

# **Achieving Good Grade and Good Heart: A Strategy of Developing Soft Skills in English Language Teaching**

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## **Abstrak**

Soft skills have a significant role in the development of the students' overall personality, thereby potentially enhance their career prospect. In the context of foreign language teaching, soft skills can be exposed integrally through the process of teaching and learning English. This is based on the paradigm that English language teaching (ELT) ideally does not merely focus on how to achieve a good grade in the language skills, but also guide them to internalize the virtues for their soft skills development (good heart). Moreover, being good at number crunching and scoring high skill in the subject are not the only criteria for success in professional and personal life. For this reason, integrating soft skills into ELT would help students to build and improve their skills especially in interaction and the effective use of English. This paper highlights some strategies of developing students' soft skills in English language teaching. The discussion specifically is directed to the strategy of developing soft skills into language skills in classroom technique.

**Keywords :** *soft skills, core values, contextual teaching and learning (CTL)*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Education ideally must have a priority over developing soft skills without neglecting the significant role of hard skills or academic skills. Soft skills are self-developed, interactive, communicative, human and transferable skills. They include positive thinking, good interpersonal skills, communication skills, time management, self-confidence, problem solving, including analyzing a problem, setting goal, and thinking through both the long-term and short-term consequences of an action. Moreover, literature suggests that hard skills contribute to only 15 % of one's skills success while remaining 85 % is supported by soft skills. Ultimately, soft skills are believed would make the youth achieve a great chance to be successful in a competitive environment, and increase their employability potential.

One of the assumptions used in developing soft skills is that putting academics mastery as a media to develop soft skills. In this context, English

language teaching (ELT) can be placed as media of soft skills building. This fact is also affirmed by the perspective that the essence of language teaching, as the essence of all teachings, lies in values or moral. ELT involves the ways of cross-cultural communication, manners, etiquette, and self-confidence with its complexity. These aspects crucially relate to soft skills dimension. Moreover, in teaching the language skills, these values can be transmitted to the learners through classroom activity and instructional materials. Thus, this paper is aimed at exploring at the particular ways in which soft skills underlie various aspects of language teaching. Specifically, it is directed to the strategy of integrating soft skills into the teaching of language skills in the classroom.

## **II. DISCUSSION**

### **1. The Nature of Soft Skills**

The concept of soft skills takes root from the concept of emotional intelligence. The