TOPIC
Curriculum Development in EAP problems faced by students at Graduation Level in Pakistan

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Irfan Asghar Khan

ABSTRACT:
English for academic purposes at graduate level in the public sector colleges and universities in Pakistan holds a significant place as the only medium for the learners who aim to explore employment and equip themselves with latest knowledge on national and global platforms. Researches have been carried out on various levels to analyze, observe and evaluate all the relevant issues and problems faced by the students particularly in countries like Pakistan where English is not only the official language but also an international medium for modern scientific and other studies. This research explores and highlights dilemmas of the college students who, on one hand, strive to learn a language they are not exposed to on cultural and social levels while on the other hand, they face serious ambiguities in comprehending the prescribed curriculum during their academic process. The study focuses on all the obstacles most commonly faced by the undergraduate students in their learning of English. It also explores the limitations on the faculty level in teaching of the prescribed syllabus in colleges and universities of Pakistan.
Keywords: Bachelors of Business Administration, Bachelors of Science, Curriculum Development, English for Academic Purpose.

Introduction:

English for Academic purposes (EAP) is globally acknowledged, used and promoted as the only medium for transferring and aligning latest data in all areas of human development. There cannot be any denial of the fact that more than the developed nations, the teaching of English for academic purposes needs to be reviewed and updated in the under developed regions of the world such as Pakistan. In order to keep pace with the latest research being carried out in the developed part of the globe, the syllabus and curriculum set for the students at higher level of education, unfortunately do not suffice to enable them to practically implement English language practically. There seems to be a breach between selection of the curriculum, its proper teaching methodology and the practical output. Our graduates passing out each year from public sector colleges and universities, even after learning English for almost four years, fail to exhibit proficiency and fluency in the language. Consequently, they not only lag behind in getting promising jobs in offices where English is the only mode of communication but also suffer from a complex regarding their education as insufficient and futile.

With a colonial history, English is practically not only a symbol of posh culture but it is also an integral component in getting good jobs in Pakistan. Keeping in view the practical significance of English language, its time to review the curriculum, teaching methodology and syllabus selection at graduate level in the colleges of Pakistan. For

this purpose, the whole process of teaching and learning of English as adoptive or second language to the college students needs a close examination from all angles. It is prior need of time to trace all the probabilities in day-to-day teaching and learning process to eradicate impediments that bars our otherwise brilliant students in colleges to fare poorly in learning and implementing English practically.

This research paper aims at evaluating, analyzing and therefore highlighting all the problems and limitations faced by students at graduate level in the learning of English for academic purposes (EAP). The study undertaken both on the qualitative and quantitative levels would help in digging out all seemingly unobvious yet highly significant lapses in the teaching of English for academic purposes that are currently being practiced in the public sector colleges of Pakistan. The sole purpose of this paper is extensive research in the defined area by taking into consideration not only the teaching and learning process but also to study the selection of curriculum, review classroom practices, carrying out surveys within and outside class environment, seeking for hurdles and hesitations and draw out graphic details resulting from this whole process. In this way, this research could greatly benefit the graduate students and the faculty members in identifying specific problematic areas thus providing a remedial insight.

- Beginning with some of the main spheres exhibiting practical hinderances in the process   of teaching and learning English for the undergraduates are explored extensively in this paper and are categorized as follows;
- Analysis of EAP curriculum recommended for graduation and higher classes.
- Pre-tertiary (at both graduate and post graduate levels.)
- Classroom interactions (Mostly teacher's feedback and occasional seminars)
- Research journals (Articles, papers and proposals)
- Professional writing (Applications, Letters, data analysis, reports reviews)
- Introduction of audio visual and information technology.
- Administrative practice (syllabus monitoring, evaluation through oral and written form, suitable environment)

For the non-native learners of English, all the above areas need to be addressed and administered thoroughly. It is a well-known fact that a large number of learners at graduate and post graduate levels do not have a strong foothold in academic communicative skills in English. After entering into colleges and having a lower level of comprehension of English, they usually fail to deliver a satisfactory output. Instead of enhance their capability of English learning, it becomes a burden for them. As a result, the students and the faculty both continue to struggle in achieving the desired result. This situation discourages the students to learn English on academic level and they adopt either escape attitude or attempt to cram the language without following grammatical precision.

