Learning Outcomes

- Explain what soft skills are
- Describe why you should emphasize developing soft skills
- Identify how to develop activities focused on developing soft skills
Soft Skills

What?

A simple term for a complex set of personal qualities
Origin of the term “soft skills”

• U.S. Army training manual in the 1972
• “skills, abilities, and traits that pertain to personality, attitude, and behavior rather than to formal or technical knowledge.”

Many Other Names

• Power Skills
• Employability Skills
• Communication Skills
• People Skills
• Emotional Intelligence

• Behavioral Skills
• Leadership Skills
• Human Skills
• Personal Skills
• Interpersonal Skills

Soft vs Hard Skills

**Soft skills** are character traits and interpersonal skills that characterize a person’s relationship with other people.

**Hard skills** are specific, quantifiable, and teachable abilities that can be defined and measured.
**Soft Skills get a Bad Rap!**

- They’re soft...
- Not measurable or teachable...
- Not very important...

- The research counters that and says they are hard!
- They are measurable and teachable!
- They are important!

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**Bad News**

Some people are more innately better than others at soft skills

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**Good News**

Soft skills can be trained, coached, and developed
Changing Nature of Soft Skills

No longer easy to tell the tone of voice

Why?

Because there is a need!
The Disconnect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Considered Essential by hiring managers</th>
<th>Rated Proficiency by college graduates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork/Collaboration</td>
<td>97.5%</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking/Problem Solving</td>
<td>99.2%</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism/Work Ethic</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>42.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral/Written Communications</td>
<td>95.9%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Management</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE)

Reframing the WHY

We must be willing to disrupt the way we do business or someone else will!

21st Century Challenge

80% of executives believe we need to fuse the 3 R’s with the 4 C’s
“We hire for hard skills. We fire for soft skills.”
Teaching **Soft Skills**

_Cannot be taught in a vacuum but must be…_  
- Introduced  
- Developed  
- Refined  
- Practiced  
- Reinforced

Follow the Universal Design for Learning  
- Enable students to demonstrate learning through multiple modalities  
- Encourage the use of technology  
- Include opportunities for “do-overs”  
- Provide instructions identifying steps to completion  
- Encourage students to present their own thoughts and opinions  
- Provide feedback in multiple forms  
- Include opportunities for students to collaborate  
- Provide opportunities for students to ask questions

Learning Content

- Engaging and fun  
- Easy to understand and complete  
- Relevant to their needs  
- Applicable not only to workplace but their personal lives as well  
- Presented in ways that make it easy to digest and retain
Implementation Options

• Offer as a stand-alone course (1-2 credits)
• Embed components into curriculum of every program
• Offer as CWE course

Teaching Soft Skills

1. Teamwork
2. Communication
3. Positive Attitude
4. Critical Thinking
5. Professionalism
6. Time Management

Teamwork

• Accept feedback
• Collaborative
• Customer service
• Deal with difficult situations
• Deal with office politics
• Disability awareness
• Diversity awareness
• Emotional intelligence
• Empathetic
• Establish interpersonal relationships

• Intercultural competence
• Interpersonal skills
• Influential
• Networking
• Persuasive
• Self-awareness
• Selling skills
• Social skills
• Team building
• Team player
Teaching Teamwork

Discussion - Teamwork

- Teamwork is essential to workplace success.
- Like a basketball team working together to set up the perfect shot, every team member has a specific role to play.
- Although it may seem as if one player scored the basket, the basket was made possible by many people’s planning, coordination, and cooperation to get that player the ball.
- It’s the same in workplace - when everyone works together to accomplish goals, everyone achieves more.

Activity – Teamwork Quotes

- Select the quote you like best
- Join up with others who liked your quote the best
- Discuss and come to consensus on the reasons why you liked the quote
- Report back to the main group
1. “Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”
   - Henry Ford
2. “Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships.”
   - Michael Jordan
3. “Teamwork divides the task and multiplies the success.”
   - Unknown
4. “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”
   - Helen Keller
5. “Lots of people want to ride with you in the limo, but what you want is someone who will take the bus with you when the limo breaks down.”
   - Oprah Winfrey

Conclusion - Teamwork

• Employers rate the value of being a “team player” extremely important.
• Why do they think this is so important?
• A good friend comes to you seeking advice. He just got in trouble at work for not being a team player. He really likes his job and is not quite sure what to do.
• What suggestions would you give to your friend to help him improve?
• How might he respond to his boss?

