DEVELOPING TEACHERS' SOFT SKILLS AND ITS EFFECTS ON TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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Abstract: Today, the field of education is witnessing tremendous changes, both in theory and in practice. This paper seeks to explore the position of teachers, their roles and the 'soft skills' they are supposed to be equipped with. The new emergent demands dictated by the recent geo-political and economic factors, both internally and externally, have brought about new perceptions of the place and the role of the teacher in the twenty first century, with specific standards and skills being more commonly emphasized. Unlike traditional views of the role of teachers, whose primary mission was limited to indoctrination and lecturing, more recent research in the field suggests that teachers should necessarily be well-equipped with specific 'soft skills' added to the 'hard skills' that he/she already possesses as a teacher. Getting knowledge and good training on these soft skills enhances communication and helps build a positive teacher-student relationship. This paper aim to argue that teachers' awareness of and training on soft skills can be one of the building blocks for a more healthy and 'dialogic' Moroccan school. To reach this objective, I will first address the different definitions of soft skills as well as the diverse taxonomies available in the literature. This will be followed by a discussion of the historical shifts in conceiving and practicing these skills in the field of education. Next, I will specifically address what I consider to be the essential 'soft skills' recommended for teachers. The paper will end by briefly suggesting some recommendations for teachers and stakeholders.
Keywords: Soft skills; literature, teacher, student.

Introduction

The baffling revolution in communication technologies over the last few decades has imposed new requirements and qualities for today's teachers. The new context(s) of the contemporary world implicate us in more condensed human contact, both nationally and internationally, and hence education and the school have to adjust to the accompanying challenges. Teachers are no exception in this regard. It is imperative to systematically train teachers on a set of soft skills that would foster their communicative competencies and complement the essential knowledge and 'core skills' they already have.   Such influential qualities and skills need to be explicitly addressed and taught in our educational system. Enhancing the communicative skills, for instance, would help teachers become better communicators either with students, parents or with the administrative body, and hence the process of teaching and learning could turn into a more successful and rewarding experience. It is to be noted that most of the literature consulted for the purposes of this paper is learner-focused and is used here as a point of departure. This could be partly justified by the scarcity of literature on soft skills for teachers, a trend of research which is still in its first stages.

Unlike earlier, 'the traditional teaching models within which teachers are expected to deliver knowledge through instruction and evaluation, in a system that encourages student agency, learning involves not only instruction and evaluation, but also co-construction. In such a system, teachers and students become co-creators in the teaching and learning process.' (OECD, 2019, p. 38). As Schleicher argues, despite the critical role of 'technology in

transmitting knowledge, the relational aspects of teaching, being a good coach, a good mentor will remain human capacities of enduring value' (OECD, 2019) Therefore, since there is a growing awareness of the necessity to rethink the educational goals along with the skills and competencies students are required to have, there is also a crucial need to rethink the competencies teachers need to possess and acquire in training centers and institutions. Therefore, the aim of this article is to address the issue of the skills and competencies twenty first century teachers need to be equipped with. The article will start by defining soft skills and shedding some light on their historical and theoretical developments. Then, we will highlight some of the well recognized soft skills taxonomies in the field of education. This will be followed by a review of the literature of the studies related to developing teachers' soft skills and their effect on teacher- student relationship. The paper will end up with a set of recommended soft skills for the would-be teachers and highlight their importance for an effective teacher-student relationship. (Daniels Denise, 2003)

Soft skills: terminology and definitions
Investigating the topic related literature reveals that there is no commonly agreed upon definition of the term soft skills; they are defined and classified differently and a spectacular array of terms has unfolded as a result. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with other terms like core skills, generic skills, life skills, transversal competencies, core competencies, social emotional skills etc. Some international frameworks like the OECD refer to them by the term 'key competencies', whereas others call them twenty first century skills like the UNESCO Global Framework of Learning Domains, the US Partnership for 21st Century skills and the World Economic Forum (2015). As for the European Reference Framework, it uses the term 'key competencies for lifelong learning'.

The use of the term and its applications vary also from one national context to the other. In Australia and New Zealand the terms 'generic skills', 'graduate attributes' and 'employability skills' are commonly used. In Spain, Portugal and other Spanish-speaking countries, soft skills are called 'generic or transversal competencies' ("competencias genéricas", "competencias transversales"). In France and Italy, they are named as Transversal skills. As for England, the terms 'life skills', 'core skills', 'key skills' and 'cross competencies' are used. (Cinque, Lost in Translation Soft Skills developmentin European Countries, 2016, p. 393) In Morocco, soft skills are referred to as 'transversal skills' and 'life skills'.