Another most important factor as mentioned above is lack of provision of suitable environment where college students could grow a natural interest in adopted language. Majority of the students belong to middle and lower middle-class strata having practically

no contact with English language on social and cultural levels. They think in their native language and while on their route to the task of learning English, cannot achieve any creative skills in the second language. The limited time while they are in their English classes, the mode of teaching is mainly through the mother tongue. Moreover, their spoken skills remain untrodden due to the non-availability of ample time and suitable environment during their academic period. In addition to this, there is a natural hesitation and shyness observed in the college students about being reprimanded or made fun of while trying to speak in English. All these factors do hinder students' instinctive capabilities towards learning English on academic level.

Without a natural tendency and absence of suitable environment in colleges, the learning of English language undergoes serios negligence by not taking into account the practical ground realities faced by both the teachers and students alike. The process of teaching a foreign language for academic purposes cannot be limited only to classroom. Rather, it should be taken as a perpetual phenomenon beginning from the selection of the right syllabus keeping in view practical use of the language , the level of comprehension of the subject by average students, sufficient drill and practice through written, spoken, listening and reading skills, periodic evaluation and feedback of the learning and teaching process, provision of creative environment to the learner and updating of the syllabus from time to time in order to meet the demands of professional efficiency.

Lack of creativity and poor comprehension of the course of study are two of the major pitfalls for the undergraduates blocking their way to acquire language skills. According to Raimes (1991), "Academic writing at university should be part of liberal art curriculum teaching grammar, literary text and culture to add a humanities dimension to students' experience and elevate the status of the field." Likewise, a curriculum that does not only cater to the academic learning but also helps to bring out creative skills in a learner is preferably to be replaced by any other that is mundane and boring. Most of the EAP courses are structured to train the learners in academic writing and oral presentation. The university level students in Pakistan usually fare well in the first category but they are found to be lacking severely in the latter skill.

This research focuses mainly on the public sector colleges and university students who are facing a lot of aforementioned issues in their learning of academic English. A detailed study of all the external and internal factors influencing the whole program would enable the experts in revising and re modeling of learning of English for academic purpose. The students at graduation level could benefit profusely with keen interest once all the obstacles are pointed out and resolved in due time. In order to get first hand knowledge of the ground realities, classroom observations, curriculum validity, surveys, along with behavioral patterns with the help of print and electronic media, charts and graphs, questionnaires are carried out.

Materials and Methods

Design and strategy:

In order to comprehend the students' curriculum approach in his/her content by exploring

and understanding their needs during the course of study and more importantly after attaining their respective degrees significantly stands out as the first and foremost prior responsibility of the syllabus designing experts. For a more objective outlook to attain targeted results in this field, quantitative method is used to achieve practical results. This portion consists of data collection, sampling at the students' level and data analysis to observe the approach, tendencies and patterns at various levels of the students engaged in different disciplines in the public sector colleges.

Sampling:

Access to college and university students was made through principals and vice chancellors respectively. A time frame of one month was set to gain the required results. The criteria were met by selecting relevant students who were studying English in their graduation courses.

Sampling population:

Students from public sector college and university were the population for this study.

Sample body:

A body of two hundred randomly chosen students from graduation and post-graduation classes with careful consideration of age and gender were selected to carry out the required data collection.

Sampling Technique:

Sufficient number of students in various disciplines were selected as samples. It was specifically planned to include the students who were engaged in learning English in their academic courses.

Data Collection:

Questionnaires and interviews of the participants were well planned and modelled to fulfil the specific purpose of conducting research at a deeper and objective level. In order to get first hand approach of the students about their curriculum of EAP, a questionnaire was launched to probe into any possible difficulties faced by the learners. This interaction with the respondents was carried out within their classrooms to enable them give direct and well thought response about any ambiguities faced by them in the curriculum designed for academic learning of the English language. The questionnaire was designed with specific consideration to probe for adequate answers, interaction with the students and teachers and getting a clarified response. The questions were coined in easy and clear language keeping in view various levels of the students, age groups and their learning capabilities.

Data Analysis:

Grounded theory was employed through open and selective coding techniques. Open coding included line by line comprehension, paragraph wise and then whole document analysis. This open coded technique resulted in evaluation of students' level of understanding on conceptual basis and their progress in developing thorough grasping the basic structure of the syllabus. Through selective coding a number of students with comparatively higher level of intellect and understanding were selected. They were assigned to work on a complex piece of writing selected from their curriculum.

