



SOFT SKILLS: NEED OF HOUR

Sumitra, Ph. D.

Assistant Professor, J.G. College of Education, Sirsa



Scholarly Research Journal's is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com

Introduction: Soft skills are non-technical skills that relate to how you work. They include how you interact with colleagues, how you solve problems, and how you manage your work. Soft skills are the personal attributes of each individual, as well as personality traits, social skills and communication skills. Soft skills characterize how an individual interacts with peers within and outside the work environment. Different from the so-called hard skills, soft skills involve emotions and intuitions, both responsible for the ability to express and interpret the feelings of another person. Teachers need to be highly skilled in all these areas to be excellent in their profession.

For a teacher, it is not just important to give a quality lecture; they also need to be able to transmit knowledge, skills and values at the same time. Soft skills for teachers are thus as important as their in-depth knowledge of the particular subject which they teach. It is only through communication skills that a teacher can introduce creative and effective solutions to the students' problems.

Meaning of Soft Skills

Soft skills relate to how you work. Soft skills include interpersonal (people) skills, communication skills, listening skills, time management, and empathy, among others. They are among the top skills employers seek in the candidates they hire, because soft skills are important for just about every job. Hiring managers typically look for job candidates with soft skills because they make someone more successful in the workplace. Someone can be excellent with technical, job-specific skills, but if they can't manage their time or work within a team, they may not be successful in the workplace.

How Soft Skills Work

Soft skills are also important to the success of most employers. After all, nearly every job requires employees to engage with others in some way. Another reason hiring managers and employers look for applicants with soft skills is that soft skills are transferable skills that can be used regardless of the person's job. This makes job candidates with soft skills very adaptable and flexible employees.

Soft skills are particularly important in customer-based jobs. These employees are in direct contact with customers. It takes several soft skills to be able to listen to a customer and provide that customer with helpful and polite service. Even if you're not in a client-facing role, you need to be able to get along with co-workers, managers, vendors, and other people you interact with at work.

Types of Soft Skills

Soft skills include the personal attributes, personality traits, and communication abilities needed for success on the job. Soft skills characterize how a person interacts in his or her relationships with others. Soft skills include:

- Adaptability
- Communication
- Compromise
- Creative thinking
- Dependability
- Leadership
- Listening
- Work ethic
- Teamwork
- Positivity
- Time management
- Motivation
- Problem-solving
- Critical thinking
- Conflict resolution
- Negotiation

Essential Soft Skills for Teachers

Whether a teacher specializes in math, English, science, or history, it's important that they master their specific area of expertise. Whereas an educator's proficiency in their subject area can be measured in terms of grades, certifications, and exams, there are some more intangible qualities that can't be measured that can help them become better, more effective teachers. Sometimes referred to as "soft skills," these qualities can't be measured, but can still be developed over time to help educators better connect with students, colleagues, and parents of students.

Essential Soft Skills for Teachers

1. Confidence.
2. Work Ethic.
3. Optimism.
4. Emotional Awareness.
5. Proactiveness.
6. Inclusivity.
7. Stress Management.

"It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but people who can manage change."

The importance of soft skills cannot be stressed enough and is not one that can be brushed aside. A Harvard study showed that 85% of one's success at the workplace is attributed to soft skills and only 15% to technical skills. No matter how great your subject knowledge is, to become a good teacher, you need to have certain soft skills. Not all teachers would have these skillsets and that's alright. These soft skills can be developed over time if you pay enough attention to bettering yourself.

Teaching is not just about reading out what's in the textbook or covering the syllabus on time. It is much more complex than that. Teachers have to juggle multiple roles and responsibilities on a daily basis. To do this effectively, these soft skills are essential. Without further ado, let's understand what soft skills are and what are the seven essential soft skills for teachers.

Essential Soft Skills for Teachers

Soft skills are non-technical skills. These might be innate skills or can be developed over time. The most important soft skills that every teacher should possess are:

1. Confidence: There is a lot of difference between reading out the laws of motion and describing the same. The thin line of difference lies in the way of presentation. A teacher won't be able to present well if they are not confident enough. They must be able to face a room full of students and own the classroom regardless of whether it is online or offline. A confident teacher will be able to influence students and create a good impact. Imagine how chaotic the classroom would be if the teacher is timid and shy! This does not mean that you have to create a hostile atmosphere. Being confident is about believing in your skills and teaching capabilities and conveying the concepts in a crisp and clear manner.

2. Work Ethic: Ethics is nothing but a set of unwritten rules that an individual has to abide by. When it comes to a workplace or a school or college in this case, there are certain work ethics that the teacher should follow. A teacher must not humiliate students in front of the class when their performance is not up to the mark. Talking ill about other teachers, favoritism, etc. are unacceptable. The code of ethics for teachers and educators is founded on the belief that students should come first. Everything else comes later. The primary goal of the teacher should be to foster healthy relationships in the classroom and with their colleagues. Brainstorming and teamwork are pivotal when it comes to teaching. Teachers will have to work together to come up with effective strategies and methods to teach. A good work ethic will help teachers to be successful and hence, this is one of the most important soft skills to have.

3. Optimism: Things won't always be daisies and sunlight. There are things that can go wrong and there will be times where you have to be stronger than you are. Being a teacher is not always breezy. The idea is to stay positive no matter what comes your way. Optimism is an important soft skill that teachers should have because teachers radiate their positivity and this transfers to their students. You should always teach your students to look at the positive side of things. If the teacher is negative. The energy of the classroom tends to be negative and effective learning cannot happen in a negative environment.

4. Emotional Awareness: Being in control of one's emotions is yet another important soft skill that teachers should have. Emotional awareness also means being able to understand what the other person is going through and reciprocating accordingly. Understanding the students and being able to guide them is an important skill to have and emotional awareness will help teachers to teach much more effectively.

5. Proactiveness: Foreseeing things or anticipating things and being prepared for the same will help teachers. A classroom can get super restless and chaotic if the students are left

unsupervised. Now that classes have moved online, what should students do if the classes don't start on time? What if your power goes off and you are not able to join the class? As a teacher, you must be able to picture things prior and have a backup plan with you. The same goes for the syllabus and lesson plan. There might be unforeseen delays and disturbances. Allow yourself enough time to convey the lesson to your students. Similarly, teachers must be proactive so that the teaching-learning process is efficient.

6. Inclusivity: Each kid learns differently and at a different pace. The teacher must be inclusive and involve all the students in the teaching-learning process. Favouritism is a big no when it comes to teaching. Teachers must be able to understand different learning styles and theories of learning. They should implement methods that are useful for each and every student in the classroom. The point is not to make any child feel left out.

7. Stress Management: While teaching is a profession that brings joy and satisfaction, it is also accompanied by stress. The performance of students. Lesson planning, classroom management, report cards, managing the classroom community, there are a hundred things that a teacher has to take care of. This might feel overwhelming and hence, stress management is something that the teachers should be able to ace. As mentioned, there are things that might go wrong, and being able to manage them effectively is what makes a teacher a great one.

Conclusion: The essence of education is to create able individuals who can make informed decisions. Teaching is not a cakewalk and while it has its share of stress, it is the profession that brings in a lot of joy and pride. Teachers across the globe strive every day to give quality education to their students. These soft skills help them to become more efficient.

References

NCERT (2005) Draft, curriculum framework (2005).

Pamela Milne. A step-by-step approach to develop sophisticated people skills.

Vineet Gill. Soft skills as important as a degree for job.

Vishwash Kothari. Training programme on soft skill development.

Pachauri, D & Nand V.K. Fundamental of Educational Technology (2007)