The variation surrounding the use of the term 'soft skills' is due mainly to its multidisciplinary origins. The early beginning of the term has emerged in the military domain in the 70s; later, the term has shifted to the field of business. With the incessant changes caused by globalization, integrating soft skills in the field of education has become a necessity according to soft skills' proponents. However, other resistant trends consider soft skills integration in the field of education as the end of 'humanitarianism' in the sense that they foster economic production. For them, 'soft skills serve the purpose of setting education on the mercantilist track, which is captured by the respective vocabulary typical of the business world: goals, objectives, competence, efficiency, educational services, customers, etc' (Gilyazova, 2021, p. 244). Adopting the perspective of the concept of Bildung, they consider that the goal of education is to 'implement Kant's (1977), Formula of Humanity: "Man and generally any rational being exists as an end in himself, not merely as a means to be arbitrarily used by this or that will, but in all his actions, whether they concern himself or other rational beings, must be always regarded at the same time as an end"' (Gilyazova, 2021, p. 245).

Some researchers correlate the definition of soft skills with the attributes and qualities students should acquire during their educational process. For them soft skills are 'the qualities, skills

and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include but go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future'. (Barrie Simon, 2006, p. 217). Since they encompass personal, social, communication, and self-management behaviors, soft skills allow people in general and students in particular to more effectively use their technical abilities and knowledge. ((Klaus Peggy, 2007, p. 2).

Other researchers identify the definition soft skills with personality traits. The early theories that have approached soft skills from a psychological perspective go back to Gardner's types of intelligences (interpersonal and intra-personal). Inter-personal intelligence is about understanding the feelings and intentions of others and intrapersonal intelligence refers to the awareness and discrimination of one's own feelings. Goalman's emotional intelligence is another major contribution in this regard. Goleman associates emotional literacy with education for character, moral development and citizenship (Scheerens Jaap, 2020, p. 4). More recently, Robles defines soft skills as 'character traits, attitudes, and behaviors—rather than technical aptitude or knowledge. Soft skills are the intangible, nontechnical, personality-specific skills that determine one's strengths as a leader, facilitator, mediator, and negotiator' (Cinque, 2012, p. 457). In the same vein, Heckman and Kautz define soft skills as 'personality traits, goals, motivations, and preferences that are valued in the labor market, in school, and in many other domains […]". They are "a mix of dispositions, understandings, attributes and practices" (Cinque, 2016, p. 394).

Although the relationship between skills, personality traits and dispositions is hard to ascertain, these individual attributes cannot be considered skills. A skill 'implies the prerequisites of having and accessing certain knowledge, processes, or sequences of behavior leading to a specific performance. However, for something to be considered a skill, it must contain an element of action.' (Matteson L. Miriam., 2016). Unlike skills that involve performance, action and change, personality traits are relatively stable. Personality traits, Matteson et al. argue are 'qualities that people possess; they inform what people do using their skill sets' (Matteson L. Miriam., 2016). Moreover, personality traits describe individuals' 'typical behavior', while skills are related to what individuals can demonstrate in a situation in which a performance is required (Scheerens Jaap, 2020, p. 220). Being subject to change means that skills are not innate, but teachable, learnable and malleable (Scheerens Jaap, 2020, p. 4).

Based on research in the field of business and management, soft skills are defined with a set of skills deemed to be important for employees to be hired. Grugulis and Vincent enlist "communication, problem-solving, team-working, an ability to improve personal learning and performance, motivation, judgment, leadership and initiative" as soft skills. Diane Parente, John Stephan, and Randy Brown define soft skills as people management skills. Their list includes "clear communication and meaningful feedback, resolving and/or managing conflicts, and understanding human behavior in group settings." (Matteson L. Miriam., 2016, p. 75). As for Peggy Klauds, soft skills cover a wide range of abilities and traits such as: being self-aware, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, critical thinking, attitude, initiative, empathy, confidence, integrity, self-control, organizational awareness, likability, influence, risk taking, problem solving, leadership, time management. (Klaus Peggy, 2007, p. 2) Other researches include oral and written communication skills, teamwork skills, decision making/problem solving/critical thinking skills, ethical judgment/moral integrity/professional responsibility skills, social/diversity awareness and sensitivity skills, leadership skills, time and stress management skills, innovation/creativity/negotiation skills, interpersonal relationships skills adaptability/self-motivation skills, and willingness to learn skills (Matteson L. Miriam., 2016).

