PSG College of Pharmacy

Best Practice II

Strategies to Empower Soft Skills

Introduction

Soft skills are essential qualities that students can develop to enhance their academic performance, personal growth, and future career success. While technical skills and academic knowledge are important, soft skills play a significant role in shaping students into well-rounded individuals who can effectively navigate various challenges and opportunities.

Objective of the practice

- ➢ To improve verbal and non-verbal communication skills, this includes active listening, clarity in expression and empathy.
- ➢ To foster positive relationships and effective collaboration within team members including conflict resolution, negotiation and networking.
- ➢ To cultivate leadership qualities such as decision-making, delegation, motivation and mentorship.
- ➢ To increase self-awareness, social awareness and relationship management skills to navigate interpersonal dynamics effectively.
- ➢ To develop their ability for adapting a change, manage stress and bounce back from setbacks.

The practice

- ➢ Soft skill classes are integrated along with curriculum for all courses, which can be reinforced through class presentations, group discussions and writing assignments.
- ➢ The classes will cover on the topics such as communication, leadership, emotional intelligence, time management and conflict resolution.
- ➢ Classes are conducted by professionals from PHASE group to deliver the lectures and seminars on soft skill topics which can provide students with valuable insights and perspectives from practitioners in the field.
- ➢ These activities can help students to identify their strengths and areas for improvement and receive constructive feedback from the professionals.
- ➢ Students will be assessed by self-reflection activities and feedback mechanisms to track their progress.

Advantages

Soft skill programs offer numerous advantages for students, providing them with a competitive edge in both academic and professional environments. Here are some key benefits:

Enhanced Academic Performance: Soft skills such as communication, critical thinking, and time management can significantly improve a student's ability to understand and retain information, engage in meaningful discussions, and meet academic deadlines effectively.

Preparation for the Workplace: Soft skills are highly valued by employers. Participating in soft skill programs helps students develop the interpersonal, problem-solving, and leadership abilities necessary for success in the workforce.

Improved Collaboration and Teamwork: Soft skill programs often involve group activities, projects, and discussions, fostering collaboration and teamwork among students. Learning to work effectively with others prepares students for collaborative work environments they will encounter in their careers.

Enhanced Communication Skills: Effective communication is essential in both personal and professional contexts. Soft skill programs help students develop verbal, written, and non-verbal communication skills, enabling them to express their ideas clearly, listen attentively, and engage in constructive dialogue.

Increased Self-Awareness and Emotional Intelligence: Soft skill programs encourage students to reflect on their strengths, weaknesses, and emotions, leading to greater self-awareness and emotional intelligence. Students learn to manage their emotions, empathize with others, and navigate social interactions with confidence.

Adaptability and Resilience: Soft skill programs teach students to adapt to new situations, embrace challenges, and learn from setbacks. Developing adaptability and resilience helps students navigate academic and professional transitions with confidence and perseverance.

Career Advancement Opportunities: Employers often seek candidates who possess a combination of technical expertise and soft skills. Participating in soft skill programs enhances students' employability and increases their chances of securing internships, jobs, and advancement opportunities.

Personal Growth and Well-Being: Soft skill programs contribute to students' personal growth and overall well-being by fostering positive relationships, self-confidence, and a sense of purpose. Students who develop strong soft skills are better equipped to navigate life's

challenges and pursue their goals with enthusiasm and resilience.

Overall, soft skill programs offer valuable opportunities for students to develop essential abilities that contribute to their academic success, professional advancement, and personal fulfillment. Investing in soft skill development early in one's academic journey can have long-lasting benefits that extend well beyond the classroom. By implementing these practices, students are equipped with dynamic learning environment that they need to succeed academically, professionally and personally.

Challenges

While conducting soft skills programs for students can be highly beneficial, there are several challenges that educators and program organizers may encounter:

Engagement and Participation: Maintaining student engagement and participation can be challenging, especially if students perceive soft skills programs as irrelevant or boring. Educators must design interactive, relevant, and engaging activities to capture students' interest and involvement.

Assessment and Evaluation: Measuring the effectiveness of soft skills programs and assessing students' progress can be complex. Traditional assessment methods, such as exams and quizzes, may not adequately capture students' development of soft skills. Educators need to develop appropriate evaluation tools and criteria to assess soft skill acquisition.

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Cultural and linguistic differences among students may present challenges in delivering soft skills programs effectively. Educators must consider diverse backgrounds, experiences, and communication styles to ensure inclusivity and accessibility.

Integration into Curriculum: Integrating soft skills development into the existing curriculum can be challenging, particularly in subjects where technical content takes precedence. Finding opportunities to seamlessly incorporate soft skills instruction into academic coursework requires careful planning and collaboration among educators.

Overcoming Stigma: Some students may perceive soft skills programs as less important when compared to technical or academic courses. Educators must address misconceptions and highlight the relevance and significance of soft skills in academic achievement and future success.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including effective communication, stakeholder buy-in, tailored instruction, and ongoing assessment and evaluation. Despite these challenges, the benefits of soft skills development for students justify the effort and investment required to overcome them.

Evidence of success

Evidence of success in student soft skill programs can be demonstrated through various means, including:

Improved Academic Performance: Monitoring students' academic performance before and after participating in soft skills programs can reveal any improvements in grades, class participation, and engagement. Success may be indicated by higher GPAs, increased attendance rates, and enhanced critical thinking skills demonstrated in coursework.

Feedback and Surveys: Collecting feedback from students, teachers, and other stakeholders through surveys and evaluations can provide valuable insights into the perceived impact of soft skills programs. Positive feedback, testimonials, and anecdotes highlighting specific improvements in communication, collaboration, and leadership skills serve as evidence of success.

Behavioral Observations: Observing changes in students' behavior and interactions within the classroom and other settings can offer tangible evidence of soft skills development. Examples include increased participation in group discussions, improved conflict resolution abilities, and enhanced teamwork during collaborative projects.

Assessment of Soft Skills: Developing and administering assessments specifically designed to measure soft skills can provide quantitative data on students' progress. Rubrics, self-assessments, peer evaluations, and performance-based tasks can assess skills such as communication, adaptability, and emotional intelligence.

Post-Program Outcomes: Tracking students' post-program outcomes, such as college acceptance rates, internship placements, and employment opportunities, can indicate the long-term impact of soft skills development. Success stories of students who attribute their achievements to skills acquired through the program further validate its effectiveness.

Retention and Completion Rate: Monitoring retention and completion rates among participants of soft skills programs compared to non-participants can offer insights into the program's effectiveness in fostering student engagement, motivation, and persistence.

Employer Feedback: Gathering feedback from employers who interact with program participants, such as internship supervisors or recruiters, can provide valuable insights into students' readiness for the workforce. Positive feedback on students' professionalism, communication skills, and ability to work in teams serves as evidence of success.

Longitudinal Studies: Conducting longitudinal studies to track the progress of program participants over an extended period allows for a comprehensive assessment of the sustained impact of soft skills development. Long-term data on students' academic, professional, and personal achievements provide robust evidence of success.

By collecting and analyzing evidence from multiple sources, including academic performance data, stakeholder feedback, behavioral observations, and post-program outcomes, educators and program organizers can effectively demonstrate the success of student soft skill programs and inform future program development and improvement efforts. Students had a transformative impact which enables them to succeed personally and professionally by enhancing communication, leadership, and emotional intelligence, problem-solving and interpersonal skills.

Resources required

All the resources provided by the institution were sufficient for completing the practice