

Soft Skills for Teachers Professional Growth

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Introduction

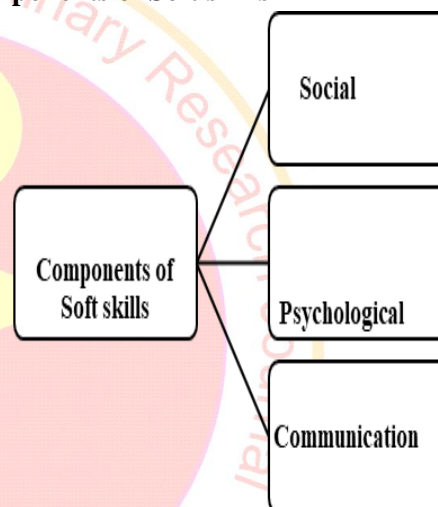
As the Kothari commission (1964-66) rightly observed, of all the factors which influence quality of education, “ the quality, competence and character” of the teachers are the most significant and as the quality of education depends upon various factors like the teaching to which learner is exposed, the educational facilities, the environment available in the institutions and the temperament and approach of a learner towards study the teacher plays a prominent role in enhancing quality in education. So it is necessary for a teacher to acquire all the skills which are essential for his/her teaching profession. Updating the teachers with soft skills is not only important for his/her career expertise but also it helps to mould the future generations as integrated personalities.

Soft skills

Soft skills is a combination of social skills, communication skills, character or personality traits, attitudes, career attribute, social intelligence and emotional intelligence quotients among others that enable people to navigate their environment, work well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals with complementing hard skills. The Collins English Dictionary defines the term "soft skills" as "desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge: they include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude " , which plays a vital role in professional success of the individuals. They help the person to excel in his/her workplace and are also called human skill complementing the hard skill, they are also the interpersonal and human relation skill which refers to the cluster of personality

traits such as social graces, facility for language, personal habits, friendliness and optimism.

Components of Soft skills



I. Social :

The social component of soft skills incorporates the group interaction and welfare of the outdoor program participants which includes the understanding of group dynamics, the ability to resolve group conflict, develop and provide a supportive climate, being sensitive to the need of others and establishing effective group relations.

II. Psychological :

The psychological component combines the skill necessary to relate to the participants presence of mind and behaviour few of the examples of the psychological component include building a climate is trust within a group, understanding what motivation is, and how to stimulate it and it also includes promoting values, understanding attitudes of others, team building, developing ethics and responding to a person's risk in a trustworthy manner.

III. Communication:

The communication component combines written, verbal, and nonverbal transmission and

exchange of information. The Examples of this component range from being able to “ think in our feet” and speak clearly in front of the group for interpreting nonverbal expressions. Other example may include expressing directions in written format (or) listening attentively.

Importance of Soft skills

Relationship play a vital role in human life and one of the key to successful relationships is development of soft skills and if a teacher/ student who has interpersonal problems such as difficulty in taking decisions, suffer from lack of soft skills and so it is essential for both teacher and a taught which will be helpful to make their dealings effective and successful

- To handle interpersonal relations.
- To take appropriate decisions.
- To communicate effectively.
- To have good impression and impact.
- To gain professional development.

Soft skills can enhance the career mobility of a person and increase the chances of success in launching the job she/he wants and are also essential for a student to develop so that she/he can cope up with different situations in the study/workplace.

Soft skills for prospective teachers

There are various Soft skills essential to succeed in any job environment few of them are briefed below

1. Communication skills

The teachers must have excellent communication skills to succeed as a teacher so as to explain his/her lessons in a clear way which can be understood by children of different ages and abilities. She/he must be able to be tactful while communicating with parents. She/he must also be an effective team member with Colleagues and the Principal .Finally, a teachers verbal and written language skills must be impeccable some important component of communication skill are :

a) Listening

To become a good teacher, she/he must have excellent listening skill which will enable them

to face a lot of questions from students and she/he must be able to understand what the students are trying to convey when they speak.

b) Presentation

It is important to be able to communicate teachers thoughts and ideas effectively using a variety of tools and resources but the teacher needs to cater and develop the use these skills throughout his/her career.

