun. The activities motivate the Students and enhance their power of identifying the structure of language. Here are some of the sample activities which are very useful the students of engineering to foster their writing skill.

Sample Language activities

Activity 1

Making of multiple words

Make more words out of the following words and use them in your sentences.

BAT CAT BAN VAN

Activity -2

Making a mind Map

Take up any one of the topics, try to brain storm around them and put the ideas in any order you feel convenient.

A. Creating a sustainable environment

B. The Role of the media in creating stereotypes

Activity 3

Quick Write

One of the challenges for ELL students when they approach writing is their anxiety about writing their ideas correctly and writing a lot of information in English. This may feel overwhelming when a student is assigned an essay. In order to get students comfortable with the idea of just putting ideas on paper and not worrying about mistakes, we do regular "quick writes." For "quick writes" I give the students a topic and then tell them to write as much as they can for five minutes. They need to keep their pencils on the paper and even if they can't think of anything to write or they are worried about how to spell things, they are supposed to keep writing. At the end of five minutes, the students count how many words they were able to write and they keep track in a log. The objective is that they will see progress in the amount of writing they are able to do in five minutes' time and hopefully apply this fluency to their essay writing.

Activity 4

Cinquain poems

Cinquain poems offer great flexibility in working with students of a variety of language levels. The basic Cinquain formula is as follows, but teachers can modify it as needed according to the student language level.

One noun

Two adjectives

Three gerunds (words + ing)

A short sentence.

A one-word summary

An example of a Cinquain a student might write:

Home

Warm, happy

Loving, welcoming, helping

People you love.

Family

There really is no wrong way to do a Cinquain, students can put key vocabulary words together any way they like to create the message they desire. Teachers may want to use Cinquains to reinforce new content vocabulary and concepts as well.

Activity 5

What's my nationality? Who am I?

Student (A) thinks of **a nationality**

Student (B) asks:

"Do you wear _____?"

"Do you drink / eat _____?"

"Do you play (sport) or (game)?"

"Do you play the (musical instrument)?"

"Does it rain / snow a lot there?"

"Is it very hot / very cold there?"

"Do the people like _____ there?"

"Are the people there tall / short / romantic / hard-working / rich / poor?"

Student (A) thinks of **a famous person, fictitious character or cartoon character?**

Student (B) asks YES/NO questions.

Activity 6

Telephonic Conversation

Write telephonic conversation based on the following situations

In these conversations tell your friend that

- You got a promotion.
- Your brother met with an accident
- You are going on a world tour
- You bought a new car
- Request your friend
- To help you in your studies

- To organize a function

Activity 7

Sentence Auction

This activity helps students analyze common writing errors through a personalized activity since they are trying to buy their own sentences. Once a week or once a month, a teacher can hold a "Sentence Auction." The teacher takes sentence examples from student writing – some of which have errors and some that don't, and writes them on a handout or overhead projector. The identity of the student who wrote each sentence is not revealed. To begin the sentence auction, each student is given an "account" of perhaps \$300. The students are told to "bid" on the good sentences. The winner is the student with the highest number of "good" sentences.

1. The teacher takes on the persona of an "Auctioneer" and opens the bidding at \$10.
2. The teacher reads out the sentence confidently exactly as it is written. "Him want to go to school very bad." Who will give me \$10?"
3. The students take turns bidding until the teacher decides who has "won" the bid.
4. Some sentences will not sell because students will know they are "bad." Just leave those sentences and move to the next one.
5. After all the sentences have been sold, the teacher goes through the list and the students say whether the sentence was good or bad. If they agree that it was a bad sentence, then the teacher asks them to explain how they can make it a "good" sentence.
6. Finally the students can count how many "good" sentences they have (since they may have bought some bad ones) and a winner is declared.

The teacher may want to give a little prize or certificate to the student. In a variation of this activity students can work k in pairs or groups to buy the sentence.

Activity 8

Click the letters in correct order

Here the students have to click the letter and then write in alphabetical order.

CDROM	ICON	OPEN
MEMORY	HARDWARE	OUTPUT
MENU	INPUT	PASTE
MODEM	INTERACTIVE	PERIPHERAL
MOUSE	INTERNET	PRINTER
MULTIMEDIA	KEYBOA SEARCH	PROCESSING
NETWORK	RD	REPLACE
NUMERIC	HELP	SAVE
SOFTWARE	SELECT	SCANNER
TEXT		

Conclusion

To conclude Language being a skill one has to develop in order to sustain the corporate world. Especially in terms of productive skills like speaking and writing. It is better to develop these skills with certain methods and approaches. There can be varieties of topics and ideas in learning these skills. The language activities are the best way to advance their writing skills. Through these activities the learners can be motivated and develop their language. This development of language will automatically lead them to foster their writing skills. Activities will make them active and reinforce to write better language.

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