Therefore, focusing on skills, drives emphasis more towards the interactional and social dimensions than on the personal and psychological.

Focusing our attention on teachers' soft skills development leads us to consider Melser's definition. She argues that soft skills are 'the characteristics, attributes, and competencies needed to teach children as well as interact with colleagues and parents. They are the interpersonal skills that help beginning teachers relate to their students and teach the concepts needed in classrooms[…] they are often fluid, changing with the needs of the children [students] in one's classroom, and they can vary, depending on an educator's background and experience' (Melser, 2018, p. viii).

A brief overview of how soft skills are being understood and defined reveals that no universally agreed upon definition of these skills exists. Defining this term indeed takes many facets due to its transversal nature. In the field of psychology, defining soft skills is plainly related to personality traits and emotional attributes and intelligences. In communication studies, the term is correlated with the different types of communication (interpersonal, intercultural, organizational etc.). Soft skills also are defined in term of cognitive and social procedures. Hence, the underlined difficulty in defining soft skills has remarkably created the need for classifying them into different taxonomies.

Taxonomies of Soft skills

Soft skills taxonomies offspring from the wide variety of terminologies and definitions attributed to the term. The literature has revealed that most of soft skills taxonomies are business related. But, respecting the scope of this paper, we will focus primarily on the well-known taxonomies of soft skills in the field of education. To start with, A 2015 qualitative analysis of the 'skill gap' conducted in a project by eLene4work (e-Learning for work) in some of the European Union countries (Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, UK.) starting in 2015 has classified soft skills into four basic categories:

•   social skills (teamwork, communication (online but also face-to-face "traditional" communication; all levels: speaking, listening, formal and informal writing), flexibility, openness for constructive feedback and humility (in social contacts students are too self-confident and convinced they know everything),

•   Personal skills, i.e. empathy (and other competences appropriate for emotional intelligence), honesty, commitment and motivation, openness to learn new things, curiosity, patience, perseverance, capacity to learn from one's failure.

•   "self-skills", like self-evaluation, self-regulation of the learning process and, as a consequence, capacity to make a conscious career choice

•   Learning skills, i.e. synthesis, skills of numeracy, ability to absorb in and deeply familiarize the topic, presentation skills. (Cinque, 2016, p. 404)

The second taxonomy has been developed by the OECD which has been at a leading edge in education, economy and sustainable development. This international organization has established a conceptual framework which clusters soft skills into three categories:

•   Cognitive skills: includes the understanding, interpretation, analysis and communication of complex information and the ability to apply this information in situations of everyday life. To assess these skills, the OECD has developed two basic data instruments: Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assessing 15-year-olds in literacy, numeracy and science; and the Survey of Adult Skills, a product of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) assessing adults aged 16-65

•   Social emotional skills: involves (friendliness, respect, caring), in achieving goals (perseverance, self-control, passion for goals) and in managing emotions (calm, optimism,

confidence). They are based on recognized taxonomies in personality psychology, particularly the "Big Five" factors (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness).

• Skills come from the interaction of cognitive and social and emotional skills. For instance, this is the case of creativity and critical thinking, which are expected to contribute to the capacity to adapt to major changes and to innovate. (OECD, 2015)

The UNESCO on its part has generated the Global Framework of Learning domains that are inevitable for professional teaching standards. The framework includes 6 domains, four of them emphasize soft skills. They can be enlisted as follows:

• Social and emotional domain: Social and community values, civic values, mental health and well-being

• Culture and the arts domain: Creative arts, cultural knowledge, self- and community identity, awareness of and respect of diversity

• Literacy and communication: Speaking and listening, vocabulary, writing, reading.

• Learning approaches and cognition: Persistence and attention, cooperation, problem solving, self-direction, critical thinking (UNESCO, 2013, p. 4)

Another important taxonomy of soft skills was designed by the US Partnership for 21st Century Skills Framework. The partnership divides 21st century skills into three major parts:

• Information and Communication skills: 1) Information and media literacy skills including: analyzing, accessing, managing, integrating, evaluating and creating information. 2) Communication skills.

• Thinking and problem solving skills: critical thinking, system thinking, problem identification, formulation and solution, creativity and intellectual curiosity.

