

**THE LIMITLESSNESS OF THE JOB OPPORTUNITIES OPEN TO 21ST CENTURY
ENGLISH LANGUAGE GRADUATES**

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I thank God immensely for making this day a reality and for His manifold mercies and grace upon our lives.

I will like to appreciate the school authorities for the great wisdom in bringing together this forward looking program that will indeed make the students better graduates ready and equipped to face the Town.

I will like to also appreciate the Head of Department and the entire academic staff for the honor and privilege given me to share my little experience with the great students of this noble institution.

I remember asking one of my lecturers in 1989 when I just entered the university, what I could do with my degree in Linguistics. It was a great concern to me; the lecturer then told me to finish first that I had a lot to do on graduation.

Having graduated and being a player in the business world, I have come to truly appreciate that University education helps one develop the ability to think imaginatively, independently and critically. It helps one to quickly absorb new information and then apply the knowledge to practical problems and new situation.

In fact, University education develops your mind in such a way that you can actually grasp, scrutinize and analytically apply any information necessary at any point in time to provide solution.

We are looking at 'The Limitlessness of the Job Opportunities Open to 21st Century English language Graduates'. I love the choice of that word 'Limitlessness'. The job opportunities are truly infinite. When something is said to be limitless, it actually connotes a state of infinity and boundlessness.

That indeed is a perfect description of the reality of what one can do with a first degree in English Language.

DIRECT RELEVANCE

Talking about the direct relevance of your course in the job market; It is very obvious that a graduate of English language will do very well in the following areas.

- Editorial Board
- Lexicography
- Journalism (Print, online, and electronic media)
- Teaching and Lecturing
- Writing
- Librarian
- Records Management
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OTHER USEFUL AREAS

The literal interaction and exercises the students go through in the course of the study put in your hands skills needed today for top performance today in every field of endeavor.

Some of these skills include but are not limited to:

- Sound oral and written communication strength
- Critical reasoning and analysis
- Articulating and understanding texts, ideas and theories
- Creative thinking

English language, being a global business vehicle puts any one that has good command of it in a very good position to boldly articulate his or her relevance in any environment; thereby making the person relevant in such areas as

- Public Relations
- Marketing
- Advertising
- Telecommunications

With a little improvement in training, one can also function perfectly in the operations section of any establishment or organization.

Obviously, this means the graduate of English language can actually work anywhere including banks, insurance, manufacturing, communications, and even the health sector.

It is indeed a limitless option.

I bring to you today my experience as a Graduate of Linguistics. I started as Teacher in a secondary school during youth service. When I got done with that; I got job in an insurance company as a Front Desk Officer and decided to make a career in insurance, driven by the desire to know why things were done and not just how.

I enrolled for the professional training and as God would have it, I chartered as an insurer in 2003. Good a thing, even if one has doctorate in insurance, you are not recognized as a professional until one charters. To widen my scope in business management, I enrolled for MBA making me more relevant in the management of the business of insurance professionally.

Having worked in virtually all departments of the insurance industry, I decided to stretch my drive into the Broking aspect of the industry and today, by God's grace, I run and manage a properly constituted Insurance Broking Company.

As it is with insurance, so is it with other Finance sector like banks, stock broking and etcetera.

HOW TO GET THERE

FOCUS: Ask yourself why you are here. Know the purpose why you are in school and concentrate on that. The bible says that if your eyes are single, the whole body is full of light. University environment provides opportunity for one to succeed; it also provides room for failure. So, you need to understand and focus on the purpose of your being here.

DETERMINATION: Og Mandino said 'Failure will never overtake me if my determination to succeed is strong enough' You need to be determined to succeed not just in school here but also in life generally. When I was writing my professional exams, at a point the institute planned changing the syllabus. I made up my mind I was not going to be part of the new syllabus, not minding that I was

seven months pregnant, I moved from one center to the other and by God's grace, I was able to make it that year.

HARD WORK: It has been said that hardwork does not guarantee success, but it improves its chances. Dr. T. P. Chia said and I quote 'Hard work does not guarantee success, but no success is possible without hardwork' let me share my experiences with you as an undergraduate. In my first year in the university, I had a lecturer that was terrorizing my life and was bent on 'dealing with me should I fail to yield to his overtures. I reported him to someone in the school and I was advised to prepare properly for the exam and let him fail me. I was actually set as a young girl to head to the senate for my paper to be remarked but as God would have it, he could not fail me. Morale: A lecturer can only reduce your mark but cannot fail you out rightly if you do excellently well.

DILIGENCE: The bible says in the Proverbs and I quote ' seeth thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men' Diligence is characterized by care and perseverance in carrying out tasks. You need to begin to be mindful of details; it will certainly take you far in life. Employment issues at point of interview. People are looking for job but jobs are also looking for people.

POSITIVE MINDSET

Develop the positive and possibility mindset. Your beliefs influence a lot of what comes your way. When I left university, I told myself I was going to get job immediately after my youth service; I was not prepared to wait at home as some would say they stayed home for a while before getting job.

PROACTIVITY

Control your situation by causing something to happen rather than waiting to respond to it after it happens. Whist still in youth service, I scouted for job to the extent I was asked to finish youth service first.

SACRIFICE

To succeed, you need to give up something. As a student, you need give up sleep, **pleasure** and fashion. Getting started in life entails a level of sacrifice generally. I want to believe as students you are paying the price already. Going beyond that, job realities may require a level of positive sacrifice.

