

ST. XAVIER'S COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (AUTONOMOUS)

(Re-accredited (3rd Cycle) by NAAC at 'A' Grade with CGPA: 3.67)

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PRODUCING EMPLOYABLE TEACHERS: PROSPECTS, CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES



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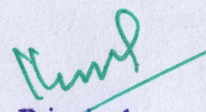
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Soft Skills for the Effective Teaching Learning Process

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Introduction

According to Dash (2001) "soft skills comprise a cluster of personality traits, social graces, facility with language personal habits, friendliness, and optimism which individuals acquire as they grow and mature". Soft skills are "the skills, abilities and traits that pertain to personality, attitude and behavior rather than to formal technical knowledge" (Fleischer and Dressner, 2002). Soft skills are also called human skill and people skill that complement the hard skill. They are the interpersonal and human relation skill.

Kate Larenz (2004) says that soft skills "refer to a cluster of personal qualities, habits, attitudes and social graces that make someone a good employee and compatible to work with." According to the partnership for 21st century skills 2006 report, soft skills are an applied skill as opposed to basic knowledge skills. The most important of these skills are: professionalism and work ethic, oral and written communications, teamwork and collaboration and critical thinking and problem solving. These are the very important skills when the educators seek to impart to their students.

Types of Soft Skills

i. Informative, instructive and explanatory soft skills

In the case of conversation; a message has to be conveyed. When the message is conveyed make that the attention of all participants is fixed on the subject that has to be passed on. Make sure that everybody is able to hear what is said. The use of presentation material, flip charts or a white board will support verbal information.

ii. Convincing, negotiating and decisive soft skills

The world is not always in agreement nor does it act like one would like to see it act. This is the reason why convincing, negotiating and decisive soft skills are necessary. In order to get a point across it is important to be convincing and firm. At the same time the art is to know when to be convincing or decisive and when enough time has been spent on negotiations.

iii. Listening and monitoring and soft skills

Listening is not only a matter of using the ears but it is also a matter of using the eyes. When people are talking they are not only using their mouth to express words, but they also use body language to subconsciously emphasize what they are saying. So, 'listening' with the eyes is a way to 'listen' between the lines.

iv. Communicative and socializing soft skills

This type of soft skills is a combination of the previous ones. Listening and talking should be in balance with each other. The purpose for using this communicative, socializing soft skill type is not solely to get something across or understand people better. The main purpose is to communicate, which means listening and speaking in a right atmosphere when working in groups.

Components of Soft Skills

i. Social

The social component of soft skills incorporates the group interaction and welfare of the outdoor program participants. It includes group dynamics the ability to resolve group understanding about motivation, promoting values, ability to stimulate developing ethics and responding affirmative to a person's risk in a trust manner.

ii. Communication

The communication components written, verbal and non-verbal transmission and exchange of information. It includes the ability to think how one feel to express the feeling clearly in front of the group, listening attentively, interpret non verbal expression and expressing directions in written format.

Importance of Soft Skills

Relationship play a vital role in human life and one of the keys to successful relationships is development of soft skills. A teacher / student, who have interpersonal problems difficulty in taking decision, support from lack of soft skills. Hence, a continuous, practice in soft skills is essential for students and teachers. This will make their dealings effective and successful.

Soft skills are very important

- i. To handle interpersonal relations.
- ii. To take appropriate decisions.
- iii. To communicate effectively.
- iv. To have good impression and impact.
- v. To gain professional development.

Soft skills can enhance the career mobility of a person and increase the chances of success in launching the job he/she wants. They are essential for a student to be developed so that he/she can cope with different situations in the study/work place.

Teacher and Soft Skills

The professional ethics of a teacher is to produce quality students with sound physical and mental health. It is also necessary to make them know how to handle students of varied age and standard. The teachers have to abandon their traditional authoritarian role teaching in order to develop more interactive relationship with the learners, recognize and respond to the learners' needs, interests and motivations. They should encourage the learners to take responsibility of their learning, take risks and to discover knowledge as student's process is harmful. For a progressive school or an institution, their faculty members should possess the soft skills.

Soft skills are habits that can be cultivated more than they are innate traits. Students who possess these have the potential of performing well in learning while paving the way to have good relationships in all areas of their life. When compared to hard skills, soft skills are highly valued by the employers of the teachers, because they develop:

- i. the ability to compromise, negotiate and persuade.

- ii. to do a job thoroughly and correctly
- iii. the ability to admit and correct mistakes
- iv. good manners and courteous
- v. honesty and adaptability
- vi. problem solving -ability to see things from a different perspective
- vii. mentoring and teaching and is also open to learning and loves to learn
- viii. confident but humble
- ix. ability to lead but also work as part of a divers team
- x. common sense

Soft Skills for the Effective Teaching Learning Process

The teacher has to improve the soft skills for the effective teaching-learning process for the following reasons.

- i. Certification is not an end itself: Teaching skills do matter
- ii. Soft skills help teaching professionals advance their career
- iii. Soft skill empower teacher and create opportunities
- iv. Soft skills not only improve teacher's career, they also offer personal growth
- v. Teacher technical skills and empowerment
- vi. Soft skills help teacher grow beyond money motivation
- vii. Developing professional ethics is vital to teaching career

Conclusion

Considering the fact that during the last decades in society the perceived importance of soft skills has increased significantly. It is of high importance for everyone to acquire adequate skills beyond academic or technical knowledge..

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