• Interpersonal and self-directional skills: interpersonal and collaborative skills, self-direction, accountability and adaptability, and social responsibility. (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2002, p. 12)

Athorough consideration of these diverse taxonomies reveals that there are three major clusters of the skills and attributes included in most classifications. They cover (1) social and communicative skills (communicative skills, interpersonal skills, teamwork and leadership, social intellect, responsibility, ethics of communication). (2) Cognitive skills (critical thinking, problem-solving skills, innovative thinking, intellectual load management skills, skills of learning, information skills, time management skills). (3) Personal attributes and emotional intellect (emotional intellect, integrity, optimism and positive thinking, flexibility, creativity, motivation, empathy) (Raitskaya Lilia, 2019, p. 7)

Soft skills in the field of Education: Recent theoretical developments

Integrating soft skills in the field of education is not merely a recent development, but has a long tradition. Good behavior and favorable attitudes for both teachers and students have always been emphasized for a healthy educational environment and a positive teacher-student relationship. A close look at the well known taxonomies of educational objectives reveals the presence of the affective domain next to the cognitive and psychomotor ones. Aspects of knowledge are outlined by taxonomy of cognitive domain, aspects of values are defined by taxonomy of affective domain while aspects of skills are defined by taxonomy of psychomotor domain. The taxonomy of the affective domain was first introduced in 1965 by David R. Krathwohl, Bertram B. Masia, and Benjamin S. Bloom. This taxonomy includes five key concepts which can be enlisted as follows: Receiving, Responding, Valuing, Organization and Characterization by Value. (Datt, 2007, p. 4)

In spite of its valuable importance for the field of education, the affective domain was treated with reservations by pedagogues and educators for fear of indoctrination and privacy concerns. (Scheerens Jaap, 2020, p. 200) Nonetheless, the incessant calls for keeping education in line with modernization, along with the demands of the world market have contributed to the emergence of 'the affective turn' in education, and brought soft skills into the surface as an integral part of educational goals. These goals include both material and formal objectives; while the former are subject-content related, the second, in Corte et al.'s view, refer to the development of different facets of personality. (Scheerens Jaap, 2020, p. 2)

The 'affective turn' in education implies that 'Affect in teaching—associated with the com¬ing together of ideas, differences, and intensities across students, teachers, and knowledge—can slow down or speed up events or make moments more or less impactful; it can capacitate and incapacitate bodies differ¬ently. Affects sparked by a video clip, discussion, material, or sound, for example, may speed up or slow down class work, thus contributing to different feelings of excitement or languor in classroom spaces and con¬nections among participants.' (Dernikos p. Bessie, 2020, p. 15)

Adopting competency-based approach in the field of education based on the requirements of the industrial and digital revolutions and globalization is another impetus for soft skills' implementation in education. It has remarkably shifted stakeholders' and pedagogues' attention to the central role these skills may play in the development of nations. The real breakthrough of this theoretical developments goes back to the US 'Nation at risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform' document which demonstrates its 'concerns that go beyond matters such as industry and commerce, but, also include the intellectual, moral, and spiritual strengths of their people which knit together the very fabric of their society'. (The National Commission on Excellence in Education , 1983, p. 10) The report highlighted the endeavor of the US to offer individuals the chance and the tools to develop their powers of mind and spirit to the utmost (ibid p11).

Another important impetus is the Delors' report which has come to the fore in 1996 emphasizing four basic pillars of education: (1) 'learning to live together' through developing an understanding of others' cultures, beliefs and history. (2) 'Learning to know' happens through combining education with a comprehensive work on a specific number of subjects. (3) 'Learning to do' entails the acquisition of competences that enable people to deal with a variety of situations, and work in teams. (4) 'learning to be' refers to extracting the hidden talents in every person such as memory, reasoning power, imagination, physical ability, aesthetic sense, the aptitude to communicate with others and the natural charisma of the group leader, which again goes to prove the need for greater self-knowledge. (Delors Jaques, 1996, pp. 20-21)

In 2015, the United Nations released Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development a historical resolution emphasizing the crucial role of education in sustainable development. In the same year, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills US framework called for fostering students' soft skills. It describes in a thorough manner the skills, knowledge and expertise students must master in work and life. This being said, it's instructive to restate that at the heart of the developments that we have tried to outline, it is the primary goal of the World Economic Forums (2015 and 2019) based on a meta-analysis of research about 21st Century skills in primary and secondary education. The OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) has been also interested in the study of soft skills in education. In 2006, the organization released the DeSeCo report that can be considered as a landmark point enlisting the basic skills and competencies that should be addressed in education. In 2016, OECD published the first phase of its learning compass entitled as OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030- A Series of Concept Notes, in which it tackled the "what"

question about the kinds of competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values) needed for individual and societal well-being. In 2019, the second phase of OECD's publication has come to answer the 'how' question about designing learning environments that can nurture such competencies and how to implement curricula effectively. (OECD, 2019, p. 9)