Teaching Soft Skills

1. Teamwork
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Communication Skills

- Able to listen
- Listening
- Negotiation
- Nonverbal communication
- Persuasion
- Presentation
- Public speaking

Teaching Communication

- Read body language
- Storytelling
- Verbal communication
- Visual communication
- Writing reports/proposals
- Writing skills

Discussion - Communication

- Listening is an important part of communication

You have two ears and one mouth. Use them accordingly.
Activity - Listen and Hear!

- Give everyone a sheet of paper
- Pick up your sheet of paper and hold it in front of you.
- Close your eyes and listen carefully to my directions
- The rules:
  1. No peaking
  2. No questions

- The first thing I want you to do is fold your sheet of paper in half (Pause)
- Now, tear off the upper right-hand corner (Pause)
- Fold the paper in half again and tear off the upper left-hand corner (Pause)
- Fold in half again in half (Pause)
- Now tear off the lower right-hand corner of the sheet (Pause)

- Now, open your eyes and unfold your paper. If I did a good job of communicating and you did a good job of listening, all of our sheets should look exactly the same!
- Hold up your sheet for everyone to see. Compare your sheet with others.
- Why did no one's paper match yours exactly?
Conclusion - Communication

• Part of being a good communicator is recognizing that people may need to receive information in different ways in order to be successful.

• If the goal of this activity was really to have everyone’s snowflakes look exactly the same, what changes could have been made to the directions?

• Work in small group to create a definition of “Good Communication” by making a list of responsibilities for being a good communicator and a good listener.

Responsibilities of being a...

| Good Communicator | Good Listener |

Teaching Soft Skills

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Positive Attitude

- Confident
- Cooperative
- Courteous
- Energetic
- Enthusiastic
- Friendly
- High Energy
- Honest
- Patient
- Respectable
- Respectful
- Sense of humor
- Work-life balance

Teaching Positive Attitude

Discussion - positive attitude

- Having a positive attitude can help get you a job and get promoted once in a job
- Employers promote employees who not only produce, but also motivate others in the workplace
- Many employers would rather hire an enthusiastic, but inexperienced, worker than someone with perfect qualifications but less-than-positive attitude
- Let’s watch a short video emphasizing a positive attitude during a job interview
### The importance of getting a good first job

- 50% of college grads underemployed in first job
  - 66% remain underemployed five years later
  - 50% remain underemployed a decade later
- Today’s students laser-focused on getting a good first job in a growing sector of the economy

Strada Institute for the Future of Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity - positive attitude video</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="https://youtu.be/vk.99seC.1" alt="Skills" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conclusion - positive attitude

- What are some takeaways from the video about positive attitude during a job interview?
- You have a friend who is getting ready for a job interview. This friend is not feeling too positive lately and you want to help her get ready for the interview.
- What are some things you could do to help your friend prepare?
Teaching Soft Skills

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Critical Thinking

- Adaptable
- Artistic sense
- Creativity
- Critical observer
- Critical thinking
- Design sense
- Desire to learn
- Flexible
- Innovator
- Logical thinking
- Problem solving
- Research
- Resourceful
- Think outside the box
- Tolerant of change and uncertainty
- Troubleshooting
- Value education
- Willing to learn

Teaching Problem Solving & Critical Thinking
Discussion - Problem Solving

• Problem solving and critical thinking refers to the ability to use knowledge, facts, and data to effectively solve problems. This does not mean you need to have an immediate answer but means you have the ability to think on your feet, assess problems, and find solutions
• Working together to solve problems is not always easy
• Occasionally, one person on a team might display a bad attitude and cause the team to be less than productive

Activity - Problem Solving Skit

• Divide the class into smaller groups
• Each group is assigned one difficult situation
• Task - develop a skit and act out BOTH a positive and negative alternative for working through and solving your assigned problem

• What would you say to or do about a team member who...
  • Is always late
  • Starts side conversations during discussions
  • Gets upset when his/her recommendations are not followed
  • Hogs the conversation/discussion
  • Leaves before the job/work is done
  • Constantly jokes and get people off track
  • Refuses to work with a “certain” team member
  • Won’t share in the leadership role
  • Just sits there
Conclusion - Problem Solving

• Should everyone on the team be “dealt” with in the same manner? Are there ever any exceptions? Explain.
• Think about a time when you were on a team where one member wasn’t contributing
  • How did that make you feel?
  • How was the situation handled?