As a result, certain issues related to syllabus formation and the complexities generally faced by the students in their learning of academic English were highlighted. Thus, the identification of the problems related to syllabus selection for the students of public sector colleges and universities once diagnosed seemed easier to be rectified by the relevant authorities. All elements of analysis and evaluation by the above methods were collected in one place for further study.

Data sampling:

All the quantitative data in the form of surveys, interviews, questionnaires and statistical analysis was collected. In order to get this study effectively transparent and objective, both dependent and independent variables were used at different levels. Statistical data is presented through tables showing figures collected from all sources at different levels and groups.

Primary Data:

Self-administered surveys, formation of academic based questionnaires, interviews conducted on both faculty and students' level, and feedback from classroom tests conducted by the teachers are included in the research. Moreover, text books in the subject at graduation level are also included.

Secondary Sources:

Secondary data collection sources are journals, published online research papers, and previous studies conducted in this regard. Electronic and print media is searched where needed to carry out research on an up-to-date level. The research work done by eminent researchers in this area is given an adequate significance to bring this study to a new and practically valid place helping to eradicate all the possible problems being faced by the students at higher level of learning English. As a result, this research done would be diagnostic in its nature to which several remedial steps might be applied in order to erase all the obstacles in the way of learning English for academic purposes.

Observation and Behavioral Study:

The qualitative method for study of observations and behavior is conducted by designing a separate questionnaire for the teachers as well, who have been teaching EAP courses at various levels of higher studies. This practice enabled us to draw conclusions based on practical ground reality. Behavioral study is covered by conducting discussions with the teachers of English who claimed to have a unique experience of teaching to the students at graduate and post graduate levels. Both these approaches helped in getting some relatively practical solutions in the end.

Results:

Descriptive statistics:

Descriptive analysis allows a large amount of data to be documented in coherence. As it is a well-known fact that the values of a random variable to cluster around its mean is known as a central tendency. In the words of McDowell & Saunders (2010), "the more accurate estimate of dispersion in standard deviation is where the central value of a set of numbers is presented." Keeping in view the above statement, descriptive

analysis about curriculum development in learning English for academic purpose can be explained through the following table.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics:

Variables	Means	Standard Deviations
Curriculum Development	3.6457	.65442
EAP	3.8572	.87657

Descriptive statistics were carried out to examine the essence of responses. The mean values of Curriculum Development and EAP 3.6457 and 3.8572, respectively, exhibit that the respondent confirmed the relationship between Curriculum Development and EAP. The standard deviation values from Table 4.1 indicate that EAP remained impulsive and volatile with .87657.

Table 4.2 Reliability:

The table below shows Chronbach's Alpha, it is the degree of internal consistency and reliability. Co-efficient alpha value must exceed the minimum standard of 0.70 levels in providing good estimates and retaining the items (Jum & Ira, 1994). (Nunnally Jum, C., & Bernstein Ira, H. (1994). Psychometric Theory. Third-Edition.)

Variables	Chronbach's Alpha	No: of items
Curriculum Development	0.709	05
English for Academic Purpose	0.759	10

The Chronbach's Alpha value of Curriculum Development is .709 in the current study. The Chronbach's Alpha value of EAP is .759. These values show that the internal consistency is strong, acceptable and reliable.

**Table 4.3 Frequency Distribution:**

Sample Characteristics:

In this research no missing values were found while data was collected. The below mentioned table expresses the small print of the demographic variance i-e age, gender and qualification. It also shows the frequencies and their respective percentage.
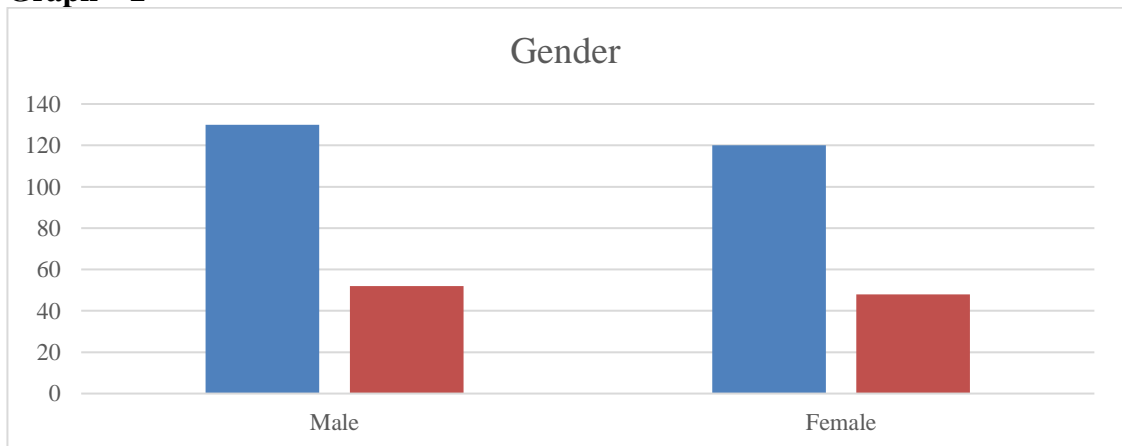
Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Age interval		
20 or below	120	60%
21-25	75	37.5%
Above 25	05	2.5%

Gender		
Male	120	60%
Female	80	40%
Qualification		
BBA	55	27.5%
BSC	50	25%
Bs	80	40%
Masters	15	7.5%