2. Leadership skills

Leadership skills are an essential component in positioning executives to make thoughtful decisions about their organization's mission and goals, and properly allocate resources to achieve those directives. Valuable leadership skills include the ability to delegate, inspire and communicate effectively which includes include honesty, confidence, commitment and creativity.

- A teacher should have the ability to engage with people to persuade, influence and be very versatile in doing that.
- A teacher require a whole set of skills for leading and setting objectives, giving feedback, sometimes saying hard things, budgeting the available resources.

3. Interpersonal skills

Teaching can be considered as fifty percent knowledge and fifty percent interpersonal skills. That means, while teaching, a teacher should not just maintain the quantity of his lecture but also the quality the lecture which can be beneficial for him to develop interpersonal skills.

A teacher should be -

- Able to support and encourage others.
- Able to give receive constructive criticism as well as able to negotiate.
- Able to listen to and value others opinions.
- Able to convey his/her point clearly to a student group.

4. Time management skill

It is important to prioritize your tasks as per the institution needs or the project needs and execute them in the descending order of priority.

One can use aids like.

- Planners
- Maintain a list of things to be done
- Prepare action plan
- Activity logs
- Review the timelines and progress closely and regularly

5. Team work skill

Teamwork is to develop a strong sense of commitment and responsibilities and It also develops qualities like respecting the thoughts and options of others in the group. The success of the entire program depends on the cooperation extended and hence skill of cooperation is essential among the teachers to organize the educators by giving related activities such as group work, group discussion, project and group assignment.

6. Problem- solving skill

Problem solving is a planned attack upon a difficulty or perplexity for the purpose of finding a solution where It enables a teacher to exercise ,control over his activities and learning environment. The teacher has to define the problem clearly and the success of the problem solving technique needs the ability to seen the problem clearly and the power to analyze with a keen discernment and the faculty to synthesize and draw conclusions with an uncanny accuracy.

A teacher should

- Focus more on the problem where it occurs.
- Develop relationship between the students and the background of the problems.
- Have careful and systematic approach with an active process of search.
- Have positive attitude and self-confidence in solving the problem.

Soft skills : A need of an hour for teaching community

The teachers should improve their soft skills for effective teaching-learning process, for the following reasons.

1) Soft skill help advance teacher career

To bring value to institution and student, teachers are getting more involved in many non-teaching tasks but the teacher needs to cater their interpersonal skills to top notch to deliver results with teacher colleagues and people in non-teaching areas the teacher has to work with.

2) Certification is not an end in itself Technical skills do matter

In order to succeed in teaching, teachers definitely need to have solid technical skills with a good grasp of the fundamentals and to make any headway, teachers need to be solid on the ground with hard tech know-how where the institution requires a teacher to fortify himself on a continuous basis with up-to-date tech knowledge and concepts. Training, certification, the internet, books ,provide opportunities for lifelong learning. A teacher needs soft skills to create opportunity for himself as it is the essence of education and the essence of teacher technical ability and so one may use soft skills to cultivate opportunities with both hands.

3) Soft skills empower teacher in creating opportunities

Soft skills are useful for creating and taking advantage of opportunities like job, career and administration. No matter how great teacher technical skills are but in job hunting, teacher's marketing skills should be unsurpassed.

4) Soft skills not only improve teachers career, but also offer personal growth

The acquisition of soft skills empowers teacher to build flexibility into future teaching career plans where most of the soft skills are regarded as transferable skills. e.g communication, administration and teamwork, which are needed in nearly all aspects of life, not just for teacher career alone, since teachers need to grow not just as techies but as persons.

5) Developing professional ethics is vital to teacher career

Stop negative conduct whether deliberate, due to ignorance, or because of an unsupportive environment. Teachers can't afford to be ignorant, insensitive or unprofessional simply because they feel that teachers are technical gurus. Nobody is perfect but Developing teachers

technical skills while actively cultivating poor soft skills is like moving one steps forward.

Conclusion:

Prospective teachers have a great responsibility in developing the society with values and good culture as they are the transmitters of culture and we know that to transmit the culture in the society, soft skills are needed at different levels and so the prospective teachers who are able to acquire these skills not only find work in the career of their choice but they also experience stronger and happier relationship in their personal lives.

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