Teaching Soft Skills

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Professionalism

• Ability
• Acumen
• Competence
• Dedicated
• Effective
• Efficiency
• Experienced
• Expertise
• Know-how
• Proficiency
• Reliable
• Skillful
• Thoroughness
• Willingness
Teaching Professionalism

Discussion - Professionalism

- In order to succeed and advance in ANY job you need to demonstrate professionalism.
- Professionalism does not mean wearing a suit or carrying a briefcase.
- Professionalism is not just one thing but a combination of qualities that include conducting yourself with responsibility, being ethical, team-oriented, act with integrity, be accountability, and demonstrate strong communication, interpersonal, and problem solving skills.

Activity - Professionalism Scenarios

- Image today is your first day on a new job.
- Why might it be important to make a good impression on your first day?
- Let's explore some professional work attitude scenarios based on Justin, a stock clerk at a local grocery store.
Scenario #1

• Justin does only what he is told to do, no more and no less.

• Does Justin have a good attitude toward work? Why or why not?

Scenario #2

• One day, Justin was stocking shelves. The item he was stocking belonged in another part of the store. A co-worker, trying to help Justin, told me that he was making a mistake. Justin insisted that he was right and started an argument.

• Was it right for Justin to argue with a co-worker?
• What could Justin have done differently?

Scenario #3

• Before Justin went home last night, he overheard a personal conversation between two co-workers and the supervisor. The next morning, Justin told everyone what he had heard. The entire grocery store was soon talking about what Justin had told them.

• Was Justin correct in discussing what he had overheard? Explain.
• When Justin’s supervisor found out about what had happened, she called Justin into her office for a conference.

• What do you think she said to Justin?
• If you were one of Justin’s co-workers, what advice would you give him?
• If you were Justin’s supervisor, what could you do to help him become a better employee?

Conclusion - Professionalism

• Describe Justin’s work attitude
• What do you think would be the most difficult part about being Justin’s supervisor?
• How can a supervisor or boss affect your job performance?
• How can co-worker attitudes affect your job performance?
• What are some skills you would like to develop so, one day, you can be a GREAT supervisor?

Teaching Soft Skills

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Time Management

- Effective planner
- Organizing time
- Prioritization of tasks
- Process of planning time
- Time allocation
- Time analysis
- Time control
- Time optimization
- Time scheduling
- Timing
- Working time arrangement

Teaching

Time Management

Discussion - Time Management

- Time management is the ability to plan and control how you spend the hours in your day to effectively accomplish your goals.
- Skills involved in managing your time include planning for the future, setting goals, prioritizing tasks, and monitoring where your time actually goes.
- Can you be effective doing two or more tasks at the same time (e.g., multi-tasking)?
- Let’s find out!
Activity - Part 1

- Get out a sheet of paper
- When I say “START” I want you to simultaneously:
  - Write down your typical morning routine (make a bullet list or in paragraph format) as detailed as you can
  - Count out loud by ones as far as you can
- You will have one minute.
- Ready. Set. START
- Record the number you reached and the number of words you wrote.

Activity - Part 2

- Write down your typical morning routine (make a bulleted list or paragraph format) as detailed as you can
- Record the number of words you wrote
- Count backwards from 100 by ones as far as you can
- Record the number you reached

Conclusion - time management

- Compare your results from Part 1 and 2
  - The number of words you wrote
  - The number you reached
- Observations?
- How effective are you at multitasking?
- How do you feel?
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Now, it’s your turn!

• Each table is assigned a different soft skill.
• Discuss that skill with those at your table and decide on an activity that could teach that skill.
• Develop a draft lesson to teach that skill.
  • Discussion
  • Activity & Extension Activity
  • Conclusion

Integrating Soft Skills into a Course

Handout Page 2
3-2-1 Reflective Activity

Resources

Questions?

SACSCOC AM 2018 – New Orleans