Based on what has been said earlier, it can be stated that the study of soft skills has a long tradition, but its implementation in the field of education has only gained momentum in the last few decades. Reviewing the literature has shown that research highly emphasizes mainly three basic aspects (knowledge, skills and attitudes) that are indispensable for the process of teaching and learning. Mostly, all of them call for a flexible education that tolerates the ups and downs of the twenty first century age, be them political, economic, environmental or social. Enhancing students' soft skills that could be considered as the driving impetus for the previous studies. And this the fact that raises critical questions about the type of training teachers should have in order to be able to put the underlined incentives into practice and build positive teacher-student relationships.

Role of Soft Skills in teacher-student relationship

Research on enhancing teachers' soft skills to promote teacher-student relationships is still in its embryonic stage. So far, most of research being conducted on soft skills addresses the issue of improving students' soft skills at first stage. This, however, raises inquiries about the extent to which teachers are really equipped with the soft skills needed to primarily enhance their students' soft skills and simultaneously establish positive relationships with them. Research has shown that Positive teacher-student relationships have positive impact on students' adjustment to school, contribute to the development of their social skills and enhance their academic performance. (Battistich Victor, 2004), (Birch H. Sondra, 1997), (Curby, 2009). It has been also reported that teachers who experience close relationships with students claimed that their students were less likely to avoid school, appeared more autonomous, more cooperative and more engaged in learning (Birch H. Sondra, 1997); (Decker Dawn, 2007). Moreover, teachers who use more learner-centered techniques (i.e., practices that show empathy, involve students in the decision-making, and recognize students' developmental, personal and relational needs) are more likely to motivate their students than those who used fewer of such techniques (Daniels Denise, 2003)

Another study conducted by Sara Rimm-Kaufman, and Lia Sandilos from Virginia University (2010) puts forward four parameters for building a positive teacher-student relationship: know your students, give students meaningful feedback, create a positive classroom climate and be respectful and sensitive to adolescents. (Kaufman, 2010) With this in mind, teachers need to model and practice 'social perceptiveness' for developing an understanding of how others view and think about the world. By doing so, teachers are involved in developing their students' empathy and helping them in interacting with others. (Hanover Research , 2014, p. 23). in the same regard, Johnson and Johnson also note the importance of social skills upon entrance into a group, and they recommend additional social skills instruction. For them, the building blocks of working together include trust, communication, support, and conflict resolution. Such skills must be developed over time through instruction, teachers' modeling, reinforcement, and practice. (Ibid 19)

The previous research on positive teacher-student relationship highly emphasizes the social skills teachers are required to be equipped with. To build a close relationship with students teachers need to be socially knowledgeable, empathetic, caring, helpful and highly aware of differentiation within their classrooms, along with being conscious of their students' needs.

The establishment of successful teacher-student relationship cannot be achieved without effective communicative skills. Mary Jalongo notes that developing attentive, involved listening in students depends, to a great extent, upon teacher behavior. For her teachers should model good listening habits and demonstrate an interest in what students are saying. (Hanover Research , 2014, pp. 8-9) Moreover, teachers with high communicative skills contribute to improving students' learning and are more effective in all segments of the teaching process. (Zlatić, 2013) Additionally, raising teachers with both a high level of motivation and communication skills will exhibit positive attitudes towards their profession and contribute to the development of their countries. (Çimen, 2016)

