The Line Must Be Drawn Now

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THE quest between recruiters and job seekers is eternal. There are never enough jobs for all and on the other hand employers seldom find exactly who they are looking for. Why? There is a mismatch between the supply and demand. We do indeed have millions of graduates but most of them are missing something very important within their quality list, which is so valuable that a good number of them become valueless because of not having those skills. What? Communication skills!

There are indeed few other qualities besides academic, recruiters are obligated to look into such as extra curricular abilities and as such, but in this rapid evolving world, the most important skill required is undoubtedly the communication skills. Recruiters seem to put the highest credence on communication skills; needless to say that if the candidates cannot effectively communicate then, presumably they may not be able to talk to their clients or even with fellow employees. Their knowledge is worthless if they fail to express it properly.

Generally a university student dreams of finding a good job after graduation. Just to be an owner of respectable GPA but without attaining proper skills, one should not dream of availing a competitive job, if one does, chances are that it will ever remain as just a dream. Living in a world of Utopia will not help flourish the future. If you are a university student, you must ask yourself how good you are in your communications. Start evaluating yourself and dedicate yourself to develop your weaknesses before you walk out of your university after four years. This is the right time to start working on it.

Out there, in the real world, the job market is like a war zone. And entering into a job market without proper communication skill is like bringing a knife into a gunfight! You will lose the battle before you know it. If you do a little research, read relevant news, job search or talk to HR managers if possible, this will be crystal clear to you. Knowledge is important, a good GPA carries a lot of weight but it is demonstrated that recruiters emphasis more on communication skills than anything else. For example, for a given job, two candidates may apply; **a.** Candidate carries excellent GPA and average communication skills and **b.** candidate carries average GPA and excellent communication skills. Guess what? Candidate **b** gets the priority (of course, it may vary based on the nature of job). It is that simple.

Communication is a broad aspect, but we can simplify it for our students. I can say if they concentrate on the following key departments then that would really help them to meet the challenge.

a. Accuracy in English writing skills
b. Fluency in speaking English
c. Professional presentation expertise
d. Standard computing ability
e. Smooth in operating modern communication tools.

a. Accuracy in English writing skills: A student must be able to draft in English without spelling or grammar mistakes. This is one of the very basics. I understand that many of our students are coming from Bengali medium background and are not comfortable in English. Well, this is a countrywide weakness that we are dealing with! But certainly this is something we can win through practice and little bit of extra care. One must have the initiative and figure out ways to improve their English. Outside the classroom, apart from the regular educational load, students should read books, attend special tutorials, seek support from teachers during off periods, join workshops and so forth. Improving your writing skill is an ongoing task which you should break down into small stages. To get the ball rolling you can open your own personal diary and get into the habit of writing down a few pages every day and show them to your teacher for corrections. It might sound strange, but reading newspaper and magazine articles is often better practice for your writing than reading fashion magazines.

Although novels help to instill creativity, the opinion columns of good newspapers expose you to a varied range of styles. Newspaper columnists and journalists are often constrained for space, and their articles must always be very concise and effective - a highly desirable skill. Never stop writing; this is the key!

b. Fluency in speaking English: If a student can speak English reasonably well that can be considered a jump starter. Once again, this is a socio-environmental problem for which our students are not accustomed with speaking in English. We have to remember that it is an international language and it is deemed necessary to have strong speaking ability in English to sustain in this globalised era. Just like developing the writing skill, students have to practice talking among themselves to remove the shyness and develop fluency. This is something you can't do alone. You may listen to the radio alone, you may read a book alone, you may write a letter alone but certainly you can't really speak alone! Speaking to yourself can be "dangerous" and people might think you need medical attention!