Graph - 1
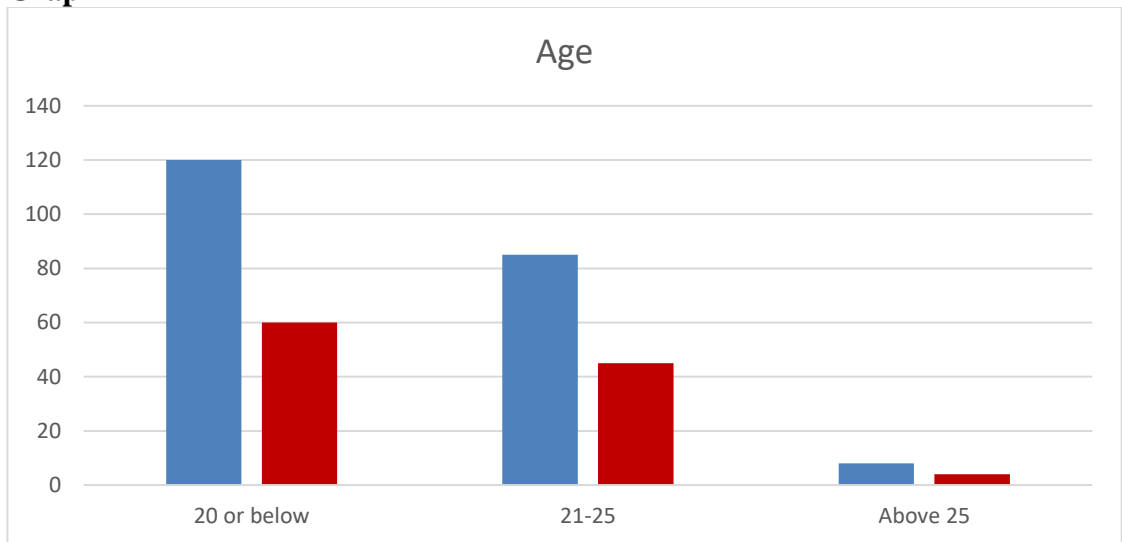
Graph – 2

Graph – 3
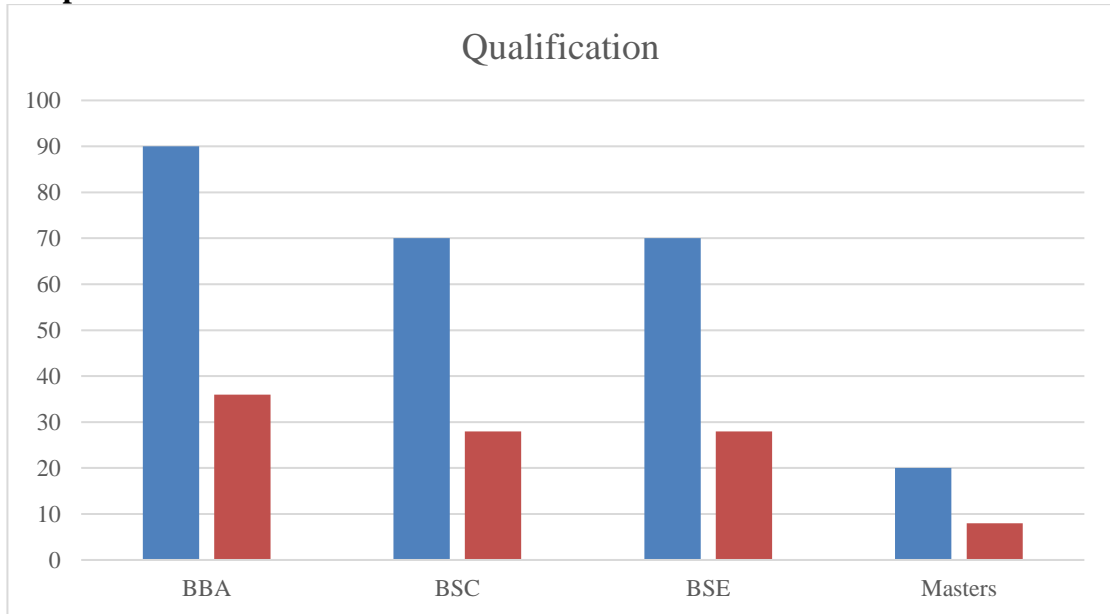
Observation and Behavioral Studies of the Teachers:

A number of discussions were conducted with the teachers to highlight problems faced by the faculty members and also from the students' end after getting feedback from classroom tests and exams conducted at the end of the course. This study to highlight the effectiveness of English language and its significant use in a career-oriented environment holds validity. It also serves as a gateway for further evaluation of the thesis statement from time to time. The learning of English academically in colleges and universities has been an important subject of discussion among the researchers. The undertaken study could be considered as one further step towards identifying and detecting various factors that influence learning and teaching of English on college level in Pakistan.

By selecting a group of students with different academic backgrounds, (rural schooling where learning of basic English begins from sixth grade and it includes students hailing from English medium background) it is discovered through the statistical data, surveys, questionnaires and the teachers' feedback that the curriculum for EAP at higher levels should be given top priority keeping in view the average intellectual capability of the age group involved. In addition to this, new methods of students' evaluation and tests are to be adopted. As observed throughout the process of study, majority of the students in the public sector colleges in Pakistan lack the basic comprehension of language structure. Consequently, they lack in all the skills that are required for learning any foreign language. Therefore, despite every effort made by their English teacher or the students themselves, they cannot develop confidence to speak, write, comprehend or read English properly. Similarly, they fail to deliver the desired results in their exams. It is an all time need in the public sector

colleges to reform and revise not only the syllabus selection but also to introduce more practical steps in the teaching process.

A need for regular training of the faculty members is also needed. Teachers should be given ample chances to update their knowledge and methods of teaching English according to global demand. The process of teaching is to be carried out from simple to complex techniques. In order to maintain the level of our students with those of same age in other non-English speaking advanced countries, our college teachers should be sent abroad for training by our government. That would not only enhance their knowledge of the subject but also equip them with latest methods of testing and evaluation. New and diverse techniques could be introduced through electronic and social media. Internet access within classrooms, use of projectors and multimedia and now installation of smart boards can be of tremendous interest for the students. Such modern approaches would make them take interest in learning of English in their classrooms and would enhance their creative intellect.

Discussion and Conclusion:

The basic aim of this research was to explore, identify and highlight the shortcomings, problems and obstacles faced by the students who are studying English as one of the compulsory subjects at graduation level. An explorative study that included both qualitative and quantitative methods has been carried out taking into consideration both the teaching side and also the learners' perspective. Data collected from various sources such as interviews, surveys, questionnaires and classroom practices are analyzed to point out the deficiencies, shortcomings and problems faced by students and teachers alike in the process of learning of English at college level in the public sector area. A group of two hundred students both male and female were engaged to fulfil the task. The findings of this study indicate that the course of study in the subject of English at undergraduate level in government colleges fail to provide the required proficiency and fluency to the students after completing their studies. The courses offered in the subject do not suffice for the local employment in offices or markets therefore leaving the graduates in a state of limbo and confusion. Unfortunately, they are not in the position to compete with their own fellow graduates coming from private universities and on the international level, they do not even qualify for applying in the field of their choice.