Immediately after youth service, I was told after a job interview the company was not prepared to employ anyone at that time. They graciously gave me two

options; to stay at home until they were prepared to employ or start without pay. I quickly jumped for the second option. I did that for three months with a little allowance for three months before getting formally employed.

AVOID UNHEALTHY COMPETITION. Compete with yourself and yourself alone. Excellence is continuous improvement. Make efforts to be better than yourself. Be your own standard. What you are today, ensure you exceed tomorrow. Unhealthy competition brings about unhealthy emotions that work against real success.

Entrepreneurship: Develop entrepreneurial skill by at least being socially responsible today. Seek ways of bettering the society in your immediate sphere of influence. Seek solution to the needs of your environment. As you are doing that, you are distinguishing yourself for leadership.

Leaders are made, though there are some people that are natural born leaders. Even such people will still need to develop the natural leadership tendencies inherent in them, which also boils down to the fact that leaders are actually made.

LIVE TODAY WITH THE FUTURE IN MIND

Remember whatever decision you take today will influence your life tomorrow. Before taking any decision or action, ask yourself what the consequences will be for the future.

TAKE TIME BUILDING INTEGRITY

Someone said ‘ integrity is choosing your thoughts and actions based on values rather than personal pain’. Integrity is from the word integral, which connotes wholeness as opposed to fraction. Righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach, let people trust you. Integrity, skill and passion are key success drivers in business.

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Think differently and creatively. Don’t limit yourself to just what you have been told you can do with your degree, there are indeed limitless exposures and avenues of leaving one’s footsteps in the sands of time. Explore! Discover! Contribute! Broaden your mind!

MANAGE TOMORROW'S EMOTIONS TODAY

I will give a tip into what you are going to need very very dearly on the job. That is emotional stability.

One professional human resource personnel said sometime on radio, that they employ people based on 85% emotional intelligence and 15% for skill. They get in the right people with the right emotions and train them for skill. You all know about intelligence quotient, but I would want to explain emotional intelligence a little bit. Emotional intelligence describes the ability of an individual to recognize their own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different feelings and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior. Begin to develop skills to relate with people. If you are too self centred, you cannot relate with people; companies are not looking for people that will bring issues for them in the organization, you are going to be working with people, so you must learn how to manage and relate with people. You must learn tolerance.

Talking about the 21st Century

The global economy has been transformed by the Internet in the last two decades. In the developed world, the economic engine has shifted toward a post-industrial model of employment, where factory work and routine office work is outsourced or automated by robots and software.

The pace of change is set to dramatically accelerate in the next decade and entire industries and occupations are going to be rendered obsolete. To survive in this rapidly changing economic environment, you need to be regularly exercising your creative muscles by developing your knowledge and skills. This way you will stay sharp and current by constantly upgrading your skills and talents so you can be prepared for unforeseeable challenges and emerging opportunities.

The rapid evolution of mobile connectivity and cloud-based office technology in the last decade means that we are now able to own the means of digital production that are required to work from anywhere and profit from our labor.

Increasingly, digital workers are empowered to create their own jobs opportunities by freelancing, experimenting with new ideas and finding creative ways to use their talents to create value for other people.

A recent study found that 65% of today's grade-school kids will do jobs that haven't been invented yet. The world we live in has never changed at such a rapid pace and this economic landscape of accelerating change demands self-education and continual lifelong learning.

To navigate this challenging job market, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills has identified three types of skills that we all need to be continually working at developing, which they call 21st century skills:

Learning Skills:

Critical Thinking. rely on reason rather than emotion, require evidence, ignore no known evidence, and follow evidence where it leads, and are concerned more with finding the best explanation than being right analyzing apparent confusion and asking questions. weigh the influences of motives and bias, and recognize our own assumptions, prejudices, biases, or point of view.

Creative Thinking. Looking for more possible answers rather than one. Looking at ideas differently. Seeing every idea as containing seeds of something potentially useful.

Collaboration. Working with others to achieve shared goals

Communication

Literacy Skills:

Information Literacy. The United States National Forum on Information Literacy defines information literacy as "... the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand."

Media Literacy. Media Literacy is a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate, create and participate with messages in a variety of forms — from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.

Technology Literacy. Technology literacy is the ability of an individual, working independently and with others, to responsibly, appropriately and effectively use technology tools to access, manage, integrate, evaluate, create and communicate information.

LIFE SKILLS

Flexibility

Initiative

Social Skills

Productivity

Leadership

In today's job market, it is clear that employers want to hire and work with versatile people who have a variety of these 21st century skillsets, a record of continual learning achievement and a digital portfolio that demonstrates their competence, creativity and forward-thinking.

NOT BY POWER, NOT BY MIGHT BUT BY MY SPIRIT SAYS THE LORD! JQ-JESUS QUOTIENT

It is the God factor in us that really and truly makes the difference. In addition to having a high IQ and EQ, you need also the Jesus Quotient. Let Jesus be the reason why you do what you do, He will certainly distinguish you.

When I came to Lagos in 1994, I was told by people very close to me that the way to make it in Lagos as a young girl was through men. Sincerely I was concerned and went to God in prayer.

I stand here today testifying that Jesus is the only Way to success in all respect. The Lord Singlehandedly took me; I didn't have to sleep with any man to get job, all through my different job experiences, I didn't have to mess up to get promoted. Even in marketing department that I was eventually moved to, I didn't have to do it to get business; from then up till now that I by God's grace employ others it has been Jesus all the way; take Him personal and mean it, He will honor you.

Thank you for listening.

God bless you