Communicative and social skills are not the only skills teachers need to be aware of. Critical thinking and creativity skills are gaining more importance in this regard. What is hoped is that educators should model various strategies to help students develop critical thinking skills. They need to set up instruction including verbal reasoning, argument analysis, hypothesis formation and testing, probability and uncertainty, and decision making and problem solving. (Hanover Research , 2014, p. 11) Along with critical thinking, pedagogical creativity is also of great importance for todays' teachers. Svitlana O. Sysoieva defines teacher's pedagogical creativity as 'a personality-oriented developmental interaction of subjects of educational process (a teacher and a pupil/student) caused by specifics of psychological and pedagogical relations between them and aimed at the development of creative personality of a student and the increase of the level of teacher's creative pedagogical activity' [30]. In her research on soft skills development for teachers of mathematics and physics, L Sultanova's et al 2021 study's results demonstrate that the level of development of soft skills such as sociability, creativity, empathy, conducted with teachers of Physics and Mathematics shows that for most respondents their development corresponds to the medium level. (Sultanova, 2021, p. 11). Building on these results, Sultanova advocate the idea of developing an innovative pedagogical teachers' training based not only on the content-subject area, but also on the intangible personal qualities teachers need to possess to contribute to the improvement of the learning and teaching processes.

From another standpoint, negative teacher-student relationships, are stressful for both teachers and students (Jennings, 2009) and can negatively affect students' academic and social-emotional development (McCormick, 2014). Negative teacher-student relationships frequently result in increased disruptive behavior (Marzano, 2003). Research has shown also that students who display disruptive behavior disturb their classmates and hinder their own learning opportunities. Students with intense behavior problems are more likely to drop out of school. (Baker, 2001)

It can be deduced therefore that negative teacher-student relationship can most likely be generated when teachers are lacking the social, communicative and cognitive skills needed to deal with different unexpected situations, which may arise during a class. As has been reported in the previous studies, caring, supportive, empathetic, socially knowledgeable, and communicatively competent teachers are more likely to maintain positive and close relationships with their students. Therefore, teachers need to be 'proactive, work with others, communicate lessons with clarity and be innovative and adaptable to any classroom setting to increase students' academic achievement' and build positive relationship with them. (Hattie, 2015)

Soft skills for pre-service teachers:

The stressful nature of the career of teaching requires teachers to be not only well prepared in terms of knowledge and pedagogy, but also armed with specific soft skills to navigate the challenges of today's world and make learning possible and enjoyable. Kesornkaew Attakorn et al. assumes that there are seven soft skills that beginning and pre-service teachers in secondary education should have: 1) Innovation, invention and development skills 2) Communicative skills 3) Critical and problem solving skills 4) Team work skills 5) Leadership skills 6) Life-long learning and information management skills 7) Ethics, moral and professional skills. (Attakorna Kesornkaew, 2013)

Being aware of its importance, the Nigerian national policy on education stressed the implementation of soft skills in teachers' pre-service education. According to its policy, teachers should be equipped with the following set of skills: conscious behavior skills, collaboration skills, adaptability skills, innovative or creativity skills and skills for communicating with others. (Maren, 2021, p. 443) In Russia, the Center for the Development of Universal Competencies opened at the Ural Federal University (UrFU) has prepared and tried out the professional development program "Soft Skills for Teachers", where teachers learn how to design courses to meet today's requirements, how to manage the group dynamics, how to motivate students and get them involved in the learning process. (Gilyazova, 2021, p. 244)

The modern policy of Chinese higher educational institutions encourages teachers' training not only on hard skills, but also soft skills as represented by innovation, creativity, management skills, high foreign language proficiency in international communication, team work, etc. More than 8,000 online and offline courses have been inserted in Chinese educational system, and more than 52,000 teachers have already been trained on soft skills. (Sultanova, 2021, p. 2)

In Morocco, training teachers on soft skills is not included in pre-service teacher education curriculum; or at least, they are not addressed explicitly. So far, most of initiatives to training teachers are not compulsory. According to the Unicef's report, 'teachers [in Morocco] do not use interactive approaches, but rather use very traditional teaching techniques. There is widespread awareness of both the limitations of current teacher development programs and the need to review both pre-service and in-service teacher training'. (UNICEF, 2017, p. 91)

Conclusion

To conclude, the multi-faceted challenges facing teaching as a career today can hopefully overcome by teachers who are equipped with soft skills, in addition to the technical skills that are inherent to the subject being taught. The literature has revealed that teachers with good social and communicative skills build positive relationships with their students; and hence, the lack of such skills engender behavior problems at the level of students. Therefore, there is an urgent need to train teachers both in life skills content, classroom management, interactive techniques and planning skills (Ibid). Stakeholders and teacher preparation institutions are required to be aware of and systematically teach soft skills to pre-service teachers. By doing so, they will prepare a new generation of well-rounded and well trained teachers for the future and will arm them with dispositions and attributes that will assist them to communicate, develop professional behaviors, and activate the characteristics needed to efficiently teach their students.

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