The statistical data evaluation suggests a strong need of curriculum development that could be implemented and revised from time to time keeping in view the demand of the job market. By practicing traditional approaches of teaching English, the current syllabus included in the academic course of graduation class is deficient to deliver individuals with strong communicative skills. The students who pass out each year are practically unable to show satisfactory performance in writing reports, demand charts, applications or any other business documentation in English on their own. This lack of skillful learning affects their inner self too. They suffer from inferiority complex, remain disillusioned about their capabilities and feel discouraged to enter into any job even after spending more than two years of studying English in college. During their

academic studies, equal importance is needed to be given to their listening, reading, speaking and writing skills.

It is the need of the present day to equip our public sector colleges with all the audio-visual technology so that students get equal opportunities as offered to those studying in private institutions. The syllabus and teaching techniques must be brought to equal level with the international standards. This research not only helps to identify the obstacles in the way of learning English as a globally acknowledged mode of communication but it also opens ways to other researchers to explore many other aspects of English learning where they could formulate more interesting methods that work on micro levels. Keeping in view all the difficulties faced by our graduates in learning English as discussed in this paper, experts would be able to get a first-hand basic understanding of the prevalent issues and step forward to design comparatively simpler courses with an assertion on practical learning of the language skills rather than just rote learning to pass the exams. In this way it is expected that this study would serve as a stepping stone for a more extensive and deeper exploration of English language learning.

Acknowledgement:

Appendix A:

Questions asked from the students.

Questions were asked from the students of different academic levels in order to ascertain the difficulties and requirements of the students in the classrooms and regarding their examinations process.

Questionnaire

1. English language course has enabled me to show satisfactory performance in my other courses.
2. The syllabus offered for the subject of English would cater to my employment needs.
3. Teaching process should focus more on acquisition of all the basic skills.
4. Time span for covering the assigned course is insufficient.
5. The level of English language used in the text books is difficult for me.
6. Teaching techniques and methods applied in the English class are simple and useful.
7. Audio visual and other modern methods are used by our teachers.
8. Students are engaged in group activity and pairs in their English lessons.
9. English language faculty proved inspirational/motivational for me in my likeness towards the subject.
10. English teachers are helpful in identifying and solving any problems during our learning process.
11. In my discipline/ degree subject, it is difficult for me to understand key concepts in the English language.

12. In my subject of specialization, extracts written in English make me uneasy.
13. It is hard for me to go through a text in English and understand its gist within short time.
14. English language is very important in getting my target career.
15. The four basic skills in language learning are the main objectives of our syllabus.
16. How far fluency in spoken and written form is necessary to get a promising career?
17. The present EAP courses being taught in colleges using various modes of technology for e.g computer, mobile phone, internet, and smart boards make learning process easier.
18. EAP syllabus is helpful in acquiring the language skills.
19. Learning grammar and language structure is the core of getting fluency in all the skills.
    Studying English courses helps me to understand other subjects.

Appendix B:

Observation through interviews with faculty members;

A number of well thought and relevant questions were asked from the teachers. During the process, however the sequence of the questions was not followed. These queries helped in probing any problems faced by the teachers in the form of classroom environment, students' assessment and evaluation and syllabus.

Questionnaire

1. Are the topics or essays included in EAP text books at graduation level relatable to the practical lives of the learners?
2. What materials other than white boards are used in English classes?
3. What methods are mainly employed by you in the teaching of English language?
4. How many training workshops are arranged for you throughout the year?
5. Do these workshops help you in enhancing the learning process?
6. How many text books and work sheets do you recommend for EAP course?
7. How often do you conduct seminars, presentations and creative writing sessions in the entire time?
8. Do you include oral and listening skills in your test's module?
9. Is the time duration sufficient for teaching the given syllabus?
10. What more techniques or methods would you suggest to make learning of English easy and interesting?
11. What should be added to the prescribed course to make it more applicable and beneficial during these competitive times?
12. As a teacher of foreign language, what hinderances do you see in the learning process?
13. What remedial steps would you suggest to eradicate the obstacles that any graduation student could be facing in creative writing?
14. How far the present curriculum is helpful to the graduates in getting employment?

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