



YOUR OPINION

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MALAYSIA'S technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system plays a critical role in the nation's educational landscape, aiming to produce a skilled and competent workforce that meets the demands of a rapidly evolving economy.

However, mastering technical skills is only half the battle in today's interconnected world. Imagine a brilliant engineer who can design cutting-edge machinery but struggles to communicate his groundbreaking ideas to a global audience. Or consider a talented software developer who misses out on international job opportunities due to language barriers. This is where the often overlooked yet immensely powerful role of English as a Second Language (ESL) in TVET comes into play.

The most basic skills that every ESL student needs to develop are the four core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These four skills are non-negotiable as they are considered must-have skills. Then can we move on to teaching academic English, which includes specialised vocabulary, grammar, and structures needed for understanding textbooks, and writing reports..

Then comes study skills, where students learn effective note-taking, summarising, and critical thinking, all of which are crucial for understanding and retaining technical content delivered in English.

Last but not least, we must teach specialised language to our TVET students, in which we introduce them to the specific vocabulary and jargon used in their technical fields, ensuring they can understand and use these terms correctly. This is very important as it is a transferable skill they

Power of ESL in TVET



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can use in their fields later.

Secondly, another role of ESL in TVET is developing communication skills, both oral and written. Students must be helped to develop speaking and listening skills, which are essential for participating in class discussions, group projects, and practical sessions. They must learn to present ideas and projects effectively in English, which is a valuable skill for professional situations.

Another vital communication skill that ESL instructors must teach their students is writing skills. The focus is to enhance students' abilities to write clear, concise, and well-structured technical reports, research papers, and other academic documents.

Thirdly, as students might have to work with people from different nationalities and cultures, it is important to instil global and cultural understanding in them.

Students must be prepared to interact with peers, instructors, and professionals from different cultural backgrounds as this will enhance their ability to work in diverse teams and gain better opportunities globally.

In the rapidly evolving landscape of technical education, the integration of ESL within TVET programmes stands as a transformative force. Bridging the language gap not only enhances students' academic and professional capabilities but also opens doors to global opportunities and collaborations.

Malaysia's commitment to developing a skilled workforce through robust TVET initiatives is commendable, and the inclusion of comprehensive ESL training within that ecosystem would ensure that our graduates are not just technically proficient but also linguistically empowered.

By investing in ESL within TVET, we are truly investing in the limitless potential of our students, preparing them to navigate and excel in the complex, interconnected world of tomorrow.

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