MY ENGLISH CLASSES

Description

THE CALL AND A REQUEST

One of my lawyer friends called me a month ago. He has a proposal, â??fifty of my colleagues wanted to upgrade their English communication skills, can you coach themâ???

I took a while to answer his request. My pause led to a mental picture, â??I have to prepare, be regular and a lot of notes and presentations.â?•Nevertheless, he heard me saying, â??yes, Iâ??ll do it for you.â??

â??You have to teach a team of fifty lawyers the basics of English and how to speak comfortably.â?? My friend conveyed what he expected from me; wished me well and cut the call.

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A TOUGH ASSIGNMENT

I have my doubts. How I would be able to hold lawyers as a group, that too sitting in a class wearing those signature black robes. Besides, they might entertain professional precedence. Any interactions in the class may bring out their inner inhibitions to fore. That they could flaunt their critical and argumentative bias any time, I held on to infer. Their age aspect is an embarrassing issue that would come upon many of them. I had run through the list of who registered for the three-month course. I couldnâ??t but appreciate their eagerness to participate, to get an idea or two about speaking skills in English. Interestingly, I found most of them sweating out in their forties.

â??Would they all with sincere intent sit and listen every day for an hour.â?? After a day of running and rushing in and out of halls of various courts: Defending, arguing, accusing, and pleading. Iâ??m confronted with questions and the answers I would know when I commence the classes. Like â??can I expect they would be punctual to allotted timeâ??? And why, at this point of adulthood, strained with professional exertion, these advocates willingly chose to sit down to pick up a few communication skills in English?

ENGLISH SKILLS -THE PROBLEM

Of late, it increasingly had become evident. â??poor Englishâ?? among students seemed a depressing disadvantage. That haunts the rooms and corridors of many Indian Colleges. Any graduate without adequate English language skills could liken to a devalued man on crutches. His handicapped would persist, shamefully, all his employable life.

Perhaps, the advocates anticipated the new capital city formation in our state. Prospects of coming off a separate High Court, into which they wouldnâ??t want to, enter the court halls; dubiously with â??Iâ??m poor in Englishâ?? pretensions.

ENGLISH: HOW I LEARNED IT

English: I cherished, praised and enjoyed and had thirty long years of a devout affair with it. I adored its inherent magic as an art form.

I believed the mission of mastering it should remain as close to your heart. Like the people exploring fine arts like dance, dramatics, music, or painting to high excellence has. As a language lover, I grew deep passion making English language as my lifeline. And stay as my major life ambition. I combined a disciplined practice grabbing as many opportunities as I could offer myself to demonstrate its mastery. My every act regarding the pooling all the English nuances. I followed â??a sort of urgencyâ?? as the buzzword of my day.

For over three decades I walked the language journey as a personal pilgrimage that has no particular endpoint.

THE SECRET OF ENGLISH IS IN ITS VOCABULARY

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Like oxygen to high altitude climbers without which they are troubled along the way up. Similarly, without the adequate hoarding of vocabulary, the chances of becoming effective in the English language skills seemed discouragingly low.

Jules Renard said, â??Words are the coins making up the currency of sentences, and in English, there are always too many small coins.â?• Aptly, said about the ever-expanding stock of the English lexicon. The power of English lies in its stockpile of vocabulary.

Going ahead with the assignment, on day one, I was ready with all my teaching gadgets. Seated in front of me a posse of forty lawyers; I saw them diffident, murmuring. Looking straight at them the legal fraternity, briefly, I became a bit shaky. I imagined, the thought amused me, that â??Iâ??m standing like the main accused fenced by a string of lawyers waiting to grill me.â??

But a few minutes after my introductory platitudes and pleasantries, it surprised me. I couldnâ??t but fully appreciated their willingness to shine in a new skill. It amazed me the way they are putting in at this age, the hardworking efforts. And see that they add a measure of merit to their profession.

I right away resolved, with a tweak of determination. â??I will do my best to share the essential building blocks of English and nut and bolts of its grammar.â??

The distressing situation I noticed when I visited colleges or academic groups that everyone sounded keen and ambitious. Willing to go ahead and pick up the required strings to become conversant in good English communication. But, deplorably, many of them had poor guidance about the â??know howâ?? and â??how toâ?? mechanism. To get a functional idea how to brace the most fluid, the mercurial language in the world: English. And certainly, they fail to realize; itâ??s not student friendly.

EVERYTHING IS IN THE READING HABITS

The truth is that a few grammar books can never tame English. It is not the form of subject easily learned, and a problem to solve in a few monthly courses. Or a mastery attained by coursing through

few related publications.

Enjoying, reading, and speaking English are akin to artistry. To wish for its enormous advantage involves multi-branched sincerity. And it asks for special enthusiasm to conquer and own it. That comes from cultivating reading as a daily habit.

THE THREE STEP JOURNEY

Planning to become well versed in English expression at best, to a limited proficiency is a three-step journey. We have to go after through like a religious ritual. First feel the language as a possession â?? a passionate longing to conquer for life. Read, read and read as many books, any genre of your liking. It can include classics or contemporary novels, autobiographies, essays, articles, newspapers, and magazines. Thankfully, today everything is easily accessible, conveniently â??off-line, online, available and downloadable freely.

Every day, make a habit of poring over your favorite books. Endear those topics that enable to identify the distinctive shades of English expressions. Most importantly the vocabulary: the lifeline that gives resiliency to English fluency. The expanded vocabulary one can amass the fluent grasp one can enjoy with the language. Thereby, it enables you to participate in a clear and fluent conversational zone. Creating a huge personal reserve of vocabulary is the second fundamental petition for English language worshippers.

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Listening and practicing is the third step. I ask any English language aspirant has to take it up to obsessional levels. Try listening to TV shows, news channels, and audio-tapes. You-tube is one enormous resource to form a habit of listening and practicing.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE IS AN EVER FLOWING STREAM

â??Your zeal to learn English must be as high as the career ambition you set.â?• This fact I appeal to all the young adults, budding professionals who sit in my classes.

The essence I wish to convey is, â??I can only shine a learnable bright light, in front of your path ahead.â?• Further, I add.â??Itâ??s your choice to follow that path. And itâ??s your inner strength that would decide the speed with which you reach your desired endpointâ?•. Here, the proficiency and ease in maneuvering the English skills. Itâ??s up to you to realize: the body of English is always there as a stream flowing. Quenching your language thirst is your pull.

At the end of my one-hour session, I completed briefly discussing the nuances of English grammar. Before concluding the dayâ??s work, I hearteningly noted. One fifty-year-old woman, a practicing advocate, shyly asked that she requires some additional explanation. And I saw another youngish good looking, perhaps in his thirties capturing all the projected notes on his smartphone.

Whatever the means they have listened to my sessions, they are there. They willingly spread their notebooks writing, listening and nodding. At the end what I expect from them is a smile of appreciation and a nod of thankfulness. I considered this one simple gesture sacred enough for any teacher like me, who would, indeed, humbly treasure forever.

Category

1. Uncategorized

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Author
eswarnadipalli

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